



Patron: HRH The Duchess of Cornwall
President: HRH The Duchess of Gloucester

RSN
ROYAL SCHOOL
OF NEEDLEWORK

Founded 1872

**Royal School of Needlework
Annual Review
2016-2017**

Mission

The mission of the Royal School of Needlework (RSN) is to teach, practise and promote the art and techniques of hand embroidery.

Vision

The vision of the RSN is to be known and recognised as the international centre of excellence for hand embroidery offering a common approach everywhere we teach are open to all levels, from beginners to advanced, and students of all ages; to be both the custodian of the history of hand embroidery techniques and active advocates of new developments in hand embroidery.



A Laudian altar frontal designed and created by the RSN for the Chapel Royal, Hampton Court Palace and used for the first time when Her Majesty The Queen attended the commemorative service for the Companions of Honour.

Public Benefit

During the year the RSN met its public benefit obligations in a variety of ways. We demonstrated hand stitching for Burberry and The New Craftsmen (front cover) at Makers' House a pop up event which highlighted the inspiration and craftsmanship behind the AW 2017 Burberry collection attracting thousands of visitors.

The RSN showed or loaned work from our Collection to a range of events including an exhibition of cross stitch curated by Mr X Stitch. We held or participated in the largest ever number of exhibitions including work by Second year Degree students at the Devon Guild of Crafts-

men which attracted over 20,000 visitors (below left) and our exhibition celebrating our 30th anniversary of being based at Hampton Court Palace which attracted 5,000 people from around the world (below right).

End-of-year shows were held for all the main courses: Future Tutors, Certificate, Diploma and Degree each of which was open to all. The RSN was selected by English Heritage to be one of its London icons and we asked now qualified Future Tutor Kate Barlow to be photographed for the exhibition (centre) which was held at Central St Martins and the Mayor of London's headquarters.



Chairman's Introduction



During the year, the RSN celebrated 30 years of being based at Hampton Court Palace and, thanks to the support of Historic Royal Palaces held two events to mark this occasion, a tea party and an exhibition of work by current and recent students showing work from all the main courses. The tea party was a joyous occasion of 180 people all there to celebrate the RSN, not just from a

historical perspective but the thriving, lively, dynamic RSN of today. It was wonderful to meet so many supporters, especially those who have been Friends of the RSN not just for years, but for decades.

As part of the RSN's public benefit the exhibition, entitled *Embroidered at the Palace*, was opened to all visitors to Hampton Court Palace for a five week period. More than 5,000 people came to have a look, from Hampton Court's own team of Wardens to many international guests from as far afield as Canada, the USA and Brazil, to Russia, Japan and New Zealand, all were very welcome and highly complementary about the students' work.

The Studio had a good year, working on major new ecclesiastical commissions and a variety of conservation projects. It also collaborated with the contemporary pop artist Phillip Colbert to create a number of textile nudes as part of London Craft Week, as a way to show that the RSN Studio is able to work with many clients for different types of work.

There are many challenges for the RSN Degree team with more and more external oversight, but the small team is building a course that has a growing reputation and appreciation from people in the sector, with a range of haute couture labels now seeking out RSN students for their practical skills, especially in the preparations for runway shows. We also welcome the opportunity to showcase students' work and were particularly pleased with the number of visitors to the exhibition of Second years' work at the Devon Guild of Craftsmen in May.

Core to the RSN are the Certificate and Diploma (C&D) programme and our Short Courses, both struggled this year showing a decline against an anticipated increase. This was a worrying position but by the end of the year Short Courses had managed to pull back some of the shortfall and ended the year ahead of 2016. Despite a

very strong summer intensive, the C&D programme finished below its previous year position and this will be monitored closely in the coming year.

The RSN is a diversified organisation but without doubt, this was a challenging year, especially in the first half, with significant impacts on Certificate, Diploma, Short Courses and Retail and the absence of a larger legacy. However, with the commitment of the staff team, a number of areas came together to help turn around this position by the year end. Retail, fundraising, Future Tutors, private lessons and international classes achieved or exceeded targets and the year ended with income just ahead of expenditure. The tea party and anniversary exhibition had a positive impact on retail, late bookers stimulated figures for the short courses and donations to the digitisation campaign all helped. As a result, the RSN achieved an overall income of £1.9m, our highest without a large legacy.

