



Q Friends in Stitches

The Australian Quaker Narrative Embroidery
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DESIGNED BY ANNE AND ANNETTE WALKER, this panel depicts Young Friends in Europe shortly after WW1 assisting to rebuild the farms structure there. Anne Walker's Grandfather in Law was a photographer and the pictures on the panel were drawn from his photos.

Martin Walker, aged 25 years, left by ship for England on 12th January 1916, arriving in London on the 16th March. He travelled with another Young Friend, Douglas Allen. They both started work at the War Victims Warehouse a few days later.

After two months of settling in Martin crossed in a convoy to Holland where he worked in a camp for over 6,000 Belgian refugees at Vluchtoord Uden, Noord Brabant. The fascinating story of how Young Friends helped rebuild war ravaged Europe will be in the book currently in preparation.

Editorial

Tessa Spratt



SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER, Cathy Davies and I travelled to West Australia and there is a lovely article about that elsewhere in this issue. We did wonder together what would happen if we gave up, but nevertheless, an email from Cathy in the New Year saying she is resigning her position of co-coordinator shocked me.

For a while there, I was paralysed, but quickly realised this is not a job I can do alone, so I wrote to the Yearly Meeting Secretary, asking her to ask the Nominations Committee as a priority to come up with someone else.

I could never use the words “replace Cathy” because she and I have become close friends over the 8 years we have been working on this project together and we feel rightly proud of what all the stitchers and designers and others have achieved.

There should be 16 panels on display at Yearly Meeting in Adelaide. Cathy also brought to the project far more expertise than I did and was entirely responsible for getting the project off the ground. I did not join her at the beginning. The woollen cloth was woven and the first panels underway before she and I connected and realised

what a good team we made. The Yearly Meeting cannot give Cathy enough thanks for her part in the Australian Tapestry. Without her, it would not have got off the ground.

When Sally O’Wheel finally decided that perhaps the Nominations Committee had not been lacking in their discernment to ask her to take up this position, it was as if a great weight had rolled off my shoulders. In fact, I think we should have asked Nominations to come up with someone else earlier.

We’ve often “put out feelers” and asked in a general way if anyone is interested in joining us, but I think it needed the weight of the Nominations Committee to appoint someone: no-one felt moved to offer.

Sally’s first brilliant idea was that, rather than just the two of us, we need a small committee. Still a work in progress. Are you interested in joining us? But Sally has re-enthused me, and done some preparatory work towards this Newsletter, so we are hopefully back on track again. Sally’s own introduction to herself is very accurate and she has been bubbling over with bright ideas and re-enthused me.



The panel Sally is currently working on is “The Elizabeth Fry Retreat.” This was a refuge and training centre for women ex-prisoners who would

otherwise have had nowhere to go on their release and no hope for the future. It was set up and run by Sarah Swinborn, a Melbourne Friend.

“We need a committee”

Quote from Sally O’Wheel, who has been appointed to help with coordination.

Sally O’Wheel,

Devonport Recognised Meeting, TRM

I WAS VERY SURPRISED TO GET AN EMAIL from David Purnell from the Nominations Committee saying that I had been nominated to replace Cathy Davies on the Australian Tapestry Project. In fact, I was appalled. When I think of Cathy, her passion, her skill, her wide knowledge of all aspects of the tapestry project, I couldn’t imagine how anyone had thought of me!

I have some background in nominations as I am on the TRM nominations committee. I knew that there was a view that when your name comes up in a Meeting for Worship for the Business of Nominations, you have to believe that God has called you. So with that in mind I didn’t reject the idea out of hand. I hoped I was only one of several names that had been suggested. David spoke of a ‘Committee’.

Had God made a mistake? I could think of a lot of reasons why I was an unsuitable nomination, not only lack of skill and knowledge but the practical issue that I am unable to travel away from home due to a chronically sick husband. After exchanging a few emails with David and asking a lot of questions, I finally rang Tessa and then Cathy herself.

I learned that Cathy has decided to lay down being an organiser of the tapestry. She has made a magnificent contribution but now she has other creative pursuits she wishes to follow. How could I argue with that? Wasn’t it someone else’s turn?

