

Exeter Cathedral needle workers have swapped vestments for NHS scrubs in response to the coronavirus pandemic.



The response was initiated by Sally Hulin, of the Company of Tapisers: volunteers started stitching the scrubs two weeks ago and have now completed 10 sets of scrubs, with another 14 already in progress.

Since starting the NHS scrubs production line, Ms Hulin has been delighted with the many offers of help, but says the biggest challenge right now is finding suitable materials: “It has been really nice to receive such an enthusiastic response from fellow needle workers, all willing to step in and help meet this urgent need. However, our biggest struggle at the moment is sourcing suitable fabric.”

The Company of Tapisers began in 1933 and its members have been stitching for Exeter Cathedral ever since, making vestments, kneelers, banners, cushions, and even rugs and ropes.

Today, the Company of Tapisers at Exeter Cathedral comprises three groups: the *Textile Group* (they make the vestments) the *Canvas Group* (they make the tapestry kneelers and cushions) and the *Whitework Group* (they embroider the white altar linen).

None of its members have had careers in dress-making, fashion or embroidery, but driven by sheer enthusiasm, love of the Cathedral and needlework “they form a guild as in medieval times: where members worked anonymously “for the glory of God” and not for personal gain.



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