I am particularly grateful to all those supporters who donated to the campaign to catalogue and digitise the RSN Collection and Archive. This will be an important project for 2018 and beyond but can only be achieved by raising external funding

I would like to conclude by paying tribute to Nicholas Rochez who retired as Chairman in February after nine years on the RSN Council, originally serving under Brian Levy before becoming Chairman in 2012. He continued steering the RSN towards the more stable financial position that it now has. We were pleased to welcome both past Chairmen to the 30th anniversary tea party in the summer.

The RSN runs with a very small staff team so, with all the Council I would like to thank the staff team for their work over the past year, especially when coping with a growing workload. There is also immense commitment from the tutors and we thank everyone for their contribution this year, as well as all the RSN volunteers who give so many hours to help continue the RSN's work.

Andrew Palmer
Chairman

Hand stitched cufflinks presented to outgoing Chairman Nik Rochez worked by the RSN Studio.



Highlights and Achievements of the Year

- The RSN celebrated 30 years of being based at Hampton Court Palace in 2017, moving here from Kensington in 1987, thanks to the offices of The Queen Mother. We celebrated with a tea party for 180 Friends and Supporters and an exhibition at the Palace which attracted 5,000 people visiting Hampton Court from all over the world. We are very grateful to Hampton Court Palace for its help with premises for these events.
- A book was produced featuring work by RSN students and the Studio from the last thirty years and Retail also featured some archival and collection designs for cards, bags, mugs and tea towels.
- We introduced Tour and Taster events for the *Stories in Stitch* exhibition which have been very successful and continued for future exhibitions. Classes are taught by Future Tutor graduates.
- Second year Degree students exhibited at the Devon Guild of Craftsmen in Bovey Tracey and more than 20,000 visitors came to the show.
- Future Tutor Auburn Lucas was the beneficiary of a prestigious QEST award and was also the selected beneficiary of a new tutor award from the Crewel Work Company which invited her to teach at two of their residential events.
- Due to the popularity of the *Stories in Stitch* exhibition featuring work by current and recent students as well as six pieces of 17th century embroidery from the RSN Collection, we extended this exhibition by five months and introduced Family events at half term as many of these pieces had a children's story theme from the Owl and the Pussycat to Humpty Dumpty and Alice in Wonderland.
- The RSN began the year highlighting men who stitch from our Degree, Certificate and Diploma programmes.
- Search Press published the latest in our series of technique books; *Appliqué* was written by tutor Kate Cross.
- The Chief Executive lectured extensively for organisations from the V&A and Devon Guild of Craftsmen to the Belfast Loose Thread Group, as well as many WI, Quilters' Guild, The Arts Society (formerly NADFAS) and Embroiderers' Guild groups. In particular, this year these included a lecture on the role of colour in *Opus Anglicanum* following the V&A exhibition. Degree Senior Lecturer Dr Clare Rose has also been a regular lecturer for the V&A.
- First year students on the Degree course exhibited in York as part of an installation by Susan Aldworth entitled *The Dark Self*. The students decorated pillow cases in stitch to represent the working of the brain while asleep.
- Supporters and Friends pledged over £50,000 towards the digitisation of the RSN Collection and Archive, the project will start during 2018.
- RSN Degree students have worked for a number of fashion houses including Hussain Chalayan, Zandra Rhodes, Alexander McQueen and Ralph and Russo.
- New donations to the RSN Collection include a selection of Turkish pieces given by an RSN Friend, a piece of Jacobean crewelwork (by design) that is actually worked in silks and two early 19th century samplers.



Teaching

Teaching the art and techniques of hand embroidery is at the heart of what we do, through four programme areas.

