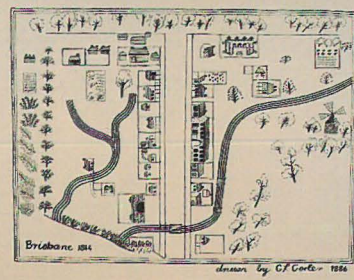
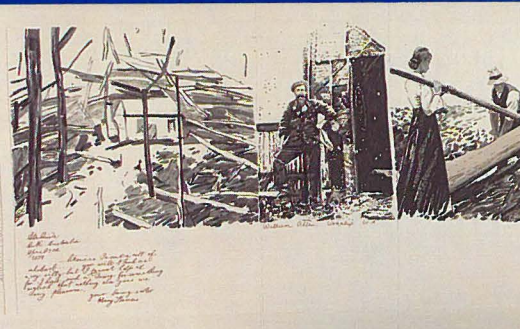


THE PARLIAMENT HOUSE EMBROIDERY



A work of many hands



Handwritten text in cursive script, likely a note or description related to the construction scene.



THE PARLIAMENT HOUSE EMBROIDERY



The Parliament House Embroidery Committee

An AGPS Press publication
Australian Government Publishing Service
Canberra

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

In August 1986 the Parliament House Embroidery Committee decided to write a book about the making of the Parliament House Embroidery. A publication committee was set up consisting of Phyl Dudgeon, Robyn Duncan, Ann Featherston, Judith Follett, Dorothy Hyslop, Anne de Cure, Wanda McMahon, Jacqueline Marsh, Sue Mickleburgh and Kitty Peisley. The committee compiled the book from the information and written contributions they collected from the State and Territory guild members, the designer and the national co-ordinator. A contribution received from Loma Rudduck about the early history of the project gave the committee a good start. The committee hopes this descriptive account of the embroidery project will interest not only the many embroiderers involved in the work but also the general public.

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Embroidery is a timeless art with timeless appeal.

We live in an age which sometimes seems to be dominated by passing fads and enthusiasms. The wonders worked by modern technology can occasionally seduce us, but I wonder how many of the pastimes and artforms so created will be able to pass the test of time. Embroidery has certainly passed that test with, appropriately enough, flying colours.

For centuries now embroidery has held a fascination for people at all levels of society. From the fabulous robes of royalty to tea-cosies in the humblest of kitchens, embroidery has made its mark on society and on all our lives. It is this immensely rich tradition which makes the Parliament House Embroidery so appropriate.

The Parliament itself is a tradition going back hundreds of years and, while both the institution and the democratic system it symbolises have their detractors, there is little doubt that both have been of inestimable value in shaping the civilised society in which we live.

It is singularly apt that a representative work of the civilised and historically-rich craft of embroidery should adorn a building which symbolises the civilised and historically-rich democratic system

Eight years of dedicated work have gone into this remarkable project. Almost five hundred members of embroiderers' guilds have been involved in working the embroidery which this book describes and celebrates in admirable detail.

Just as the Parliament is a national institution, so the preparation of the embroidery has involved a national effort. A tremendous amount of co-ordination has obviously gone into this labour of love and congratulations must go to everyone associated with the Parliament House Embroidery Committee.

I am sure that all who walk through the Great Hall of our new Parliament House will be deeply impressed by what they see. I am sure also that a great many will be sufficiently interested to obtain this book and learn more about the work which went into it.

The Parliament House Embroidery is a gift to the nation. I am sure that the nation will be deeply grateful for it.



The Honourable Joan Child, MP
The Speaker of the
House of Representatives
Canberra



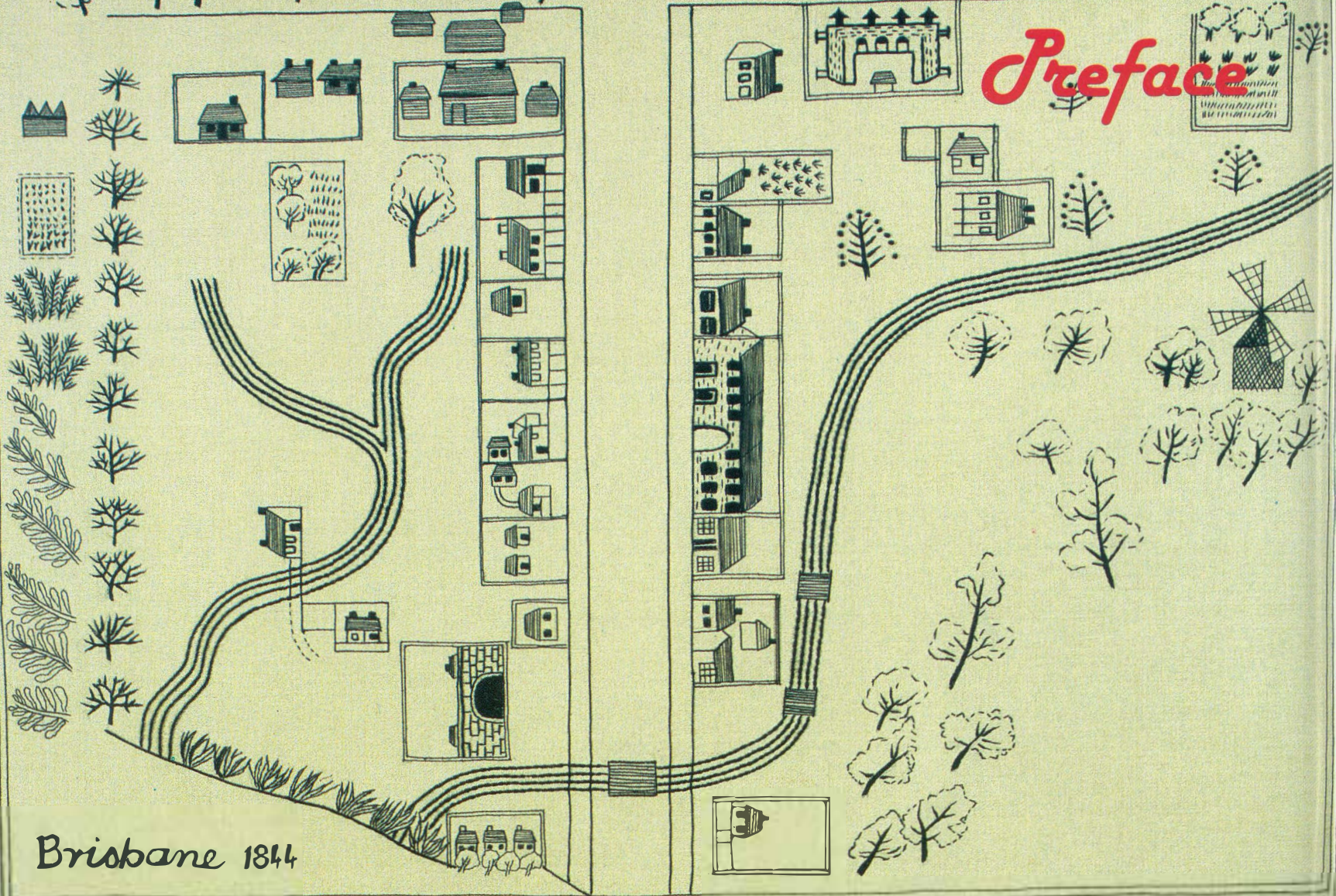


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...Manoo maaaa arganangam Wungudanjama arganangama nat

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Preface



Brisbane 1844

drawn by G. F. Gerler 1886

The Parliament House Embroidery, one of the key commissioned works in the new building, is the fruition of an inspired idea by Dorothy Hyslop of the ACT Embroiderers' Guild.

Very early in the project the guilds proposed to the presiding officers of the Parliament a major embroidery to which guild members around Australia would contribute their skills in a true community gesture.

The proposal was adopted enthusiastically. Planning and administration of the work became the responsibility of the Parliament House Construction Authority's Art Advisory Committee, working in conjunction with Mitchell, Giurgola & Thorp Architects.

The committee determined that the design for the embroidery should be as significant in quality as the craft skills which would be devoted to the fabrication of the work. The committee proposed that an artist should conceive the overall design for the embroidery and then work closely with the guilds in the development of the design and throughout the fabrication process.

In a limited competition, six artists were invited to submit designs from which the committee selected the proposal of Adelaide artist Kay Lawrence, whose response was outstandingly successful in meeting the terms of the design brief.

The overall program of commissioning and acquisition of works for the new Parliament House centres on the interaction of people with the vast land of Australia from the earliest Aboriginal occupation to recent times.

Kay Lawrence developed this concept in her design by compiling successive images, ranging from the Aboriginal viewpoint through European exploration and settlement to the contemporary reality of rural and urban life.

The work is characterised by a unified and contemplative approach distinguished by the artist's freely flowing line and subtle gradations of colour application. The success of the collaboration is revealed in the finished embroidery, which retains the 'painterliness' of the original design with its watercolour washes, delicate rendering in colour pencil and strength of photomontage.

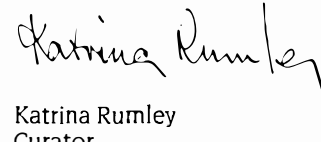
The art of embroidery is seen in the reception hall work through the lyrical melding of colour, tone and line, the avoidance of overstatement and the retention of the quality and spontaneity of expression of the original design.

The embroidery, as one of a number of important commissions for the new Parliament House, was produced within the framework of commissioning established by the Parliament House Construction Authority.

This framework provided for equitable contracts between artists and the authority, close collaboration with the architects, reasonable fees for design, co-ordination of fabrication and installation and assurance of long-term conservation of the work on display.

This very generous gift of the Embroiderers' Guilds of Australia, the work of hundreds of skilled craftspeople, now hangs, a full 16 metres long, on the first floor of the reception hall in space allowing visitors a close-up view.

The embroidery is a vital expression of Australian life and culture which finds its perfect home in a building designed for the people as well as the Parliament.



Katrina Rumley
Curator
Parliament House Construction Authority



Introduction



Welaide
South Australia
April 7th
1859

... likewise I want a root of
rhubarb you will think me
very silly but I cannot help it
for I have such a desire for something
English that nothing else gives me
any pleasure.
your loving sister
Mary Thomas

This book details the process and completion of an historic project for all of Australia: the Parliament House Embroidery. Its importance lies in the fact that it was executed by a large and diverse group of people — all volunteer members of embroiderers' guilds across Australia.

There were no precedents for this kind of project so the embroiderers and the designer had to work closely together and examine and debate every aspect of the work. The risks for the embroiderers were many — they feared that a consensus might not be reached, or that 'easy' decisions would be made which would ignore the real demands of the work, or that the vast technical, design and conservation aspects of the project would overwhelm them.

To the credit of the guilds and the Parliament House Embroidery Committee that directed the project, these fears were unfounded. Despite considerable (and justifiable) concerns about undertaking such a large work, the guild members attacked the project with a determination, tenacity, and modesty of approach which greatly impressed all of us at the architects' office who were associated with the embroidery. Any initial reticence among guild members to take on difficult areas of the project, such as long-term conservation requirements, quickly gave way to enthusiasm when knowledge and expertise was gained through thorough research and practice.

Those of us involved in the formation of the art program wanted to make the embroidery an intrinsic part of that program rather than adding it later to a completed

building. To that end, when we wrote the design brief in the architects' office, we said that the embroidery should become a part of the sequence of the other major artworks in the building. We also said the embroidery should be placed in the public first floor gallery of the reception hall so that it could be viewed at close hand yet still be protected from exposure to sunlight and other high ultraviolet light levels.

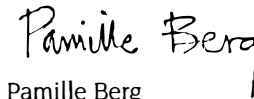
In addition to tailoring the design brief to allow the embroidery to fit in with the art program and the larger architectural context of the building, we sought to create a close association between the guilds' project and the design of its surrounding spaces. This attempt to link together the two design processes stemmed from our belief in the benefits of a 'cross-fertilisation' among design disciplines, in both content and form. Put simply, we believed that the building would gain from architects collaborating with designers and embroiderers, rather than all working in isolation.

It is particularly appropriate that the embroidery is a gift to the Australian people. It is proof of the remarkable results that can be achieved through the democratic process of free discussion. The architects also believe the project proves that community art does not necessarily mean high enthusiasm and low aesthetic quality. It is no accident that the Parliament House Embroidery simultaneously possesses a freshness of approach and a mastery of technique. Both were consciously striven for when embroiderers sought to interpret the design in the best way.

The Art Advisory Committee and the Parliament House Embroidery Committee decided to invite artists who were not embroiderers to submit designs for the work. This was because we wanted to give the guilds an exciting challenge. Traditional stitching would have to be adapted and new methods used to create the embroidery. After some initial surprise among guild members that the embroidery would not simply use traditional stitch motifs, a wonderfully creative period ensued.

It is fitting that the guilds have written their own book about the making of the embroidery. They could have commissioned a professional writer but just as they tenaciously completed every phase of the embroidery on their own so they completed this book.

The embroidery will remain in the new Parliament House and will serve as evidence that the making of a cultural tradition is not a passive process of accretion, but an active and precise series of acts by many people working creatively and co-operatively together.



Pamille Berg
Art and Craft Co-ordinator
Mitchell, Giurgola & Thorp Architects



The Idea

How it all Started

In 1979 the Australian Parliament decided to build a new Parliament House which was to be completed in 1988, the bicentenary of European settlement in Australia. An international architectural competition was held in 1979 to select the design.

Members of the embroiderers' guild in Canberra were aware of the competition but they were nevertheless surprised when, at a meeting one morning, Dorothy Hyslop said, 'Why don't we make an embroidery for the new Parliament House?'

There was stunned silence but Dorothy pressed on, 'Each embroiderers' guild in Australia could do a piece and these could be joined together.' In a letter of 10 February 1980 to the president of the ACT Embroiderers' Guild, Dorothy wrote, 'Eight years is a short time to plan and execute a work of this kind . . . [but] many embroiderers would find it exciting [and] it could give great impetus to our craft.'

Dorothy thought of the embroidery as a gift to the nation and although the Canberra

guild was doubtful about the idea they sent the suggestion to the chairmen of the Joint House Standing Committee on the new Parliament House. An enthusiastic letter came back from the two chairmen — the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the late Sir Billy Snedden, and the President of the Senate, Sir Condor Laucke — accepting the gift. Through the Canberra grapevine the guild heard that the Joint House Standing Committee felt that the offer was like 'a breath of fresh air'.

So the idea launched in the ACT guild now had to be developed. The ACT guild wrote to the other guilds and asked them if they would be prepared to participate. All replied favourably.

On 26 June 1980 the winner of the Parliament House architectural competition was announced — the American firm of Mitchell, Giurgola & Thorp (the last partner being Australian). This gave embroiderers the fillip to concern themselves with the practicalities of organisation, design, materials and, of course, finance.

To take responsibility for the development of the project, a standing committee known as the Parliament House Embroidery [PHE] Committee was set up in the ACT on 27 October 1980. It was made up of talented needlewomen with good planning and organisational skills. Dorothy Hyslop's appointment as convenor, a position which she held for eight years, was a natural choice. Her faith in the embroidery, her confidence that Australian embroiderers would be willing and able to meet its challenge, and her remarkable negotiating skills proved invaluable to the committee.

As well as accepting responsibility for the management of the project, the PHE Committee, through its various sub-committees, conducted comprehensive investigations into questions of design, materials, suppliers, conservation practices, preservation techniques and costs. It also set up an archives sub-committee to keep accurate written records of the project and, in co-operation with the Parliament House Construction Authority, brought key

personnel to Canberra from time to time for briefing and discussion.

Without the uniting role of the PHE Committee, the project would have been impossible to control and co-ordinate. Despite the vast amount of work involved, most of the original members of the committee stayed with it until the project's completion. Their commitment, and that of others who contributed their particular skills, ensured the smooth operation and ultimate realisation of the project.

On 4 and 5 May 1981, meetings (the first of several involving interstate representatives) were held at the home of Loma Rudduck, the ACT guild's vice-president. Margaret Sydes represented Queensland, Peg Saddler represented South Australia and Ida Birchall represented Tasmania. Unfortunately, representatives from New South Wales, Northern Territory, Victoria and Western Australia were unable to attend. Decisions were made:

- to obtain a good design
- for each guild to pay for and provide its own fabric, threads and workmanship
- for the ACT guild to meet the administrative costs
- for the embroidery to be long and narrow so that it could be divided into several panels
- to use linen fabric and woollen threads and Australian materials wherever possible

This plan was then sent to the architects as they had asked to be kept informed of progress. The next year, 1982, was taken up with the problem of finding a suitable

embroidery design and also fund raising. Advice about fees was sought from the Crafts Board in case the guilds wanted to commission a designer.

What Kind of Embroidery and What Will it Cost?

Late in 1982 the architects appointed Pamille Berg from their New York office to be their art and craft co-ordinator. Shortly after her arrival she talked with Dorothy about the embroidery. Had the guilds thought about making, say, a large tablecloth for use on ceremonial occasions? Yes, the guilds had discussed this but had firmly preferred an artwork. The guilds wanted something for all to see, not a piece to be put away in a cupboard — although, of course, the reason why the *Bayeux Tapestry* has survived for so long is because it was displayed only on special occasions.

Pam Berg understood immediately the guilds' feelings on the matter and soon became one of their most ardent supporters. The PHE Committee were encouraged by her ability to persuade others that the guilds could undertake a significant work of art.

But still there was no design! In the end the PHE Committee decided that a limited number of accredited artists should be invited to submit design ideas. It was accepted that the winning designer would have to visit each guild to help members interpret the design and to monitor the standard of stitching. If the winning designer was not a trained embroiderer then this second task would be done by a 'national co-ordinator', who would need to be

specially appointed. Commissioning a designer, appointing a national co-ordinator and providing for them to travel around the guilds would require considerable funds in fees and airfares. Fortunately, guild members would provide free accommodation.

