



WITWATERSRAND EMBROIDERS' GUILD ("WEG")

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 2 – FEBRUARY/MARCH 2023



Hello Everyone

Welcome to our combined February / March 2023 Newsletter. With February having been a short month and with all the exciting things happening, I decided to compile a Bumper Issue so, grab a cuppa and sit down for a nice long read.

In the spirit of Valentine's Day and our "love" of embroidery, please bear with me as I exploit this theme. The fact that I'm a Valentine's baby has NOTHING to do with it ... nudge, nudge – wink, wink!

Kind regards Toni



We'd like to congratulate those who celebrate a special day in
February and March 2023

The following ladies had birthdays during February:

2nd Laura Tyrer
3rd Elizabeth Filby
5th Sarie Sawers
6th Margaret Place
14th Toni Billing (that's meeee!)
18th Corinne Van Deventer
25th Gerdie Myburgh
26th Valerie Ann van Deventer and Diane Walker

The following ladies had/have birthdays during March:

3rd Marion Arthur and Hettie Moller
5th Khatija Patel
16th Janis Savage
20th Sheila Meyerowitz and Paula Miller
21st Mandy Kort
24th Charmaine Fiorotto
27th Ann Morris and Maryna van der Merwe

Please let us know if you were also a February or March baby so we can update our records



Annual membership fees are due and payable by **31 January** each year.

The fees for 2023, which INCLUDE the cost of refreshments are as follows:

Members younger than 90 years	R300.00
Members aged 90 years and older	Free

Joining the Roosevelt Park Recreation Centre is obligatory for those attending meetings, but this is purely for health and safety reasons so is free of charge.

I urge members to please pay their annual fees, as soon as possible as we will, unfortunately, have to restrict access to our various communication channels for those who no longer wish to remain members.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The WEG's Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 25 March from 12h00 until 13h00 at Roosevelt Park Recreation Centre. Any discussion items for the Agenda should be communicated to Danny Wimpey before the meeting. Committee Nominations and Proxy Votes should have been forwarded by now, but these are still available from the Committee.

Some changes to the WEG Constitution and Rules are being proposed and we would like input from all our Members so please make every effort to attend.

Please remember that only paid-up Members are able to vote.

BANNERS

OUR GOLDEN LAND



By Danny Wimpey

Members of the WEG will know this beautiful banner very well. It has been displayed at Exhibitions over the years, and more recently at the Craft Market in 2022. It is an amazing display of skill and talent, put together by a group of Guild members as an entry to a competition in the United Kingdom in the late 1990s. To me it is a tremendous piece, one which we should be proud to display at every opportunity.



As with so many things, the history of the banner has become obscured as people who worked on it and were involved in the project left the Guild or passed on.

It is important to keep this history alive to serve as a reminder of what has been achieved and as an inspiration for future generations. With that in mind, I recently met with Veronica Talbot and Jenny Shippey, to discuss and record what they remembered about the banner. Sheila Meyerowitz also sent me her memories, which are included below, and I have scoured the Committee minutes which are sadly very sparse when it comes to details about the work done.

I wrote to several UK-based embroidery groups and guilds, including the Royal School of Needlework. All of them were very complimentary about the banner and reinforced what we know – that it is an extraordinary piece of work - however. no-one has been able to shed any light on the matter.



It appears that the banner was conceived in 1997 as an entry to a competition - Pam Goodbrand was the chair at the time, and she got the ball rolling. Penny Cornell of the Cape Guild had previously attended the Madeira exhibition and was invited by the late Ian MacPherson, (the managing director of Madeira Threads UK at the time), to submit exhibits from the South African Guilds. She was responsible for coordinating these submissions and was sent photos of various pieces from various South African Guilds from which she selected a few entries, including our banner. The minutes refer to the 'Madeira Competition' or the Madeira Exhibit, but with very little other detail. I contacted Madeira Threads to find out more, but they have no information and sadly no longer hold competitions.

