



## The Beadworkers Guild Annual Challenge

The Beadworkers Guild's Annual Challenge is designed to encourage members to stretch themselves creatively. Each year there is a different theme to inspire you. Individual members submit their work in one of four categories based primarily on their experience in the craft. Groups of beaders may also submit work on the same theme.

The submitted beadwork is assessed by a panel of judges which gives an award to the best in each of the categories, including the groups. There are also two 'Members' Choice' awards, in which members attending the Guild's main event in May vote for their favourite of the individual and group entries.

Prizes are given to the successful members (see below) and so the Challenge is, without a doubt, a competition. However, we urge members to concentrate on the personal challenge - to be as good as they can, rather than pitting themselves against others.

We understand that entering the Challenge can be daunting, particularly if you are doing so for the first time. So, we offer a mentoring scheme in which we put members in touch with an experienced beader who can advise them. A mentor can act as a sounding board for ideas and problems but will not give direct instructions on the beading itself. For example, if you are finding it difficult to decide what to represent and how to make it, your mentor would encourage you to explore the brief and what it means to you. Once you have decided what theme you are going to work on, your mentor would encourage you to consider the stitches you are familiar with and perhaps to experiment with those you are not so comfortable with to see what can be achieved.

If you would like to be put in contact with a mentor, please contact Elaine Wood  
Email: [challengeadmin@beadworkersguild.com](mailto:challengeadmin@beadworkersguild.com) or Tel: +44 7778 666 615

### Prizes

Individual winners will receive cash prizes to the value of:

- Challenge in a Matchbox £15
- First time entries – open to all - runner up £20, winner £30
- Experienced/professional £50
- Previous Winners £50

The Group winner will be awarded a trophy (UK only) to display for a year. They will also be featured in an article in the Journal and recorded in the 'Honours book'. Overseas groups are welcome to take part but sadly are not eligible to receive the trophy due to cost and risk of damage.

Founder's Award £50 + certificate (Group Entries are excluded from this award)

The individual entry which the Judges select for the quality and imaginative use of beading stitches to enhance the design of the piece. The winner of the Award will be presented with a glass trophy (UK only), sponsored by the Guilds founder Jill Devon, which will be retained by them for a year. Winners of the award will also be recorded in an 'Honours book'.

**Members' Choice** awards, voted for by members attending the AGM.

- Individual - £30
- Group entry - £30

All winning entries will be retained by the Beadworkers Guild for twelve months to promote beadwork around the UK and will be viewed by many hundreds of people.



## The Challenge Rules

Any competition needs rules and here are ours - please read them carefully.

We cannot make any allowances for members who do not abide by the rules laid out by the Guild and to be fair to all, if you don't follow the rules, your entries will be disqualified.

If you have any queries or would like to be put in contact with a mentor, please contact Elaine Wood.

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### Entry categories

Entrants must opt to enter the category which they feel most applies to them and The Beadworkers Guild reserves the right to challenge the member's declaration of status on the entry form.

Anybody taking part in the individual Challenge categories must be a member of the Beadworkers Guild on the date of the deadline for entries.

Group entries must include at least **50% Guild members**, and there is a fee of £5 per non-member.

Previous winners of categories A and C must enter at the next level, eg first time entry winners now enter as experienced. They are also welcome to enter the Challenge in a Matchbox.

- **Category A** First time entry - open to all 'non-professional' beaders of every level.
- **Category B** Challenge in a Matchbox – **RULE UPDATE 2026** open to all beaders of every level  
The brief is to make a piece of beadwork that will fit into a kitchen size matchbox (maximum size 120 x 67 x 27mm) The outside, top surface of the matchbox should also be beaded.
- **Category C** Experienced / Professional: more than five years' experience and all who receive payment for teaching and all who sell their work commercially, regardless of length of experience.
- **Category D** Previous winners of Category C.
- **Category E** Groups. This may include groups who meet online. A group may have as few as two members, for larger groups at least **50% should be BWG members**.

