

STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 2200HRS, FRIDAY 28th APRIL 2023



ROYAL COMMUNICATIONS

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**THE CORONATION ANOINTING SCREEN IS BLESSED AT THE CHAPEL ROYAL AHEAD OF THE
CORONATION SERVICE**

The Anointing Screen which has been designed and produced for use during the Coronation Service on 6th May at Westminster Abbey has been blessed at a special service of dedication at the Chapel Royal, St James's Palace.

The blessing follows a private visit by Their Majesties The King and The Queen Consort to the Royal School of Needlework to view the Anointing Screen's progress, and to meet the craftspeople and embroiderers who contributed to the project. As Duchess of Cornwall, Her Majesty The Queen Consort became Patron of the Royal School of Needlework in 2017.

The Anointing Screen

The Anointing Screen has been designed and produced for use at the most sacred moment of the Coronation, the Anointing of His Majesty The King. The screen combines traditional and contemporary sustainable embroidery practices to produce a design which speaks to His Majesty The King's deep affection for the Commonwealth. The screen has been gifted for the occasion by the City of London Corporation and City Livery Companies.

The Anointing takes place before the investiture and crowning of His Majesty. The Dean of Westminster pours holy oil from the Ampulla into the Coronation Spoon, and the Archbishop of Canterbury anoints the Sovereign on the hands, chest and head. It has historically been regarded as a moment between the Sovereign and God, with a screen or canopy in place given the sanctity of the Anointing.

The Anointing Screen was designed by iconographer Aidan Hart and brought to life through both hand and digital embroidery, managed by the Royal School of Needlework. The central design takes the form of a tree which includes 56 representing the 56 member countries of the Commonwealth. The King's cypher is positioned at the base of the tree, representing the Sovereign as servant of their people. The design has been selected personally by The King and is inspired by the stained-glass Sanctuary Window in the Chapel Royal at St James's Palace, which was gifted by the Livery Companies to mark the Golden Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II in 2002.

The Anointing Screen is supported by a wooden pole framework, designed and created by Nick Gutfreund of the Worshipful Company of Carpenters. The oak wooden poles are made from a windblown tree from the Windsor Estate, which was originally planted by The Duke of

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Northumberland in 1765. The wooden poles have been limed and waxed, combining traditional craft skills with a contemporary finish.

At the top of the wooden poles are mounted two eagles, cast in bronze and gilded in gold leaf, giving the screens a total height of 2.6 metres and width of 2.2 metres. The form of an eagle has longstanding associations with Coronations. Eagles have appeared on previous Coronation Canopies, including the canopy used by Queen Elizabeth II in 1953. Equally, the Ampulla, which carries the Chrism oil used for anointing, is cast in the shape of an eagle.

The screen is three-sided, with the open side to face the High Altar in Westminster Abbey. The two sides of the screen feature a much simpler design with maroon fabric and a gold, blue and red cross inspired by the colours and patterning of the Cosmati Pavement at Westminster Abbey where the Anointing will take place. The crosses were also embroidered by the Royal School of Needlework's studio team.

At the Coronation Service, the Anointing Screen will be held by service personnel from Regiments of the Household Division holding the Freedom of the City of London. The three sides of the screen will be borne by a Trooper and Guardsman from each of The Life Guards, Grenadier Guards, Coldstream Guards, Scots Guards, Irish Guards, and Welsh Guards.

Design process

The screen has been gifted for the Coronation by the City of London Corporation and participating Livery Companies, the City's ancient and modern trade guilds. His Majesty The King is a keen advocate and supporter of the preservation of heritage craft skills, and the Anointing Screen project has been a collaboration of these specialists in traditional crafts, from those early in their careers to artisans with many years of experience.

The individual leaves have been embroidered by staff and students from the Royal School of Needlework, as well as members of the Worshipful Company of Broderers, Drapers and Weavers.

As well as heritage craft, contemporary skills and techniques have formed part of this unique collaboration. The outline of the tree has been created using digital machine embroidery by Digitek Embroidery. This machine embroidery was completed with sustainable thread, Madeira Sensa, made from 100% lyocell fibres.

The threads used by the Royal School of Needlework are from their famous 'Wall of Wool' and existing supplies that have been collated over the years through past projects and donations. The materials used to create the Anointing Screen have also been sourced sustainably from across the UK and other Commonwealth nations. The cloth is made of wool from Australia and New Zealand, woven and finished in UK mills.

The script used for the names of each Commonwealth country has been designed as modern and classical, inspired by both the Roman Trojan column letters and the work of Welsh calligrapher David Jones.

Also forming part of the Commonwealth tree are The King's Cypher, decorative roses, angels and a scroll, which features the quote from Julian of Norwich (c. 1343-1416): *'All shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well'*. This design has again been inspired by the Sanctuary Window in the Chapel Royal, St James's Palace, created for Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee in 2002. At the top

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of the screen is the sun, representing God, and birds including the dove of peace, which have all been hand embroidered by the Royal School of Needlework.

The dedication and blessing of the Anointing Screen took place earlier this week at the Chapel Royal, St James's Palace, where it was officially received and blessed by the Sub-Dean and Domestic Chaplain to The King, Paul Wright, on behalf of The Royal Household.