The PHE Committee also realised that when the work was finished it would need to be displayed in such a way that people could see it properly but not touch it. A protective glass case would be another costly item.

A budget was worked out by the committee which amounted to \$90 000 for fees and fares for the designer and a national co-ordinator, and the cost of the case. As there was no possibility of raising such an amount among embroiderers, the PHE Committee decided to ask for help from the Parliament House Construction Authority. It was known they had funds specifically intended for obtaining suitable artworks for the new building. A submission was made to the Parliament House Construction Authority in November 1982 which included a diagram to scale of the proposed 16 metre x 65 centimetre embroidery (although without the design!), samples of linens and woollen threads, and pictures of commemorative embroideries in overseas countries. In April 1983 the Construction Authority responded by agreeing to provide funds for the first stage of the embroidery proposal, that is to say, the funds to conduct a design competition.

An important aspect of the embroidery was its position in the building. In June 1983, at her Canberra office, Pam Berg spread out blueprints of the building and with Dorothy

looked for appropriate public spaces to display the embroidery. Individual panels along the curved wall? No — at the interstate meetings in May 1981 the embroiderers agreed they wanted to do one piece. What about the diningroom? This was a more public place but think of the pollution. Finally, the reception hall (now known as the Great Hall) was suggested. It had galleries either side and was a place of public access. That was it!

Dorothy said it was an awesome feeling making the decision for all the other embroiderers; naturally she wondered whether she had made the right one.

Materials and Techniques

Dorothy's idea in 1980 for a commemorative embroidery included a desire to provide a showpiece for Australian fabrics, threads and craftsmanship in a traditional type of pictorial needlework with stitches in wool threads on a linen-flax base. Investigations into sources of supply of materials began in 1981, three years prior to the design being chosen. Jean Wilson, an ACT guild member, enthusiastically led the research.

Choice of Fabric

As linen fabric is not manufactured in Australia, flax and synthetic mixtures of imported yarns from a local manufacturer were examined but were not considered suitable for large-scale embroidery purposes. Other linens were collected from overseas, mainly from Europe.

Wool was also considered as a base fabric but in March 1982, before the final choice of

fabric was made, the PHE Committee approached Josephine Carter, conservator of textiles at the Australian National Gallery. She recommended against wool as a base fabric because of the different climatic conditions under which the work was to be carried out. Of natural fibres, wool is the most reactive to differing levels of temperature and relative humidity.

The search was then refocused on linen fabrics. The PHE Committee discussed the commissioning of a locally handwoven cloth but this was found to be inappropriate both from a financial and a design point of view as there was a risk that a weave that was unsuitable for the design (still unknown at this stage) would be chosen.

More than twenty varieties of linens and several different types of threads, mainly woollen ones, were tested before a selection was presented to the Parliament House Construction Authority. Later, in November 1983, nearly all of the six artists who took part in the embroidery design competition indicated a preference for a 'Glenshee' linen twill, including Kay Lawrence.

Glenshee linen twill became the chosen fabric and in 1985 the PHE Committee located a supplier in Queensland who had a stock of the material. Forty metres were obtained and the bolts cut and pieces made available to each of the State and Territory guilds at the supervisors' conference held between 2 and 5 December 1985.

Preparation of the Fabric

The untreated linen was washed by groups in New South Wales, Tasmania and the ACT

and by a professional laundry service in Victoria. Guild members, in their homes, placed the linen in baths and arranged it in concertina folds, completely covering it with very hot water. When the water became cold it was drained away. The linen was then covered with quite warm water and washed, using 1 per cent soap mixture to 99 per cent tap water. Two rinses were necessary and in the final rinse distilled water was used.

After the washing, the linen was carefully lifted out of the baths and laid on plastic sheets, which were taped to the floor to prevent movement. The linen was pressed firmly against the plastic, keeping the grains very straight. Excess water was lightly mopped from the surface and edges. When half dry the linen was ironed on both sides.

Choice of Threads

Although not produced primarily for embroidery, wool threads from the Victorian Tapestry Workshop were sent, with the design brief, to the six artists who took part in the design competition. However, these could not be used in the final embroidery mainly because the Victorian Tapestry Workshop was not geared up to supply small quantities of threads on demand to Australia-wide locations. In the event, the PHE Committee found that Appleton's threads, made in England from Australian and New Zealand wools, were of high quality and provided an extensive range of colours and weight. For the images in the embroidery which had sharp lines and highlighted areas, cottons from the DMC range and synthetic threads were used.



ver again see the waving plains of mitchell grass or the rich and diverse

The Design

The Competition

The PHE Committee's idea was that the embroidery should be about the people who made Australia. They thought the design should include Aboriginal, European, Asian and Pacific migrations and be about settlement not exploration. As the theme for the reception hall was 'the land', the idea of 'settlement of the land' fitted in well.

In April 1983 the PHE Committee with the approval of the Art Advisory Committee began to make arrangements for holding an embroidery design competition. It was agreed that six artists would be offered a fee to produce a design for consideration by the Art Advisory Committee. The PHE Committee was to nominate three of the six artists and the other three were to be nominated by the representatives on the Art Advisory Committee of the Crafts Board of the Australia Council.

The PHE Committee invited the State and Territory guilds to send nominations and the names of twelve artists were suggested. Three were chosen by the PHE Selection

Committee, which comprised the PHE Committee together with Peg Saddler of South Australia and Elaine O'Neill, a member of the design sub-committee of the PHE Committee.

The brief for the competition was prepared in the architects' office by Pam Berg in November 1983 and was welcomed by the PHE Committee as a significant document that perceptively reflected the committee's thoughts.

The brief called for a design that could be embroidered conveniently in eight separate sections. It said that the embroidery would be placed on the wall of the first floor gallery of the reception hall to which visitors would have continual access. And, although it aimed to leave the designers as free as possible from unnecessary restraints, the brief also said the embroidery was to be an integral part of the sequence of artworks in Parliament House.

On 28 November 1983, the six chosen artists were brought to Canberra to be briefed in more detail. They met with Ian

Fowler from the Parliament House Construction Authority; Katrina Rumley, their curator; Pam Berg from Mitchell, Giurgola & Thorp; and Dorothy Hyslop from the guilds

At the architects' office Pam Berg described the other proposals for artworks and the colour schemes to be used in the building. It was during this session that the designers were fired with enthusiasm.

The entries for the design competition were submitted in May 1984 and an excited PHE Committee immediately met to judge them. The Art Advisory Committee's selection committee met in Sydney on 14 June 1984. Its members were:

Carl Andrew	Chairman and Art Advisory Committee member
Aldo Giurgola	Architect and Art Advisory Committee member
Hester Hopkins	Independent embroiderer
Dorothy Hyslop	Convenor of the Parliament House Embroidery Committee

Darani Lewers Art Advisory Committee member
 John McPhee Representing Mr James Mollison Director of the Australian National Gallery and Art Advisory Committee member
 Katrina Rumley Curator, Parliament House Construction Authority

Authority and the architects, I had no idea how complex it was going to be to produce a design for such an ambitious project.

It was only during the briefing by Pam Berg at the architects' office that I began to comprehend how the embroidery fitted into the scheme of the building and to realise the scope of the project involving hundreds of people all over Australia. Each of us found inspiration from Pam's clear exposition of the comprehensive plans that integrated all the artworks into the concept of the building.

The embroidery was conceived as one of a sequence of artworks for the monumental spaces of the Parliament building. More precisely, it was to be one of the two major works in the reception hall. A large tapestry designed by Arthur Boyd symbolising the land was to be the other one. The embroidery, on a more human scale, was to 'examine the concept of the Australian land and its impact upon the human values and lives of its inhabitants'.

As members of the eight State and Territory embroiderers' guilds were going to stitch the embroidery, it had to be designed so that it could be worked in eight parts, which would finally be joined and hung as one piece, 16 metres long and 65 centimetres high. Predominantly woollen

yarns were to be used on a linen ground and the stitching would be done by many people in each guild, in both city and country areas, working together on separate pieces. The design had to allow for these considerations.

Without Pam's capacity to convey the architects' vision for the building, and the infectious enthusiasm of the PHE Committee, it would have been an impossibly daunting task. As it was, I returned to Adelaide excited by the possibilities, tossing around in my head various ways of approaching the design.

The selection committee stated it was 'impressed by the standard of presentation of all submissions and the way the designers responded to the brief for the project'. It unanimously selected the work of Kay Lawrence and recommended to the Parliament House Construction Authority that Kay be commissioned as the designer. The selection committee considered Kay's design 'to be the most outstanding of all submitted, admirably fulfilling aesthetic and practical requirements'. It was agreed that her work showed flair and imagination in interpreting the theme of the brief. In terms of treatment, it was thought that 'the finished work would be of significance and most appropriate for the reception hall first floor gallery'.

The Designer on the Design

This is Kay's own account of her involvement with the project.

Briefing

When, with five other invited artists, I went to Canberra in November 1983 to meet the Parliament House Embroidery Committee and to be briefed by the Parliament House Construction

Development

The phrase in the brief that kept coming back to my mind was 'the land as conditioner of values'. Could my design illustrate the impact that Australian geography has had on the Australian character? I concluded that the landscape would have to be a central element in the design as, not only has it been a powerful force in our literature and art but also it has fundamentally affected the way we Australians see ourselves.

While I had often included landscape in my own work, this was the first time I thought of using the landscape as a means of expressing fundamental ideas about Australia. I knew it

① the land - Aboriginal response
European response.

② migration European sensibility - mapping
introduction of plants

③ exploring national response -
finding a balance
positive effects
negative effects

④ effects of weather - drainage
wheat, pastoral
sheep, cattle - at view.
overstocking
disturbance
of native grasses

peaks, introduction of plants, black
introduction of fumes, rabbits

Kay Lawrence's notes (above) and working drawings (facing page) show the development of the embroidery's theme

would take a great deal of research to familiarise myself with the history of Australian settlement to the point where I could develop my own point of view confidently. With the help of my friend, historian Margaret Allen, I drew up a reading list and spent three months reading and thinking and developing my approach.

I was greatly influenced by Geoffrey Bolton's book *Spoils and Spoilers* (George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1981) and his analysis of the conflict between the utilisation and exploitation of the land so important in our history.

I was surprised to discover, through my reading, the extent to which the landscape we take for granted as 'natural and untouched' has been altered by human intervention — European agriculture and buildings, displacement of indigenous plants and animals, tree-cutting and so on. I eventually decided to use such changes to the land in my design as a metaphor for the development of European settlement in Australia. The changes in the appearance of the land would symbolise the settlers' attempts to come to terms with their environment and to use the land properly.

Rather than focusing on the Europeans themselves, I decided to imply their presence. I wanted to indicate their way of life by showing the

changes they made to the land, the structures they built on it, and the plants and animals they introduced.

In developing the design, I kept in mind a statement by Bolton regarding 'the conflict between those who exploited the country to some preconceived economic goals and imported attitudes of mind, and those who sought to create a civilisation where human use of resources was compatible with a sense of identity with the land'.

I decided not to describe each of the States as a separate entity in the design. I thought it would be more appropriate in an embroidery for the Federal Parliament to illustrate the common experience of settlement through reference to images from all over Australia. I preferred to indicate a diversity of experience by using a variety of media and different examples to try to get away from the stereotypes that are often used to characterise the different States and Territories.

My approach to the design was decided when I had to select and draw up the images that would best communicate my ideas — that is, clearly and simply but without being simplistic. My first scribbled drawings show that I established the essential structure of the design quickly. However, I found that filling in the detail was a

painstaking task which involved discarding many more images than I expected. I wanted to use original source material — such as old maps, letters, paintings or photographs — as much as possible, but I first had to find them.

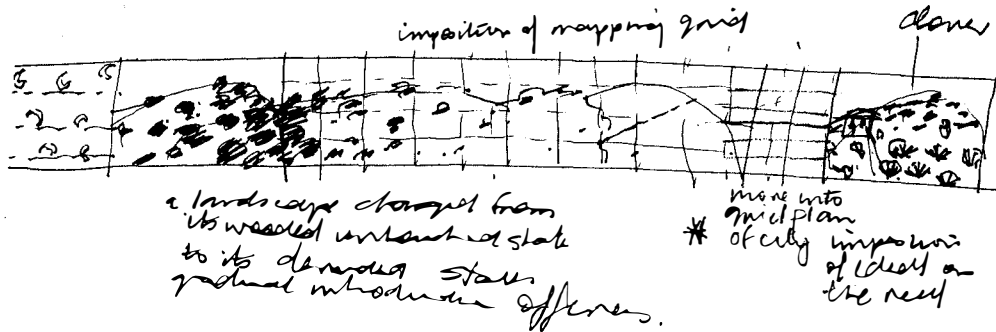
Once I obtained the items I wanted, I often had to re-draw and change their positions in my sketches so that, through their relationships to one another, the story would unfold.

I knew I would find the design much easier to control if it was smaller than the half-size drawing asked for in the competition brief. Drawing it up at one-fifth the size meant that the images were small enough to redraw and also to see the whole design at once — which was essential in order to maintain an overall visual rhythm.

I wanted to begin the embroidery with an image of the land before the arrival of the Europeans in 1788. That is, I wanted to suggest the presence of the Aborigines through their relationship with the environment as expressed through their language and art. I spent the whole of Easter 1984 in my studio struggling with cut-ups of my own watercolour sketches, postcards of Aboriginal art and photographs, trying to establish the beginning of the design. Once I got this right I knew the rest would follow relatively easily.

After many false starts, I eventually found the right combination: an Aboriginal petroglyph from the Flinders Ranges, a line from a story by Sam Woolagoodjah in the Worora language and part of a Papunya painting. When combined with other images of the land, these Aboriginal items imply a continuous landscape that runs right along the length of the design; it is disrupted by the alterations and developments of the Europeans, but is reaffirmed at the end.

During the next month as I slowly worked my way through the design, section by section, I began to see that I was dealing with a series of opposites or conflicts that, rather than being resolved, were often held in uneasy balance:



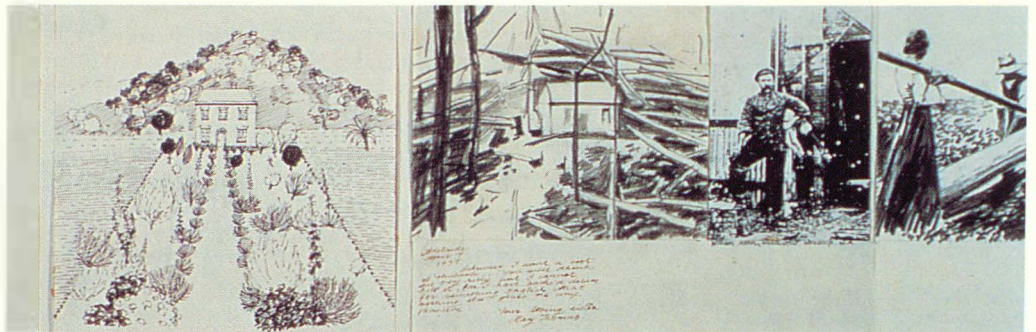
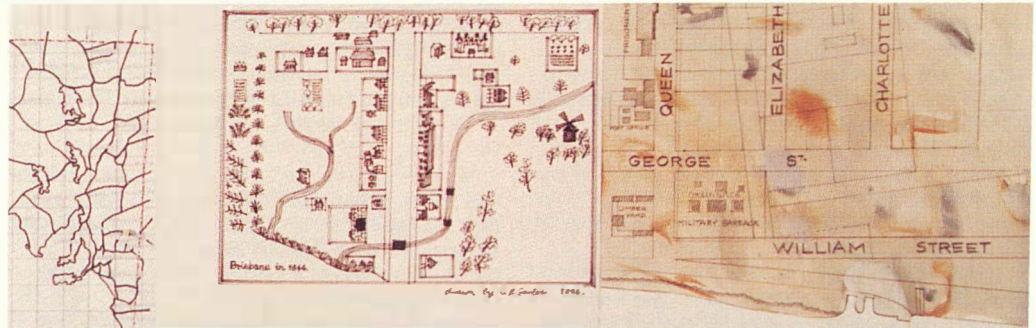
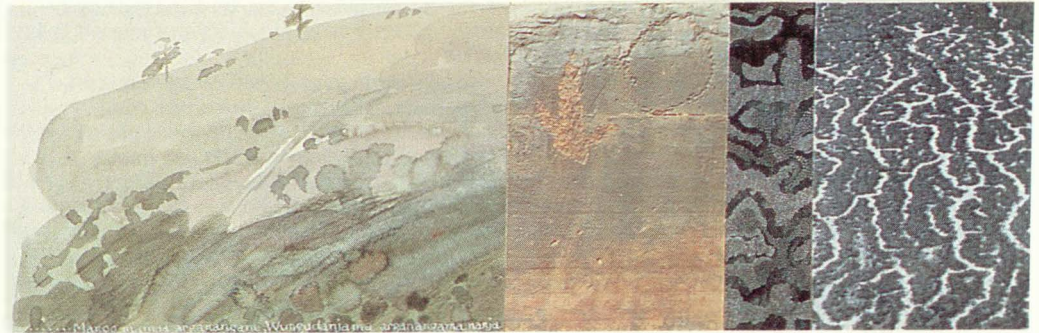
- an Aboriginal sense of oneness with the whole land opposed to the European attitude of private ownership
- the conflict generated by the differences between the old expectations the settlers brought with them and the realities they faced by way of terrain, climate and distance
- the conflict and the shifting ecological balance of indigenous against introduced species of plants and animals

To express this delicate balance of opposites as an underlying theme, I structured the design around two points of view — the general and the particular — distant views as in the landscapes to close-ups as in the detail of Mitchell grass. This gives a rhythmic shift along the length of the design from distant views to close ups, which is repeated in the shift from monochrome to colour.

