

## Dunera Boys

### from an email by Bridget Guest

The Dunera Boys panel is progressing well. It is time consuming work and although there are several embroiderers working on it, they can't do this at the same time so I know we will be working on it for a long time yet. It will not be ready for July.

We encourage our embroiderers to work on the panel within the exhibition. This gives our visitors the opportunity to see a panel under construction and lets people know that there are more panels in production, both in this country and overseas.

Roy recently gave an illustrated talk about The Dunera Boys, as a fundraiser for the Quaker Tapestry. It's a little-known story over here in the UK and the talk he gave, following all the research he had done, was very well received.

I have attached a couple of photos for your interest.

One shows Janet Bagot embroidering and chatting to a Museum visitor, the other photo shows the panel in progress. The title lettering has also been done but in the photo it is hidden under the protective cloth and has been rolled around the frame to make the working area easier to manage.



## The Dunera Boys embroidered panel

### by Roy Wilcock

Prior to 1939 many Jewish German and Austrian refugees, escaping the Nazi policies, were welcomed into Britain. When war was declared, the government feared them to be Nazi sympathisers, spies or saboteurs. Male refugees aged between 16-60 were arrested and placed into temporary internment camps around the British Isles, prior to some being sent to America, Canada and Australia.

The troopship HMT Dunera was berthed in Liverpool. The normal capacity of the ship was 1,600 men including the crew. On that day 2,542 internees boarded the ship, plus the crew and 316 inexperienced and ill-disciplined British army guards, under the command of Lieutenant Col' William Patrick Scott.



The guards searched the internees as they boarded and stole anything of value from the men and their luggage, this theft continued throughout the voyage. Regular beatings took place, rifle butts were stamped onto bare feet, internees forced to run bare footed over broken glass and various cases of severe mental cruelty. Later it was discovered that Scott was aware of these atrocities.

The journey was 57 days. With insufficient hammocks, many men slept on the steel floor, the food was poor and water was rationed. Ten latrines were provided for all the internees, these were out of bounds at night and replaced by a single bucket. A bar of soap was shared between 20 men and one towel for 10 men which had been stolen from their own luggage. Shaving was not allowed and the same clothes worn for the whole voyage. There was very little daylight in the hold and internees had just half an hour on deck for exercise.

In Australia the men were distributed to three internment camps where they finally received good treatment. They were supported by Quakers who, not only administered to their needs for food, clothes and toiletries, but also provided tools, books and equipment. Quakers interviewed the men and recorded stories of their voyage. These reports were sent back to the UK, resulting in court martials for Scott and a few officers. Politicians described these as a total cover-up - hardly any action was taken against them.

Some internees returned to Britain in 1941, others stayed in Australia to make a significant contribution to the arts, science and teaching.

The full Dunera Boys story can be seen on the website [www.quaker-tapestry.co.uk](http://www.quaker-tapestry.co.uk)

## Francis Cotton's Myths

### Feedback from an email by Robin Sinclair

(Editor's note: I asked Robin what she thought about the Francis Cotton Panel new information. I have had little feedback on the Feb issue's article and am anxious to have more thoughts from FIS.)

Re the Tasmanian Myths panel, this is certainly a tricky one. Such a lot of work went into that panel, design and stitching. But it certainly doesn't tell the whole story. I've just been reading *The Vandemonian War* by Nick Brodie, all about the systematic persecution of the Aborigines in early Tas. history. Have you seen it? It is a very recent publication, based on previously neglected papers and accounts of the time. Cotton gets a couple of

mentions in it. In one he joins with other nearby settlers and a government party to hunt down an Aboriginal band that has been 'causing trouble' in the area. There is also a mention of the Cotton family's collection of Aboriginal skulls!

So, about the panel: it would be a pity to withdraw it, considering the work that went into it, but if it's giving a wrong impression it shouldn't really be on display. Perhaps the story that goes with it could be modified to explain that this is only part of the story, and that more facts have since come to light. I don't know. As Friends, we don't want to be telling what's not true. Perhaps you could discuss it at Silver Wattle.

