

January 2022 Newsletter

CStitches@quakersaustralia.info

Calendar Payments

Thank you to all Friends who purchased 2022 Friends in Stitches Calendars. I ordered 75 and all were sold. Hurray!

Jacque Schulz, the Yearly Meeting Secretary, tells me that payments to the account are slowly coming in.

If you have a calendar and have not paid for it, could you please do so now. These are the banking details.

**The Religious Society of Friends,
BSB 313140
12091523
Reference FIS and your name.**

Please Reference your payment! If you don't reference FIS your money goes into general funds and we have no idea that it was a calendar payment. If you have paid and have not referenced FIS, can you please let me or Jacque know.

The calendars were \$20, which was almost cost price, plus postage. Postage costs differed depending on how you got your calendar. If you bought one from a bulk postage it will be cheaper than if you ordered an individual calendar. Please ask the person who sold you the calendar about the postage, or email me (CStitches@quakersaustralia.info) and I can tell you how much the postage came to. Everyone who was sent an individual calendar has been already emailed with the details but if you have lost the email, get back to me.

If you gave a calendar to a friend with the expectation that they would pay for it, can you follow them up and check that they have the banking details.

Sally O'Wheel

Mary Grbavac

Tessa remembers:

Mary Grbavac died peacefully in her sleep on December 10th at 4.50 am. after a short battle with pancreatic cancer. A funeral service was held on Tuesday 21st. December and a Quaker Memorial Meeting for Worship at Kelvin Grove Meeting House on Sunday the 9th of January. Mary has been a pivotal member of Friends in Stitches almost from the start.

Mary at Silver Wattle, 2016



She worked hard to get Queensland stories onto the panels.

I first met Mary at Swarthmore Hall in September 2009 where we happily shared a bedroom for the 10 days duration of the Australian 1652 tour, which included a day at the Quaker Tapestry in Kendall. We had a happy reunion at each Yearly Meeting thereafter as well as each workshop Friends in

Stitches ran at Yearly Meeting, Silver Wattle and Kelvin Grove. Mary ran the Queensland Stitching Group until she died and was instrumental in encouraging three women from the Brisbane Embroiderers Guild to pick up the Kelvin Grove Panel, which they are now working on and determined to complete.

A report from Jude Pembleton

A Memorial Service where Friends spoke of the Grace of God in the Life of Mary Grbavac was held at Kelvin Grove Meeting House on Sunday 9 January after Meeting for Worship. Mary had been a faithful attender at Kelvin Grove as often as she could, especially on first Sundays for the Meeting for Business, and she had some faithful Friends who drove her to Meeting as her home was some distance away and she lived with limited mobility.

Brisbane Friends were joined by quite a large number of Friends on Zoom including from interstate and overseas. Zoom attendees included Mary's son, Marco, and his children and

two family members from the UK — Mary Grbavac's sister, Ruth Owen, as well as one of her cousins, Martin Charters. The UK folk were up at around 1 am - 2 am, so were very devoted in their love for Mary.

Friends spoke of her generosity, her hospitality, her joy of sharing the products of her baking, especially for morning teas after Meeting for Worship, and her devotion to the Friends in Stitches project. As Queensland's stitchers had reduced in numbers, Mary had hoped for some years to have Sally O'Wheel and Tessa Spratt run a workshop at Kelvin Grove to renew interest and bring in new stitchers. It was a delight to have this happen in recent years when health was still good enough for her to take part and to see a new coterie of stitchers become enthused, including some from the Embroiderers' Guild.

Duncan Frewin spoke of how frustrated Mary felt as her capacity to offer service diminished. Duncan recalled a time when Mary was deeply hurt by an event in our meeting and became distressed and angry. She tried to forgive, but Duncan was not convinced that it was real forgiveness. He saw her as trying too hard. Yet, he said, over time she dug deep into her spiritual reserves to truly forgive those who were the source of her deep pain. Duncan said true forgiveness is very hard and takes immense courage. He expressed hope that he will be given the courage to forgive as she was able to forgive.

Several Friends talked of the courage and acceptance Mary displayed as she approached her end. Mary could be feisty and could be a strong voice for change when she saw something she felt was an injustice, but as she approached her death she became a role model for gracious acceptance. She planned her funeral with her son. She approached her death with stoicism, and with complete faith that she would soon be with the Source of all. Friends expressed the hope that they, too, would be able to follow Mary's example as they approached their death.



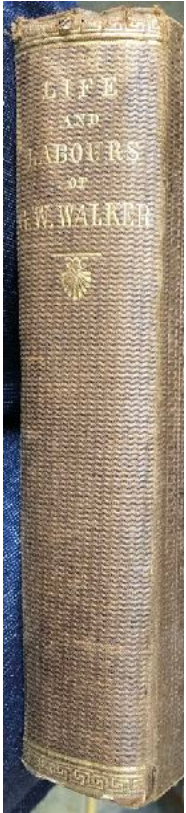
Judith Pembleton
Queensland Quakers Correspondence Friend

Looking to the future

Gillian Risdale, the new FIS Queensland Correspondent

The Quaker Memorial Service for Mary was held yesterday at the Meeting House. It was a wonderful celebration of Mary's life, which included contributions from members of her family online from the UK.