Future Tutors

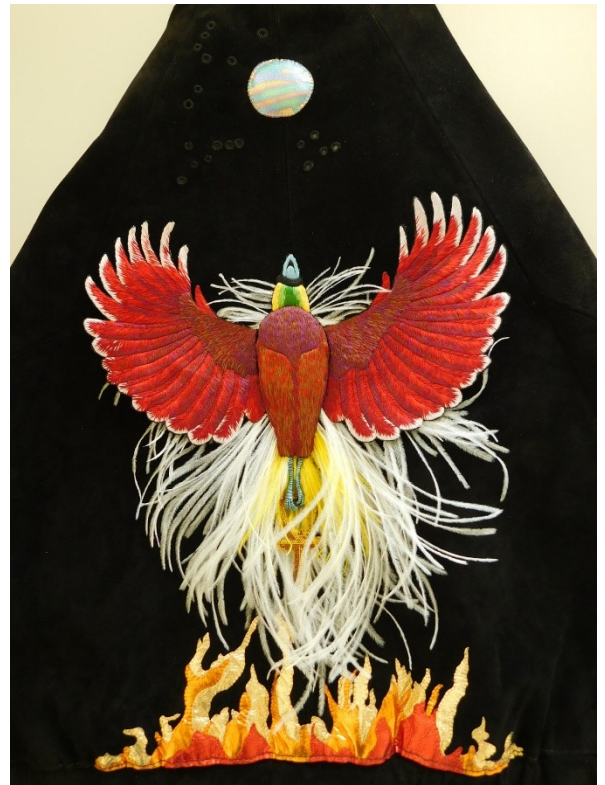
To teach for the RSN one must be taught by the RSN in order to appreciate and pass on the hallmarks of how we teach and the RSN's technical approach to stitch. Maintaining and developing the number of teachers we have is absolutely vital to our future and to meet external needs and expectations.

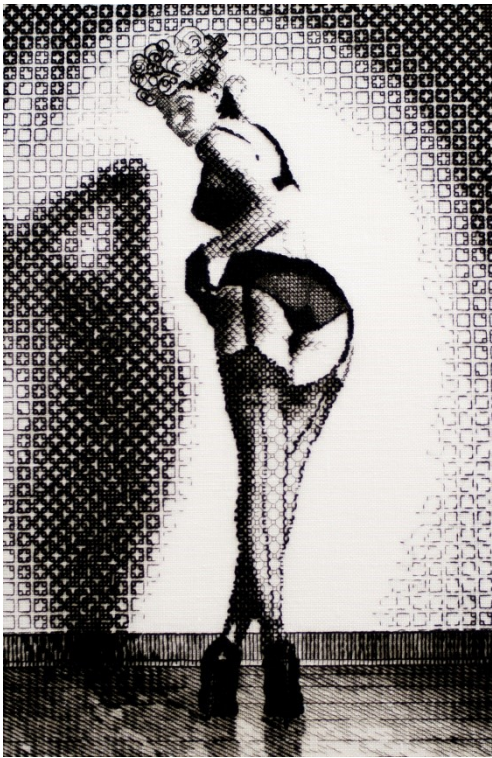
This year there were nine Future Tutor students across the three years including two transitional students who had completed the Certificate and some of the Diploma units before starting on the Future Tutor programme, so would be able to complete the course in two years. Four students graduated at the end of the year and they have already started teaching for the RSN in the UK and USA.

The financial challenge of the Future Tutor programme is that, as a practical course which is RSN-specific, students are not eligible for any loans or grants, so the RSN has taken the approach of raising funds to support the programme, enabling fees to be reduced and attracting bursaries to support the individual student's needs. This year more than £62,000 (2016: £42,000) was raised for the course costs including £13,300 towards student bursaries and prizes.

The long-term financial goal is to increase the RSN endowment to support the ongoing Future Tutor programme. As part of our commitment to public benefit, the Future Tutors led taster courses at a number of shows and exhibitions, led workshops for students at the V&A and participated in the new Family Days during half terms. They also participated in the Studio's work with pop artist Philip Colbert for London Craft Week.

Work by the Future Tutors was exhibited at the end of year show and as part of the 30th anniversary exhibition *Embroidered at the Palace* including sushi box by Sara Jane Dennis, embroidered jacket by Amy Burt, Advanced Whitework on an early 20th century blouse by Auburn Lucas and a Frog purse by Pippa Foulds.





The RSN Certificate comprises four techniques: Jacobean Crewelwork: Silk Shading, Goldwork and either Blackwork or Canvas Stitches.

