

Friends in Stitches

The Australian Quaker Narrative Embroidery

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<https://www.quakersaustralia.info/Stitches>

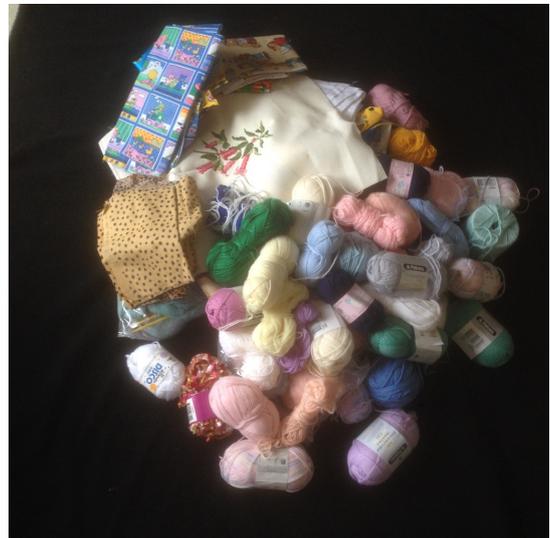
The Joy of Decluttering

By Deborah Schrader

Decluttering is very popular at the moment and, for once, I'm on trend. Having started on my house in December, at Easter I finally reached the craft room. Here's how I sorted out the mess.

1. Craft magazines and books. I've collected these avidly but reality belatedly set in. No, I will never do most of the projects that originally attracted me. I culled around half the magazines, photocopying odd pages that I thought would still be useful. The magazines were divided between a local library that has a magazine swap box (they disappeared within a week) and the Embroiderers Guild. The books have been donated to the Oxfam bookfair.
2. Materials. Scraps that I thought might be useful have been collected into a scrap box. Oddments of yarn and fabric that I no longer want have gone to a local craft group that makes items for sale to support the Royal Children's Hospital. Op shops will also accept them.
3. Unfinished projects. This was the hardest area to deal with but I found some useful advice on a knitting blog –

Pieces started in various workshops have been mounted and will be retained as samples. No need to be too precious about these either. I'm the only one who'll ever use them and I won't live another hundred years. They don't need to be stored to conservation standard.



You don't have to finish everything! Accept that you got pleasure from a project you started and, perhaps, learnt a new technique. If you've lost interest, leave it at that. Maybe unravel it.

For embroidery projects, I've made up a kit with the original instructions that will go to the Embroiderers Guild for their annual Paddy's Market. Someone else might like to finish it.

There are also the projects that have been stitched but not made up. The very small ones I've made into cards. (And, of course, scrap paper/fabric collages can make attractive cards too.) The larger ones have gone to the craft group where they will be made into bags etc and sold for the hospital.

Finally, I've actually managed to finish a few of the items that didn't need much more done! The almost-done bits have been stored together and will be polished off at the rate of 1 a week or 1 a month, whatever works. The main

thing is that there is now a plan to get through them however slowly.

Decluttering has a definite spiritual dimension that's worth thinking about. It doesn't just simplify possessions but action as well. Accumulating activities, especially ones I know I'll never complete satisfactorily, is as pernicious as filling my home with unnecessary stuff. Decluttering really has been a joy.

Holiday Snaps from London

by Sally O'Wheel

I am composing this newsletter in my Budget apartment in Bayswater, London. It is hot. I came to Britain Yearly Meeting. What a blast it was to be in Friends House for the first time. The Yearly Meeting had a theme of privilege and inclusion, focussing on the ways some people are excluded from our Society and how we can change that. So to name it up: I am privileged by being white and I grew up in a house where there were more than 50 books. I have the privilege of education and I do not struggle with money. This allows me time and energy to be engaged in a frivolous pursuit like embroidery. As I was at Friends House I was thinking quite a lot about my Quaker heritage and I did acknowledge that the Godlee family had traded in coal so they benefited from the appalling working conditions of women and children in 19th century mines. In Australia they inhabited stolen Kauna land in South Australia.

I was disappointed to find absolutely no Kendal Tapestry presence at Britain Yearly Meeting. I took a heap of cards which I sold to the bookshop. And I did buy a book about the tapestry and some book marks to bring home.

So my plan to fill this newsletter with pictures from Yearly meeting has come to a grinding halt. However, since Yearly Meeting i have been out and about being a tourist in London and have snapped pictures of embroidery and tapestry where even I came across it.



