



Friends in Stitches

The Australian Quaker Narrative Embroidery
Australian Quaker History in Crewel Embroidery

Hello Friends in Stitches,

This is the June '17 Newsletter. I am going put out a short monthly newsletter. We used to do this but haven't for a few years.

Website

Barney Reynolds and I are working on getting our website up. We need a lot of photographs so if you can take some of your panel in progress that would be helpful. Close ups would be good so we can see your excellent stitches!

Panels in progress

Beth Harcourt's panel in progress: *Walking in the Light*. Isn't it fabulous? Beth will be at Yearly Meeting,



This drawing by James Backhouse will be incorporated into my *Cherish our Place* panel. Notice the tiny James kneeling on a fallen log. I am preparing this design ready for Yearly Meeting so that I can draw it onto the calico and bring it home ready for stitching. Whoop whoop!

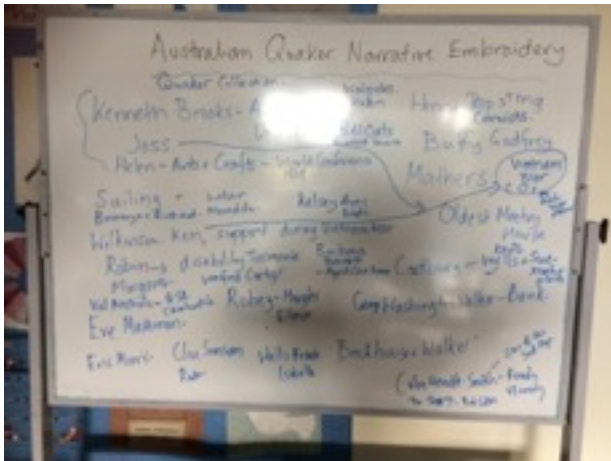
Friends in Stitches, the next steps in Tasmania.

It was a treat to meet with Friends when I came to Hobart on the 21st of April.

We have finished one panel in Tasmania, the beautiful Francis Cotton panel. The Friends School panel is in progress and in the north, I am stitching the *Elizabeth Fry Retreat*, which is about an institution in Victoria. Meanwhile other Regional meetings are completing their 5th or 6th panel. I visited Friends in Stitches in South Australia when I was there recently and

found them sitting on their hands, having completed six panels and not wanting to get too far ahead of the rest of us. This made me think that my next job as co-ordinator of the Embroidery project, should be to get more happening in Tasmania, my own Meeting.

Here is photo of the white board of all our ideas.



From these ideas I have drawn up a bit of a list, some more formed than others.

1. Convict Quakers: Backhouse and Walker visited lots of convicts during the 5 years they were in Van Diemen's Land. They talked to them at Macquarie Harbour, on road gangs and at free settlers' farms where convicts worked. Bill Oats says in *A Question of Survival* that 22 people connected to the Tasmanian meeting were convicts. He writes in detail about three of them. Abraham Flowers, Henry Propsting and Abraham Davy, who became stalwart Friends in the meeting. One of the issues which Bill Oats highlights is the problems this brought for the Tasmanian Meeting, the first Australian meeting, something that was unprecedented in Quaker Meetings before. B & W were understanding and forgiving towards the convicts and encouraged them but some other members of the meeting were not so open minded and felt uncomfortable with worshipping with convicts. He tells one story about someone who was applying for membership and one of the appointed visitors was an ex-convict, which they found unacceptable. When B &

W left Tasmania, ex-convicts were sometimes disowned for trivial matters and Bill says it wouldn't have happened had B&W been on hand. Queensland Friends have a panel of B&W visiting a prison, so our panel needs to focus on the fact of convicts joining the Society and making up a big part of the first meeting. Convict Quakers were also an issue in Sydney Meeting.

2. George Washington Walker married Sarah Mather and came back to Hobart to settle. He started the bank which became the Tasmanian Savings Bank. The bank was situated in his draper's shop. So you could do your banking, buy a bonnet and a dress and also a Bible and sign the Pledge all in the one stop shop. I can see the inside of that shop on a panel. I think George Walker should have his own panel, apart from Backhouse, considering the big role he played in the Tasmanian Meeting.

3. Are you able to contemplate your death? Buffy Godfrey was a prominent Tasmanian who ran a TV cooking show. When she died, about 10 years ago, her sons were charged with her murder. In fact, they took turns to watch over her as she died from self administered medications.. The Advice and Query continues: 'Accepting the fact of death, we are freed to live more fully.' Buffy lived fully and she chose the time and manner of her death.

4. Tasmanian Friends involvement in various public worthy organisations: eg Kenneth Brooks started Adult Education, Colin Wendel Smith started Australian Family Planning and University of the Third Age in Tasmania. They let their lives speak. And 'Tried to discern new growing points in social and economic life....and lots of A & Q #36 or #37.

5. Vietnam. There were a number of young men, (eg Joss Brooks who stowed away on a ship going to England,) in the Hobart Meeting who were conscientious objectors and others in the meeting who supported them: Ken Wilkinson, Richard Meredith and

Kenneth Brooks. Others represented Quakers at protest marches and public meetings. No doubt this is true of every meeting in Australia. They could be put together.

6. Disability and the work of Robin and Margaret Wilkinson Or maybe this could fit in with #4.

7. The first Australian Quaker meeting. In Bill's book he says that Tasmania was a unique meeting being made up of 3 distinct groups: the Convicted, the Convinced and the Disowned. (9 were disowned - a lot when you consider the smallness of the meeting) Except for B & W there were no long term birth right Friends to be a steadying force. They often struggled with personality issues. Maybe this is 3 panels: the convicts, the convinced - like the Mathers - and the disowned. Or maybe it is one panel representing those three groups around a depiction of the first meeting house in Murray Street?

8. The Quaker Collection at the University of Tasmania is the biggest collection of Quaker archives in the southern hemisphere.

9. Bill Oats and the story of how he brought 400 children to Australia on a ship from France during the 2nd World War. There is so much one could say about Bill, but I think this story has the element of drama needed for a good panel!

10. Elinor Mobey's embroidery. Just because it *is* an embroidery, valued by the National Gallery - a precedent for the Quaker Narrative Embroidery. We could stitch a replica! Design all done! Wouldn't it be lovely to stitch! Thanks to Pat Mavromatis for sending me the photograph and kind letter. Pat inherited this embroidery and was approached by the National Gallery (who said it was worth \$10,000,) asking her to donate it to the gallery. Linor, as she was known and her sister Margie were birthright Friends, descended from both Cottons and Mathers. Linor was a sewing teacher at Friends School and both of them organised a huge clothing collection which they sent to Europe after the Second World War. Margaret Bywater also remembers them and is interested in working on this panel. How delightful!

This gives us heaps of ideas to carry forward.

Now we need to find Friends who would like to design a panel. Are you an artist or even if you don't see yourself as one, perhaps you would like to have a go at designing a panel? Be inspired. Let your Light shine and lets see where it leads!

Best wishes,

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Below, Linor Mobey's embroidery, now in the National Gallery

