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Embroiderers to HM The Queen.

Lock embroidered the train for Princess Anne's wedding dress. The nine foot net took 200 hours to embroider. The approved design was first sewn in white silk and silver thread then mirror jewels and pearls were applied. In order to preserve the secrecy, Lock 'invented' a Greek bride who was being married in Athens in early November. One of the girls working on the train was heard to remark 'What a pity it isn't for Princess Ann'.

The same secrecy was used by 'Miss Peggy', one of Lock's directors, who was 'on holiday' when she sewed the 14-foot long wedding veil for The Princess of Wales with what she describes as a 'Milky Way' effect using over 10,000 sequins. Miss Peggy was actually working at home in her sitting room.



Lock work for 'big fashion houses', Hardy Amies, Hartnell and Murry Arbeid. 'I suppose they know,' said Mr Lock, with a modest cough, 'that we're the best'. Their work has been worn by Cilla Black, Petula Clark, Eartha Kitt and Barbara Cartland as well as by the Royal Family. Lock received their Royal Warrant from The Queen in 1972.

The Hardy Amies poppy dress that The Queen wore in 1983 to the 20th Century Fox Studios in Los Angeles was embroidered by Lock, as was The Queen Mother's 80th-birthday gown which was covered with orchids sewn in gold and silver thread, studded with diamonds and picked out with clusters of fine pearls. The full-length dress with its crossover neck and three-quarter-length scalloped sleeves was designed by Hartnell. Another Royal commission was new sleeves for a cerise dress which The Queen had decided to bring up to date. The sleeves were snaking columns of intertwining red sequins, edged with gold thread.



Lock's 20 embroiderers work on the fourth floor of Rathbone Place warehouse. They either embroider by machine or sequin by hand on their tambour frames, following complicated coded patterns drawn on the reverse side of the fabric. Pearls, diamonds, beads or large sequins are then sewn on by hand from the front to create a three-dimensional effect. To make a bodice of a dress could take 10 hours and it takes at least two years to train as a beader. Their collection of sequins, beads and pearls, dates back to the 1920s. And they still tint sequins to match any colour. Lock work for private customers too; a beaded collar starts from £50.

Monday-Friday: 9-5. Lock have samples of every style and design of embroidery they have ever worked which they can repeat, or they can work out a specific design for your requirements.