**World’s Longest Embroidery**

**Working with Mount Pleasant Primary School**

**Darlington**

We first met the children in a local library just before Christmas and they were so interested in what we had with us that I suggested that we could go into school and work with them. Their teacher, Jane Telfer, who is also deputy head, said that would be a great idea and the rest is history. They are class 4T and it is a mixture of 8 and 9 year olds.

We went in to make stuffed felt hearts and stuffed rabbits over the next couple of months. The second visit was made into an event as parents were invited in. We ended up in a very full hall and it was a very social occasion – everyone working together and having fun. There has been a bit of envy from other pupils in the school!

I suggested that we get involved with The World’s Longest Embroidery and they were really keen. Obviously, it would be organised in a different way as only small groups could be involved at any one time. I asked them to do some preparation in the form of talking about and planning out some ideas.

They discussed it and decided that their project ‘Around the World in Eighty Days’ had been a big part of their year and it was important to them. They had covered several different subjects through this one project. They are a Rights Respecting School so the UNICEF logo had to be included. Their motto ‘Learn for Life’ needed to have pride of place too.

They all did a planning sheet, including shared ideas and things from an individual perspective. They included pictures and drawings as well as words and numbers on the sheets and Jane and I chose from them. The Sumo wrestlers were interesting but we decided in the end that perhaps they were a little too risqué for the project! We really enjoyed this part of the project as the drawings were fantastic.

I put together an initial plan, and then firmed it up more with actual pictures, which were shared with the class. After that there was a little refinement to do.

I prepared the background by machining some of the pieces on ready for them to stitch over and around. We planned on doing some colouring in with fabric pens and glitter glue; stamping words and numbers; stitching, what they have called ‘Frankenstein’ stitch – the straight stitch across the edge of the pictures; running stitch around many of the pictures; chain stitch as the continuous line – everyone did at least four of these, including the class teacher, support assistant and an ex-pupil on work experience; cross stitch and couching; they applied buttons, beads and sequins too. They chose which threads they wanted to use.

At one point we had eight working on it at the same time – seven stitching and one colouring in. They worked conscientiously and with consideration for others. The enthusiasm and desire to participate was most rewarding. It was fantastic to see and great to be a part of.

We have been invited to an assembly to celebrate the completion of the piece.

Gloria Brunning (Chair of Darlington’s Embroiderers’ Guild)