

Friends in Stitches

The Australian Quaker Narrative Embroidery

Newsletter, May 2020

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Dear Friends,

Suddenly, here is May. I know some of us have been staying inside and stitching. How good to have it and a more leisurely pace of life. I have been meeting at a Zoom sewing circle with three of my oldest friends, bringing my panel. Lyndall Katz in Sydney is renovating worn out clothes, Maureen Davey in Hobart is learning how to make button holes on a doona cover and Monica O'Wheel in Adelaide is making an XR cross stitch embroidery. It is such a joy to meet together in one place! We could always have done this before but we never thought of it.

It made me come up with the idea of a Friends Meeting for Stitching. We will meet on Thursday May 7th at 11.30am and then decide how frequently we want to continue. This is the link to the meeting.

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87384920112?
pwd=NXh0dkFwVEM4MHZoUTZHbzNuaStHUT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87384920112?pwd=NXh0dkFwVEM4MHZoUTZHbzNuaStHUT09)

All welcome, with or without stitching. Looking forward to catching up.

Deborah Schrader
by Tessa Spratt

Deborah Schrader was not a person who put herself forward. But she was a person with many many interests. She started her career in IT where she worked with Jim Palmer at Myers but retrained as a librarian in the late nineties.

You read of Deborah's battle with brain cancer in our last issue – she lost that battle on 6th April. I was out walking when my phone rang – it was Deborah!! I was amazed as I knew she was in palliative care, even though I had been unable to visit her for a couple of weeks, due to the lockdown, I had been in touch with Di, her beloved sister who cared for her at home for a few days before she was readmitted to palliative care. No – it was Di, using Deborah's phone, to give me the news that she had just passed. Friends, I was sad. Now I have no-one close to me to share stitching with, nor do I have the

company of a very brave person who had become a very good friend. Just a reminder that I have a lot of wool and other things Tapestry from Deborah and would love to share with you



Calendars

by Sally O'Wheel

In the last newsletter SA Friends in Stitches made some comments about the calendars.

Firstly, the very valid point about the lack of information about each of the pictures. In the format of Vistaprint calendars, which is the one I use, it is not possible to add annotations or subtitles. This is a pity. It has been suggested that an extra page be included to provide this. It would not be possible to print this as part of the calendar but it would be possible to print it out at home, separately and include it with each calendar as it is mailed out. It would be more work at a busy time of year so perhaps we could add it as an optional extra, perhaps with an additional cost which customers could request when ordering.

Secondly Robin and some others don't like the close ups which they think expose flaws in the work and allow us to scrutinise the stitching more closely than would be possible in real life. I choose close ups precisely because it allows us to look closely at the stitching. As a stitcher I am interested in exactly how the effect has been achieved. I want to know how they did it. In real life, I like to get up close and peer at the stitching.



A case in point is the May picture in the calendar which, (topically,) shows Sydney Parkinson. I especially like being about to examine how the coat has been stitched. I noticed the details of the cuffs and the wonderful effect of his lacy collar. I've always loved the effect of the waves washing up on the beach and this close up shows me the really simple way that effect is achieved. Our calendars attract Friends but they also have a market in embroidery circles and I think embroiderers are always interested in the fine details. I only choose close ups of work that I consider exceptionally good!

from Roger Sawkins

Robin Sinclair suggests in your newsletter that you avoid showing detailed sections of panels in your calendar and newsletters as they 'come across as rather amateur and clumsy'. Can I disagree?

I would classify the panels as 'folk art', which is a very important medium in our increasingly plastic, printed, digital, cgi world. It is a centuries-old tradition which illustrates the care and dedication of the people who produce them. As such I think we should be proud of the work that has gone into them.

The panels are not just artistic, they are also educational and an important historical record. They are accessible and attractive for all ages and all people. They are prompts for meditation and deeper thought.

