



Latin Mass Society

&

Guild of St Clare:

Sponsorship for

the Royal School of Needlework Certificate Course



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The Royal School of Needlework Certificate Course

The Royal School of Needlework (RSN) was established in 1872 to revive, employ, and pass on historic hand embroidery and related skills. As well as conservation work for museums, they make and repair liturgical items for major churches and undertake commissions from the Royal Family. The RSN represents the gold standard both in terms of the authenticity of historic techniques, and the high level of skills successful completion of its courses implies.

The RSN's headquarters are in part of Hampton Court Palace on the outskirts of London, but they also have centres in Bristol, Rugby, Durham, Glasgow, and overseas, where students can receive tuition.

The Certificate course at the RSN comprises four modules, each of which is a project using a particular technique. Each module is expected to require attendance at one of RSN's centres for eight days, for advice and tuition, plus work at home. The Course is extremely flexible, as the days of tuition can be booked whenever the student likes (outside the RSN's own holiday periods): consecutively, weekly, monthly, or around other commitments. The whole course must, however, be completed within four years.

Each module must be completed to a high standard for the student to progress.

The cost is currently just over £1,000 per module (£135 for each tuition day). This comes to more than £4,320 for the whole course, to which the cost of materials and travel must be added. This is where the Guild of St Clare sponsorship comes in.

The Guild of St Clare

The Guild of St Clare was founded in Oxford in 2009. Its purpose is to repair and make the liturgical vestments necessary for the celebration of the traditional liturgy of the Catholic Church, to pass on the skills necessary for this, and to promote domestic sewing.

The Guild today runs two 'Sewing Retreats' each year, where liturgical sewing is combined with spiritual talks and liturgy, one in the spring and one in the autumn. The next will take place at Douai Abbey in early November 2019.

The Guild is affiliated with the Latin Mass Society, which was founded in 1965 to promote traditional Catholic liturgy. The Latin Mass Society is a registered charity.

The Guild's spiritual patron is St Clare of Assisi, who, like many female religious over the centuries, made liturgical vestments.

The Guild blog can be seen [here](#); the Latin Mass Society website is [here](#).

More about the Sponsorship Scheme

Sponsored students will be able to reclaim half the cost of their tuition days, up to a maximum of £2,000 a year (September 1st to September 1st), subject to satisfactory progress in the Certificate course, and their attendance at least one of the Guild's two annual Sewing Retreats.

Students at the RSN have to pay for tuition days when they book them; they would be reimbursed at that point. Progress will be monitored by reference to the successful completion of each module, and the reports which are provided by RSN tutors on each piece of work.

We are asking that sponsored students take part (for free) in at least one of the Guild's two annual Sewing Retreats, to offer support and advice to other attendees on the work being done. It is to be hoped that their involvement would extend further and continue after the Certificate is gained, although this is not a condition of the scheme.

We hope to be able to sponsor in this way a new student to start the Certificate Course each year.

Who can apply?

Anyone who is able to do the RSN Certificate Course, shares the Guild's passion for hand embroidery and the restoration of fine vestments, and is happy to join us at some of our events noted above.

Why we are offering this sponsorship

One of the things essential to the success of the Guild of St Clare has been the expertise of key members, gained above all from the Royal School of Needlework through their Certificate Course and the more advanced Diploma Course.

Vestments are traditionally constructed and embellished using techniques quite distinct from those of dress-making. Cheap vestments which do not use traditional techniques never hang

right, and a serious knowledge of embroidery techniques is absolutely necessary before repairs to embroidery can be attempted.

The Guild of St Clare exists to bridge the gap between expensive museum-quality work for museum-quality items, and bodged repairs on vestments which, while not of museum quality, are well worth preserving for continued liturgical use.

This work is best undertaken by, or at least planned and supervised by, graduates of the RSN, committed to the Guild's work.

The object of this scheme is to increase the supply of these graduates.

How to apply

It is recommended that those considering applying attend an Open Day at the RSN if they are not already familiar with it. One-day or other short courses offered by the RSN also offer a good insight into what the RSN can teach, its standards, and its facilities.

Written applications should be made by 15th June to lucyashaw@gmail.com

There is no form to fill in, but your application should include the following information:

- Name and address
- Previous experience / training if any
- A short paragraph (200 words) on your interest in the course, your plans, and your creative background
- Details of a character reference if possible.

We hope to interview shortlisted candidates, in London, in the last week of June.

The successful candidate will need to make his or her own application to the Royal School of Needlework for admission to the Certificate Course.

This information was compiled by Joseph Shaw

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