Veronica and Jenny recall how the banner was wrapped securely and posted, through the South African Post Office (I know!) to the UK. It was returned the same way, in the same packaging and arrived back safe and sound. The design represents the thread of gold that runs through South Africa. This can be seen by the golden path that winds its way around the various embroideries. Other references include our mines, our flora and fauna, and our people.

The banner was designed by an artist and member of the Guild, whose name we can't remember. Does anyone recall who she was? Some of the work is appliqued on, other pieces are embroidered directly, there is ribbon work, trapunto, stump work, lots of long and short stitches, many other stitches with some beading and fabric painting. It is assembled and backed beautifully, with such care and dedication.



Jenny and Veronica remember some of the members who worked on the pieces, namely:

- Miners and Guinea Fowl: *Barney Pienaar*
- Dancers and lettering: *Prof Lorna McDougall*
- Hillbrow Tower and city skyline: *Caroline Botha, Shirley Thomas, Sheila Meyerowitz, and others*
- Crested Barbet: *Etto Rademeyer*
- Flag and butterflies: *Myrna Fandam*
- Arums and African Hoepoe: *Rosemary Anderson*
- Aloe leaves, embroidered bull, cooling towers and power station: *Veronica Talbot*
- Aloe flowers, *Wild Dagga plants, sunbird: Jenny Shippey*
- Windmill and giraffe: *Sheila Meyerowitz*



However, there are still several gaps and anyone who has further information is urged to let us know. We plan to print as much information as possible onto fabric and sew this to the back of the banner so that the history can be preserved. Please let us know if you're aware of anything we have recorded incorrectly.

Sheila writes:

Hi Danny, one day there was a buzz at Guild and volunteers were needed to help with a banner for an international competition. I was a newbie still but offered to help.

The piece of cloth I worked on was being embroidered on by Ethel Hunt who did the gorgeous flowers. Namely the euonymus or pineapple plant and the agapanthus.

When she was done, I got a piece of cloth where the windmill and giraffe were allocated to me. I completed them both in my own way. The windmill in ribbons for the metallic shine and the giraffe? Well, I was a bit flummoxed until I thought of canvas! I cut him out of canvas and applique him on with his mane in DMC and his body in Perle 5 and sort of appliqued him onto the cloth. I did his mane and tail etc afterward and blended the two workings together. You'll see his body is in Perle 5 and mane etc in DMC. I also did the 2 turquoise buildings up top.

There was great excitement about the project and one of my favourite parts is Jenny Shippey's crested barbet and foliage.



Penny Cornell sent me an email that was very useful. Here are some of her memories:

I cannot tell you who worked on it I am afraid, but I can tell you that along with other pieces of work from your Guild the hanging was displayed at the MADEIRA SHOW. "Craft Embroidery and Fashion" in 1997...

...Madeira Threads covered the cost of "shipping" all the items to Cape Town where it was professionally packed and crated ready for being air freighted to England...

...I had been to the SHOW the previous year and so knew what to expect and also know what the hanging set up was and as a result I was able to plan the layout beforehand... Everything ... fitted perfectly and looked grand...

...I am sorry not to be able to help you more but if I get a sudden "lightbulb moment" I will certainly contact you. Good luck with your research.



THE ORIGINS OF ST VALENTINE'S DAY

It all goes back to a mysterious, third-century saint who suffered a brutal fate.

St. Valentine of Terni was martyred in around 273 AD. According to legend, the Roman physician and priest was beaten, stoned, and beheaded for the crime of marrying Christian couples. Thanks to the marital angle of his story, Valentine became the patron saint of love, young people, and marriages. Unfortunately, but thankfully little known, he also became the patron saint of plague, epilepsy and beekeepers.

At the end of the 5th century, Pope Gelasius I forbid the celebration of *Lupercalia*, a pagan festival that celebrated the coming of spring, including fertility rites and the pairing off of women with men by lottery. The Pope "replaced" *Lupercalia* in 496 AD when he established February 14th as St Valentine's "feast day".