Blackwork by Sarah Mole

Silk Shading by Junko Kuwabara

Crewelwork by Anna Haendal

Goldwork by Julia Jackson

Canvas Stitches by Beatriz Nasr





The RSN Diploma in technical hand embroidery requires a minimum of six techniques including Appliqué, Advanced Goldwork, Advanced Silk Shading, Stumpwork, Whitework (Pulled and Drawn Threads) and Canvas Shading plus either Blackwork or Canvas Stitches, whichever was not completed at Certificate level. There are further advanced techniques which students can take, including Advanced Whitework, Both Sides Alike and Creative Box (see back cover).

Appliqué by Janet Dingemans

Advanced Goldwork by Claire Roberts

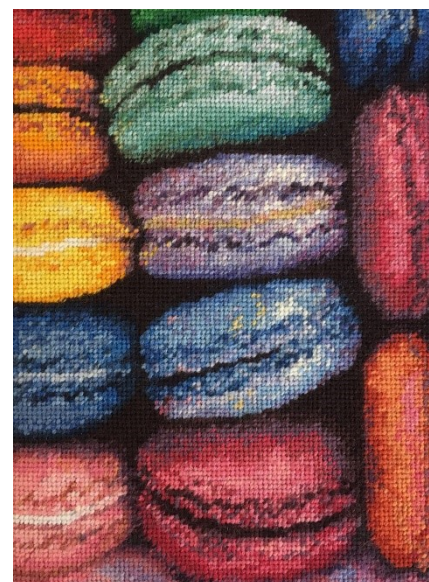
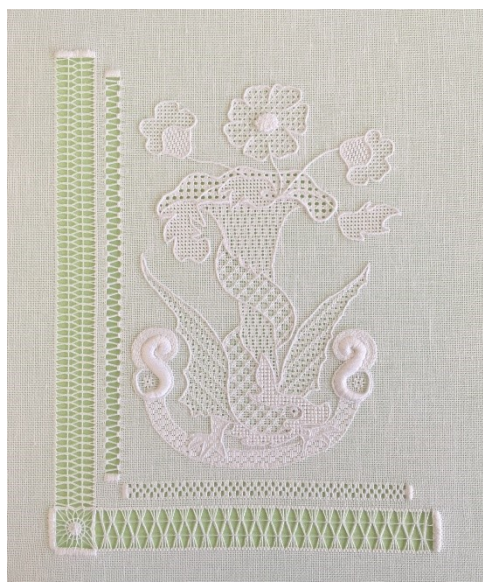
Advanced Silk Shading by Teresa McAuliffe

Both Sides Alike by Paris Morethorpe

Stumpwork by Sandra Arthur

Whitework by Ghislaine Peart

Canvas Shading by Jane Francis



Certificate and Diploma

The Certificate and Diploma in technical hand embroidery are the RSN's part time courses for people who wish to gain high-level skills in hand embroidery. This year we taught the courses at Hampton Court, Bristol, Durham, Rugby, Glasgow, in Williamsburg USA and three centres in Japan. All students other than those in Japan have been able to use the new Bookeo reservation system, which has helped the financial administration. However, the anticipated growth in numbers, especially at Hampton Court did not occur and a number of activities had to be put in place, including an Open Day in Bristol and starting a rolling programme of Open Days at Hampton Court to encourage new starters. Early signs are that these are showing results with particular growth in Bristol.

The summer intensive programme at Hampton Court had very good numbers and this year we also ran additional days of tuition for regular students during July, which proved popular, but overall, income was down against budget by £52k and £15k below the previous year. After an analysis of the figures, a number of issues were identified and these are being addressed. A new Education Manager is now in post and will be working on a range of promotional routes with Marketing. This year we taught a total of 365 students: 299 attended Certificate classes and 132 attended Diploma classes including 66 who transitioned from Certificate to Diploma .

Short courses

Short courses are mostly one and two day courses at weekends for leisure stitchers. The courses are for all levels, beginning with introductory classes through to advanced techniques. They take place at Hampton Court and in Bristol, Glasgow, Rugby and Exeter on a regular basis, as well as being part of our North American offering. We also offered courses in association with the Bath Fashion Museum and we made a second visit to Dublin to offer a weeklong programme.