Interpretation

I deliberately put off thinking about how the design would be interpreted into embroidery until I had completed it. As I was not an embroiderer, I thought it best to concentrate on expressing my ideas as well as I could on paper before beginning to consider how the components would be stitched. Of course, some images seemed to demand a particular approach. The lively naivety of Sam Burns's painting *Hungry Rabbits: Thackaringa 1890 Drought*, with its flat colour and strongly repetitive design, cried out to be appliquéd. I felt confident that the wonderful range of coloured threads and embroidery techniques would more than adequately interpret each of the images and yet still retain the qualities of the original drawing. I felt sure the embroiderers' skills would imitate the fluidity of watercolour as easily as they would keep the precision of ink lines.

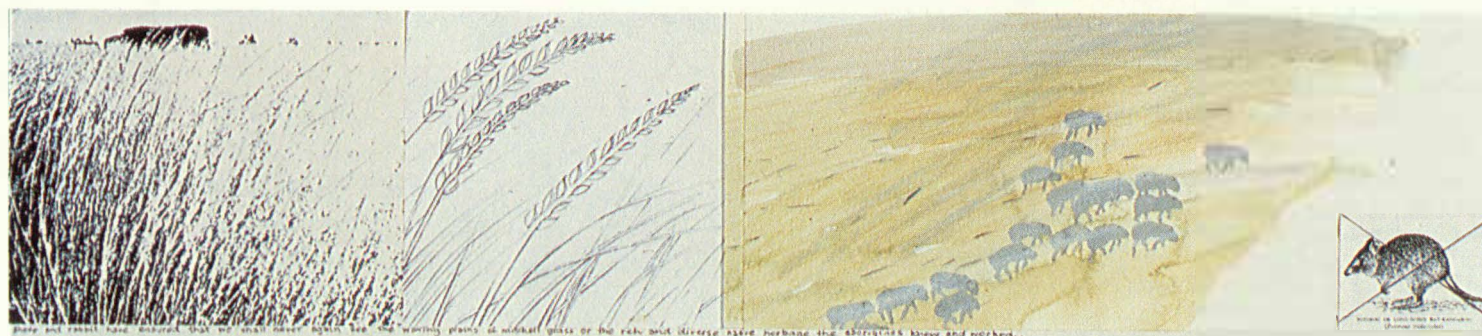
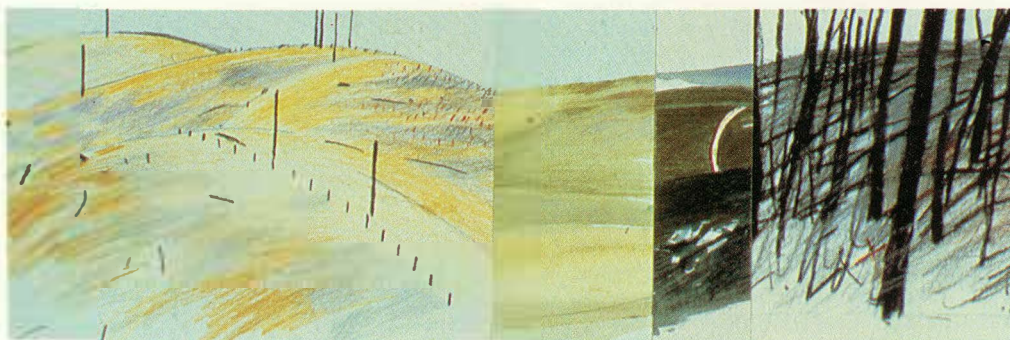
Rather than trying to suggest, with my limited knowledge, which embroidery techniques should be used in the work, I thought this practical side



Designs for the State and Territory panels
 Top: ACT
 Centre: Queensland
 Bottom: Tasmania

should be developed in close collaboration with the guilds. By using their skills and experience in experimenting on samplers, and by trying out different ways of embroidering each image, we could decide together which embroidery techniques worked best. I knew this collaboration would be crucial to the overall success of the project.

However, in my submission for the design competition, I had to indicate in detail how a section of the design could be interpreted. I chose for this two images from the first panel — the painting *Possum Dreaming* by an Aboriginal artist and the photograph of Lake Eyre.



images were similar in form they had been created by very different processes. I suggested contrasting embroidery stitches should be used to show up these differences: satin stitch and long and short stitch for *Possum Dreaming*, and cross stitch for the photograph of Lake Eyre.

In my description of these approaches, I was concerned more with describing the effect I wanted than with specifying the stitches.

Extracts from designer's competition entry, May 1984

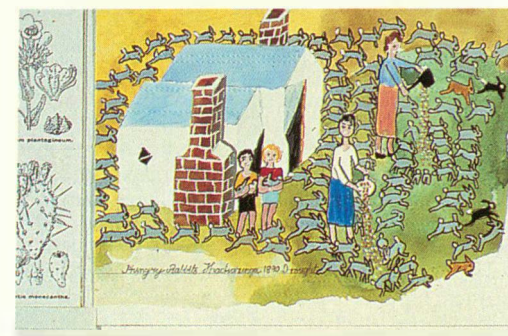
Possum Dreaming

To maintain the rhythmic quality of the image I would discourage a rigid copying of each spot,

but would only indicate the general groupings of the different sized spots, allowing the embroiderer to place the spots in a rhythmic sequence during the embroidery process, very much as the original image was made.

The subtle shifts of colour over the surface of the original painting would be obtained by using mixtures of fine threads of slightly different colour and lustre — mainly wool but with the addition of strands of silk or mercerised cotton to catch the light and create a shimmering effect.

The spots would be embroidered in satin stitch, the direction of the stitch being used to



Designs for the State and Territory panels

Top: South Australia

Centre: New South Wales

Bottom: Northern Territory

emphasise the rhythmical quality of the image. I had imagined the varying colour of the background being filled in with long and short stitch after the spots had been made, but this may make the image lose some of its spontaneity.

Lake Eyre

This image would be embroidered in cross stitch, the formal regularity of the stitch emphasising the grainy quality of the printed image; a hard yarn would be used to maintain the crispness of the original, possibly a tightly woven, fine black cotton thread. The size of the stitch would be adjusted to the weave of the linen and would possibly be a little larger than the stitch indicated in the sketch so that the nature of the stitch is not lost in the image. The three tones indicated in the sketch would be obtained by embroidering with a double thread, a single thread and leaving blank spaces.

It is interesting to see how closely my original suggestions anticipated the eventual interpretation of these two images worked out in collaboration with the guilds.

When I finally sent my design to Canberra in May 1984, I wrote, 'This design should be regarded as a first draft which, while maintaining its essential form, would necessarily be modified during its interpretation into embroidery.'

This is exactly what happened. Small additions were made to emphasise a point and some images were modified as suggested by the guilds. For instance, I added a line of text under the image of the town with its patchwork of houses in order to reinforce the idea of the displacement of the Aborigines from their traditional lands during the period of settlement. Halley's Comet appears on the final panel as a reference to the year 1986 in which the embroidery was stitched as a link to the most famous of commemorative embroideries, the *Bayeux Tapestry*.



Finally, under the last landscape, I added the last four lines from *Falls Country* by Judith Wright to affirm our dependence on and responsibility towards the land:

Listen Listen
 Latecomer to my country
 Sharer of what I know
 Eater of wild manna
 There is
 There was
 A country
 That spoke in the language of leaves

Description of the Design

On one level the embroidery tells the story of European settlement. On another level it shows the Aboriginal people's harmonious relationship with the land contrasted with the different relationship of the European settlers as they sought to control and develop the land. The first images are gentle — a tranquil unspoiled landscape followed by a depiction of an ancient Aboriginal rock carving, a contemporary Aboriginal painting and a bird's-eye view of Lake Eyre. These are

followed by three maps — one of South Australia's Aboriginal tribal lands as seen through European eyes and two of early Brisbane Town, one military and one civil. John Glover's house in Tasmania continues the theme of European ideas in an Australian landscape. The other sections depict the unremitting toil and hardships experienced by the early settlers who tried to carve out a living in a strange and often hostile environment.

Mistakes made in the development of the land are not glossed over but the final landscape, reminiscent of the first gentle image, suggests a growing awareness of our responsibility and an acknowledgment of our indebtedness to the land we have made ours.

Allocation of Panels to the Guilds

Kay discussed with the PHE Committee how the parts of the design to be worked by the guilds should be allocated. It was important to take into account the different situation of each of the guilds — for example, the small size of the Northern Territory guild and the remoteness of many of their members. Although the design lent itself to being stitched in sections it was still desirable to have as few joins as possible. Also it was clear that the stitching of some parts of the design were going to be more complex than others. For these reasons the lengths of pieces given to some guilds varied — but every piece contained a number of images.

The final division of the embroidery into eight parts, reading from left to right, was:

<i>State</i>	<i>Name of image</i>	<i>Design grouping</i>
ACT 2000 x 650 mm	First landscape Petroglyph <i>Possum Dreaming</i> Lake Eyre	Aboriginal response to the land
Queensland 2000 x 650 mm	Aboriginal tribal map Gerler map Military map	European response: mapping the land
Tasmania 2000 x 650 mm	Glover's cottage Strzelecki Range Letter from Mary Thomas William Allen Pioneer and wife	The dream and the reality
South Australia 2000 x 650 mm	Autumn Winter Spring Summer	Changes to the land: clearing and fencing, seasons
New South Wales 2865 x 650 mm	Mitchell grass Wheat Sheep Landscape Potoroo	Changes to the land: European agriculture
Northern Territory 1218 x 650 mm	Plant pests Sam Burns's <i>Hungry Rabbits</i>	Changes to the land: introduced pests
Victoria 2235 x 650 mm	Pioneer implements Town Shopkeeper Contractors Woman with cradle Miner	Growth of the towns Growth of industry: mining
Western Australia 1770 x 650 mm	Mining scene Second landscape	Growth of industry: mining Reaffirmation of the land



Hungry Rabbits Thackaringa 1890 Drought

Preparations for Stitching

Appointment of the National Co-ordinator

Kay was of course very keen to participate in the process of converting her ideas into stitched form but, as she was not an embroiderer, she could not be expected to assess the quality of each embroidered section. To undertake this task a 'national co-ordinator' was appointed.

The PHE Committee invited each guild to nominate suitable highly skilled embroiderers for the job. Four names were put forward from which Anne Richards from

Melbourne was chosen. Anne qualified with a Fellowship of Art (Embroidery) from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and has special expertise in dyeing techniques. This proved particularly useful as six of the final embroidered images required dyeing. She was given leave from her position as a lecturer in textile arts at Victoria College, a college of advanced education in Melbourne, to take up her new post. In her new role she was required to make three trips around Australia to visit the guilds, two of which were with Kay.

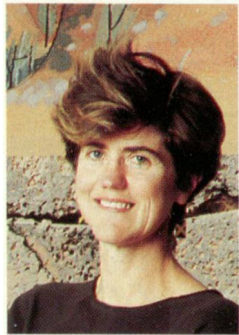
section of the embroidery related to the whole design.

Kay found that most people were enthusiastic but, inevitably, a few guild members had some difficulty accepting her design. Although some images could be related to all States, many embroiderers thought the design should have dealt with settlement State by State and were surprised to find that they were going to embroider images that related to other areas of Australia. Others were disconcerted by the departure from conventional embroidery designs and the inclusion of monochrome. A few were offended by references to the exploitation of the land by the early settlers.

Kay quickly realised how important it was for these objections to be brought out into the open and be fully discussed. It was essential for embroiderers to understand her intended meaning in the design so that they would accept it and embroider it wholeheartedly. And, as people became more involved in the process of

The First Visit of the Designer

Between May and July 1985, Kay made her first visit to each of the eight guilds to present her design and to discuss the stitching of the embroidery. She took her original design and detailed drawings as she knew they would help the embroiderers to interpret, in terms of stitches, their particular section of the design. This first meeting was also the opportunity for the embroiderers to discuss with Kay how their



Kay Lawrence

Anne Richards

Hungry Rabbits stitched by the Northern Territory guild



interpretation, their understanding of the design grew and almost all of their original objections disappeared.

Working on Samplers

Before commencing the actual embroidery, it was necessary to prepare samplers to evaluate materials and techniques. The first series of samplers was begun in August 1985 and for nine months this experimental work continued. Although this seemed a long drawn out process, everyone recognised the importance of developing the best possible techniques for the best possible interpretation of the design.

Interpreting the design was a great challenge for all guild members. Their imagination, skill and technical knowledge were stretched to the limit as they explored ways to translate into stitches Kay's painted and drawn cartoon.

In each guild embroiderers worked samplers, of varying sizes, of sections of the design, choosing threads and stitches which they thought would give the desired colour

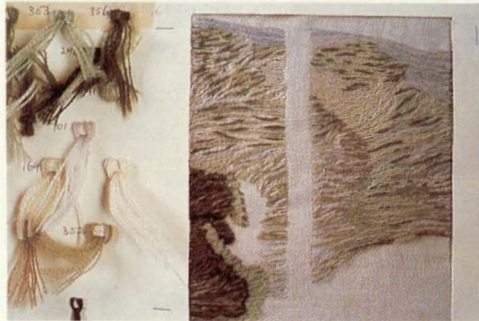


and texture. Groups in some guilds created a 'colour core' — that is, they embroidered full-scale strips from each section of their panel on a large practice frame.

These strips enabled Kay to consider the likely effect of the final work including the relationship to adjoining sections. They also allowed the embroiderers to practise the techniques necessary for working on big frames.



Top: Tasmania's selection of monochrome threads
Bottom: June Weatherstone and Beverley Thomas from the ACT hold a practice frame



Conference of Supervisors 1985

The familiar Australian problem of distance and isolation heightened the importance of developing and maintaining good communication between all the people involved in the project.

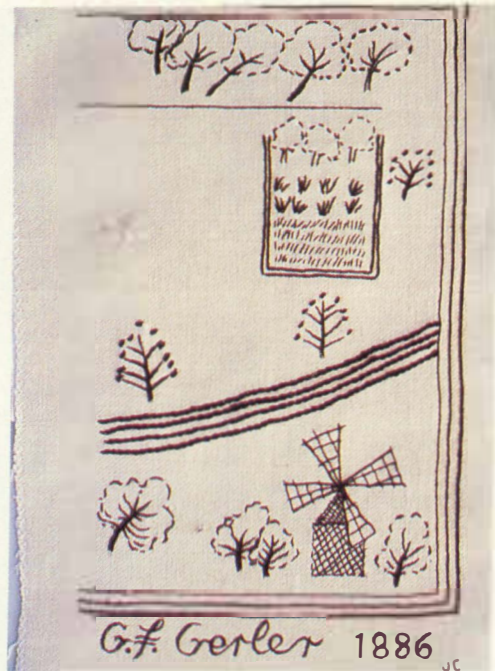
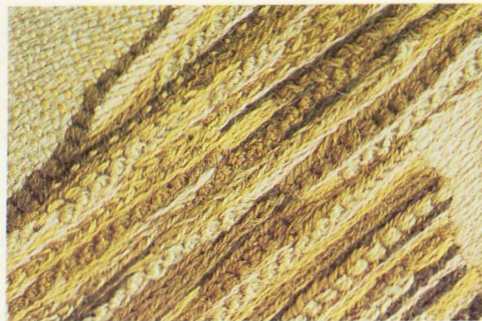
On 25 May 1985, the PHE Committee's secretary, Wanda McMahon, issued the first of a series of newsletters to keep everyone informed about Kay and Anne's visits to the guilds, about time-tables and to exchange news, ideas and opinions. A little later the

Top: Queensland guild members discuss samplers with Anne Richards

Bottom left: Sampler from Western Australia showing the second landscape and the coloured threads used in it

Bottom right: Kay Lawrence discusses samplers with supervisors at the supervisors' conference in Canberra, December 1985

Tasmanian guild members discuss samplers from other States



committee organised a national conference of guild supervisors. The conference, in December 1985, enabled the supervisors to meet Anne (just appointed national co-ordinator) and each other, to discuss embroidery issues and experiences.

Each guild's supervisor brought to the conference her guild's first set of samplers to be evaluated by Kay and Anne. The supervisors examined each other's work and listened carefully to Kay's comments on each piece. Everyone found it interesting to hear Kay explain how she came to choose between samplers depicting the same image — that is, why some samplers were more successful than others in expressing her ideas. This was an important stage in the development of the project.