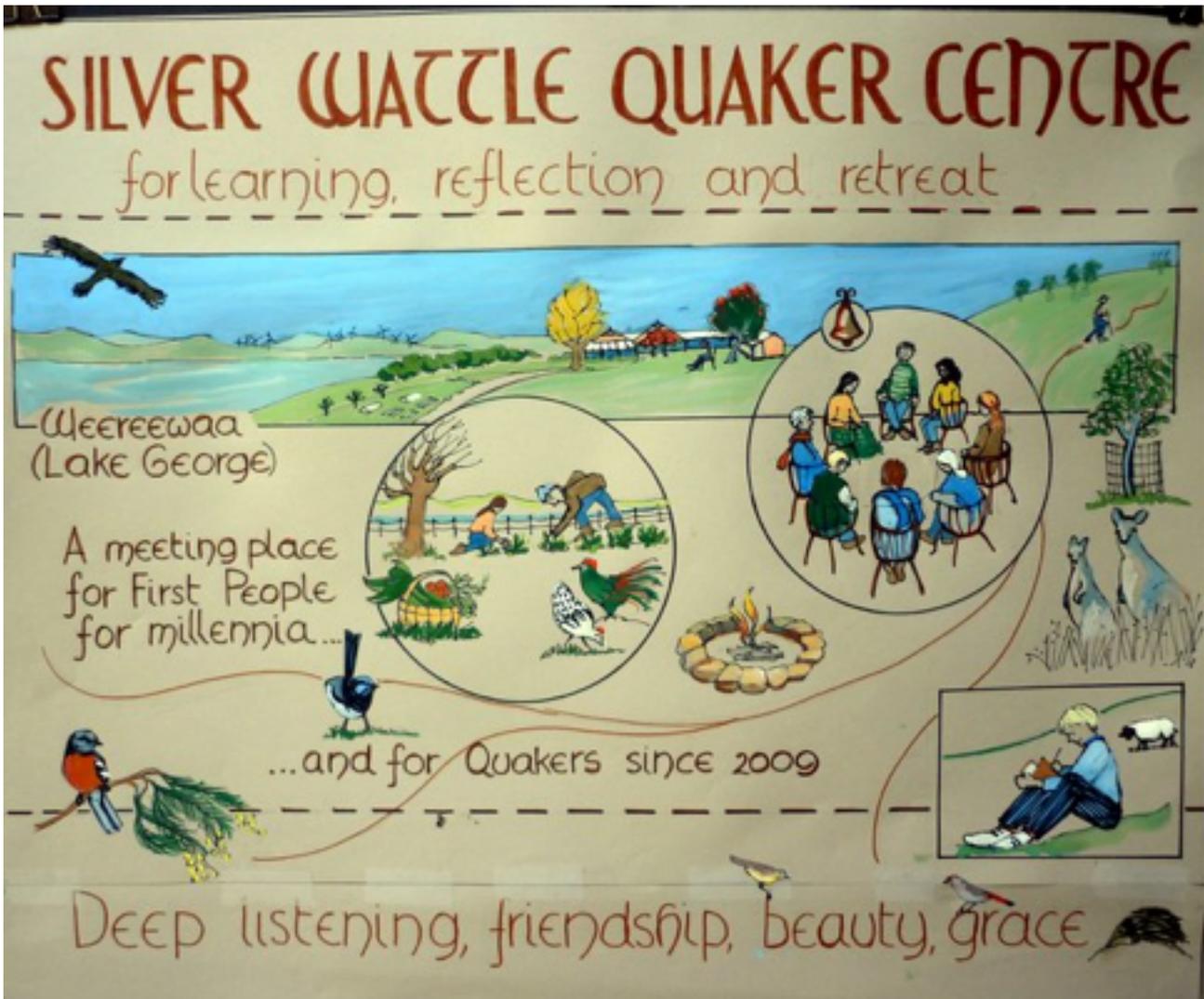


### Feed back from Sally O'Wheel

I am now reading Nick Brodie's book. (I see he attended Writers' Week in Adelaide in March.) I have just read about the violence on Cotton's farm in July, 1829, where the roving party, led by the Danish convict, Jorgen Jorgenson, was too late arriving at the hut and found that the Aborigines had already been there, stolen the guns and speared some of the workers. One died. The context is one in which bands of British militia, police and ticket-of-leave convicts are roaming the 'settled districts' hunting down Aborigines and shooting them. It is impossible to believe that 'friendly natives' could have been hidden on Cotton's land.

We will certainly discuss this further when we meet at Silver Wattle this month. **Please send us your thoughts about this important issue.**





## Silver Wattle Design

### By Robin Sinclair and the SA Group

Here is the final version of the Silver Wattle panel, incorporating some ideas suggested by Helen Bayes and others. She is happy with it, so our group met this morning and are starting on practise pieces.

The words are self-explanatory. The circles in the composition indicate the importance of the circle. SW, in worship, study, consultation and conversation. The two larger circles are linked by the smaller one of the fire circle. The 'kangaroo trails' (same colour as the lettering) link the other elements together.

Animals are represented by the kangaroos and the sheep (which could be George, but which also stands for all the sheep on the property) and the echidna.

The birds, just a few of the many to be seen there, are wedge-tail eagle, blue wren, yellow-rumped thornbill and red-browed firetail finch, and the robin, perched on a twig of silver wattle.

As well as the productive gardening efforts indicated in one of the circles, many young trees have been planted as a way of re-vegetating the property. These are indicated by the tree in the tree guard behind the kangas and some more distant ones on the hill.

The bell (inset into people circle) is included to indicate the importance of the rhythm of the day. We are anticipating that it will probably take us about a year to stitch it.

**See you at Silver Wattle for Meeting for Stitching April 14th -19th**