The early part of the year showed a disappointing take up of places and this was attributed to too much choice. The September to December programme had already been advertised so it was more difficult to retrench but the January to August programme was reduced before launch, with one exception, a short-term focus on Opus Anglicanum to coincide with the exhibition that was held at the V&A, as it is only RSN-trained tutors who can deliver such courses. As a result of these actions, figures for the second half of the year were better than the first. Altogether short courses brought in £14k more than the previous year, although down against budget. In total 1,950 places were sold on short courses (up from 1,877).

One area that has grown over the year is private lessons where we continue to increase bookings, for both on and off-site lessons on specific projects



New this year the RSN introduced Family Days as part of the Tour and Taster programme, encouraging young people to have a go at stitching. These were very successful and will be continued for future exhibitions.

RSN Studio

The role of the RSN Studio is to undertake commissions of both new embroidery and conservation and restoration of historic textiles for a range of clients. This year the predominance was on new work, completing a series of altar frontals for an oratory (1) and commencing work on a set of new vestments for Buckfast Abbey.

Conservation work predominantly focused on ecclesiastical pieces, but there was also a steady demand for repairs to wedding veils and a Victorian version of the Lord Chancellor's purse (2). The major new initiative this year was a partnership with pop artist Philip Colbert for London Craft Week. Philip designed a series of pop-art nudes and the RSN Studio with Future Tutors realised them in Appliqué and stitch. This included for one week moving the entire team to Philip Colbert's Studio in Shoreditch where members of the public could come and see the work in

progress (3).

It is also while in the Studio that the Future Tutors learn one of the principal hallmarks of the RSN and that is to work collectively on a piece and yet ensure it looks like the work of one person. For several years the Clothworkers' Company has commissioned a new kneeler for their church, St Olave's, and this is begun with a competition for the first year Future Tutors responding to a brief that changes each year. The winning design is made up under the guidance of the Studio team, by all the Future Tutors together, so they learn how to match tension and stitch length (4).



3 2
4 1



Fundraising

The RSN is not in receipt of any statutory funding and has to earn or raise all its income. We have two main strands for our fundraising: our core programme and new projects. In the area of core programme, we raise funds to support student bursaries on both our Degree and Future Tutor programmes. In addition, because students on the Future Tutor programme are not eligible for any government loans we raise funds to support the course as a whole, enabling us to reduce the course costs to participants. It is vital to have this support for this important course, which is at the heart of keeping hand embroidery alive for future generations.

This year we have also focused on raising funds for new

initiatives, in particular the RSN Stitch Bank and our wish to digitise the RSN Textile Collection and large swathes of the RSN Archive. These are major initiatives but with the help of Charitable Trusts and RSN supporters, we hope to begin to start work on the digitisation in 2018.

The RSN remains grateful to all those organisations which support the RSN, especially City Livery companies including Broderers, Clothworkers, Dyers, Girdlers, Gold and Silver Wyre Drawers, Haberdashers, Needlemakers, a number of Charitable Trusts and those who wish to remain anonymous.

Degree

The RSN Degree in hand embroidery is the only degree focusing solely on hand embroidery in the UK and probably within Europe. The programme teaches core stitch techniques but then challenges students to take the stitch in new, creative directions based on their work in art and design, research and experimentation.

The Degree is subject to the same quality assurance standards as all other higher education providers. Having been commended for the quality and breadth of its course in 2016, especially in relation to the opportunities available to students, in 2017, after submission of the appropriate evidence, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education determined that they did not need to make an inspection.

Continuing the tradition of taking all external opportunities, second and third year degree students began the year demonstrating hand embroidery as part of the Burberry Makers' House event and at the Luxury Made event at London Olympia, they also assisted several designers with preparations for Fashion Weeks in September and January including Hussain Chalayan, Jasper Conran and Alexander McQueen. Two students also worked on longer projects with Zandra Rhodes.

All three years worked on projects for public exhibition. First years participated in *The Dark Self* an installation of 1001 embroidered pillowcases initiated by artist Susan Aldworth who wanted to explore aspects of the brain during sleep. All the first years contributed making their own interpretations to fit the brief and the pieces were all on exhibition in York.