Also discussed at the conference were the details for the archival records of the project — that is, documenting who did what, where and when, the stitches and techniques used, and the costs. Josephine Carter from the Australian National Gallery outlined the conservation procedures to be followed



Sampler of part of the first landscape stitched by an ACT guild member

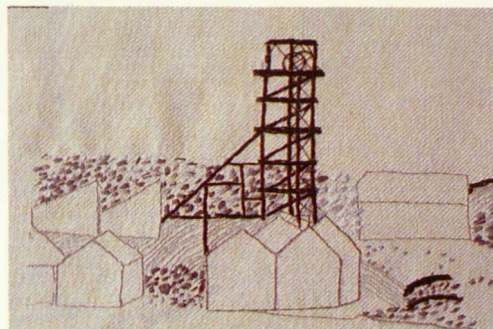
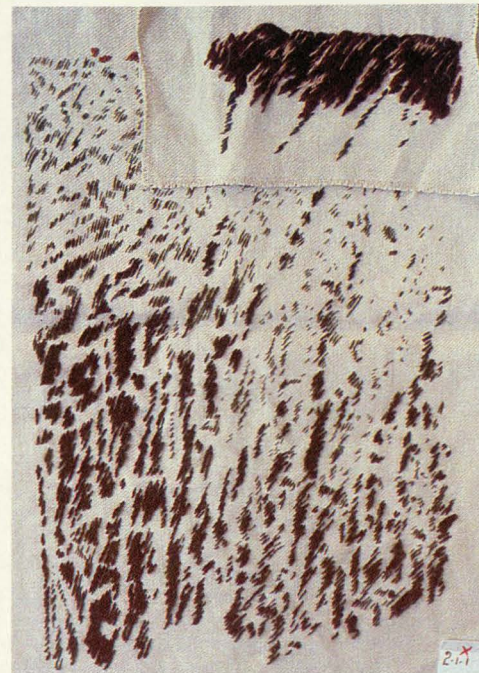
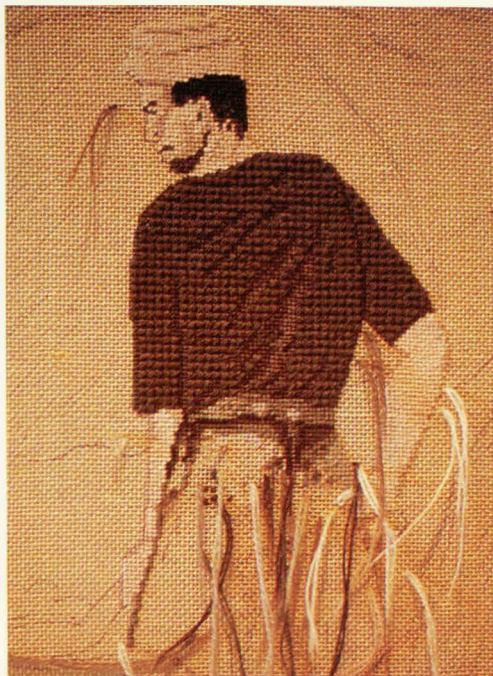
Top: Detail of the first landscape sampler, from a folio prepared by Betty Haughey from the ACT

Top: Part of a sampler of the Gerler map from Queensland

Centre: Sampler of the pioneer's wife, from the Tasmanian guild, showing shadows that are too dark

Bottom: Details of samplers of autumn and summer from the South Australian guild

Bottom: Sampler of Glover's cottage from the Tasmanian guild



during the stitching of the linen panels. In her lecture she described the principles of conservation the guilds would need to observe and the problems of temperature and relative humidity, light and dust, and the dangers of insect and fungal attacks.

At the end of the conference the supervisors returned to their guilds better informed about the embroidery. They had met the architects and had gained from them a good understanding of how it was to fit into the new Parliament House.

The beginning of the new year, 1986, saw the second series of samplers being stitched.

Top: Sampler from the Victorian guild — the miner

Bottom: Sampler from Western Australia — poppet head

Sampler from the Northern Territory — child and rabbits

Sampler from New South Wales — Mitchell grass



ly and by all gone, plenty shoot 'em whitefellow.... long time plenty, plenty

Realisation

Dorothy Hyslop had expressed a dream. Kay Lawrence had translated the dream into a design. It was now the responsibility of all the guilds to turn the design into an embroidery.

Despite exhaustive experiments and preparations over several months, the prospect was still daunting when the go-ahead for the final embroidery was given.

The Designer and the National Co-ordinator Visit the Guilds

Of the two joint trips Kay and Anne made to the guilds, the first (in April 1986) was to assess a second round of samplers and to decide finally on interpretations. The second trip was to oversee the beginning of the stitching onto the linen. After that, Anne made a final round trip alone to check the standard and quality of the embroidered panels as they neared completion.

At the end of the first joint trip, Kay wrote in one of the newsletters:

I suppose we now enter the most critical stage of the project with some States beginning work on

the embroidery itself... it is both exciting and nerve-racking to make those first stitches after months of preparation. I feel very confident that in those areas now being embroidered virtually all the problems have been encountered and resolved and that work should proceed confidently and without hesitation.

Frames

A grant of \$150 towards the cost of each of the embroidery frames was made available by the Crafts Board of the Australia Council but some guilds did not take up this offer. Husbands, sons and professional tradesmen were commissioned to construct them. In Western Australia, apprentices at the Fremantle Technical College designed and made a frame as a special project for the guild in Perth. In the Northern Territory, lengths of metal shelving were joined so that they could be used later as library shelves. All frames were consequently different, reflecting again the ingenuity of the embroiderers.

Western Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, South Australia and the ACT chose to work



Guild members from New South Wales assemble their frame

their pieces in one section on frames 3 metres in length. The Northern Territory used a slightly smaller frame whereas New South Wales worked on two frames. For Queensland two frames meant that one part could be worked by country members at Toowoomba. Western Australia used a Japanese-style frame on which the fabric was held between split rollers which were wound and fixed. The other States laced their material onto fixed frames.

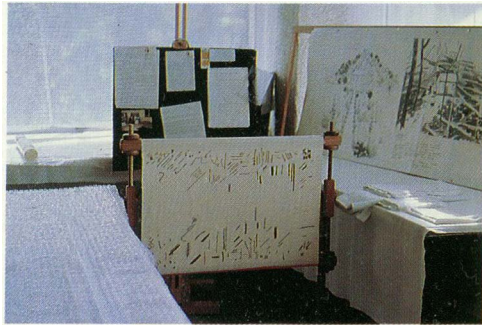
All the guilds intended that they would do their stitching whilst sitting at the frames, which were to lie horizontally on trestles. However, reaching the centre of the work proved to be backbreaking and some dismay was felt at the difficulty of undertaking such exacting work at more than an arm's length. In Queensland and Victoria the embroiderers resorted to working in tandem, one standing above and inserting the needle into the work, whilst another sat on the floor underneath the frame and pushed the needle back up. Initially, New South Wales also solved this problem by using pairs of

stitchers. The difference was that they secured the frame vertically on an easel with one person in front and another behind the work. However, they found that one worker sitting facing the frame could achieve the same result by using curved needles. This meant the stitcher could enjoy the satisfaction of completing the stitching action unaided.

Workplaces

Sectioned-off areas of guild rooms and also members' studios were chosen as workrooms for the stitching. The conservator's guidelines for a suitable working environment were observed in each setting. Several rooms were air-conditioned but in the cooler climates of Canberra and Tasmania a stable temperature was achieved with heating. Windows were covered with curtains and daylight fluorescent lighting installed to provide protection of the fibres and dyes from damaging ultraviolet light. Possible damage from dust and other pollutants was

minimised by daily cleaning of the work areas, vacuuming and dusting with a wet rag. And there were strict rules — no smoking or eating was allowed in the work area and hands had to be washed frequently. No cosmetics or jewellery which might come in contact with the work were worn. Sleeve covers or smocks were used as protection against body contact with the embroidery and the ill-effects of acidity. The Northern Territorians were better able than most to adhere to these requirements for a clean



The interior of the Tasmanian guild's studio in Launceston



Wanda McMahon from the ACT checks threads underneath the frame of the Lake Eyre section



Freda Tilsley and Nance Ryan, both from the Tasmanian guild, measure their frame

environment — they worked in a doctor's surgery and even sterilised their needles and scissors.

During work, areas not being embroidered were kept covered. The temptation to pat and feel completed sections was dealt with by tacking acid-free tissue paper over them. At the end of each day the work was covered with layers of tissue paper and clean sheeting and finally enclosed in plastic as protection against any unforeseen moisture.

Although compromises were sometimes necessary, a serious effort was made to adhere to the conservation measures recommended by Josephine Carter. The objective throughout was to ensure that the embroidery would endure with no deterioration in its condition.

While most problems had been resolved on the samplers, there were many times when critical decisions had to be made during the stitching of the final panels, lending a degree of excitement and tension to the process. The first stitches were often placed hesitantly but as the embroidery

grew so did the confidence and certainty of the embroiderers.

Working rosters were organised. In some guilds four or five women worked at any one time, each panel taking thousands of hours to complete.

The Final Work

The completed embroidery is a tribute to the work of many hands and to the dedicated supervision of the supervisors and section leaders. It has been referred to by one participant as the 'seven-year stitch'. What follows is the story of the stitching of each panel as told by each guild's supervisor or archivist with help from the section leaders. The guilds are shown in the order of the images they stitched, reading from the left to the right of the embroidery

ACT

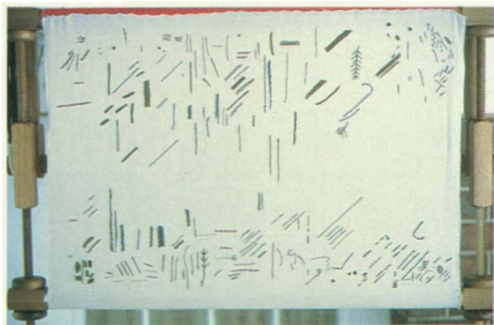
Stitchers in the ACT were inspired by the enthusiasm of the PHE Committee and by being near the Parliament House

construction site. They could see for themselves the building rising majestically from the excavations on Capital Hill. By the time of Kay and Anne's visit in April 1986, the Canberra guild were well advanced in the sampler process. Before they arrived numerous teaching sessions had been organised by the section leaders under Lois Evans's supervision. Soon after Kay and Anne left, having given their approval to the guild's work, a ceremony was held to mark the first stitch on the final embroidery.

Supervisor Lois Evans

Our panel comprised four sections showing the presence of Aborigines and their relationship to the land as expressed through their language and art. There were four teams of stitchers.

On 5 May 1986 the real work started. The landscape section was rostered to work all the time. The other images, being smaller, were stitched for one week and then left for two weeks. The Lake Eyre section was the first to be finished and the final stitch (in the landscape section) in the entire panel was celebrated on 1 February 1987.



Practice frame used by some Tasmanian embroiderers



At work on the ACT panel. Sleeves were worn to protect the embroidery

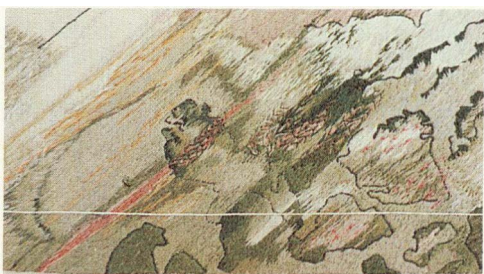


Left to right: Pedro Geleris, Geoffrey Siebens, Pam Berg, Lois Evans, Elva Oakley, Liz Evans and Dorothy Hyslop celebrate the making of the first stitch at the ACT guild, 2 May 1986

After a very busy twelve months a letter from Kay Lawrence was enormously rewarding:

You must have a wonderful sense of achievement now your panel is complete . . . I can't say enough how impressed I've been with your interpretations and the commitment and sensitivity everyone has shown. You've brought the images to life and surpassed all my expectations . . . Please thank all the embroiderers for me.

Amongst those who stitched the Capital Territory's panel were six mother and daughter teams; one family of three generations; one



anangám Wungudania



Manoo mam

young woman of fifteen years and two women of eighty-three years. Embroiderers from the southern New South Wales towns of Cooma, Goulburn, Captain's Flat, Bateman's Bay and Murrumbateman also contributed.

A section leader, Elva Oakley, wrote of her particular pride at being involved in the project:

My grandmother and father were born in this district and I feel that I have added a little to the history of this area in their name. My father was the Canberra railway stationmaster when the Duke and Duchess of York arrived to open the original Parliament House in 1927.

First Landscape

Section leader June Weatherstone

The first image of the embroidery is a landscape depicting a generalised Australian vista before European settlement. It is a hill with a wide expanse of grass along the top. Towards the bottom the vegetation thickens gradually and becomes quite dense. Superimposed over this is written, 'Manoo maaa arganangam Wangudanjama arganangama nanja', a quotation from a poem *Balai Dreamtime* by Sam Woolagoodjah in the Worora language. The translation is, 'These places hold our spirits, these

Wunga places of the Wandjinas'. The Wandjinas are spirit people of the Kimberly region of north-western Australia. The Wandjinas are believed to have come from the sea and sky originally, and the rocks, springs and other features of the landscape now hold their spirits.

In preparation for stitching, the outline of the image was faintly traced on the stretched linen using special carbon paper. Only vague guidelines could be traced as there were very few definite shapes to follow. The sweep of the hill, the contours and the vegetation had to be achieved by carefully blending colours using the designer's original one-fifth size watercolour as a guide.

The hill, which occupies approximately three-quarters of the panel, is completely filled with stitches, only the sky is left in the bare linen. To achieve the subtle blending of colours one strand of Appleton's wool was used throughout. To add life to the grass and to give it a windswept feeling, one strand of embroidery floss in a similar hue was used either in the same needle or separately.

In the foreground, where a heavier thread was required for highlights, DMC Perle was used. Long straight stitch, long stem stitch and split stitch were the stitches chosen for the smooth flat areas. Where texture was required, fly, cretan and



buttonhole stitches were introduced. Careful blending of the colours was important as it was easy to end up with stripes instead of contours.

The embroidery along the bottom strip of the image had to be particularly even and also dense enough to form a base for the lettering which was worked on top. To position the lettering, two parallel lines the width of the letters were couched into place. The letters were traced on thin paper which was then placed over the lines and the letters were outlined in small running stitches.

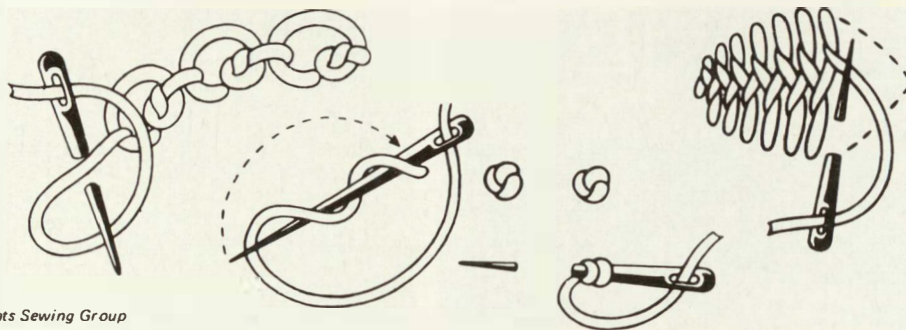
Once the paper was torn away the letters were filled in with double chain stitch using DMC Perle. This task was difficult because it was worked very close to the edge of the frame. Great care had to be taken to avoid distorting the background embroidery. The final removal of the outline tacking also demanded supreme patience and delicacy.

Petroglyph

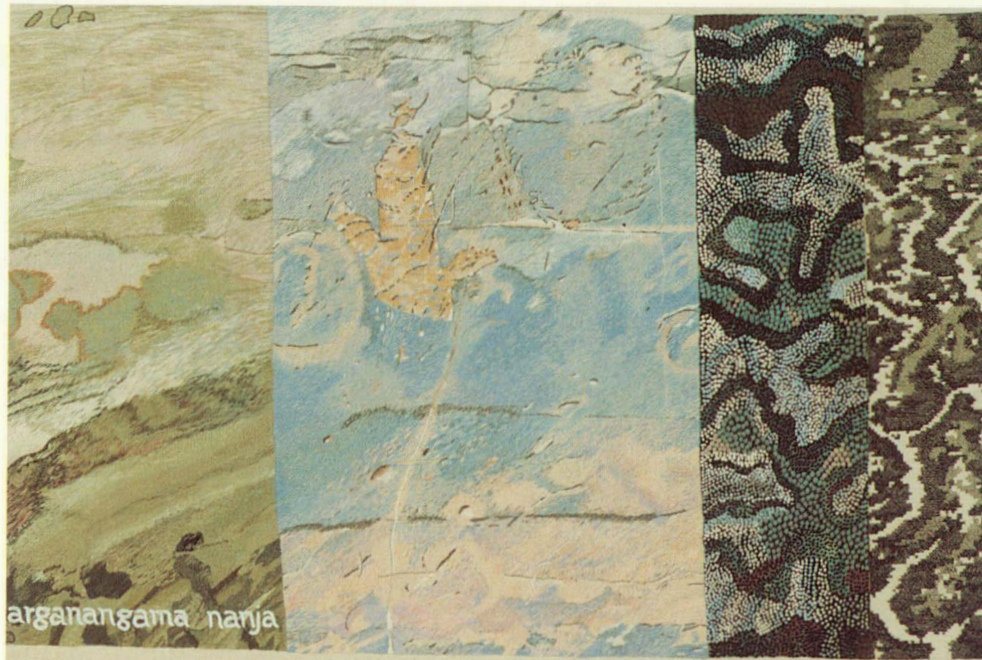
Section leader Elva Oakley

This image is a representation of an ancient Aboriginal rock carving from Red Gorge in South Australia's Flinders Ranges. It depicts an emu footprint and circles and spots which signify emu and goanna tracks. An authority on Aboriginal history was consulted in order to ensure faithful interpretation of this section. Kay redrew the small photograph in the original drawing to full scale, simplifying the design and clarifying some obscure features.

The section was worked entirely in wool, often two colours of thread in the one needle. Some of the watercolour and crayon shadings were especially difficult to achieve. Shades of blue-grey ranging to pink, apricot and orange were worked in straight stitches to give the background the appearance of a rough, flaky rock surface. Cretan stitch was used to depict the embedded emu claw.

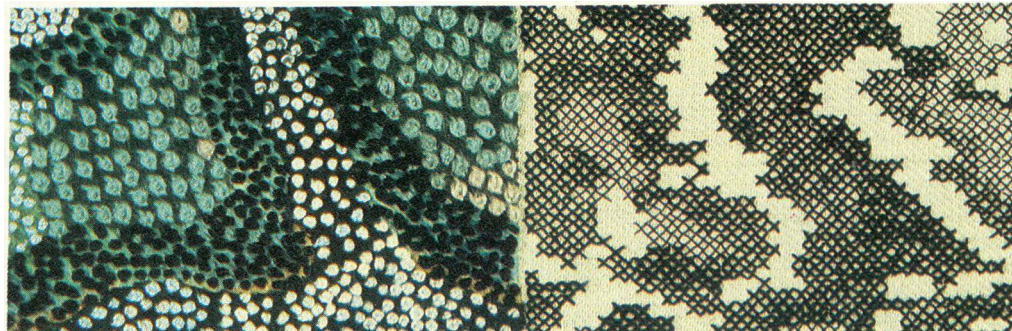


 Coats Sewing Group



Top: Knotted cable chain stitch, French knots and cretan stitch

Bottom: Part of the ACT panel showing the end of the first landscape, the petroglyph, *Possum Dreaming* and the beginning of Lake Eyre

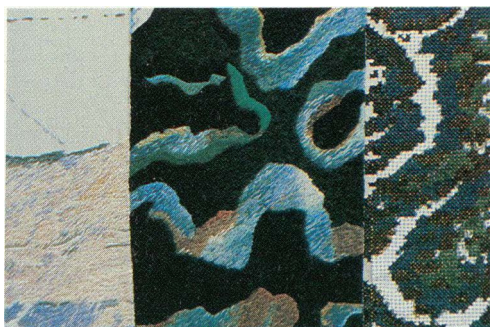


Possum Dreaming

Section leader Betty Bourke

This section reproduces a small section of a large, modern painting in the traditional style of Western Desert Aborigines called *Possum Dreaming*. The name of the artist must not now be mentioned as he died in a car accident and it is believed by his people that the sound of his name would disturb his spirit. The challenge for the embroiderers was to interpret an image which was simple and abstract but which expressed the spirituality of the Aboriginal Dreamtime. Dense stitchery was chosen to represent the mysterious nature of the themes and the intricate pattern of the original painting. French filling stitch was used for the background because this allowed the bulk of the thread to be on the surface of the fabric which lessened the weight of the section.