As time went on, more romantic connotations came to be associated with the Saint. One legend has Valentine befriending (or falling in love with) the blind daughter of a judge (or his jailer?). He supposedly wrote her secret letters signed "from your Valentine" and then restored her sight from beyond the grave.

So, we know how Valentine's Day came to be seen as the most romantic day of the year. However, the truth is, we don't know much about St. Valentine himself. There are 11 "Valentines" commemorated by the Catholic Church, and there were at least 2 other St. Valentines who lived around the same time as St. Valentine of Terni. Because his origins are so obscure, he was removed from the General Roman Calendar by the Roman Catholic Church in 1969 (but he's still technically considered a saint).

As the cult of *Valentine* spread across Europe in the Middle Ages, an even more romantic light was cast on mid-February. Geoffrey Chaucer mentions Valentine's Day and describes February as the time "*when every fowl cometh there to chose his mate*". Formal messages, or valentines, appeared in the 1500s, and by the late 1700s commercially printed cards were being used. The first commercial valentines in the United States were printed in the mid-1800s.

Valentines commonly depict Cupid, the Roman god of love, along with hearts, traditionally the seat of emotion. Because it was thought that the avian mating season begins in mid-February, birds also became a symbol of the day. Traditional gifts include candy and flowers, particularly red roses, a symbol of beauty and love.

But, for those who weren't *lucky* on 14 February, don't feel bad. It couldn't have been worse than getting killed, confused with other people and kicked off the general liturgical calendar — which is what actually happened to the real St. Valentine.



WORKSHOPS

EXTERNAL

When the WEG once again started meeting at the Roosevelt Park Recreation Centre we realised that we have sadly lost some of our older members to COVID and to the infirmities of old age.

So, in order to increase our membership and ensure the continuity of our craft, it was decided to offer workshops for beginners. The first of these was held on 11 February 2023. The aim was to teach a new skill to all ages, bringing together like-minded people to learn and share in what could be a dying art.

Eleven people attended the day-long workshop to make a needle case, embroidered with a heart. Five basic stitches were taught, namely: stem stitch, back stitch, French knots, daisy stitch and chain stitch. The feedback from all attendees was extremely positive and we look forward to holding further workshops soon.

A big thank you to Alice Per and her Team for a tremendous effort.

INTERNAL

Our internal Workshops continue with Jenni Langford starting the Dorset Button class on 11 March 2023. Some of the work can be seen below.



Amina Ebrahim



Amina Ebrahim



Jarika Crous



Lalita Sukha

Ribbon embroidery, felt applique, Goldwork and smocked ornaments are planned for the forthcoming months.



Looking for an embroidery teacher

Heather Lawlor is looking for embroiderers who are interested in teaching at an embroidery/quilting shop in the Edenvale area. If you are interested, please contact her directly at cbt@linknet.co.za or on 082 885 4305.

SALES – (late) MYRNA FANDAM

Thanks to the generosity of the late Myrna Fandam's husband, the WEG has been lucky enough to be gifted with a vast quantity of her embroidery stock. Some of the threads have been allocated to workshops, some of the books to the library, a few items were given to the Lace Guild and the rest will be sold to PAID-UP Guild Members during the course of the next few months.

IGHALI

Updates will be sent to interested members. Those wishing to be kept abreast of developments are welcome to send their email addresses to billingt@nbc.co.za.

Going forward

Sadly, we've had to postpone our plans to hold Ighali in 2023 as, despite a thorough investigation of various venues in and around Johannesburg, we are still struggling to find a suitable location. Some of the considerations are price; wheelchair access; adequate lighting; enough accommodation; suitable breakaway rooms; distance to/from airports; quality of the food; ease of access; and ... price (again!). Johannesburg venues aren't cheap!