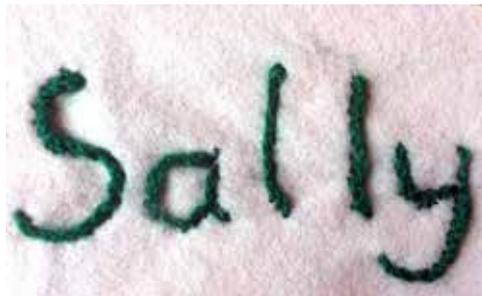
When I spoke to Tessa we agreed that we did need more people on this ‘committee’. We do need someone who can travel around the states, running workshops, going to Yearly Meeting, encouraging



the stitchers. So I agreed to take on the job, on the condition that we asked Nominations to try to find more people, specifically someone who could travel.

I do feel quite embarrassed by this nomination. I did have nights when I woke up thinking, ‘What have I done!’

Here is my background in the tapestry story: Cathy and Tessa came to our meeting - the Devonport Recognised Meeting. We learned the Quaker stitch and made our name tags. I got very excited and went away to design a panel. My panel is about the environmental struggle to save Tasmanian forests and references James Backhouse’s visit to north west Tasmania, so beautifully describing the rich wet forests he found here. These are our forests which we have been involved in saving, these, James Backhouse’s forests. My panel, “Cherish our place” is still in it’s draft – (pictured overleaf).



Cathy and Tessa decided we needed a nudge so they gave us a panel which had already been designed by someone else. A member of our meeting went to Yearly Meeting and got it onto

the calico and attached the wool to the calico. We ordered a lot of wool directly from England. We all started stitching. When I say ‘all’ I mean three of us. Sadly the others are no longer involved.

I got a big boost last summer when I was supported by TRM to attend the Silver Wattle workshop for a week, saw the other completed panels, and met other inspiring stitchers. I understood the very powerful outreach that the tapestry provides, concentrating our Australian Quaker story into pictures and very few words. It is wonderful.

So I am ready.

What I can offer is enthusiasm. I am experienced in working with groups. I am good at not being a



martyr, delegating, supporting others. I have been a teacher and a political organiser most of my life. I have been a Quaker since 1990. My stitching skills are rudimentary but then, Cathy is still around and there are plenty of others involved in the project who can also step up to teach others. Tessa always tells the story about how she knew nothing about embroidery and found herself launching the Australian Quaker Tapestry project.

Tessa and I have started conversations. We have ideas. I will talk to you soon.



Sally watching Tessa at the Silver Wattle workshop last year.

Visit to Perth

Cathy Davies and Tessa Spratt
October-November 2016

AT THE END OF YM, it was decided that the larger proportion of completed panels would go with the Western Australian attenders to be shown in the Mt. Lawley Meetinghouse in Perth. They have been shown there for a number of months.

WARM were very keen that Tessa and Cathy go to WA to describe the panels already there as well as the ones which have been completed since. With the generous assistance of *The Thanksgiving Fund*, Cathy and Tessa flew there at the end of October for a period covering two weekends.

Over the first weekend we held a workshop covering embroidery techniques, (which their exemplary embroidery groups have shown to those interested), and demonstrating things they were unclear about.

On the first Sunday after Meeting for Worship we showed in greater detail the latest completed panels. A panel from Gippsland, Victoria was finalized shortly after Yearly Meeting. It depicts Young Friends travelling to France shortly after WW1 to assist rebuilding the farms structure there.

One of the vignettes shows a bomb in a field with an Australian Quaker tractor driver ploughing around it. This panel was stitched by Anne Walker, grand daughter in law of Martin Walker who took the photographs this panel was based on.

On the Thursday we were driven, thanks to Beth Harcourt, to Albany where on Saturday we held a public display in Albany library. This is the first public showing we have had and over the three hours we were there a number of people came to talk to us about them. At least they will not consider us Quakers obsolete!

On Sunday we went to Denmark, WA where Quakers use a magnificent little mud-built building as a Meetinghouse. Over twenty Embroiderers



Guild members as well as locals were invited to come and see our display. One assured me afterwards that she intended to come to our Meetings for Worship. This Outreach is one reason we are doing what we are doing.

We were immensely grateful for and impressed with the enormous amount of generous and kindly assistance we were given by local WARM members throughout our stay.

On our five hour return to Perth we made a decision that when presenting the panels we would strive to show the Quaker values behind each panel, perhaps emphasizing the "SPICES" or the Advices which led the designers.

Whilst in WARM Beth Harcourt began a new panel which will probably be the main introduction to all the panels. Headed "*Walking in the Light*" it will show Australian Quakers love of country and demonstrate the Australian Advice #47, "*We live in a land of unique grandeur and beauty harsh and majestic, but at the same time fragile.*" It should be a delight to see.