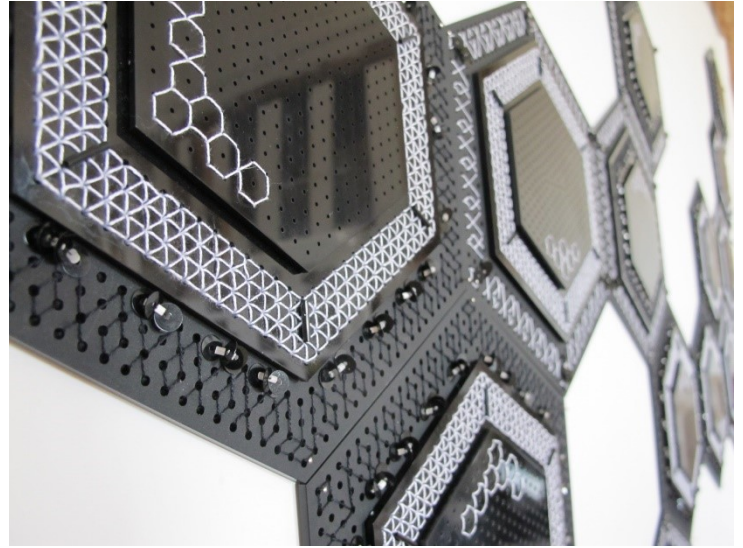
The second year students' live project this year was called *Off the Surface* and asked students to explore works in the RSN Textile Collection including pieces of Chinese embroidery, purses and other accessories and lace handkerchiefs and make a response to what they saw. The created pieces and the original inspiration were then exhibited at the Devon Guild of Craftsmen. This free exhibition attracted over 20,000 visitors.

Third year work was exhibited at the RSN for the end of year show and both second and third year work was included in the *Embroidered at the Palace* exhibition. 2017 Graduate, Elena Thornton went on to win the Hand & Lock prize for embroidery, the most prestigious hand embroidery award with an international reputation. Her winning pieces are shown below.

This was the first year of the three-year degree programme operating in full, across all years and we also grew our first year numbers with 19 in the first year, 14 in the second year and 10 in the third year. All students passed, with four of the third years achieving first class degrees.

The degree continues to seek new opportunities to market itself, often through its activities such as exhibitions and participation in special events. The Chief Executive and Course Leader were both invited to speak at events linked to quality and standards to showcase the RSN degree programme.





Work by third year degree students: Claire de Waard using straw to embroider on this dress; Erum Waseem embroidering on laser cut outs; Esther Wilson transforming denim; Alice Brady inspired by her Irish countryside and Connie Wynn refashioning 19th century christening gowns into contemporary lingerie.



Finance

The consolidated statement of financial activities for the year shows a net surplus (before investment gains) of £9,604 (2015/16 surplus of £4,362).

The overall income for the year 2016/17 amounted to £1,917,802 (2015/16: £1,758,317), a year on year increase of 9%. Increases were experienced in all areas of activity, with the exception of donations and legacies of £239,499 (2015/16: £241,869), where there was a small decrease due to lower legacies. Donations and legacies remain an extremely important source of income, particularly for the Degree and Future Tutor programmes, neither of which receives any government funding, and for all new initiatives.

