

Pilgrim Stitchers 2012

For our traditional opening night at Loch Fyne, Winchester, we were so pleased to have Alison Carter and several of her family members join us. Alison had made many of our earlier Pilgrim adventures so much more fascinating, with her knowledge and insight into textiles and costume. During the evening our organiser Sue Blomley (www.pilgrimstitchers.org) proudly unveiled her recreation of a sampler stitched by Eliza Vowles in 1843 which belongs to Alison's family and which we were told would be our main project for 2013!

Our first full day followed on from the main theme of last year, Jane Austen, as we travelled to Chawton House Library (www.chawtonhouse.org). Amongst the House's many owners was Jane's brother Edward who became the heir of the childless Knight family and inherited the estate in 1809. The estate remained in the Knight family until the 1990s when it was acquired on long lease by the newly formed registered charity, Chawton House Library. The Library opened to the public in 2003 and is now known as the home of early English women's writing c. 1600–1830. We were treated to such a special day. After a detailed tour of the public rooms, we were able to take a closer look at some of the Library's collection before listening to a fascinating talk by Alison on Regency Reticules, Bags and Purses. After lunch we were introduced to the first of Sue's projects for this year, Cassandra's Reticule and Smalls. The reticule is made from gold and green striped silk and we were talked through its construction. We each then had the challenge of making a twisted cord and tassel for our own reticule, much fun had by all! The day rounded off with a delicious afternoon tea, all home-made, as were most of the day's refreshments. Only a light supper was needed that evening!

Day two took us back to our regular home for these occasions, Chilcomb House, the home of Hampshire county's textile archive (www3.hants.gov.uk/dress-and-textiles.htm). After making a start on Cassandra's smalls, a thimble case, scissor fob, needle case and pincushion, we were delighted to have John and Carol from Pearsall's Embroidery (www.pearsallsembroidery.com) back with us. John handed over the reins to Carol this year, and she captivated us with her experiences as a Registrar, highlighting many of the highs and lows that came with the role.

For our final day we returned again to Chilcomb House and were introduced to Sue's second project for this year, The Sisters' Samplers. These were two samplers from the county's collection, stitched by sisters Eliza and Mary Plummer, daughters of John and Mary Plummer, in 1826. Although at first glance they looked very similar, on closer inspection significant differences were found. Such bright silks were used and they had retained their colours well. Sue had recreated these using Pearsall's filoselle silk on 28ct linen and we studied the charts closely before threading our needles. As always with Chilcomb House we were so privileged to study up close many fine examples of needlework from their collection and we encouraged Sue to plan projects for both 2014 and 2015!

The dates for 2013 are September 10th—13th and along with Alison's family sampler we will be working on another of Sue's wonderful creations, Portsmouth Borders, a sampler of borders we all fell in love with during our visit to Portsmouth's City Museum in 2011.

Huge thanks as always go to Sue and husband David for making this event so special and here's to September 2013!