Regarding the gift of the Anointing Screen, Lord Mayor of the City of London Nicholas Lyons said: "While many things have changed since the last Coronation, one thing that remains the same is the City's unstinting loyalty to and support for the Monarchy. The City Corporation and Livery Companies are proud to contribute to the most sacred part of the Coronation ceremony."

James Gaselee from The Weavers' Company said: "The Livery Movement is honoured to be able to provide the screens which will be visible to millions around the world at a key moment in the Coronation ceremony. Livery Companies have a long association with and support for the Crown, and this project is a collaborative effort involving many of the liveries and talented craftspeople. Another important aspect for The Weavers' Company is that the screen helps to demonstrate that the UK Textile Manufacturing Industry is alive, well and thriving."

Nick Gutfreund, Project Lead and Cabinet Maker, said: "It's been a privilege and a pleasure to be asked to lead this unique project and help bring such amazing talent together to create this special piece. I'm so pleased we were able to use sustainable materials at the heart of the screen, including using a windblown tree from the Windsor Estate for the wooden frame."

Aidan Hart, Designer and Iconographer, said: "It has been a huge honour for me to design this screen and to work with consummate craftspeople. The inspiration of the Chapel Royal stained-glass window was personally requested by His Majesty The King. Each and every element of the design has been specifically chosen to symbolise aspects of this historic coronation and the Commonwealth, from the birds that symbolise the joy and interaction among members of a community living in harmony, to the rejoicing angels and the dove that represents the Holy Spirit."

Anne Butcher, Head of Studio and Standards at the Royal School of Needlework, said: "It has been a wonderful collaborative project to be involved with, and an exciting celebration of craft techniques. The leaves were a particular pleasure as they were worked on by multiple embroiderers. To help the leaves stand out, we placed them over padding to give them an extra lift from the branches, stitched the names of the countries with gold thread, and then used a dark blue and further gold thread for the edging."

ENDS.

Notes to Editors

Please note that photographs and footage are available of both the Anointing Screen at the Chapel Royal, St James's Palace, and The King and The Queen Consort's private visit to the Royal School of Needlework to see the screen embroidery in progress.

B-Roll of the Anointing Screen being embroidered is also available via the Royal Rota system.

Background on the Anointing in the Coronation Service

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The tradition of Anointing dates back to the Old Testament which describes the anointing of Solomon by Zadok the Priest and Nathan the Prophet. Anointing was one of the medieval holy sacraments and it emphasised the spiritual status of the Sovereign.

Contributors to the Anointing Screens project:

The City of London Corporation is the governing body of the Square Mile dedicated to a vibrant and thriving City, supporting a diverse and sustainable London within a globally successful UK. Its charity funder, City Bridge Trust, awards grants of over £30 million a year to tackle disadvantage across the capital and has also made an extra £200 million available over five years from 2021 to 2026 to support London's charity sector: www.cityoflondon.gov.uk.

The 116 City of London Livery Companies focus their efforts on supporting UK industry as a whole, the specific trades they represent, and local communities. This includes nurturing and training in their ancient crafts and modern industries. The movement also plays a large role in the field of education supporting a total of 395 schools, academies, colleges and other education establishments, and donating over £70 million to charities each year.

The Royal School of Needlework (RSN) is the international centre of excellence for the art of hand embroidery. It offers a range of courses around the world for beginners through to advanced. Founded in 1872, the RSN is renowned for its work for Coronations throughout its history, including the mantle of King Edward VII; the altar dorsal for King George V and Queen Mary; and the Robes of Estate for the Consort of King George VI, Queen Elizabeth (later known as the Queen Mother) in 1937 and Queen Elizabeth II in 1953.

Nick Gutfreund is a designer and maker of bespoke fine furniture. His focus is on creating designs and pieces that are inextricably linked to both the people who commission them and the environment within which they will live. Some notable pieces that Nick has designed and made include the Captain's Table for both HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales

Aidan Hart, British designer and iconographer, raised in New Zealand, has been a full-time liturgical artist for over forty years. Notable commissions are with the Ecumenical Patriarch, the Pope, numerous cathedrals, and His Majesty The King. Aidan's aim is to create works and church interiors that reflect something of the beauty of life in Christ, and help people experience that union of heaven and earth which is the ultimate purpose of church art.

Pete Tarrant is the owner and designer of Digitek Embroidery, based in London, working with local and global embroiderers and producing customised artwork through machine embroidery.

UK textile industry involvement. The main fabric, from Australia and New Zealand, is wool and was woven spun and dyed by AW Hainsworth in Leeds. The applique wool fabrics were spun by Camira Fabrics Ltd (Huddersfield) and R Gledhill Ltd (Delph); woven at Camira Fabrics Ltd (Huddersfield) and John Spencer Textiles Ltd (Burnley) for Ian Mankin Ltd (Burnley); and finished at Camira Fabrics Ltd (Huddersfield) and WT Johnson & Sons Ltd (Huddersfield). The linen applique fabric was woven at John Spencer Textiles Ltd (Burnley) and finished at H&C Whitehead Ltd (Brighouse).

For further information, please contact:

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