

# Friends in Stitches

The Australian Quaker Narrative Embroidery

March, 2020.

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March is upon us. The plums are ripe and the prunes are in the drier. The pears dropped before we realised they were ripe. Tomatoes coming into the house at last!

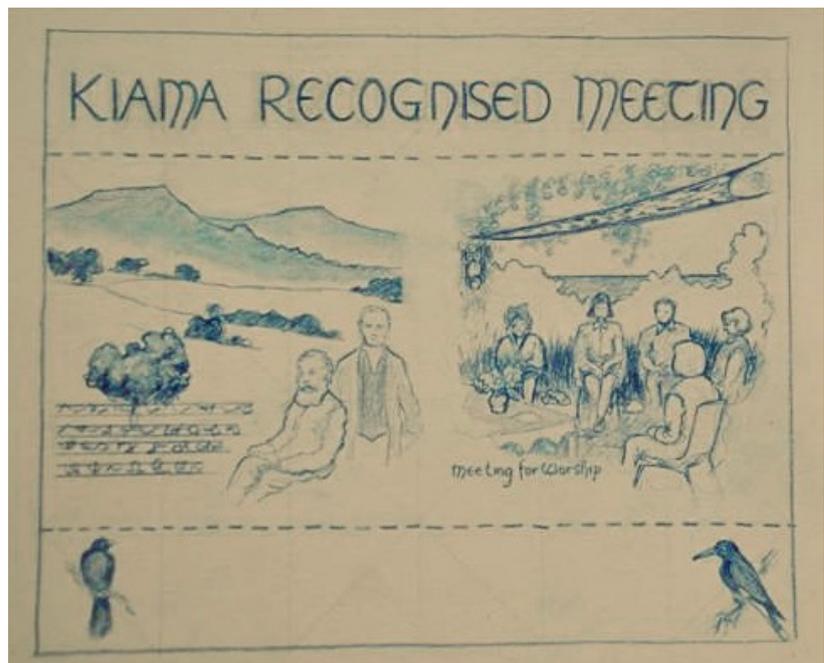
So good to get news from Moira about breaking through the stitching drought and picking up the Kiama panel. Many thanks to her for her article.

## Finding my stitching Mojo

By Moira Darling

It was at AYM last year that I was encouraged to take on the Kiama narrative panel. A couple of months later I had obtained and set up the stitching frame with help from Tessa. And there it sat for several months. I was overwhelmed by the details and a sense of this panel as a part of a much larger, weightier project. I couldn't find a way to start. I had no connection to Kiama and didn't even know where it was in Australia.

By chance I was visiting Wollongong with my husband while he was working there. I was amazed to realise that Kiama was just a bit further down the coast. I took the train there and enjoyed a beautiful day in this lovely coastal town. Back in Wollongong, I was able to connect with one of the folks who attended meeting at Kiama and had worked on the panel. It was especially helpful to hear Audrey talk about how she did some stitching every morning. I was enthused and connected. It now seemed possible to do some stitching most mornings. The work has begun.



Moira, FIS look forward to work in progress update photos!

## **Cherishing my place.**

Sally O'Wheel



Since my last mail to you, I also have been back with the needle in hand and have made good progress. It is thrilling to see the forest emerge on the fabric.

## **Magna Carta embroidery**

While I was pondering this newsletter and bemoaning the lack of material, the universe brought me a visiting friend, on the road from Alice Springs to Hobart. She had been in Sydney and when I mentioned 'embroidery' she mentioned an exhibition she had been to in Sydney. I wonder if any FIS saw it. Sadly we have missed it now.

It was an exhibition of the renowned British artist, Cornelia Parker. One of her works was Magna Carta, a 13 metre long embroidery depicting the Wikipedia entry for the Magna Carta. It was stitched by over 200 people, including prisoners,

The Wikipedia article about the work says:

It is a response to the legacy of Magna Carta in the digital era and Parker has referred to it as "a snapshot of where the debate is right now", the result of all open edits by [English Wikipedians](#) up to that date.