Displaying small details (such as the ones in your newsletters) not only emphasises the fact that they are handmade but also shows the skills of those making them. You can see the detail that goes into producing something that looks so effective. Who would otherwise realise that the bird has minute 'spotted' stitching to get the colour blend right? Or the tree trunk has subtle gradations of (strange) colours to make it look real? Yes, the lettering is eccentric but isn't the overall look so appropriate?

And on a different design point, can I congratulate you on the font used for the title of the newsletter? The 'e' looks exactly like a needle and thread and the choice of that font was inspired!

Roger

From Ann Rees

Your Fox quote is amazingly appropriate and I hope you don't mind if I spread it around among SANTRM Friends. I will give you credit for finding it. I wonder if it was serendipity or Divine guidance which led you to it?

I am one of the stitchers who is not in favour of the super close-up views in the calendar, although I can see the reason behind including them as there is some exquisite work. There are a couple of bits which I have stitched that I would not like to see enlarged, and that is the source of my concern.

Love from Ann.



And other feed back on the April Newsletter - always welcome!

From Bevianne

Stopping to quick-read it in a crazy-busy-potentially stressful day has brought me back to soothed centre. Your emerging forest cooled my mind and the word Quaker that is scattered throughout the newsletter tugged my Q-strings back into place.



From Anne Locket (Devonport Embroiderers' Guild)

Thank you once again for your newsletter. I love the progress you have made with your panel. It is surely a weird time & like you, I don't seem to get as much done as I had hoped. A lot more time has been spent on the phone & contacting my U3A craft class. Also trying to discipline myself to continue with U3A history draft. I am not getting as much embroidery done as I would have hoped. I attach my progress on my Hazel Blomkamp piece.

Lots of needle weaving which I have never done before but Hazel's instructions are great.

Happy stitching.
Anne

From Judith Robinson in New Zealand

Judith here from Whanganui NZ. I am the one who looks after the QTapestry photograph panels here

Your Newsletter is wonderful. I still haven't taken it all in!

The Friends in Stitches project is fantastic such enthusiasm, planning, stitching and exhibitions!

I imagine there was similar involvement when the QTapestry project was underway! Thinking of everyone as we are affected by the global situation.

I hope you are adjusting wherever you are

With warm wishes,

Judith Robinson

Up date on stitching progress



Here's a progress shot for the Kiama panel. Working on the mountains, greenery and shade sail at the moment and continuing to be inspired by Audrey.

Cheers
Moir

'The background shows the escarpment behind Wollongong with Mt Kembla in the foreground and Mt Keira in the background. This escarpment was a challenge facing Backhouse and Walker and their Jerringa guide, Tommy, from Kangaroo Valley. The explorers wrote extensively about Indigenous people they met - the Wadi Wadi and the Dharawal nation. They noted that in 1836 the Aboriginal populations was only a third of what it had been just a few years before.

Backhouse and Walker stayed over night in Kiama, arriving at dusk on the 27th of September. In 1836 It consisted of a few bark huts, a blacksmith, a shoemaker and a constable station, clustered around the harbour.

The right hand image shows Kiama Recognised Meeting for Worship, which has been held at the pre-school for over 20 years, usually in the covered outside courtyard. In the background is the Pacific Ocean. Being outside lets them feel connected to the environment and the local community.

The owl sat for many years in the pre-school tree, as an item of interest to the children and all Friends.

Panel designed by Alan Lawrence and stitched by Audrey Wilson, Liz Henigan, Ann Britton and Sheila McGee.' And Moira Darling!



This is an up date on *Cherish our Place*. The fern trees were so much fun to do, using a stitch I learned at the Embroiderers' Guild, fly stitch. They grew fast! I had to unpick the light green fronds which I originally did in a different shade of green. They look much better in that vibrant green. I am now working on the sassafras leaves. They are not well drawn on the calico so I am making a practice piece. I used a picture in a book of Tasmanian forest trees. Just saying, these forests are being cut down in the Tarkine during the Lockdown.- essential work apparently!

Sally O'Wheel

