

Hello to members! It is good to be in touch once again after so many weeks and to have the opportunity to give you an update before welcoming everyone back in the autumn.

First the good news! Although Elm Ridge Hall will not be ready for us in September, Lesley Wood, who was booked to come for that meeting is able to change dates to 3rd October. I am sure that her presentation 'From Paint to Thread' will get us off to a great start.

It is not such good news about the Workshop with Liz Almond on 17th October. Reluctantly the Committee has decided that the timing of this is too early for such a gathering to be held safely and successfully, complying with the guidelines at this stage in the Covid recovery process. Liz is very understanding and happy to reconsider for 2021 if this would be popular. Many fans of her designs will know that Liz has been busy online over the last months, introducing new designs and inspirations. www.blackworkjourney.co.uk

The visiting Speaker on 7th November is Cathy Needham inviting us to share in her 'Colourful World'. Cathy's skill with colour and fibres has led to her being a featured artist on the recent BBC One programme 'Home is Where the Art Is'. You can watch her Cathy on the Moon experience on the TV programme of Friday 10th July: Episode 5. Highly recommended!

They say that - *Every Cloud has a Silver Lining* - and this might be true for some members who have used the unexpected turn of events to spend bonus time on stitching projects. Have you been prompted & motivated to look out and complete those Unfinished Symphonies hiding in a drawer? Treated yourself to time to complete the Canvas Work Stitch samplers you tried out that morning in March (remember that far back?!) Or found time at last to experiment with a technique you have been promising yourself to explore? You might have taken inspiration from the Rainbow theme which inspired so many and helped us through the stressful weeks or even now be producing individual face masks with character! Whatever has inspired or helped you through the lockdown we would like you to share these pieces with members at the **October meeting as the theme for the Fletcher Award 2020**. Any design and technique is welcome, kits included. Please bring these pieces with you to the meeting, morning/afternoon – and you still have more time to be inspired to respond to this challenge.

Our other 2020 Branch competition '**The Festival Bowl**' has been moved slightly later to the meeting on 5th December, giving extra time to complete entries on the theme of '*Folk Art*'.

2020 began well with our enthusiasm anticipating a proposed exhibition at **Darlington Head of Steam Railway Museum**. The museum has now reopened with all safety measures in place. I have contacted staff to ask if we can revisit the proposal which included a Group visit and themed Exhibition and make it an inspirational feature of the programme for next year.

All in all I hope this offers everyone an exciting prospect and one which will stimulate and enthuse you to return, renew friendships & share experiences with others who enjoy and value embroidery, textiles and stitching in all forms.

Joy Bradshaw