The weight was important in order to avoid tension with the adjoining sections since these are not worked as closely. The subtle shifts of colour in the original painting were simulated by using mixtures of threads of slightly different colour and lustre, mainly in black and green wool, but with the addition of strands of mercerised cotton. These catch the light and create a shimmering, opalescent effect.



An early decision to embroider the dots in satin stitch was abandoned in favour of French knots for the small ones and cable chain or oyster stitch for the large. These regular stitches allowed a large number of embroiderers to be involved without causing noticeable changes in the pattern.

To maintain the rhythmic quality of the image we did not rigidly copy each spot. Instead, the general groupings of spots of different sizes and colours were noted. These provided a pattern within which the embroiderers placed the spots in much the same way as the original image would have been created. The luminous quality of



the white dots was achieved by using 'warm' and 'cool' white threads from the DMC Perle range.

Lake Eyre

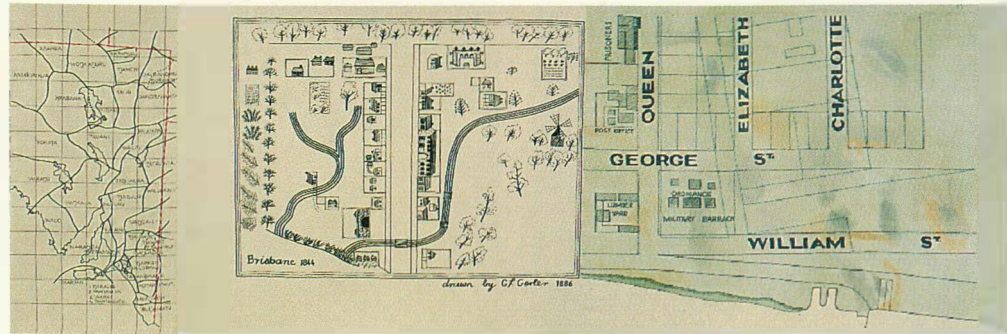
Section leader Liz Evans

The embroiderers' task was to copy a satellite photograph showing a series of water courses flowing towards Lake Eyre with bush in between. Cross stitch was used in three different thicknesses of black thread to indicate the different densities of the vegetation. A counted-thread technique was considered but it would have been difficult to employ on the close-weave linen twill.



During the sampler stages the outlines of the water-courses were traced on canvas mesh which was laid onto the base fabric to provide a guide and to ensure regular-sized stitches. It was left to each embroiderer to interpret for herself the areas of shading between the courses but it proved difficult for one person to follow another's interpretation. So it was decided to trace the design onto the canvas using three different coloured felt-tipped pens to denote the different densities. This was satisfactory as each embroiderer had only to follow the colour code. The threads used were DMC Perle No.8 and No.12 and a fine tatting cotton.

Liz Evans with the Lake Eyre design on canvas, ready to be applied to the linen base fabric



On completion of the stitching, the canvas threads were removed from under the cross stitches one by one. Meticulous checking was also required to ensure that all the stitches sloped in the one direction and that there were no incomplete half stitches.

Queensland

Queenslanders made a hesitant start. Their task was to depict three maps which show different Aboriginal and European interpretations of land settlement and division. Embroiderers may have found these subjects less inspiring than architects or surveyors but, nevertheless, they rose to the challenge. Unfortunately, a misunderstanding during the planning phase resulted in the drawings, designs and the linen itself being inadvertently cut, which meant an extra joining seam was necessary. However, once Eva Wilcox got guild members involved in the stitching their confidence grew. The three maps required a linear interpretation while the technique of using a heat disperse dyed

The entire Queensland panel

Terylene overlay was to prove most effective for the 'organic' splashes of colour.

Supervisor Eva Wilcox

Embroiderers from Tasmania and New South Wales sent us some valuable advice, even sketches and photos, to help us to design our frame, which was built by the son of one of our members. It was installed on the top floor of our headquarters and the large piece of linen was attached to it with great expertise.

On 3 October 1986, which is a date indelibly printed on my mind, our nucleus team met to put in the first stitches. The plan was to start with a couched line of the architectural drawing, using blue-grey Perle cotton for the line and two strands of Anchor cotton to stitch it down. We all stood around watching as if a surgeon was going to proceed with a delicate operation.

Almost immediately we realised that, in a sitting position, it was very difficult to stitch accurately with the arm stretched to the limit to reach the centre of the fabric. We resorted to placing cushions on the floor and continued in a kneeling position.

Many weeks of happy stitching followed but progress was slow and then the Christmas holidays were upon us. Queensland experienced

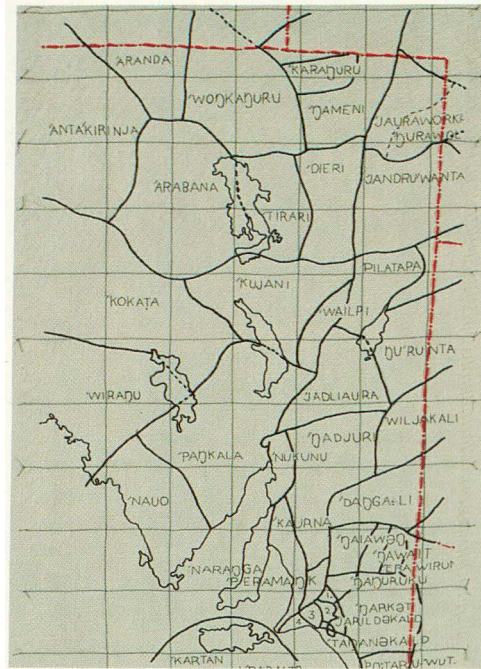
an especially hot and long summer. In Brisbane the humidity was high, and our members were reluctant to come back from their seaside cottages and mountain retreats where they were enjoying the cool breezes.

In the new year the old team of intrepid workers started on a roster of three times a week with many a Sunday thrown in for good measure. Still our progress seemed too slow for comfort. More hands were needed and we called on our sister groups in Toowoomba and Southport

Carloads of four to five members arrived for five-hour sessions of stitching — a valiant effort considering the four hours spent in travelling. It boosted our morale no end. However, after three such trips, it was decided to take the 'Aboriginal tribal map', which was on a separate frame, to Toowoomba for completion. This was a great load off our minds.

At the beginning of March 1987 we could see the light at the end of the tunnel. To my horror, that was the signal for many of our workers to say, 'We are almost finished, you don't need us any longer.' Once more I went on the campaign trail with renewed urgency. The guild branch in Southport jumped into the breach and a new momentum gathered in the last push for completion. Then the day for the photographer arrived and the unbiased eye of the lens judged whether we had succeeded or not.

To be part of history in the making brings a warm glow to the cheeks. Our section of the Parliament House Embroidery, which had taken eighteen months of laughter, tears, joy and despair, came to a fitting finale on 9 April 1987. A celebration was staged in grand style by our president. Guests from all the Queensland guild branches and representatives of government and the arts attended. Senator Lady Florence Bjelke-Petersen headed the list of dignitaries. Our efforts were praised and we were proud of them.



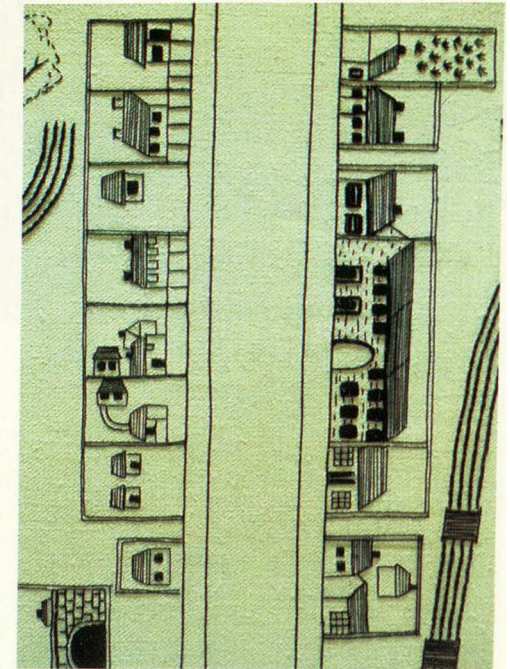
Aboriginal Tribal Map

Section leaders Lyle Burns and Marion Rohde

This map shows the divisions between South Australian Aborigines based upon tribal language groups at the time of European settlement.

A white voile overlay was machined onto the twill linen and a fine grid highlighted by pulling single threads from the voile. The boundaries and lettering denoting the tribal areas were worked in back stitch in black, and the State boundaries in red thread.

The Aboriginal tribal map

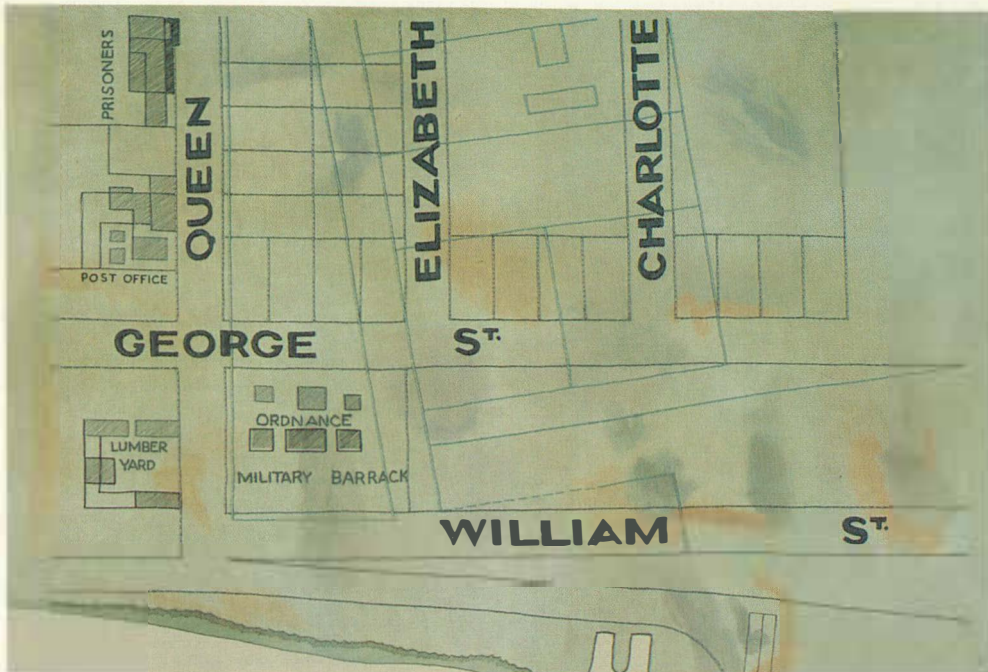


Gerler Map

Section leader Eva Wilcox

This naive depiction of the Brisbane township was worked in different thicknesses of black cotton and Perle thread. Any inaccuracies showed up glaringly because of the starkness of the black thread against the light background material. The line drawings were couched and satin and back stitches were employed for the lettering, houses and windmill. The river was worked in stem stitch, straight stitch and Holbein stitch and a few French knots completed the trees and shrubs around the perimeter of the image.

Detail of the Gerler map



Stitching this section was simply a delight. The utter charm of the drawing touched the hearts of the many willing workers. However, an impasse was reached when the central section could not be reached comfortably for stitching. Again a group specialist came to the rescue with the suggestion that her son make two upright easels. We then arranged for teams of two embroiderers to work on the Gerler and military maps, one member stitching whilst the other fed the needle through from the back. Faster progress was made with this method, although the process was not as satisfying for stitchers as having total control of the action.



Military Map

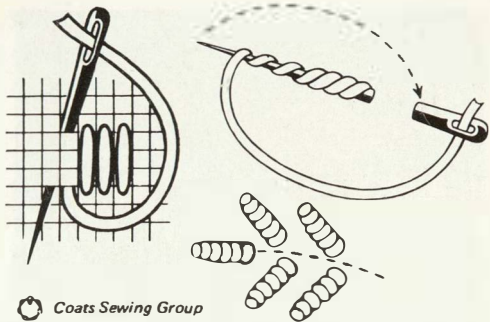
Section leaders Margaret Sydes and Lorna May

Much experimentation with heat-transfer dyes on a polyester organza overlay was undertaken to achieve the special effects of the watercolour depicting the uneven terrain or perhaps a discoloured parchment map. Although most stitchers were experienced embroiderers, working with a curved needle needed much practice and a special dexterity before the architectural drawings and lettering could be satisfactorily executed in straight and fine satin stitches. Particular care had to be taken in working over the two layers of

The military map

Fabrics and colour experiments for the military map

Section leader Eva Wilcox considers some overlay fabric



Coats Sewing Group

fabric as the overlay was very delicate and did not allow for much handling or undoing of stitches.

Tasmania

Supervisors Freda Tilsley and Nance Ryan

The Tasmanian section of the embroidery was stitched between 18 April 1986 and 28 January 1987. Thirty-five guild members took part but the major stitching was done by fifteen embroiderers. This group was particularly close-knit and it maintained its enthusiasm for the project from the beginning.

The five sections of the panel depict the conflict experienced by the early European settlers between the ideals they brought with them and the harsh reality they faced in Australia.

It should be stated that when those of us in the Tasmanian group first saw the images we were to embroider we were deeply disappointed. It seemed almost all black and we wanted to use colour and to create prettier images. However, with encouragement from Anne Richards, we discovered that there was still scope for wide tonal variations even from a reduced palette. A variety of matt and shiny threads helped create a rich and exciting dimension to the monochromatic images which was more than Kay had expected.



Glover's Cottage

After a lively discussion with guild members, Kay modified her design to include more colour and less black and grey. The cottage was drawn without colour in the style of an architectural elevation rather than as an actual place but Kay agreed to introduce the mauve and olive colours of the Tasmanian bush into the hillside behind it. This had the effect of emphasising the difference between the dream and the reality of the new environment.

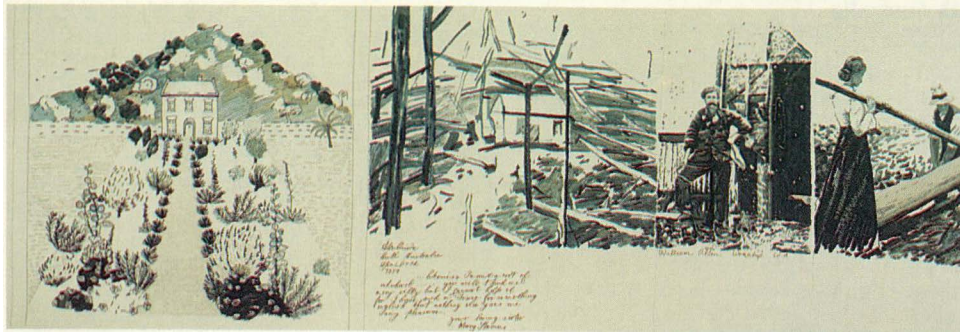
The hillside was embroidered in long split stitches with overlying threads and the trees were



shaped in bullion stitch. The cottage was worked in a combination of cottons, the matt and shiny threads providing contrast. The details of the garden were minute and required reference at all times to the original drawing. Never before had the embroiderers worked charcoal foliage and beige-toned roses!

Strzelecki Range

Subtle toning was required to bring life and dimension into the black and grey areas of this image. Charcoal was chosen rather than black, and small, condensed straight stitches were used



to concentrate tone while larger ones were used for the lighter ones. This technique lifted the image whereas the drawing itself had appeared dark and flat.

Letter from Mary Thomas

We applied to the South Australian State Library for an enlarged copy of this handwritten letter home to England from an early woman settler. Kay was asked to rewrite some of the lettering to match the original. It was worked in black wool stem stitch. The text from the diary and letters of Mary Thomas, 1836–66, reads:

Adelaide, April 7 1859.

Likewise I want a root of rhubarb . . . You will think me very silly but I cannot help it, for I have such a desire for something English that nothing else gives me any pleasure.

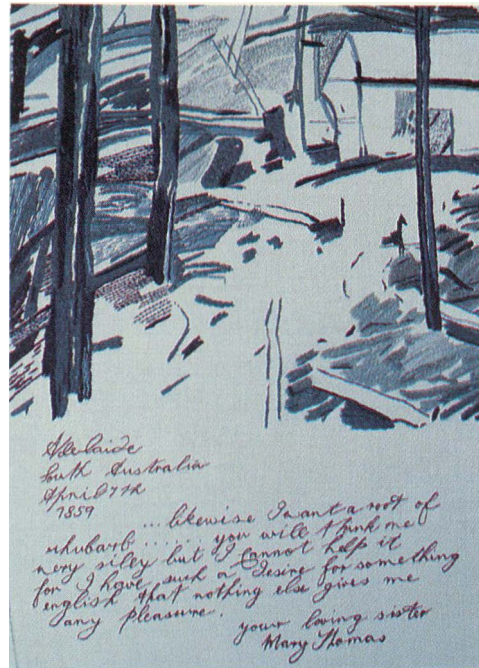
Your loving sister

Mary Thomas

William Allen

The figure of William Allen in the panel became a real character to the group and we thought he looked very happy to have been embroidered.

