



Hi all, well 2020 was a terrible time, and now 2021 has started with a bang or a fizzle! Depending on your view- point!!

You should all now be aware that the Guild is in crisis, and that we have been invited to attend a General meeting on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March, in which the proposal to close the branches and Regions and reduce costs to enable the Guild to survive is being discussed.

I would urge all members to send in their votes after the meeting but before 10<sup>th</sup> March, with a positive **yes to acceptance**, which will ensure the Guild as a Charity survives in the future.

I would also recommend that members listen to the podcast on Stitchery Stories in which Dr Penny Hill (trustee) is being interviewed regarding the crisis in the Guild. This interview is extremely interesting and apart from giving more details on why the Guild is struggling to survive, gives a potted history of the Guild from its start in 1906 and its charitable aims.

There is a link for this interview below the Qs & As on the new temporary website under General Meeting 2021. <https://embroiderersguild.com/>

I feel this maybe the opportunity to tell you all what being a member of the Guild has meant to me and the opportunities it has given me.

A few years ago, a friend, knowing I liked to stitch & make, invited me to accompany her to Parbold EG Open Day. From that minute on I was hooked and I quickly joined the Guild and attended monthly meetings. Does that feel familiar to you?

The first year I hesitantly joined in with some of the activities, made new friends and learned new skills- I would add I didn't really understand some of the terminology, it was like a new language.

However, a long-term member, Sandra Kedzlie who is sadly not with us now, persuaded me to enrol in a City & Guild course in Preston- well that was it!!!

I attended weekly night school for 5 years, eventually gaining a diploma in Embroidery and Design. From there I helped to set up a textile group, which is still creating and exhibiting. I started running workshops, selling my work at craft fairs and in shops etc etc.

I've also had the privilege of being a branch committee member for a number of years in differing roles and deciding to become member on the Regional Committee & now Regional Chair.

What a journey, and as you can see **'that is what the Guild has done for me'**

I know members are very upset about all of this and I do appreciate that some may feel the rug has been pulled from under their feet, but I would urge you all to consider action that preserves the Guild and its charitable aims, by voting yes.

Having had a zoom meeting with a majority of the NWR branch chairs from the 22 branches, it seems that over half of them have now made the decision to form an independent group at a later stage and assuming the vote to retain the Guild goes the right way. I believe some branches have called meetings with their members to gauge the support for starting an independent group. Independent groups will receive a start up fund and support package from the Guild and will be able to keep their branch equipment etc

I will be sending out the minutes from that meeting to branch chairs asap

As a region we must make big decisions regarding future events, regional property and structure. Be aware that the Regional Committee are on the 'case' and we will be meeting to discuss these and many more decisions and plans over the next few months.

I intend to keep the NWR branch members informed of all developments and we will try to help & support branches for as long as it takes.

Communication is extremely important, and I would urge all branches to keep me in the loop, and I will ensure that they are in turn informed of any new developments and plans.

Regional Day on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> April is still going ahead on a virtual basis, and I would urge all members to reserve their places asap. You can do this by going to <https://www.megonline.co.uk/> and viewing Regional Day 2021. This will take you into the booking form and information. The tickets are £8.00 which includes a raffle ticket- what a bargain! Where could you be entertained by two well known textile artists, buy online from traders, view work by Merseyside EG members and possibly win a lovely handmade bag full of goodies for such a small fee- and all from the comfort of your home! **bargain**

We **must** make this a success and we need more people to book on, you can get friends, family or complete strangers to attend (please don't rugby tackle people in the street though) - the more the merrier.

We are not sure about Summer School (25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> June) yet, we do have a number of bookings, and in theory the government should be loosening up lockdown regulations by then. However, so we do not incur cancellation fees, we are having to make a decision soon, and this will be discussed next week during our Regional Committee meeting. If we do decide to cancel this event we will of course contact the booked attendees, and sort out deposit refunds.

I have now run out of steam, but hopefully after the General meeting I will be sending a part 2 pf my newsletter to all NWR branches.

Sue Chisnall-Sumner NWR Chair