



## Having us in STITCHES

Britain has an amazing heritage of embroidery, and this year marks 150 years of the Royal School of Needlework

ou'd expect
embroidery on
royal wedding
dresses and
ceremonial garb but did
you know it features on the
sleeve of a Paul McCartney
album, a FIFA logo and
in Game of Thrones?

It's all the work of the Royal School of Needlework (RSN), which has been creating beautiful bespoke embroidery for art, fashion and royalty for 150 years.

Opened by Lady Victoria Welby above a bonnet shop in London's South Kensington in 1872, its founding principles were to train young women in an occupation and to preserve hand embroidery as an art form. Queen Victoria's daughter Princess Helena was its first president and played

a key role in the early days, when it employed 20 ladies were based there.

Today, the Royal School of Needlework is also responsible for restoring and conserving valuable historical pieces and stitching. It provides hand-embroidery classes to students far and wide from its current base at Hampton Court, as well as other locations in the UK, America and Japan.

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## Craftmanship on the catwalk

Embroidery often features heavily in the designs of Alexander McQueen, one of the most respected fashion brands in the world.

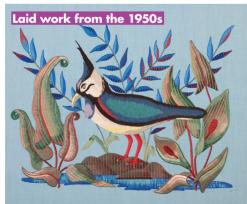
Today, under the direction of Sarah Burton, the luxury fashion house contributes to community youth training programmes, providing embroidery workshops among other creative skills.

Sarah Burton famously designed the Duchess of Cambridge's wedding dress, with the lace appliqué on the skirt and bodice hand-stitched by the Royal School of Needlework.



Embroidery on show

ome exquisite embroidery examples need to be seen to be believed. Here are just a few of the many places in Britain where you can see textiles enhanced by skilful stitching.



\*\* 150 Years of the Royal School of Needlework: Crown to Catwalk, Fashion & Textile Museum, London, 1 April to 4 September.

Get up close to some of The Royal School of Needlework's commissions for the British royal family as they celebrate their fascinating history with a new exhibition showcasing pieces from a 5,000-piece archive. You can listen to online talks and learn about life at the RSN and

the embroidery techniques they are famed for at royal-needlework.org.uk

\*\* The **V&A**, or Victoria & Albert Museum, is the London home to a wide range of embroidered textiles from



across the world. Highlights include embroidery designs by British textile designer William Morris and an incredible example of English 17th-century embroidery on a large casket, completed by 11-year-old Martha Edlin.

The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, has a textile collection that includes over 400 samplers, spanning several centuries and displaying a wide range of needle techniques.

\*\* Blooming Marvellous: Flowers in Fashion, 1700s-2000s, Chertsey Museum, Surrey, until 3 September.

Flowers and fashion have long gone hand in hand. The exhibition showcases examples of clothing beautifully enhanced with flowers through embroidery and other techniques.



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