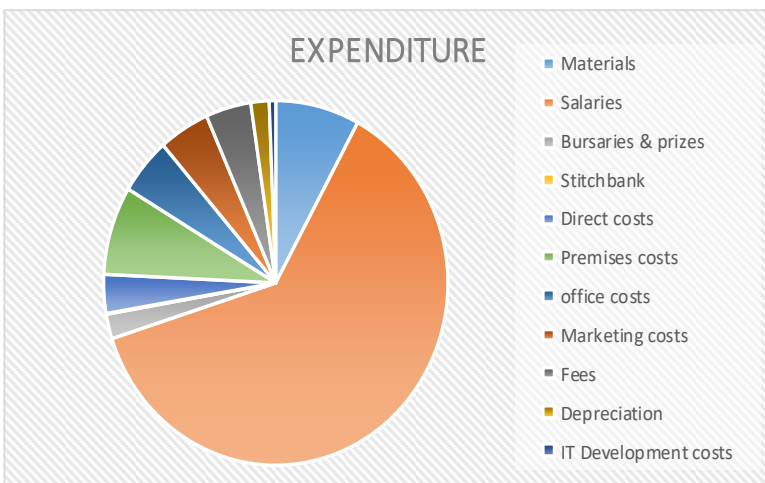
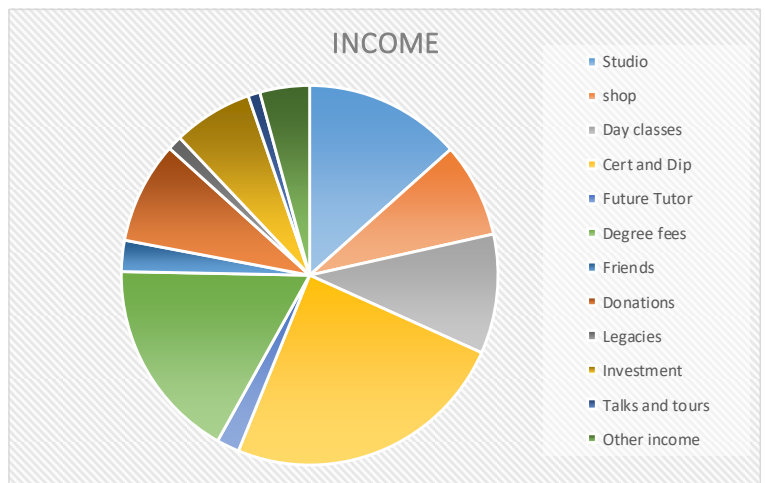
The trading subsidiary income of £384,266 (2015/16: £340,449) increased by 13% mainly due to the level of activity in the RSN studio which benefitted from a large commission which was completed by the end of the financial year.

Income from charitable School activities amounted to £1,126,852 (2015/16: £1,010,413) a 12% increase over the previous year due to increased student numbers particularly on the Degree programme and also on short courses. Investment income of £167,185 (2015/16: £165,586) also increased marginally.

The restricted fund income of £162,638 (2016: £190,610) consisted of resources earmarked for the Degree and Future Tutor programmes and the RSN Stitch Bank and Collection and Archive Digitisation Campaigns. The reduction compared with last year is mainly due to the lower level of legacy income received. Restricted expenditure of £198,257 (2016: £170,072) was incurred against the Degree and Future Tutor programmes, for the RSN Stitch Bank project which commenced during the year and also the ongoing depreciation on the capital costs of the set-up of the new classrooms at Hampton Court Palace in 2015.

Total expenditure for the year of £1,908,198 was 9% more than the previous year (2015/16: £1,753,955) and particularly reflects the increased staffing and other resources required to yield the additional income from school and trading activities in the current year.

Net realised and unrealised gains on investments for the year amounted to £393,933 (2015/16: £406,717) reflecting the continued rise in the investment market since the EU referendum last year. At the balance sheet date, net assets totalled £5,088,599 (2016 £4,685,042) of which £2,178,186 (2016: £1,940,936) are unrestricted.



Summary of income and expenditure by department and activity

Consolidated statement of financial activities

Year ended 31 August 2017

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	2017 Total funds £	2016 Total funds £
Income and expenditure					
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	76,861	162,638	—	239,499	241,869
Investment income	167,185	—	—	167,185	165,586
Income from trading activities	384,266	—	—	384,266	340,449
Charitable activities					
School activities	1,126,852	—	—	1,126,852	1,010,413
Total income	1,755,164	162,638	—	1,917,802	1,758,317
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	427,680	26,478	—	454,158	413,825
Charitable activities					
Costs of school activities	1,275,211	171,779	7,050	1,454,040	1,340,130
Total expenditure	1,702,891	198,257	7,050	1,908,198	1,753,955
Net income (expenditure) before investment gains and losses	52,273	(35,619)	(7,050)	9,604	4,362
Realised losses on investments	(10,580)	(1,083)	(10,868)	(22,531)	(56,784)
Unrealised gains on investments	195,557	20,020	200,887	416,464	463,501
Net income and net movement in funds	237,250	(16,682)	182,969	403,537	411,079
Reconciliation of funds:					
Fund balances brought forward at 1 September 2016	1,940,936	481,749	2,257,587	4,680,272	4,269,193
Fund balances carried forward at 31 August 2017	2,178,186	465,067	2,440,556	5,083,809	4,680,272

Trustees' statement

The trustees confirm that these summarised financial statements are a summary of information from the full annual report and financial statements which were approved by the Board of Trustees on 19 February 2018. A copy of the full annual report and financial statements, upon which the auditor has reported without qualification, will be submitted to the relevant statutory bodies, including the registrar of companies. These summarised financial statements may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of the Royal School of Needlework. Further information and the full financial statements are available online or by contacting the Chief Executive at: the Royal School of Needlework, Apt 12a, Hampton Court Palace, East Molesey, Surrey KT8 9AU.