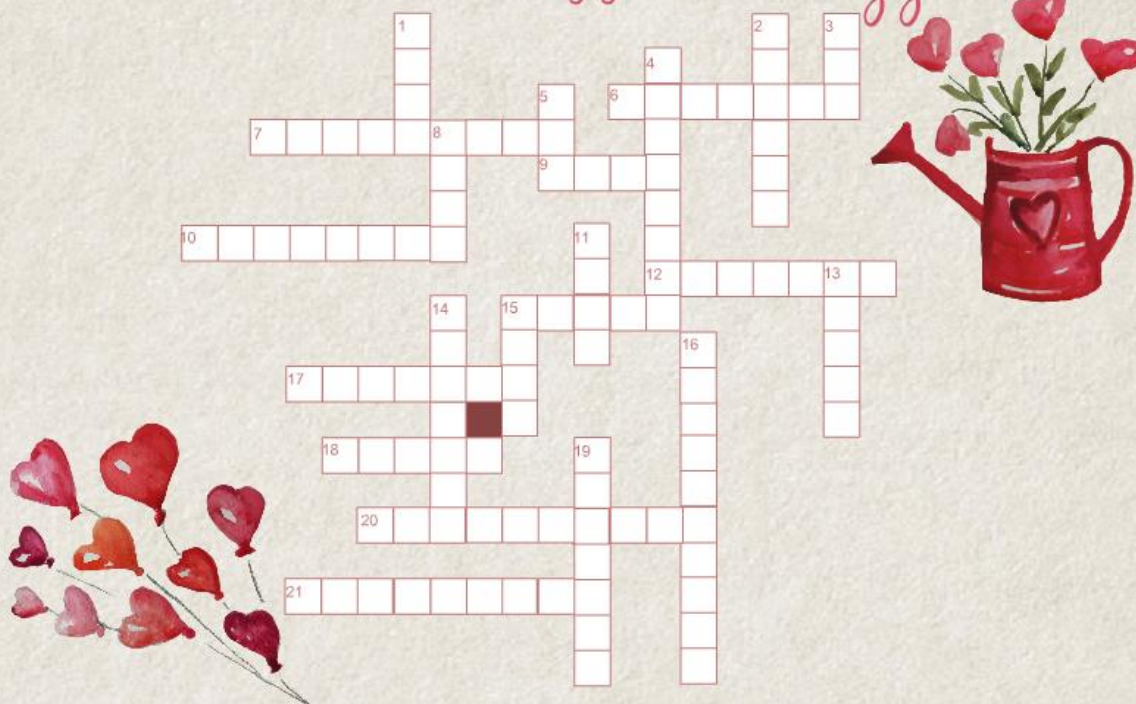
Please feel free to research any venues that you feel may satisfy these considerations and make us aware of them so that we can investigate further.

Fundraising projects are ongoing, and we urge you to take part in the raffles, sales and all our other attempts to fund the seminar. We'll be sure to keep you posted and appreciate any assistance that interested parties are able to give.



FIRE-UP YOUR ROMANTIC BRAIN

Valentine Crossword Puzzle



Down:

1. hugs, and kisses
2. A person with whom one has a bond of mutual affection
3. Squeeze (someone) tightly in one's arms
4. The second month of the year
5. The color of blood
8. An intense feeling of deep affection
11. A piece of paper to send greetings
13. A sweet treat
14. A declaration or assurance that one will do something or that a particular thing will happen
15. A color intermediate between red and white, like coral or salmon
16. unable to think or act normally, especially as a result of being in love
19. another word for gift

Across:

6. An emotional state or reaction
7. A treat made from roasted and ground cacao seeds
9. Regarded with deep affection.
10. A flat paper container with a sealable flap, used to enclose a letter or document.
12. A feeling of excitement and mystery associated with love
15. a social gathering of invited guests
17. Cute and colorful inflated rubber bag
18. the Roman god of Love
20. A person with whom someone is having a romantic relationship
21. A sweetheart chosen or complimented on Valentine's Day



www.MyPartyGames.com