Insurance

WE ASKED STANDING COMMITTEE to consider the insurance of these panels.

We currently have fourteen panels, and more than ten are being worked on, so more are added constantly. Whilst we are aware that it is extremely difficult to place a price on them, we wonder if they should be covered by insurance. The AYM Public Insurer, ANSVAR, does not cover them.

The AYM Secretary assures us that each RM should have their own insurance coverage covering us whilst at a Meetinghouse but this also does not cover the panels. Nor are they covered while being kept in someone's home. The AYM Secretary and Alan Clayton are investigating insurance whilst the panels are in someone's home or when left in a Meetinghouse where there is no-one living permanently. They also need insurance when posting from place to place. If these panels are to be sent around the country, as is suggested by some meetings, we need to solve this problem. At this stage, we do not recommend they be kept in a permanent place.

PS. ANSWER PLEASE

This is the first response of the valuer "If you had to estimate, how many hours would you estimate that it takes for an artist to complete ONE panel?"

You can break it down by **time for design + time for stitching + time for meeting** to discuss the panel with others, etc.

Please send Tessa (tessas@optusnet.com.au) your estimate – then we can put them all together and take an average of estimates.



The Dunera Boys – A Tapestry Panel for Australia

www.quaker-tapestry.co.uk

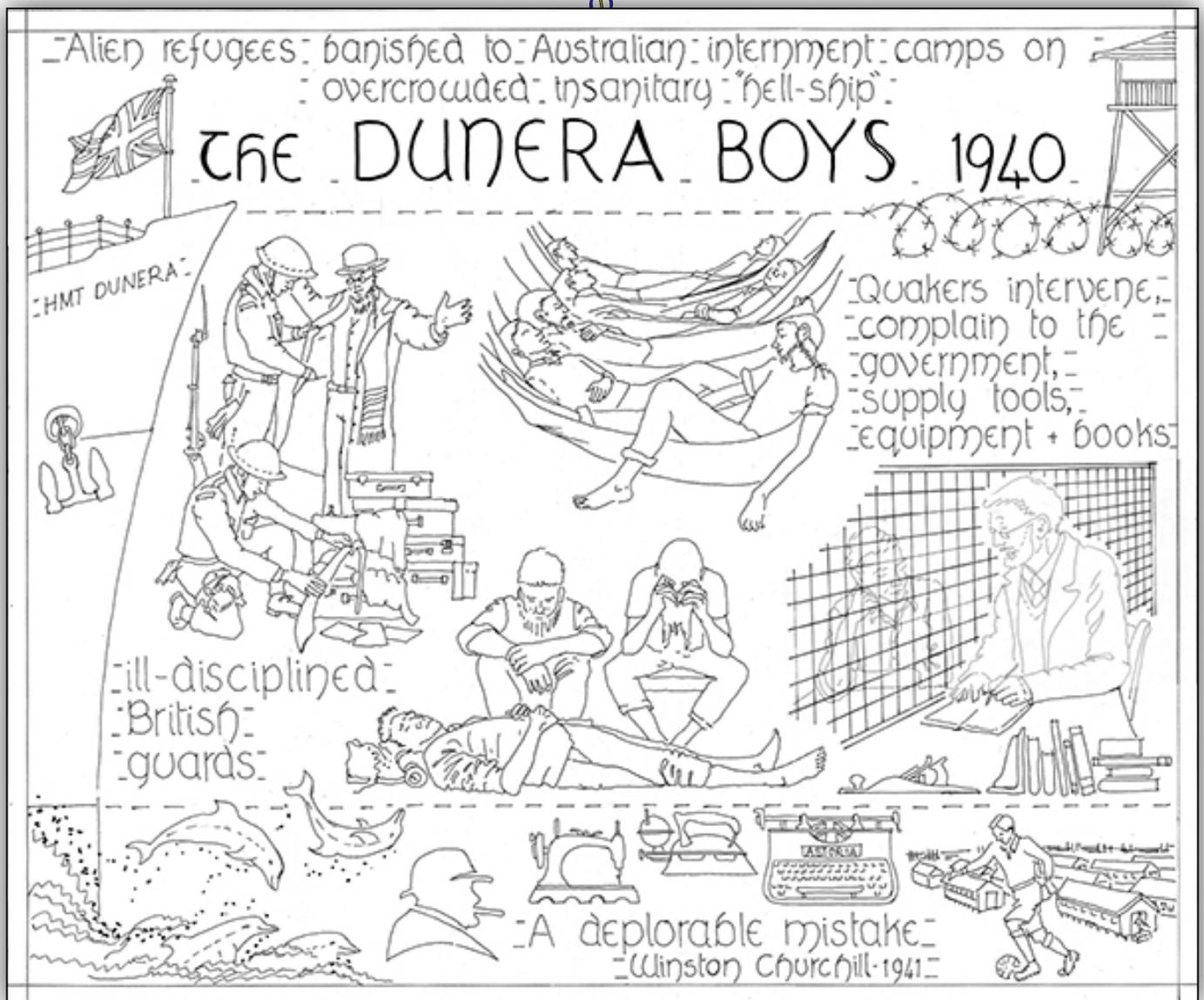
BACK IN 2015, THE AUSTRALIAN QUAKER TAPESTRY PROJECT INVITED US TO CREATE A PANEL ABOUT 'THE DUNERA BOYS'. The idea was that the panel be designed and stitched in Kendal to reciprocate the panel 'Elizabeth Fry and the Patchwork Quilts', which the Australian Quakers stitched for us. However 'The Dunera Boys' was a not a subject familiar to us.