Balance sheets

as at 31 August 2017

	Group		Charity	
	2017 £	2016 £	2017 £	2016 £
Fixed assets				
Tangible assets	80,356	111,358	80,356	111,358
Investments	4,928,585	4,570,262	4,928,685	4,570,362
	5,008,941	4,681,620	5,009,041	4,681,720
Current assets				
Stocks	58,276	53,388	21,565	19,829
Debtors	98,309	110,985	100,169	149,115
Cash at bank and in hand	365,689	296,084	325,442	247,997
	522,274	460,457	447,176	416,941
Creditors: amounts falling due				
within one year	(442,616)	(457,035)	(367,618)	(413,619)
Net current assets	79,658	3,422	79,558	3,322
Total net assets	5,088,599	4,685,042	5,088,599	4,685,042
Represented by:				
Capital and reserves				
Called up share capital	290	290	290	290
Capital redemption reserve	4,500	4,480	4,500	4,480
	4,790	4,770	4,790	4,770
The funds of the charity:				
Endowment funds	2,440,556	2,257,587	2,440,556	2,257,587
Restricted funds	465,067	481,749	465,067	481,749
Unrestricted funds:				
General fund	1,378,186	1,140,936	1,378,186	1,140,936
Designated fund	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000
	5,083,809	4,680,272	5,083,809	4,680,272
	5,088,599	4,685,042	5,088,599	4,685,042

Independent Auditor's Statement to the Trustees of the Royal School of Needlework

We have examined the summarised financial statements set out on pages 13 and 14.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and auditor

The trustees are responsible for preparing the summarised financial statements in accordance with applicable United Kingdom law.

Our responsibility is to report to you our opinion on the consistency of the summarised financial statements with the full financial statements and the trustees' report. We also read the other information included in the annual report and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the summarised financial statements.

Basis of opinion

We conducted our work in accordance with Bulletin 2008/3 'The auditors' statement on the summary financial statement' issued by the Auditing Practices Board for use in the United Kingdom.

Opinion

In our opinion the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements and the trustees' report of the Royal School of Needlework for the year ended 31 August 2017

Looking ahead

The major new initiatives for the year will be a summer school in the USA, the introduction of distance learning courses, starting the digitisation of the RSN Collection and Archive and introducing a schools initiative. Underpinning a number of these areas will be the major IT project, which began at the end of 2016-17 and is aimed at transforming some of the RSN's core working practices. This is a major investment by the organisation, so we have appointed a specific project manager to bring it to fruition in a timely manner. Only when completed will we then look to start phase two which will bring in the RSN Stitch Bank work and the cataloguing and digitisation of the Collection and Archive. We are very grateful to all the RSN supporters who have given donations to these projects and we will look forward to starting the work.

Also linked to IT, the RSN is very aware of the introduction of the new data protection rules coming in during 2018 and is working hard to obtain consent for correspondence with all our customers, Friends, donors, newsletter recipients and others so that we can continue to keep them informed of our work and opportunities. If you are reading this please ensure we have your consent for future communications so we may send you the report next year.

The RSN has been visiting the USA twice a year for the last nine years but the focus has primarily been on Certificate and Diploma courses with only a small number of short courses. There have been many calls for more classes, so for 2018 the RSN is aiming to take 10 tutors for two one-week Summer Schools in Kentucky in July. Initial interest has been high and we are looking forward to two great weeks.

However, one summer school is not going to appease the many people in the UK and internationally who wish we were located nearer to them. This year we are looking to launch a new Distance Learning programme as a partnership initiative that will introduce RSN stitch to people anywhere in the world. This has been a long-time desire and over time we hope it will represent the full breadth of RSN techniques.