It was not until the stitching was well under way that the embroiderers realised that Kay's



Detail of the Strzelecki Range and all of Mary Thomas's letter



original drawing lacked sufficient detail. After one member commented, 'How William Allen stands up defies belief', Kay redrew his feet which had not been distinguished from the ground.

Originally, the shed was thought to represent a dunny. It was not until someone sent us a photograph of the original that we realised it was a portable shed in which hung a mug and harness. This panel was worked in straight stitch in black and white with sepia overtones.

It was stitched from the outside edge inwards and it was with considerable relief that the joins of William's top and bottom were seen to match perfectly.

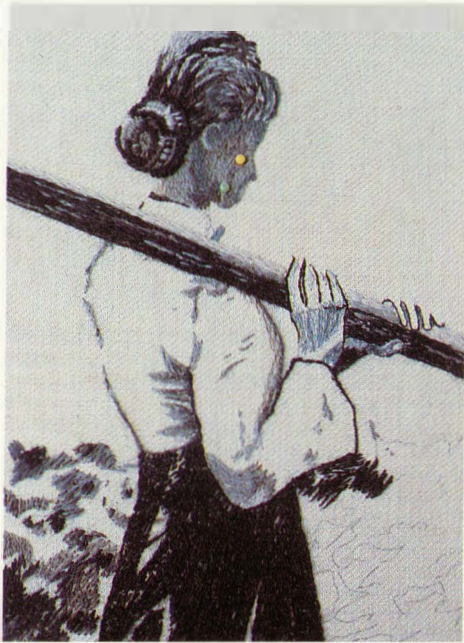
William Allen — comparing the sampler with the finished work

The Tasmanian guild's panel

Pioneer and Wife

The man and his wife were worked with both wool and cotton threads. Again some trouble was experienced with heads and hands until Kay redrew them with more detail showing the form within the shadows. The embroiderers were happy with the limited colours of this section which they felt expressed the bleak conditions of that time.

As with the other monochromatic images, many of the embroiderers worked the design upside down on the frame. This helped them adhere faithfully to the tones rather than to their preconceived visual imagery.



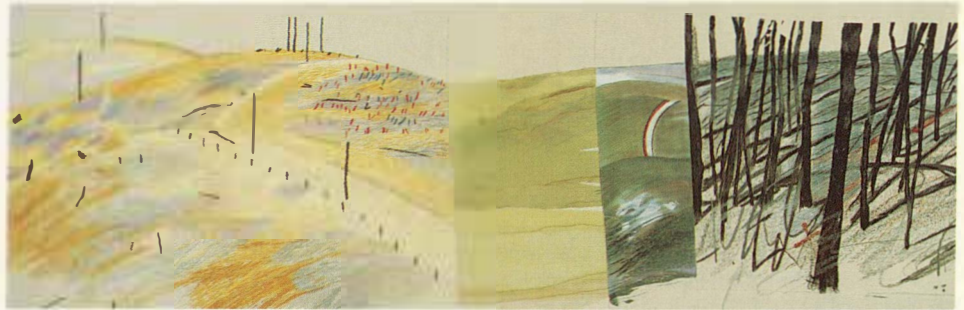
Detail of the pioneer's wife

South Australia

Supervisor Peg Saddler

When in August 1985 our guild first saw the sections of the design allocated to us many members were disappointed that the South Australian guild's contribution to the embroidery was a section showing cleared hills and bushfire. However, when we understood the concept better and realised that the images were representative of the impact of European settlement on the country as a whole, we felt happier.

A small group of embroiderers met to work on samplers of the four landscapes, each representing a different season. The vigorous quality of the artist's drawings was soon captured in bold lively stitchery but more subtle integration was required between the parts fully stitched and the parts of the linen base fabric that were left free of stitching. It was decided that spring and winter should have transparent overlays to suggest the washy watercolour effects. By the end of 1985, after experimentation with a variety of stitches and dyes, Kay's approval was gained. However, little further stitching was done until October 1986 owing to the guild commitments to the Jubilee Festival of Embroidery which was part of South Australia's sesqui-centenary celebrations.



Panel stitched by the South Australian guild showing autumn, winter, spring and summer

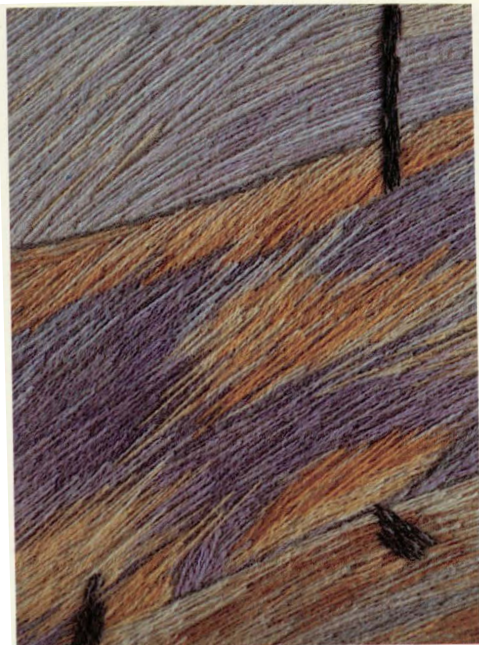
On 22 October 1986, the first stitch was put into the embroidery. Over one hundred embroiderers participated in the stitching, including a number of country members from locations several hundred kilometres away, and twenty-eight young embroiderers ranging in age from nine to sixteen years. These young members received a commemorative certificate acknowledging their effort.

Stitching was completed on 10 April 1987. Throughout we were assisted by the constant involvement and direction from Kay Lawrence, whose home State is South Australia.

Autumn

Stem stitch and French filling stitch (a long stitch forward and a short one back underneath the fabric before starting the next long stitch) were used to depict Kay's very definite strokes and lines. A single strand of crewel wool was used throughout and the colour blending was achieved by stitching closer and closer together in a wide range of colours until the linen was completely covered. Kay advised when we should use smaller or longer stitches, and when to use more white and when to blend.

Completing this section was not without its problems. Using the straight stitch in varying



lengths meant we had to check constantly that the flow of movement in the design was achieved without sacrificing the even tension of the stitches.

Winter and Spring

In these sections stitched nylon scarves and a dyed Terylene overlay were placed over the embroidery and then stitched again. This was technically difficult but we enjoyed depicting the image in stitches. Kay cunningly left it to each individual to decide whether the crescent shape was a rainbow or a road leading somewhere.



Top and bottom: Details of the stitching of autumn

Top: Winter and spring. The design is at the bottom righthand corner

Bottom: Detail of autumn

Top left: Working on the autumn section

Top right: Peg Saddler and Meg Douglas with heat-fix dyed fabric overlays

Bottom: Stitching the summer section



Summer (Bushfire)

This image proved very challenging. Again using the long stem stitch, the entire background was worked first and the trees stitched over the top. Doing it this way presented problems when it came to outlining the design on the linen as care had to be taken not to stitch the trunks of the trees too heavily. This would have destroyed the balance of the embroidery as a whole.

The subtleties of colour had to be achieved through blending two or three colours. Blue and black tones conveyed the devastation of the fire and were counteracted by the warm red ochres of

and a lament of the time quoted by Geoffrey Bolton in *Spoils and Spoilers*, 1981, from the *Australian Financial Review*, 1981.

Sheep and rabbits have ensured that we shall never again see the waving plains of Mitchell grass or the rich and diverse native herbage the Aborigines knew and worked.

Although many members participated in stitching samplers it was decided, in the interests of excellence, that a group of only seventeen embroiderers would take part in the final stitching. The group decided to work their section of four images on two frames. Samplers of the



the ground. A certain grey thread caused us some concern until the Tasmanian guild came to our rescue and provided it when we could not obtain it elsewhere.

New South Wales

Supervisor Marjorie Beck and archivist Lex Bisset

The two sections sewn by New South Wales depict an emerging rural industry portrayed by introduced pastures, wheat and sheep. The destruction wrought upon the native flora and fauna is represented by the endangered potaroo

Mitchell grass, wheat heads and leaves required only minor refinements before work could commence, but the sweeping pastoral scene was to prove quite a challenge. Fortunately, the Sydney guild had members experienced in dyeing fabrics.

Some initial difficulties gave way to pleasure when embroiderers saw, as work progressed, the design emerging. What at first appeared to many people as uninteresting turned into a thoroughly absorbing project. Certainly it gave great satisfaction to those who actually did the stitching and who were involved with the venture from the start.

Top: Detail of the back of the finished section of summer

Centre: The complete panel, stitched by guild members from New South Wales

Bottom: The design of summer—sketching in with thread



Detail of Mitchell grass — work in progress

Mitchell Grass

Section leader Jocelyn Gay

The artist's concept of this section of the design was in negative form, that is, Kay intended the space between the lines that were stitched to illustrate the Mitchell grass and the lines of stitching to depict shading and shadows. This, of course, was different from traditional embroidery

Accuracy of design was essential and this was achieved by means of a colour-coded tracing. This meant each stitch was carefully traced in the appropriate colour code on acid-free tissue paper, which was then tacked to the linen. The choice of



colours, weight and thread was predetermined on paper, ensuring a perfect reproduction.

When the first stage samplers were sent out to members with wools in browns, purples and black, there was some difficulty following the design and making it really look like Mitchell grass. After many experiments, the final selection of colours was determined and the grass was worked in tones of green and charcoal Appleton crewel wool and DMC stranded cotton. Contrast was introduced by using warm shades of rust and green in the rocks at the top of the panel. The use of different thicknesses of thread created the highlights

Using a curved needle on a section of the Mitchell grass



Wheat

Section leader *Jenny Priestley*

Embroiderers were readily able to interpret the artist's images of the wheat section. It looked as if the sun was shining on a field of wheat moving gently in a light breeze. Before beginning to stitch, embroiderers faced the delicate task of transferring the wheat design to the linen twill fabric. The original design was done in soft pencil and one problem was to avoid transferring the graphite onto the linen twill. Using a fine black-ink pen, a tracing was made and from that a second tracing was taken using acid-free tissue paper and a 2H pencil.

The long, smooth curves of wheat stems and leaves were achieved by means of a draughtsman's adjustable curved ruler. This final tracing was then centred on the twill and anchored on all sides with tacking stitches and by using diagonal, vertical and horizontal lines.

Many interpretative samplers were worked for Kay to choose from till, finally, the warmth, shadow and movement of the wheat grains, leaves and stems were achieved. This was done by fading out the ends of broken stalks by gradually introducing Perle with the wool up the wheathead stalks and using wool with stranded cotton on top of the leaf stalks.



Detail of one of the wheat samplers

Top: Detail of the wheat section stitched through tissue paper

Bottom: Detail of wheat

Top right: Jenny Priestley, wearing a magnifying glass, stitches the wheat section



Subtle tonings of predominantly warm golds, creams, fawns and occasional touches of apricot, pink and mauve-grey created the variety of colour in the wheatheads which Kay intended. Awns on wheatheads were worked with a single thread of stranded cotton. All stitching was done with a curved needle and with the frame in an upright position.

Sheep, Landscape and Potoroo

Section leader Jacqueline Macdermid

We found the sheep panel difficult as we did not have a full-colour example to follow. The subtle flowing watercolour effect was achieved by using a dyed overlay. This was a real challenge. The transfer of the design was achieved by placing wet polyester fabric over the design and tracing it with diluted paint.

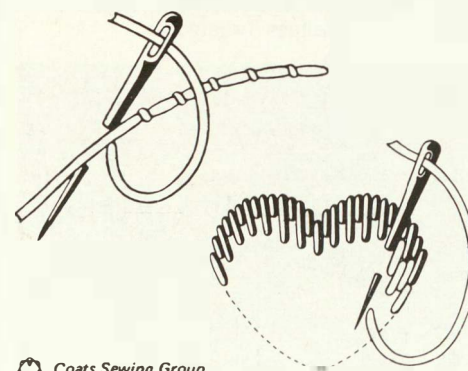
When attaching the overlay, we had to avoid puckering by taking meticulous care with the preparation. First the polyester fabric was carefully tacked around the edge, then in vertical rows 5 centimetres apart, starting from the fixed lefthand side, smoothing as we went. Finally, we worked a double row of backstitching all round, which remained until the stitching was well advanced. This was all done with the frame in an upright position to stop 'sagging'.


We seemed to go round in circles trying to achieve the effect Kay had in her mind — a transparent, watercolour sheep, with streaks of ground showing through. The required effect was finally achieved by changing the colours from the blue and grey tones to green, cream and grey. We used small straight stitches and left some areas unstitched. The sheep images were transferred using the same method as for the wheat panel. This entire panel was worked with curved needles, which was only difficult when using tiny, closely packed stitches.

In Kay's original design the potoroo was drawn in black and white, but she agreed to our suggestion to embroider it in its natural colours. After working on a sampler we realised the stitches needed to be very tightly packed and so decided to stitch the bulk of the body separately, then appliqué it in place. This avoided distorting the linen and also gave the potoroo a rounded look. Long and short stitch with a curved needle was used and, once the final colours were decided, we all enjoyed working on this panel.

The cross through the potoroo caused much controversy. A compromise was reached by breaking one of the arms of the cross to indicate that it is an endangered, not an extinct, species.

Lettering on the two panels was done by couching. Parallel horizontal lines were tacked on the linen as a guide to the stitching, and each letter was outlined with machine cotton. A No. 7 crewel needle was used for the two strands of wool being couched and a fine embroidery needle with a single thread of stranded cotton worked the couching. For the 1 centimetre high letters under the potoroo the wool was twisted and couched — a tricky process. Each letter was done separately to facilitate any future corrections.



 Coats Sewing Group

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Unfinished sampler of sheep

Detail of sheep

Top: Potoroo — with lettering below in the process of being stitched

Bottom: Couching and long and short stitch

Northern Territory

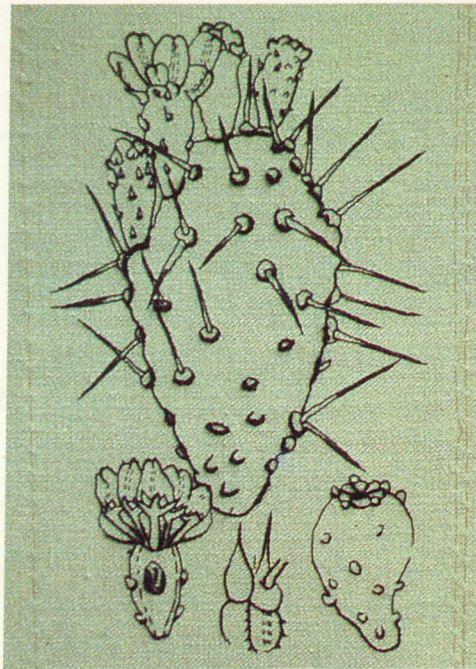
Supervisor Kathleen Short

The panel worked by the Northern Territory embroiderers depicts introduced pests. It incorporated a naive painting of a rabbit plague with botanical drawings of Paterson's Curse (or Salvation Jane) and Prickly Pear. Initially our members were not happy about portraying these scourges.

The Territory's guild headquarters are located at Katherine, about 300 and 1000 kilometres respectively from the other major population centres of Darwin and Alice Springs. The demands of distance and climate were met with that insouciance typical of the Top End.

A veritable plague of rabbits, running all over Sam Burns's painting, greeted Kay and Anne on their first visit to review samplers. So that members who lived in isolated areas could participate, it was decided that clusters of rabbits should be stitched and later applied to the linen ground. Kay decided that the pompom-tailed variety, jokingly offered by some embroiderers, were delightful but not quite appropriate!

Exclusive use of an air-conditioned doctor's surgery enabled the embroiderers to meet the conservation guidelines. Twenty-five



embroiderers worked on the panel, including four mother and daughter teams.

Plant Pests

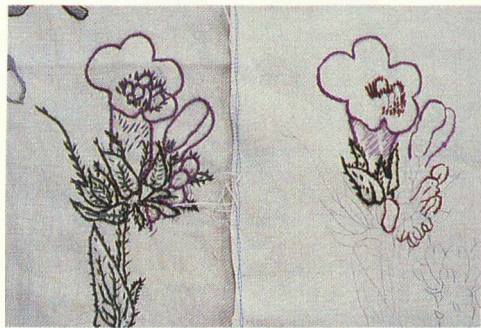
Originally, we intended the section showing plant pests to be worked separately in Darwin, but the technical difficulties of matching pieces that might have different tensions dictated that the members from Darwin should travel south to stitch directly onto the linen.

The representations of Paterson's Curse and Prickly Pear were worked in black and charcoal wool and cotton threads, with one fine line and one thick line on each side. These lines were worked in whipped back stitch and whipped chain stitch. The variety of stitchings in this section contrasts well with the lively rabbit scene.

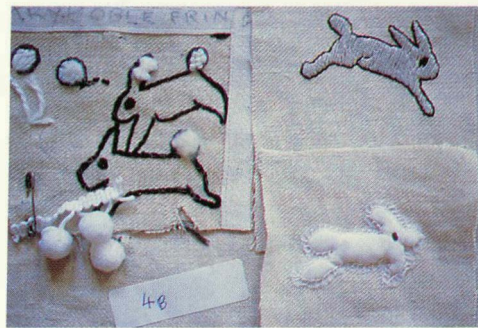
Hungry Rabbits

This panel consisted of a Terylene overlay which was coloured with permaset dyes according to instructions from embroiderers in the New South Wales guild. Onto this we applied ninety-seven rabbits and the figures of two women and two children in front of their tent home.

