

The Tapestries 20 years on – 21 May 2006

- Ae Do you remember, Ann, doing the tapestries? It doesn't seem like 20 years.
- A There are only three of us left – you, me and Edith Entwistle How did we come to do the tapestries do you remember?
- Ae No Someone had a brainwave and we just set off!
- A I think that was Eileen Jackson, a very fine needlewoman and she got in touch with Anne Stanley, the designer and then the hard work began and we went back to school to learn the stitches Do you ever examine the tapestries and see all the stitches
- Ae There are 2 million stitches. It was reported in the Times that a group in the south had just completed a tapestry with a million stitches which had taken them 3 years and we did ours from start to dedication in 18 months.
- A Well, Anne, that's southerners for you! I remember us meeting fortnightly in different houses. There were 10 of us Now let's see who were they – there was Alice Crook, Ella Abbott, Lucy Crone and us three that makes six. Who were the other four? Annie Armstrong, Eileen Jackson, Bessie Stephenson and Elizabeth Lund. We had a tapestry for a fortnight and then had two weeks off.
- Ae Yes, but Ann just like homework the day before the handover you realised that you had not done a stitch and stayed up half the night embroidering! If we got into difficulties we helped each other
- A Let's look at the tapestries and see what we remember
- Ae Oh the sea that was hard I never knew what sea-sickness was until I embroidered that!

- A The nets were difficult to do. Looking at them now I think the Fishermen were the hardest. Yet at the time I thought that we would have most problems with the History of the Church and it was the one that nobody wanted to do. I started it off by doing one square and it is the only tapestry that you can remember what you did. This is not odd because the tapestries were a joint effort so that no one person could claim a tapestry as her own.
- Ae I liked doing the town and your deliberate mistake was chopping off the Wiseman's feet.
- A He's still too tall but it's a secret don't tell anybody.
- Ae Do you have favourite?
- A I do. It's the children
- Ae You would be a head teacher. I like the dog!
- A I remember the difficulty we had with the Risen Christ.
- Ae I remember the difficulty I had with it too! I took it away with me for Christmas and I embroidered the halo upside down and it all had to be taken back. I was in disgrace!
- A But the real difficulty with the Risen Christ was that Anne Stanley kept appearing with a sketch of the Crucifixion and we told her that we wanted the Risen Christ. This happened at least three times; it was a real battle of wills but at last she drew what we wanted.

Both And here it is the fifth tapestry the Risen Christ

Dialogue between Anne Humphreys (Ae)
and Ann Wicks (A)