After reading a short synopsis Roy Wilcock, Bridget's partner and Quaker Tapestry volunteer, became enthused with the idea. Tasked with encapsulating this scandalous episode in British history onto an embroidered panel, Roy embarked on a detailed research of the events that befell the boys which enabled him to come up with the final design (drawn by Bridget)

A connection needed to be made to explain the Quaker involvement in the story. How did Quakers respond to the refugee situation? What practical help was put into place and how did they challenge the Governments in the UK and in Australia?

So how can such a story be reduced down to a few key images and words? A difficult task but there were strong elements throughout which were destined to become part of the final design; the heading at the top gives a brief introduction to what the panel is about leading viewers into the story, the ship with the name Dunera on it, a floating prison that housed the brutality shown to the detainees by the British army guards escorting them on their journey.

The panel goes on to show hope and friendship offered by the Quakers in Australia, and later when the story broke in Britain. The two people talking through a mesh screen depicts Quakers talking to internees in the camp and detailed along the bottom of the panel are the things that Quakers



This is the panel which has been designed by British Friends and which they will stitch. It is thought that the word 'British' should be taken out when describing the "ill disciplined guards" - as no doubt the Australian guards were bad too.

gave them to break the monotony, typewriters, books, irons, carpentry tools and shoes to play football in. Dolphins in the foreground represent freedom and when it's stitched the waves beneath them will have lots of colour in them reflecting the multifaceted parts of who these boys were.

The panel will soon be started by our Projects Half Done group and it will be accompanying some of our existing panels on Roadshows this year in Taunton and London where it will answer

everybody's favourite question "Is the Quaker Tapestry finished?"

Roy's booklet will be available to read via our website once the panel is underway and we would like to offer our thanks to Roy for all his hard work in unpicking the story of The Dunera Boys and showing Quaker Tapestry Museums dedication in paying true homage to their story in our collaboration with the Australian Quaker Tapestry.



Spiritual Comfort in the Mountains

EACH YEAR IN FEBRUARY, Wilma Davidson goes on a silent retreat. She finds embroidering a very meditative occupation during this time.

Last year, Wilma worked on a fairly new panel “*The Greening of Broken Hill*” (Albert and Margaret Morris were responsible for this – both Friends.) The year before, Wilma started with *The Rajah Quilt*.

This year, we had a bit of a search and eventually Bairnsdale offered their precious panel, “*Spiritual Comfort in the Mountains*.” This panel was designed from “**this we can say**” 2.60 and tells the story of J J Neave who travelled to Omeo over the Bogong High Plains during the snow season. He

became lost and had no matches with him, but still recorded in his journal that he “*Spent the night in the arms of a comfortable gum tree*”. Next morning, he found a hostel and they gave him some matches.

Britain Yearly Meeting was being held concurrently and Joseph James felt the presence of those attending Yearly Meeting upholding him.

One of the lovely benefits of this position is the gorgeous stories people bring to our attention. Heather Stuart, who leads the Bairnsdale Group, felt that anyone who could phrase such an experience so positively had to be immortalized in a panel. Incidentally, Anne Walker who stitched the panel on the front cover, did all the lettering on this panel. Anne lives in Gippsland.

