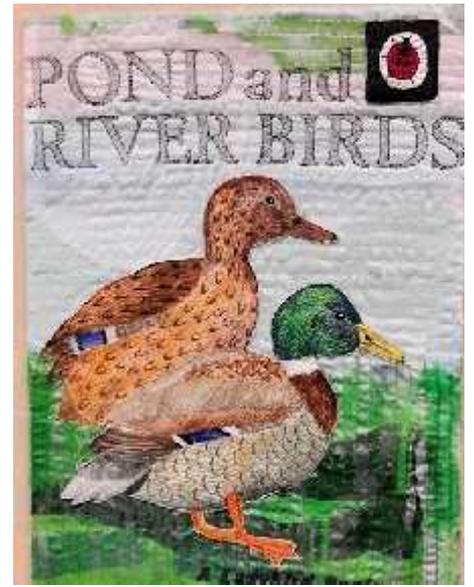


# Exhibitions

## Knitting & Stitching Show, Alexandra Palace, London, October 11–15

With no apology whatsoever, I am going to give the entire feature over to the Knitting & Stitching Show's textile gallery. This year's selection of artists, and the work they have produced, has resulted in one of the best shows we have seen for a long time.

The brief from the Embroiderers' Guild for their 'Page 17' exhibition was to use any technique that you liked to create a piece of artwork based on your favourite book. I really have to begin with Sarah Rickard's *Pond and River Birds* taken from the Ladybird book of same name. Fiona would never forgive me if I left that one out. It's a tricky thing to do, creating a replica of a printed page – conveying the atmosphere and nostalgia of the book in completely different media – while creating a pleasing textile work. This artist gives us an abject lesson on how to achieve it.



Amanda Wright produced a lovely piece entitled *Hope* and her inspiration was a book by Simon Armstrong, *The Poetry of Birds*. Having seen the piece, I am determined to order the book. *Hope* was machine embroidered, using two-ply knitting wool, in a masterly fashion. I particularly liked the subtle way the quotation was embroidered in the background, not jumping out at you but subservient to the main image.

If I really try, I can just about sneak in Su Allington's *Troilus and Cressida* (that bard fellow). See below. The humour in this work came across so strongly with Troilus doing a runner from crafty Cressida. The hand stitching was just the right technique for this clever piece.



Just when you thought that Bobby Britnell had explored every avenue possible with bark cloth, she comes up with something quite breathtaking, this time in a brilliant partnership with fashion designer, Jose Hendo. The exhibition, *BARKCLOTH Reinvented*, was a combination of Bobby's textiles and some of the most amazing garments I have ever seen. I think they really should be viewed as sculpture as they were monumental in every sense. I may have to revisit the show at one of the later venues, just to see this again. You may think that I was just getting myself into the act in the pic below left. Actually, I was talking these two artists into agreeing to be featured on our shiny new WOWbook website in December.



I was also very taken with Hilary Hollingworth's stand. Her work was based on the trial of three witches in Lancashire – the title *The Stones Cry Out* echoes the words of the judge at the trial of the witches.

Hilary has been a great favourite with her explorations of pattern darning and has taken this traditional technique along new and intriguing byways. We have one of Hilary's workshops on the Taster page and she will certainly be coming with us with new ideas in future issues.

She was telling us that pattern darning is becoming popular in schools as it is portable, satisfying, requires little equipment and looks great when all samples are mounted together as a project.

Jo Beattie had an intriguing exhibition was called *Precious Memories* and centred on people – all kinds of people, all drawn using the sewing machine and dark threads to produce ethereal ghost-like characters, perfectly suited to here theme.

It encapsulated that memory of a place or person that you can't quite bring to mind, which hovers at the edge of recollection and refuses to reveal themselves in full, all-colour detail. The use of reflective materials embraces this theme but makes it very difficult to photograph.

The photograph shown on the right certainly resembles my memory as I run through a cast of thousands trying to recall a particular face. I do love clever textiles.



Diane Bates' work just continues to amaze us all and she was telling me that she has moved into a bigger house where she hopes to be able to display her work for visiting groups.

She has also retrieved all her pieces from storage which is great for us as I think I have persuaded her to be our Celebrity Interview for the June issue of WOWbook. That will make a most amazing article.

One of the busiest galleries showed the work of Haf Weighton. I must confess that I hadn't come across Haf before but I feel sure that we will be working together soon, as I love the way she handles landscape. Her textiles contain a lot of stitch and I am sure that a lot of planning goes into these pieces which have the charm of a quickly drawn sketch.



The pieces are painted and printed before being stitched, usually by machine. Her love of landscape and the manner in which she captures an atmospheric aspect of the scene come through strongly in the work.

The subject matter divides between London, where Haf used to live, and her current location in Penarth, on the shore of the Bristol Channel in England's south-west. Her fairly recent move and the new source of inspiration provide a great contrast and freshness in her work. We will be seeing lots more of Haf – I am sure of that.

If you can get to one of the later venues of the K&S, I can really recommend it. Maggie Grey.