The rabbits and the large chimney were stitched by embroiderers who lived in remote areas and were returned to Katherine wrapped in



Samplers of a plant pest — Paterson's Curse

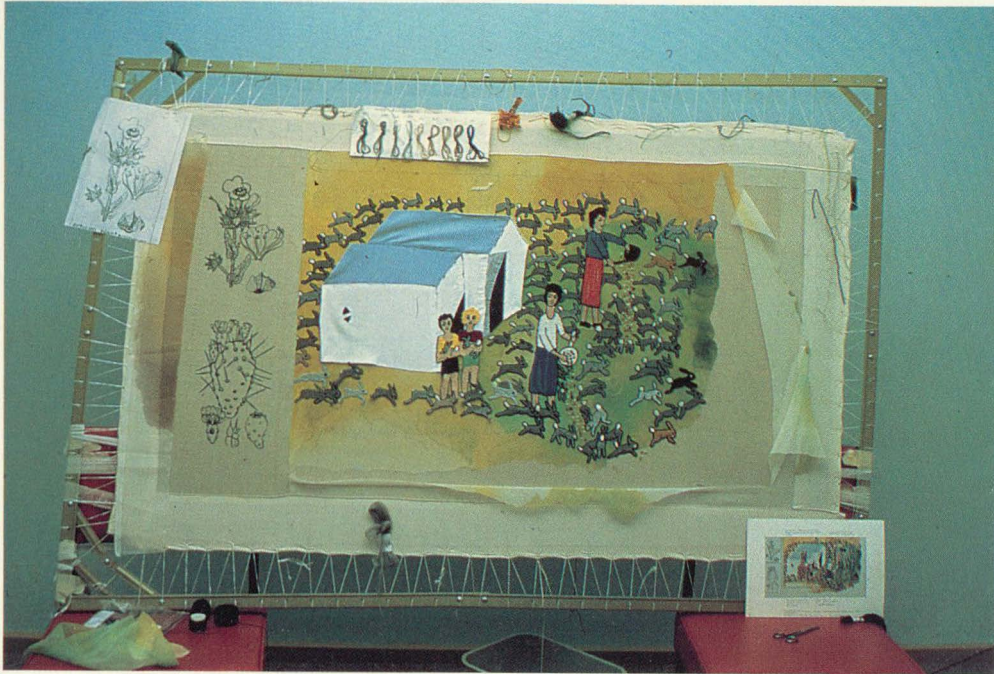


Top: Plant pest — Prickly Pear

Bottom: Samplers of rabbits — the pompom tails were rejected



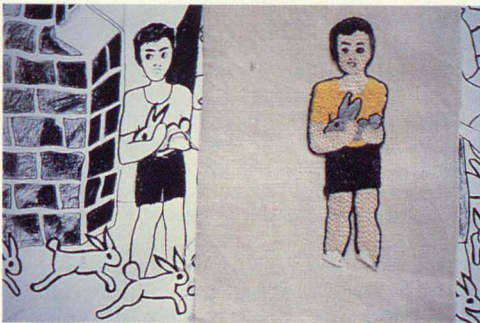
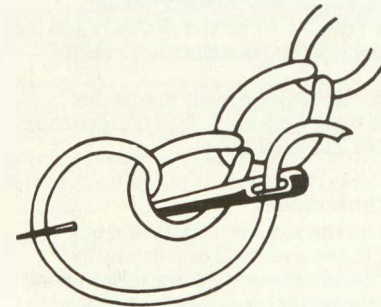
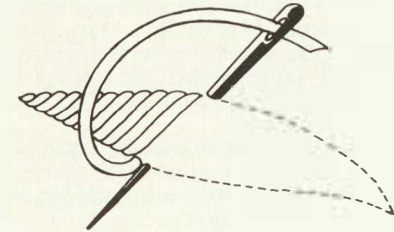
Another sampler of rabbits



acid-free tissue paper and clean sheeting. All the rabbits were named to help place them accurately on the linen.

We asked Kay to redraw the lady, who looked as though she had just chopped her hand off with an axe rather than appearing to feed the rabbits from a saucepan. Her ankle socks were also removed in favour of lisle stockings which better matched her fine jumper.

A wide range of stitches was employed. The rabbits were outlined in couching with their bodies done in French filling stitch and their tails in satin stitch. The family's clothes were darned to give the surface of the fabric a homespun effect, their hair was done in bullion and French knots, and their arms, legs and faces in chain stitch.

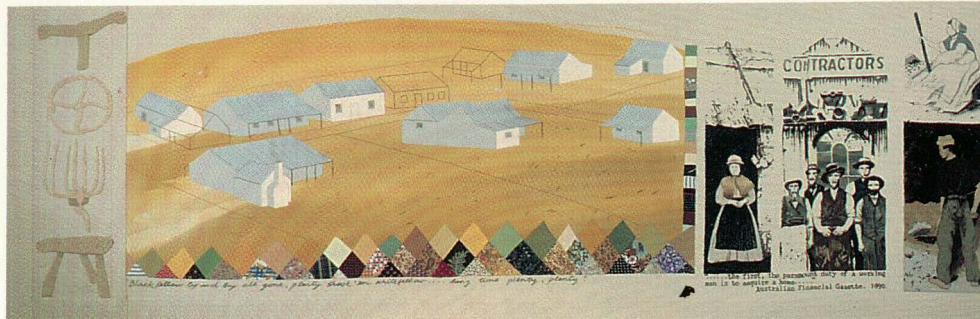


Top: The Northern Territory panel in its frame

Bottom left: Section from *Hungry Rabbits* — cartoon and sampler of child

Bottom right: Supervisor Kathleen Short corrects cartoon

Satin stitch and chain stitch



Victoria

Supervisor Wanda McPherson

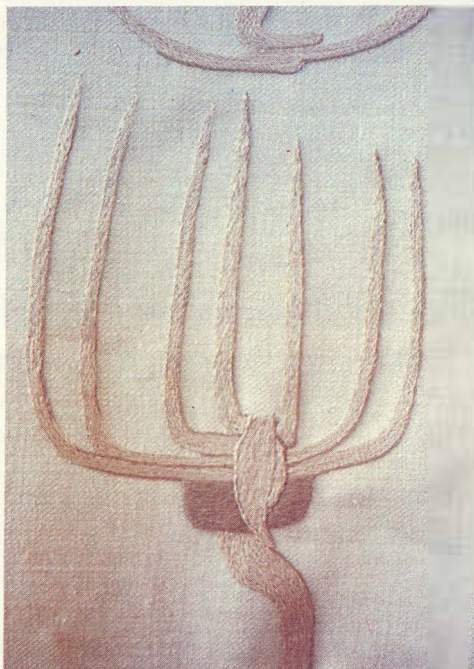
The Embroiderers' Guild of Victoria has over 2000 members, more than 1500 of them in Melbourne and its suburbs. Over the years its members have worked on many commissions and the wealth of experience and professionalism among members meant that coming to terms with Kay's images was never a problem.

Eight section leaders helped to organise and develop a working plan under the supervisor's direction. Our part of the design showed attempts by the European settlers to come to terms with the landscape. This was depicted through machinery, housing, commerce, industry and the disappearance of the Aborigines from settled areas.

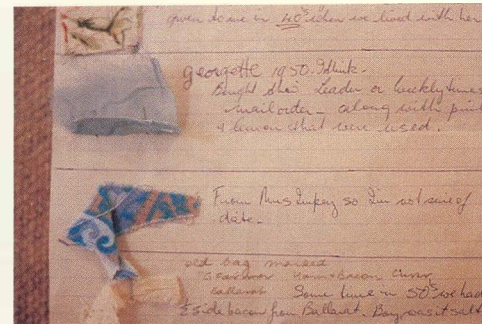
Many friendships were made during this project and there were many shared experiences to remember and laugh about.

Pioneer Implements

The design for the pioneer instruments was transferred to the linen twill by stitching over tracings of the images on acid-free tissue paper which was afterwards carefully removed from under the stitches. These images represent the



Detail of pioneer implements



process of 'making do' that characterised the lives of the early settlers. The section was stitched by country members and was taken on a separate frame to Mildura (567 kilometres from Melbourne) and then to Warrnambool (264 kilometres). Other members travelled from Geelong (75 kilometres) Mornington (54 kilometres) and Bendigo (111 kilometres) to work on the section at the guild rooms in Melbourne. The finished work was then appliquéd on to the background fabric. The shapes of the implements approximate the letters which spell 'town'. Embroiderers studied the wheel itself closely before beginning work — it is kept at Castlemaine Market Museum in Melbourne.

Town

The town comprises three sections: Cottages, Patchwork strip and Lettering.

Placed across the bottom of the scene, which depicts the harshness of new settlement on the cleared land, is a strip of patchwork that reminds the viewer we are looking at a situation essentially human. Another side of this story is in the text from a Taungiang tribesman quoted from H. Reynold's *The Other Side of the Frontier*:

Black fellow by and by all gone, plenty shoot 'em white fellow . . . long time plenty, plenty

Swatches of old fabrics, with comments, submitted by some guild members



Kay's small sketch and colour core were used as guides for transferring the colour wash with fibre-reactive dyes to a cotton voile overlay. Several pieces were tried and the most suitable one was selected for stitching onto the linen fabric.

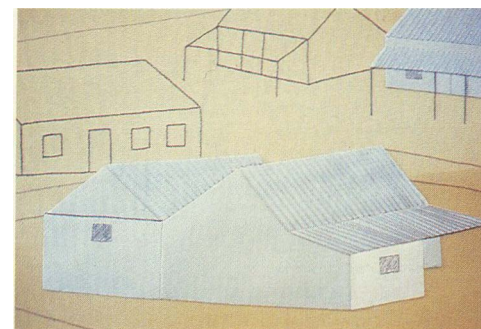
Cottages

Section leader Alison West

A team of seven embroiderers worked on the cottages at home. Each cottage was traced off the original drawing and photocopied. The copy was then given to each person and from this each made a template. The cottages were applied to

the overlay. As with other sections of the embroidery, all the fastening off and a great deal of the stitching was done sitting on the floor underneath the frame, pushing the needle through and then getting up and pushing it down from the top.

Grey Perle thread was couched on the roofs at an angle to look like corrugated iron catching the sun. The doors and windows were suggested by slanting, straight stitches and the verandahs and doorposts were worked in stem stitch. The cottages were deliberately understated to contrast with the heavy stitching of the adjacent section. Some adjustments to the original



drawing were made by Kay to make the perspective more accurate.

Patchwork Strip

Section leader Helen Mitchell

I was delighted with this section. In contrast to the nearly washed-out scene, it made you think that inside those drab little houses was some colour and perhaps a few memories from other lands stitched into the fabrics of their patchwork quilts. As most of us in our own work aim to produce straight lines and sharp points we found it quite difficult to cut irregular shapes all askew.

The safest way was to trace Kay's shapes, and we did this, using no less than seventy-two templates.

For months we advertised and asked guild members for small pieces of old fabrics. Unfortunately, the search yielded few very old fabrics that could be used and, in the end, some pieces of material that were not quite so old and new strips that had a 'period' look were used instead.

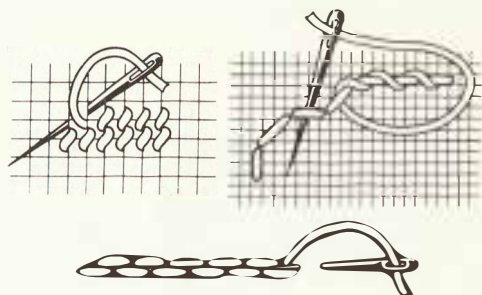
Lettering

Section leader Betty Luke

For the sake of accuracy the text was marked onto Vliesofix which was tacked onto the linen. The

Detail of the patchwork strip and writing below the town section of the Victorian guild's panel

Detail of the town showing appliquéd houses



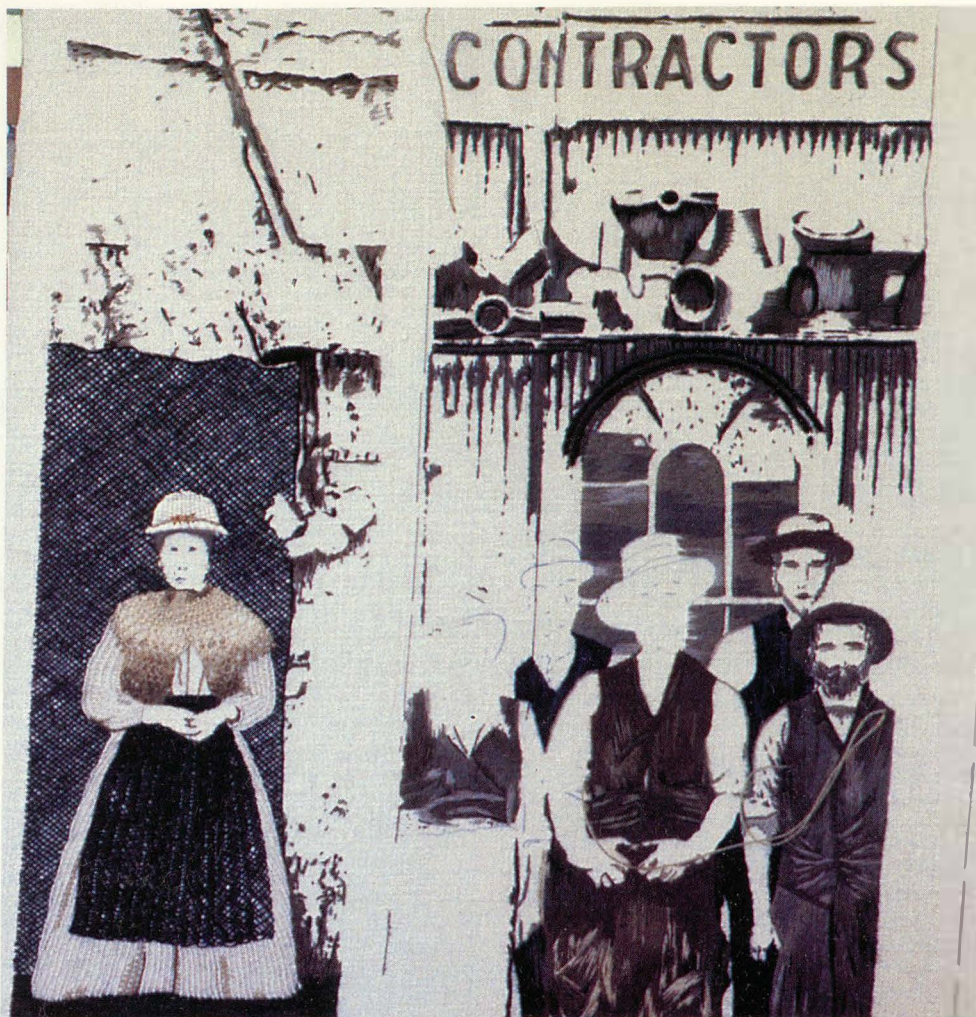
 Coats Sewing Group

letters were then outlined in sewing cotton and the transfer removed from underneath them. The letters and punctuation were completed in Perle cotton whipped back stitches and French knots.

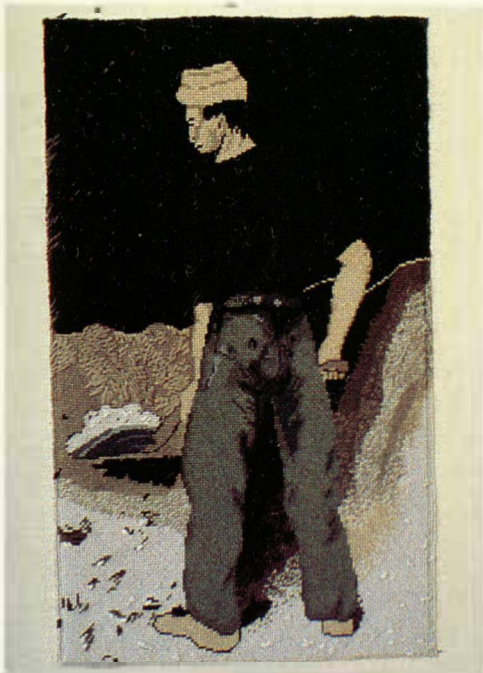
Shopkeeper

Section leader Margaret Jessel

The dark blue background had to be done first, a close random lattice, which was very slow work. We named the lady Bessie and we worked first on her hair, hat, face and the step on which she stands. We then began dressing her and moved to the other side of the frame to work on the bark roof and the side wall of the hut. Kay wanted the



Part of the Victorian panel showing the shopkeeper and the contractors



finished work to be as much like the original picture as possible and this meant making tiny stitches and long stitches to look like scratches in grey and very dark blue threads. This gave an appearance of random directions to help give the idea of bark. The roof needed to be worked from the top down because it was physically impossible to reach far enough from the right side. Cable stitch and French knots were chosen for Bessie's bonnet and its floral decoration. Brussel stitch was used in her needlelace shawl and her apron was worked in closed herringbone stitch. The pattern of her dress was created by rows of split stitch interspersed with seed stitch.

Miner stitched in petit point and attached to the linen



Contractors

Section leader Lema Spotswood

Kay's original drawings did not provide sufficient detail to reproduce the 'contractors' and the other daguerreotype photographs in the Victorian panel. The difficult task of rendering the photographic tones of the hardware in black and white was solved by stitching from the top down. This resulted in the embroiderers strictly reproducing the tonal qualities of the design rather than being influenced by preconceptions of what the items looked like. It is likely that if the embroiderers had copied the implements the

Sampler of S.T. Gill's drawing of the woman with cradle, machine stitched

right way up there would have been some loss of dimension. Careful work was required to delineate the forms from the tonal values of the background. So the original source of inspiration was obtained from Kay and after a good deal of research, photocopies were made from books and enlarged to actual stitching size. These enlargements were used as a constant reference during stitching, the outline being transferred onto the linen with dressmaker's carbon.

