

CETG ARCHIVE

Meeting Report

10th April 2017

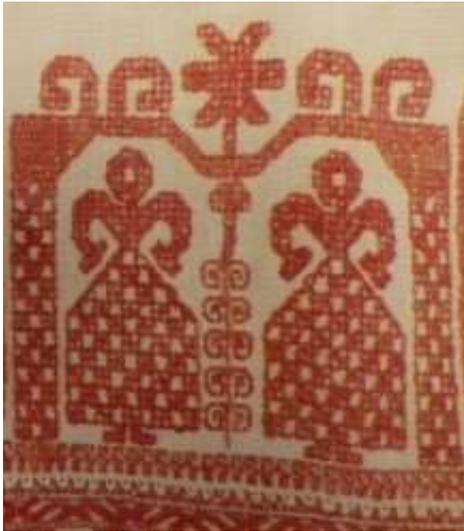
Speaker: Pamela Smith

Talk: Feathers of the Firebird – Textiles from Russia

[Pamela Smith](#) spoke to us about her lifelong fascination with the art and textiles of European Russia. As a child she was enchanted by the works of the illustrator [Ivan Bilibin](#) which appeared in many books of Russian fairy tales. The title of the talk "Feathers of the Firebird" is taken from one of the most famous folk stories in which the beleaguered heroine is transformed into a magnificent magical bird. In 1987 Pamela and her husband, both working for the British Council, were posted to Moscow, at the same time as she was completing the first year of her City & Guilds at Windsor. Her life's work was decided.

Pamela gave us a tour of Russian textiles, beginning with the humble red on white towels of the peasantry used for clothing, household linen and religious ceremony. Much was worked in counted and pulled work (though not cross stitch) with traditional designs including the double headed eagle and female figures, with clothing varying by social position and geographic region. She then spoke about the French-inspired court dress introduced in the 1700s by Peter the Great, followed by the utilitarian clothing and propagandist textiles of the communist Revolution. She also touched on present day Russian textiles where there is a revival of interest in more decorative forms of the past and a real passion for patchwork quilting.





The April "Have a go" session will be at Jackie Connors' house on 20th April where Terry will discuss the principles of paper patchwork piecing. Janet Edmonds' workshop on "Van Gogh as Inspiration for Texture and Colour" was a great success and a full report can be read [here](#). The next workshop will be on 10th June when Heather Cawthorn will demonstrate Nuno felting.

Details of the Embroiderers' Guild appeal for its relocated archive at Aylesbury had not been circulated to members via email, therefore the discussion on whether CETG might make a donation from funds will be postponed to the May meeting.

Several members had brought in samplers. Mary Gamester showed two Art Nouveau style works, dated 1909, which she had inherited from family friends, bearing the saying: "There's nothing neare (sic) at hand nor farthest sought, but with the needle may be shap'd and wrought". Heather

Cawthorn's junk shop find was a sampler worked by Maria Barnett in 1878 when she was aged 10 years and 11 months (those extra months are so important!). She stitched it in India where her father was stationed in the British army of the Raj, near Mount Simla.

Following on from the March talk by Carol Waddle, a number of members have expressed interest in using the annual outing to carry out a similar design project. Terry suggested we might visit the current stumpwork exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum so that those who wished to do a design project could find inspiration there and visit independently later, while others could simply enjoy the exhibition. Terry also mentioned that there are some places on John Allen's current design course, for anyone interested. Other exhibitions mentioned were the "Game of Thrones" display at Aylesbury Museum and one at the American Museum in Bath on bargello work by Joyce Petschek. Details of these are available on the [Events](#) page.

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