

SOUTHWELL MINSTER High Altar Kneelers

The present kneelers were installed at Evensong on 16th June 2012

These were presented to the Minster by the Friends of the Cathedral Embroidery Group having been designed and produced by the members of the group. The design was conceived by Hilary Tinley and is based on pattern and colour found in three compatible sources, the tiled high altar floor of the Minster itself, part of the tiled floor of 'St Mark' in Venice and a book of mosaic designs by Helen Fairfield.

Hilary has very sensitively incorporated aspects of all three stimuli into the final working design and the result is a coherent expression of all three into a new piece of work which is aesthetically very exciting. Together the kneelers create an echo of the altar floor of the Minster, against which they sit, which is very satisfying.

The selection of colour used in the embroidery comes from 5 basic colours which, in combination, provide 26 different shades all of which relate back to the original stimuli. The overall effect is muted yet strong.

The working and completing, of a geometric pattern in a number of shades of wool demands skilful needlework from a number of individual embroiderers working separately, but simultaneously. The original design was conceived in such a way that it allowed for natural variation by incorporating 'grouting' between sections of the pattern also the natural shading of colours. This served to make the result even more authentic. As in all good art, the eye compensates for variation and the result is very pleasing.

Care has also been taken with the design not only of the kneeling surfaces, but also with the side and end sections of each kneeler. Both side sections of each kneeler, incorporate quotations from the Psalms. Each side is different, in that one side depicts 'cheerful' aspects while the other offers 'more sombre messages'. Depending on the season and calendar, the appropriate side will be displayed. The end sections of each kneeler appropriately feature the well-known 'Minster Leaves'. Incorporated into each end, in among the leaves, in a very discreet way, are all the names of those whose dedicated work has contributed to the making of the kneelers.

From the Guild Monthly Meeting – 8th September 2012