



July 2022 Friends in Stitches Newsletter.

CStitches@quakersaustralia.info



It was 2007. I had just retired when I saw an advertisement for a week long stitching workshop to be held in the Blue Mountains. My thought was: a week in the Blue Mountains! That sounds rather nice. Little did I know that that workshop was going to embroider my retirement. I soon joined Cathy Davies as Co-Convenor and got to know her very well. The Australian Quaker Narrative Embroidery Project - or Friends in Stitches as we affectionately nick-named it, got under way.

[Cathy and Tessa toured the country and New Zealand, teaching us how to design and stitch our panels. They got it off the ground, inspiring Friends and embroiderers everywhere. Tessa produced a book which is still available. Sally O]

Friends, my husband, Richard, has been getting sicker lately and recently had two months in hospital following meningoencephalitis. He is home now and we have a Level 4 Home Care package. This is wonderful. However, he still cannot be left except when carers are here. I won't be able to travel any more.

We hope and pray that COVID really does decrease and that Friends in Stitches will be safe to travel in the ministry with Exhibitions and workshops, creating a desire among Friends to stitch more Australian Quaker history.

I have come to the sad conclusion that the right way forward is to pass the baton on to someone else.

I have enjoyed working with Sally O'Wheel and I do know she will help steer whoever accepts the position of my replacement. That Friend will bring fresh ideas and enthusiasm to the job.

Whoever does take up that position couldn't not enjoy it more than I have.



Exhibition in Latrobe, Tasmania

Sally O'Wheel

I have emailed this press release to the Northern Tasmanian ABC and the local paper, *The Advocate*, (affectionately known as *The Aggravate*.) but so far neither have responded.

Press Statement.

This July there is an exhibition of embroidery in Latrobe which begins to tell the history of Australian Quakers. Few of the people in Latrobe would know the connection of Latrobe to the Religious Society of Friends, Quakers.

Friends William and Elizabeth Wells arrived in Tasmania in 1884 with their four children. We do not know why they made the decision to immigrate to the other side of the world but can only surmise that there were already a large group of Friends already settled here and they felt there would be good opportunities for themselves and their children. They settled at The Don where William worked for The River Don Trading Co which he later purchased. In the early 1890's William purchased a business in Latrobe which was to become W. L. Wells and Sons. The family which now included 2 more children moved into a house in Hamilton Street. The business was based on his strong Quaker principles of service to the community, honesty, loyalty and hospitality and continued to be run by the family for 4 generations until it was sold in 2007 although the business still bears the Wells name. William was instrumental in the founding of the Friends School in Hobart as he and Elizabeth badly wanted a Quaker education for their children, even though that meant they had to leave home, board, travelling to and from Hobart each term by train which took a day. Descendants of William and Elizabeth still live in the Latrobe district.

The Australian Quaker Narrative Embroidery Project - or Friends in Stitches, has been going for nearly twenty years and so far 23 panels have been stitched. It is a community arts project, created by stitchers both experienced and new, Quakers and otherwise, from all over Australia.

The twenty three panels are on display at the Crowded Lounge in Latrobe during the month of July.

The first Quaker to visit Australia was the artist Sydney Parkinson who was the young artist on Cook's Endeavour. That was the first panel to be designed and stitched. In the 1830s James Backhouse, a Quaker missionary, visited Van Dieman's Land, including the north west coast. He is honoured in two panels, with more in mind. Other panels illustrate the Quaker concerns of peace and social justice, working with convicts, Aborigines, victims of war. The survival and growth of the Religious Society of Friends in Australia is depicted.

For more information contact CStitches@quakersaustralia.info

During July there will be a Quaker Meeting for Worship on Sundays at 11am at the Education Centre at the Tasmanian Arboretum in Eugenana. All welcome.



The Devonport Embroidery Guild visited the exhibition and took some photos. They posted them on their Facebook page. In just 4 days their post had had 17,322 hits. That compares to the usual 200 they get on their other posts. Pretty extraordinary!

<https://www.facebook.com/Embroiderers-Guild-Devonport-1089417151165666/>



Vale Anne Walker. 1939 - 21st June 2022.

Tessa Spratt

I met Anne Walker fairly soon after coming to Australia over fifty years ago. Eastern Suburbs Melbourne Meeting made a practice of visiting isolated Friends and the Walker family were always on our calendar. Sometimes we camped for the whole weekend and this gave us a greater opportunity to get to know the family. I had my first experience of eating eels that the teenagers caught and Anne cooked. I had to take a deep breath before I tried them - they were delicious. Anne and Adrian and their children would also attend Yearly Meetings and we would meet up again. I grieved with them when their only son died so unexpectedly from a sudden lung infection, a complication of diabetes I believe.



Then Anne attended, with Adrian, a Friends in Stitches workshop at Silver Wattle. Adrian helped in the grounds. I remember him fixing a wooden gate. Anne embroidered one of our samplers beautifully and expressed a desire to immortalise Adrian's father, Martin Walker, who, as a Young Friend, spent time in Europe helping to repair houses, replant and restock farm land, mostly in Brabant and Argonne. So began quite a long project for Anne. She had help with the design from Annette Walker, but Anne stitched



the entire panel, right down to the bees coming from the beehives at the bottom of the panel. Sandra was apparently responsible for this. She looked at the finished product and declared that the beehives needed bees coming from it. It is especially noteworthy that Anne embroidered the whole panel alone for most of our panels are

works shared with more than one person embroidering.

At Anne's funeral someone gathered together a sample of the things Anne loved: gardening, growing flowers, especially proteas, frequently growing them from seed from last year's crop, knitting, crocheting, jam making and of course her embroidery.

