

### In memoriam: Isobel Lattimore, from Hunts Arts Society

Mary Isobel Lattimore, (always known as Isobel), died peacefully on Christmas Eve 2020, aged 85. Isobel trained first as a nurse, but after marriage she pursued her life-long interest in embroidery as a Liveryman of the Broderers Company. Together with husband Colin, himself a Past Master of the Worshipful Company of Clockmakers, they were deeply involved in the preservation of these ancient organisations and the associated skills within the City of London. Isobel set up a small group of enthusiastic needlewomen from the locality, most but not all from Huntingdon NADFAS society. Together they worked on a number of church vestments, refining and developing their skills from Isobel's conservatory which was converted to a workroom each week.

In 2012 they were commissioned to repair and develop the Altar Frontal for Ely Cathedral. This required first the removal of the applied lettering from its base, a beautiful but worn apricot silk, together with several hundreds of seed pearls. The new silk was specially woven to match the original and each letter and pearl re-attached with scrupulous care. The lettering was secured by couching down red silk threads around the felt shapes and gold thread to outline each shape. On September 21st, 2013, the Bishop of Ely blessed the newly restored altar frontal in Ely Cathedral at a Festal Eucharist attended by the group of embroiderers who had done the work, led by our then president, Isobel Lattimore.



Isobel's meticulous care and detailed work on the Festive Frontal for Ely Cathedral resulted in admission to the Royal College of Needlework and an invitation to join the group of needlewomen who worked on the St Paul's Cathedral vestments. The workroom was high in the building, near the belfry, from where they had a distant view of the nave (see (i) below).



(i) High above nave



(ii) Vestment repair



(iii) Cope decoration

In November 2016 Isobel helped to arrange a visit for Arts Society members to St Paul's to see the vestments under current restoration, and some spectacular new vestments for the recently appointed Bishop of Durham. The work was exquisite and amazed all who had the good fortune to see it (see (ii) and (iii) above).

It is sad that Isobel's death has resulted in closure of the Embroidery group. A plan has been proposed to offer a prize for sixth form entrants working in design and development of textiles in the name of Isobel Lattimore. It is hoped that this might stimulate increased interest in this craft. If you might be interested in supporting this proposal by donation in Isobel's memory, please contact any member of the committee.

We extend sincere condolences to Isobel's family. She will be much missed by the Arts Society.

Jill Donnelly