### Qualifying beadwork

All entries must be new pieces of work designed by the entrant, they may include an occasional element by another designer provided evidence of permission is shown and copyright is observed, ie: the other designer must be credited for the element in question. The submitted piece must be made for the BWG Challenge and must not have been previously entered into any other competition or publication.

Any stitched beadwork technique or combination of beadwork techniques may be used.

There are no restrictions on the type of item which can be submitted. Members may, for example, consider making an item of jewellery, an accessory, a three dimensional or sculptural piece, a wall hanging or a framed piece.



### **Entrants' descriptions**

Entrants must include a short explanation of what inspired their piece and how they interpreted the Challenge theme. This should be a brief statement of **up to 100 words** and it must not include anything which would identify the artist. For example: *"the piece explores the use of different sized beads to create a 'perspective'. This would normally be shown with the vanishing point in the distance. Here, however, the opposite is the case, and the perspective is coming towards you, thereby justifying the description of a 'fishy' point of view."*

### **Identification of work**

Every entry must be accompanied by the entry form which gives information about the member/group and the work. No labels may be attached to the work and there should be nothing in the piece which would enable the member/group to be identified.

### **Size restrictions and packaging**

- **Challenge in a Matchbox:** maximum size (outer sleeve) 12cm x 6.7cm x 2.7cm
- **All Other individual entries and Group entry:** **RULE UPDATE 2026**

**There is no longer a maximum box size for delivery.**

The parcel may contain elements of a piece which, once assembled, is larger than the parcel in which it is delivered.

**The maximum overall display size of the work for both Individual and group entries, should not exceed 60cms high x 60cms wide x 45cms deep.**

**All entries:** The work should be packaged in such a way that it is fully protected against the rough handling it is likely to receive whilst in transit.

### **Entry Fee**

Every entry must be accompanied by the entry fee as shown on the entry form and return postage if appropriate.

### **Number of entries**

There may be only one entry per individual member or per group. A member submitting an individual entry may also participate in a group entry.

### **Presentation/assembly of work**

Entrants may include supporting 'props' or bases for their work if they wish. However, this is not required. For example, an acrylic base might be integral to a 3-D item, while a necklace can stand alone. If the work needs to be assembled by us for presentation to the judges, detailed instructions for doing so must be included, with photographs of the completed item.

### **Electrical content**

The work should contain no electrical content unless powered by batteries, in which case suitable batteries must be included.



### **Delivery of entries**

Entries must be sent to the address on the entry form. However, pieces may also be delivered, by prior arrangement only, at a show or to a Trustee. An entry **will only** be accepted in such cases if the Trustee or Guild representative is satisfied that there is sufficient time for it to be transferred to the Challenge Administrator and to be professionally photographed without additional cost to the Guild.

### **Return of entries**

Members wishing to collect their work personally may do so from 2 pm on the Sunday of our May event. Or they may nominate a friend to collect the work for them: only the person named on the entry form may take the work, unless the Guild is advised of a change prior to the event. Winning entries will be retained for twelve months and arrangements for the return of their work will be discussed with those concerned at the appropriate time.

### **Display of work**

All entries will be displayed at the Guild's event held in May.

### **Photography**

All entries will be professionally photographed before judging and the images may be used, fully credited, for promotional purposes by the Beadworkers Guild. Photography will not be allowed during the event in May. However, members of the public may photograph the winning entries when they are on display at shows subsequently.

### **Judging**

All work submitted is assessed by a group of three judges who are experienced beadworkers. They do not know the identities of the makers of any of the pieces. The judges take into account the following considerations:

- Technical competence - quality of the work, including tension, and the stitches used.
- Interpretation of the theme - originality of the design ideas.
- Presentation - pleasing use of materials/colour etc.
- Suitability for purpose - for example, an item of jewellery must lie well; a bag must be practical to use.

For group entries, the judges also look for evidence that the design would enable members with a wide range of beading abilities to take part in the project.

The judges' decisions are final and are announced at the Beadworkers Guild's AGM in May.