Parker used a screenshot from the 15 June 2014 English Wikipedia article for Magna Carta and printed it onto fabric. Like English Wikipedia, the embroidery was created

through the collaboration of many individuals. It was divided in 87 sections and sent to 200 individuals who each hand-stitched portions of the artwork. She sought the collaboration of people and groups that have been affected by and associated with Magna Carta.<sup>[4]</sup> The majority of the text was sewn by prisoners.<sup>[5]</sup> Members of the [Embroiderers' Guild](#) stitched the images, with at least one embroiderer selected from each region of the UK.<sup>[6]</sup> Many celebrities and public figures also contributed, stitching phrases or words of special significance to them.<sup>[7]</sup> Parker has represented the work as "Echoing the communal activity that resulted in the [Bayeux Tapestry](#), but on this occasion placing more emphasis on the word rather than the image, I wanted to create an artwork that is a contemporary interpretation of Magna Carta."<sup>[1]</sup>

The work includes a tea stain from a prisoner and a spot of blood from *Guardian* editor [Alan Rusbridger](#), who accidentally pricked his finger while sewing.<sup>[1]</sup>



This is a list of people who contributed. Many of them only embroidered a single word.

- [Julian Assange](#) – "freedom"<sup>[7]</sup>
- [Mary Beard](#)
- [Shami Chakrabarti](#) – "Charter of Liberties"<sup>[11]</sup>
- [Kenneth Clarke](#)

- [Jarvis Cocker](#) – "common people" for the [song of the same name](#)<sup>[7]</sup>
- [Brian Eno](#) – "in perpetuity"<sup>[7]</sup>
- [Anthea Godfrey](#) (Embroiderers' Guild) – image of [Pope Innocent III](#)<sup>[7]</sup>
- [Antony Gormley](#)
- [Germaine Greer](#)
- [Igor Judge, Baron Judge](#) and [Lady Judith Judge](#) – "Habeas Corpus"<sup>[11]</sup>
- [Christopher Le Brun](#) – "folio"
- [Doreen Lawrence, Baroness Lawrence of Clarendon](#) – "justice", "denial" and "delay"<sup>[11]</sup>
- [Caroline Lucas](#)
- [Eliza Manningham-Buller](#) – "freedom"<sup>[11]</sup>
- [James McNeill QC](#) - "Abbots - witnesses"
- [Caitlin Moran](#)
- [Cornelia Parker](#) – "prerogative"<sup>[7]</sup>
- [Janet Payne](#) (Embroiderers' Guild) – image of John of England signing Magna Carta<sup>[6]</sup>
- [Philip Pullman](#) – "Oxford"<sup>[7]</sup>
- [Alan Rusbridger](#) – "contemporary political relevance"<sup>[7]</sup>
- [Edward Snowden](#) – "liberty"<sup>[7]</sup>
- [Clive Stafford Smith](#) – stitched his contribution while visiting a client at the Guantanamo Bay detention camp<sup>[7]</sup>
- [Peter Tatchell](#) – "democracy" (shared with Parker)<sup>[7]</sup>
- [Jimmy Wales](#) – "user's manual"<sup>[11]</sup>
- [Sayeeda Warsi, Baroness Warsi](#) – "freedom"<sup>[11]</sup>
- Baroness [Shirley Williams](#)
- Students from La Retraite Roman Catholic Girls' School – "Salisbury Cathedral", "Durham Cathedral", "South Africa" and "Australia"<sup>[9]</sup>

In the Wikipedia article is a very good 6 minute video about its creation.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magna\\_Carta\\_\(An\\_Embroidery\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magna_Carta_(An_Embroidery))



# Friends in Stitches Workshop- and view the Quaker Narrative Embroidery

for all interested women and men at the Quaker Meeting House,  
10 Hampson St Kelvin Grove from 10am to 3.30pm on Saturday 18

April 2020. Facilitated by  
Tessa Spratt and Sally  
O'Wheel.

Bring some lunch to share  
and a pair of scissors - tea,  
coffee, juice and snacks  
provided.

RSVP by 11 April or email  
[valuable1@optusnet.com.au](mailto:valuable1@optusnet.com.au)

Enquiries Valerie Joy 0422  
434 336



(I have paid for my tickets to Brisbane from proceeds from Calendars. Thank you to everyone who bought one. Sally