I spoke with Saadia after the service and we are proposing our first FIS meeting for Saturday 5 February in the Garden Room, the downstairs space at the KG Meeting House from 2.00-4.00pm. We do hope this date and time works for you all? Please could you let me know.



New Panel ideas : George Washington Walker

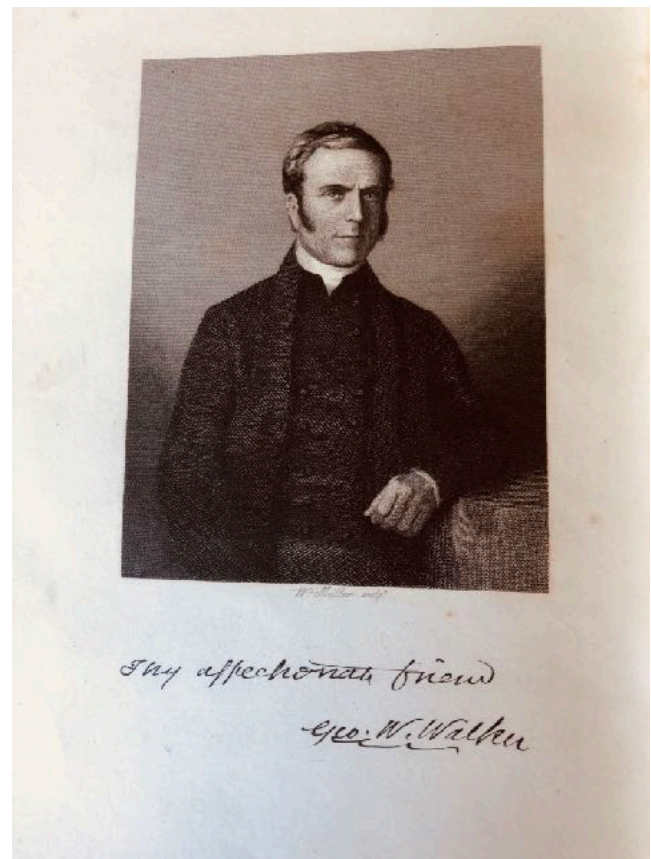
Sally O'Wheel

Recently I read *Tongerlongeter* by Henry Reynolds and Nick Clements. It is a history of a Tasmanian Aboriginal warrior. The works of James Backhouse and George Washington Walker are extensively referenced as sources and that inspired me to pick up *The Life and Labours of George Washington Walker*.

George W W is important to Australian Quakerism because after travelling around with James Backhouse and accompanying him to South Africa, he returned to Van Diemens Land, married Sarah Mather, a Wesleyan who had become a convinced Friend, and settled in Hobart. He opened a drapers shop and actively promoted temperance. As part of that concern he opened a savings bank which became the State Bank.

I am very much enjoying reading this, extracts from his journal and letters.

His descriptions of meeting with Aborigines in the far north west Tasmania and on Flinders Island, sources for *Tongerlongeter* and other histories of Tasmanian Aborigines, are fascinating. This makes me wonder if a panel about Backhouse and Walker and Aborigines might be something to consider. We have not really addressed their work in documenting treatment of Aborigines and their important and valuable descriptions of pre-colonial life styles. That could be extended to include the contact he had with Aborigines in NSW too. It is challenging indeed because their ideas have dated! They believed that converting the Aborigines to Christianity, and educating them to the ways of civilisation were necessary and good. While they were in South Africa this concern for civilising and converting tribal black Africans continued to interest them. To tell this story in a panel will be tricky and needs to be sensitively done so that we don't misrepresent the truth, but recognise their work. Seen in the context of their times, they were progressive. In Van Diemens Land they wanted to support Aborigines, they respected their skills and understood that they had been violently oppressed. In Africa there is a place where George shakes hands with a black man after a meeting and someone takes him aside and tells him that shaking hands with a black man is 'not the thing'. George stands up to this man and



tells him that he will continue to do it.

Meanwhile a panel about George Washington Walker is a lot more straight forward. I am looking forward to reading about his life in Hobart after he returned from South Africa.

Another panel subject that came to mind as I was reading the Life and Labours of GWW is convicts. Backhouse and Walker met convicts at Macquarie Harbour, Port Arthur, on chain gangs and in isolated rural settings where they were working as ticket-of-leave convicts. They met ex-convicts. Some of the convicts they meet are disowned Friends, some become convinced Friends. Some of them attend the first Australian Quaker Meetings. This is a quintessential Australian Quaker story.

What do you know about convict Quakers in your Region?

Who will design these panels? Who will stitch them?

George Washington Walker's shop and bank in Hobart.