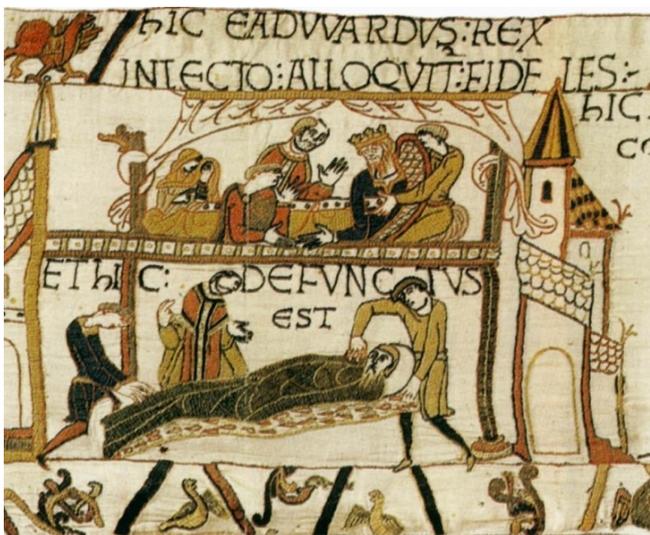
Friends House Euston Road: A base for worship, a place to eat, a place to meet and a base for action

On the plane to Singapore, I was reading a fantastic book about the Bayeux Tapestry, by Carolla Hicks. Her suggestion is that the work was initiated by Edith, the widow of Edward, the Confessor and the sister of Harold. That's why half of it is about Harold, a story she would have known from his own account. She argues convincingly that Edith had the skills and the contacts to organise the design and stitching of the tapestry. She ran the Royal embroidery workshops that produced textiles for the church as well as for Edward's clothes of state. She had a deep understanding of embroidery and its potential to tell a story. The author gives a comprehensive picture of how embroidery functioned in nunneries and I loved this paragraph: 'The enjoyment that religious women clearly obtained from such work aroused anxieties in male clerics. In 747 the Council of Clovesho recommended that nuns should spend more time on singing psalms and reading religious

texts endless on sewing.' It did make me think of certain Principal's prohibition of knitting in staff meetings and indeed this paragraph from the BYM notes:

'The Quaker business method is a discipline in which all present should be focusing on worship and discernment of the matter at hand. Please avoid any activity that detracts from this discipline. This includes knitting...'

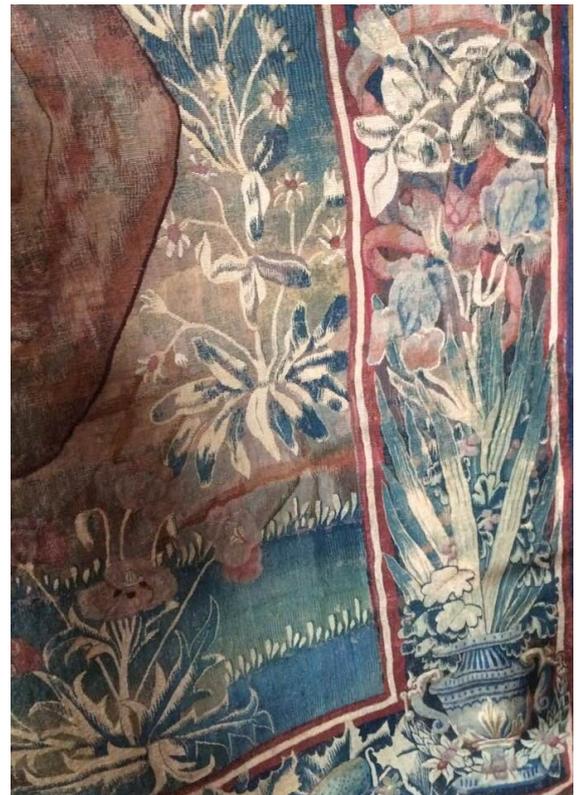
Sadly, I managed to leave that book on the plane when I alighted in Singapore. I will finish it in the Kindle format.



This is the death of Edward. Edith is depicted at the end of the bed.



We went to Hampton Court.



Henry VIII had 2,000 tapestries by the time he died. They were changed every week. Only 30 survive. This is a detail that struck my eye, showing iris and poppies.

One day I caught the train to Pewsey and then the bus to the ancestral home of my Primitive Methodist agricultural labouring family. I found the 14th Century church and sat outside wondering about it all. A woman went into the church to check on the flowers and I found out that I could go in too. There were embroidered cushions that the congregation used when kneeling on the cold stone floors.

Best wishes, Sally in Bayswater, UK.