Woman with Cradle

Section leader Norma Bain

One of the embroiderers wrote:

I fell in love with S.T. Gill's drawing of the woman holding a baby and working a gold cradle. She could have been my great grandmother, who, at the age of sixteen married and arrived at the Bendigo Goldfields in 1854. The baby, whom we called 'Casper' because of her shape in the drawings, could be my grandmother.

Stem stitch was used to outline the figures of the woman and her infant. The rim of her bonnet is edged with buttonhole stitch. The linen is otherwise left bare, except for some shading in wool and cotton threads worked in straight stitch.

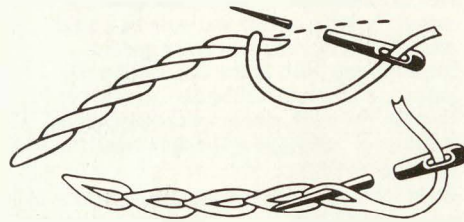
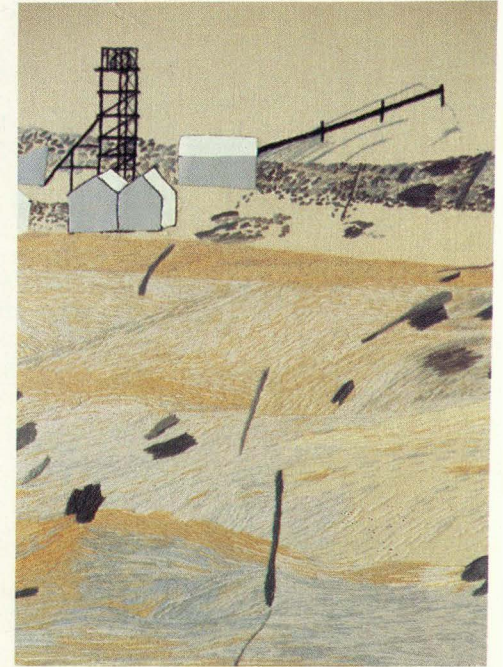
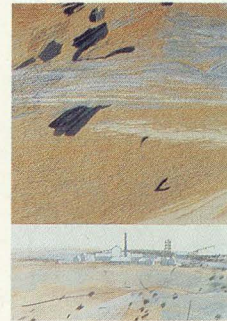
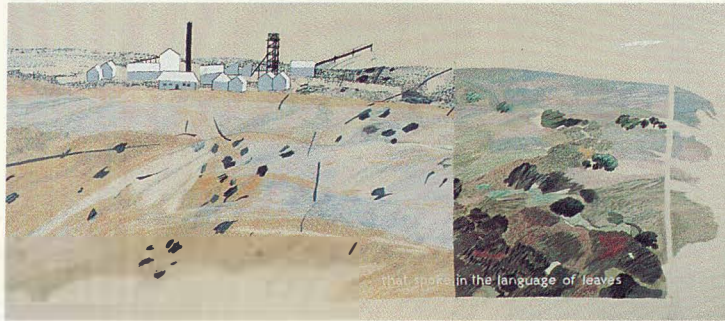
Miner


Section leader Margaret Miller

Victoria's sixth image, the miner (whom we named Henry), was worked in canvas stitchery. While the ACT removed the canvas threads from their image of Lake Eyre on completion, this tent stitched canvas was applied to the linen twill.

Wanda McPherson has the last word:

Looking back, I realise I learned a lot and I am grateful that I was given the opportunity to contribute to the embroidery. One of the nicest things about the experience was working with all the women who came to do their various sections of the embroidery.



 Coats Sewing Group

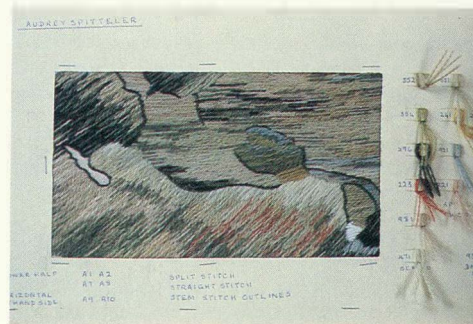
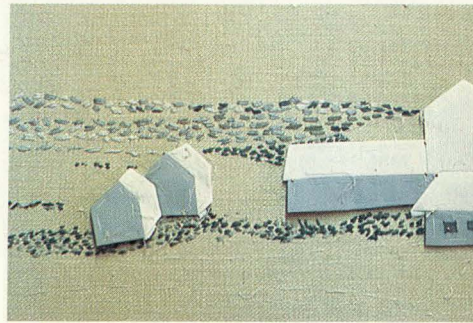
Western Australia

Supervisor Rusty Walkley

The Western Australian panel marks the transition of a society which utilises the resources of the land but which is also coming to terms with, and exercising responsibility towards, the environment. The scenes depicted are a mining scene and a second landscape.

Guild members produced a comprehensive series of samplers from which Kay and Anne, who visited in April 1986, chose the techniques which best achieved the subtle variations of values and textures in the challenging images.

During later visits of the designer and the national co-ordinator we discussed at length the images and the various ways of achieving the



overall tonal effect needed. When large samplers were stitched and we saw the images coming together, it was easy to see areas that required more defined shapes or more subtle gradations of tone. We came to realise that the key to developing the images was to convey a sense of perspective through the shading and direction of stitches.

Mining Scene

The large arid area in the foreground was difficult to interpret and only after much trial and error were we able to create a satisfactory effect. Once the colours had been decided the coal area was

Top: The Western Australian panel

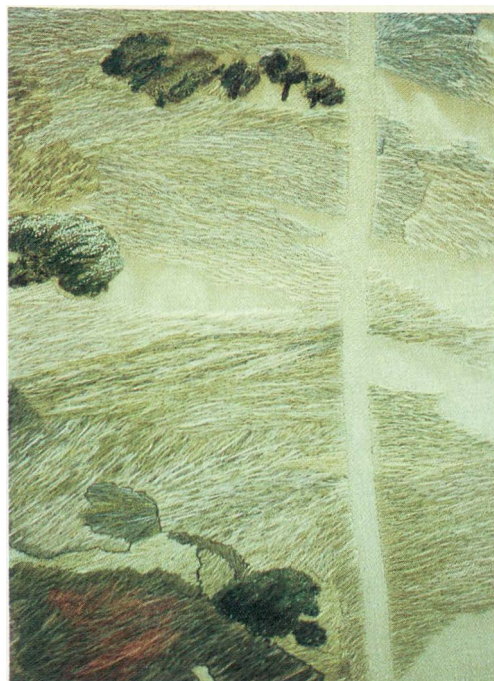
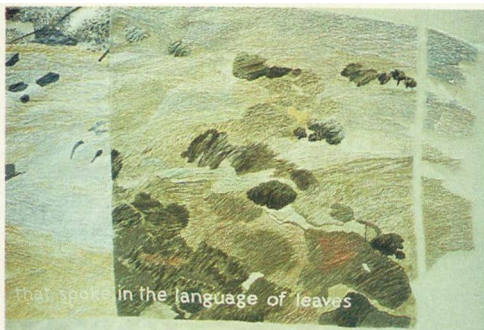
Bottom: Stem stitch and split stitch

Top: Detail of the mining scene with the design of the whole mining scene beneath

Centre: Detail of appliquéd mining huts

Bottom: Sampler of the second landscape

Detail of mining scene



the easiest section to stitch. The patchwork and appliqué of the mine buildings also proceeded without difficulty. After much experimentation with couching, split stitches, double-running and stem stitch, the desired skeletal effect of the mine poppet head was achieved. The main problems lay in establishing a relationship between the buildings, the coal, and the foreground which, when embroidered, had become more distinct.

Second Landscape

During the sampler stages, the group unsuccessfully experimented with Procion dyes on nylon to produce an overlay. The use of a fine

fabric called Stabletex was also considered but the material snagged and ran with the stitches. In consultation with Kay and Anne it was decided to use only embroidery techniques (as in the case of the ACT landscape panel).

The group was perturbed by the stark effect created by a chalky birdlike figure in the foreground. The impact was lessened by working threads of different colours together into its outline rather as a painter mixes paints. Eventually, this technique was found to express the delicacy and subtlety of the design.

Free machining on dissolvable fabric produced an interesting texture for the tree foliage. This was

then applied directly onto the stitched linen ground of the landscape.

The lettering from the poem *Falls Country* by Judith Wright was embroidered in white Perle chain stitches. Against the pale mining scene it appears as a whisper but as the words stand out against the landscape the strength of this affirmation of the land seems to increase in volume and power.

Halley's Comet — included because it appeared in 1986, the year of stitching the embroidery — is stitched with rayon threads which reflect the light.

Comment

An embroiderer who played a significant part in this project wrote to Dorothy:

My small involvement with this gargantuan undertaking has made me grow as a person, for which I am most grateful. These past two years have drawn me right into the very fibre of Australian life and history. I feel so strongly part of it all. It could never have happened, were it not for the Parliament House Embroidery. After only twelve years in this country, I can honestly say it is my home, and home is not a place, it is a feeling of love.

Top: Second landscape

Detail of the second landscape

Bottom: The Western Australian guild's supervisor, Rusty Walkley, fixes samplers of Halley's Comet to the second landscape



that spoke in the language of

Completion

Conservation

In February 1987, the PHE Committee gathered a team together in Canberra to receive the embroidered panels from the State and Territory guilds and to check and treat them from a conservation point of view. Betty Bourke led this team.

Supervisor Betty Bourke

Guild members on duty unwrapped the panels and had the first sight of the embroidered images. We worked at the Australian Archives Repository at Mitchell in Canberra and are grateful to the ACT Regional Director of the Australian Archives for allowing us to use the repository's air-conditioned rooms for storing and joining the embroidered panels. It was an exciting time. Each unwrapping was a special experience and we were very impressed that each guild had so carefully followed the instructions given by Josephine Carter for the safe transport of the panels.

We wrote a receipt for each panel as a future reference for conservation action and for the people who would later assemble and join the panels into one piece. Each panel receipt showed the date of arrival, its origin, the person who received it and the condition in which it was received.

Part of the Western Australian panel showing some of the mining scene and second landscape

Each embroidered panel was removed from its travelling frame and laced over Fomecore, a lightweight board suitable for short term use as its overlaying covering is acid free. The Fomecore was cut 20 centimetres larger than the size of the actual image so that the linen fabric was able to relax. For storage, the whole surface of the linen was covered with acid-free tissue paper, then specially washed cotton sheeting and finally bubble plastic. The cotton sheeting was washed, then thoroughly rinsed in demineralised water, dried indoors and placed in plastic bags. Every care was taken to protect the sheeting from particles of dust.

It was necessary for the moisture content to be checked so that all eight sections of the embroidery were at the same level at the end of the conservation program. Josephine Carter was notified of the arrival of the panels and she came and checked them and advised what to do.

The general procedure after receiving a section was to examine it for any faults such as pin marks and so on; these points were recorded for future attention. We also adjusted the tension, especially where there were overlays and appliqués

On the days Josephine came to check the panels it was surprising to see the changes in the



moisture content as read from the moisture meter. To adjust the moisture content in some small pockets of stitching, small pieces of tissue paper were folded over the area and then the covering tissue paper, sheeting and plastic were replaced, sometimes leaving one corner of the plastic unsealed to allow the moisture to escape.

The ultimate aim of having all of the eight panels of the embroidery brought to the same level of humidity was not achieved until December 1987, ten months after we had begun. The embroidery was then ready to be joined into one whole piece.

Storing a completed panel at the Australian Archives Repository at Mitchell, Canberra



Joining

*Supervisor of the joining and mounting team
Margaret Roberts*

When Dorothy persuaded me to lead the team, I accepted the position with some feeling of inadequacy, not really knowing how big a task it would be nor how many difficult decisions would have to be made. Inevitably, there were some lows — such as when we had to cope with distorted linen caused by dense stitching with the edges of embroidery not finishing in the weft space, and with insufficient linen being allowed for wrapping around the frame.

However, there were many highs to compensate. The first was when we saw the panels from each State and Territory assembled on their mounting boards at Australian Archives on 9 July 1987. Kay was present on this day and it was great to have her deciding where the horizontal and vertical boundaries of each panel were to be placed. Recording these boundaries was the first step in the joining process. As we expected, there were some discrepancies in the measurements of the finished panels and we found measuring and tacking the boundaries were the hardest tasks.

Another high was when the first seam was completed and it looked great. A flannel fell seam



was chosen to join the pieces because of the double strength gained at the back of the work by pressing the seam allowances to one side and securing them with herringbone stitch. The actual seam was back-stitched by hand in linen thread for further strength. The task was meticulous and took over three months of stitching on several days each week. Another great moment was when the embroidery, in two pieces, was placed together on 8 metres of table space to be prepared for the final seam. It looked so long!

Mounting

The week beginning Monday, 21 March 1988, was one of the most exciting in the whole project. Meticulous planning ensured that nothing would be forgotten and all would go smoothly. The contractors had the stretcher ready for the embroidery, also the ten stands (like saw-horses) and the moveable stays to steady them.

Velcro was stapled to the back of the frame. Pencil markings and notches were also made on the back of the frame to indicate the boundaries of the images on the embroidery. The double corrugated Archivart multi-use board had already been cut. The boards were lapped by 50 millimetres and the joins covered with Archive Text paper strips using adhesive. Top, bottom and



sides of the board were bevelled to provide a soft edge for the embroidery to be wrapped around. Archive Text completely covered all edges of the Archivart board and the stretcher frame to the reverse side.

Dacron was placed over the front of the stretcher frame overlapping the edges, and over this was placed Terylene, stapled to the frame through linen tape using copper staples.

By Wednesday we were able to practise lifting the frame in and out of the case. Five metres of cotton calico stitched on the edge with Velcro had been prepared to ensure that the method proposed would work. Josephine Carter and

Top: Panels being laid out for the first time at the Australian Archives Repository

Bottom: Acid-free tissue paper was used to protect the embroidery before rolling it

Betty Bourke, head of the conservation team, removes loose threads with tweezers

Receiving the completed Tasmanian panel at the Australian Archives Repository. Dorothy Hyslop unlocks the case and (from left to right) Betty Bourke, Sheena Ford, Wanda McMahan and Anne Mussett watch



Sheena Ford stretched the fabric in place and seven helpers stood by to observe and to assist.

The scene switched the next morning from Parliament House to the Australian Archives Repository at Mitchell where the work of conservation and joining had been done. The embroidery had been prepared, rolled around two cylinders towards the centre, covered with acid-free tissue paper and a sheet then encased in bubble plastic. A trolley was used to transfer the embroidery to a covered van, manned by a driver and an assistant from the Australian Archives, and driven to Parliament House. The team of ten women were there ready for the final stages of the work.

The boundaries of the images from the centre were marked by the tacking lines on top and bottom of the embroidery. These were to match with notches and marks on the underside of the frame. The guide lines were remarkably accurate. The embroidery was unrolled towards each end of the frame, a small section at a time.

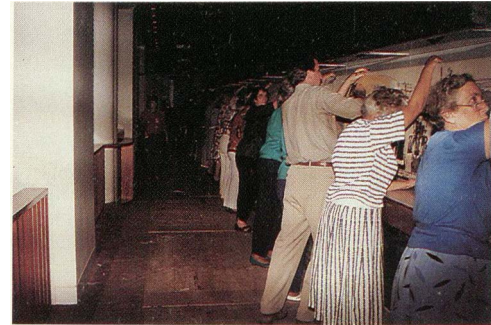
Once the straight grain was obtained, Josephine Carter and Sheena Ford worked along the panel stitched by New South Wales. Extra hands, wearing white, soft, cotton gloves, were required to maintain the tension of the fabric. In a gallery situation weights would have been used.



As the day progressed the embroidery began to respond to the tensioning and it was pleasing to see how the Velcro held the embroidery taut. It was tiring work for Sheena and Josephine and it was necessary to stop to wash hands and refresh from time to time.

Necessary repair work was noted and attended to — for example, some tacking threads used as guide lines needed to be removed and some loose ends secured.

As work proceeded difficulties such as the distortion of heavily embroidered images against plain linen were more easily dealt with. The measurements taken earlier in the joining



process were vital in ensuring that the total length of the embroidery was 16 095 millimetres, to match the wooden stretcher. When the tensioning of the embroidery on the stretcher was complete the surplus linen at each corner was mitred and stitched neatly, not an easy feat as it was necessary for the finisher to turn her head and work upside down.

The team who had practised on Wednesday were recalled on Friday to set the embroidery in its place. Geoffrey Siebens of Mitchell, Giurgola & Thorp gave the call, 'One, two, three — lift', and the embroidery, on its stretcher, was lifted and held vertically while men removed the support

Mock-up of the corner of the frame. Velcro was applied to the frame and fabric. Note the magnifier, sandbag and model of the embroidery used in the mounting process

Pat Armstrong and Margaret Roberts admire another join

Top: The mounting team makes final adjustments in Parliament House

Bottom: Hanging the embroidery in Parliament House

stays and the stands. The lifting team then inched forward, heel to toe, keeping the forward movement even, along the 16-metre length. The embroidery was lowered into its place, the wooden bar on the back of the stretcher slotting into its place in the case, giving the embroidery a free standing appearance. Pins in the case were secured in place on the stretcher and safety chains were attached. These measures ensure that in the event of the embroidery falling forward, for instance, when necessary adjustments are made, the safety chains prevent it from falling onto the glass.

The case that houses the embroidery is made of polished brush box with a laminated glass front. It is completely sealed and monitored for humidity. The inside of the case is painted a neutral warm grey complementing the walls of the gallery, which are finished with fabric panels of a deep blue.

After eight years' work the Parliament House Embroidery was mounted in its case. Each of the fifteen embroiderers on the mounting team had her own thoughts about the part she had played and the great achievement of everyone who had contributed, in one way or other, to the work. There were cheers and, a little later, champagne.

On 20 April 1988 the embroidery was adjusted slightly and then the glass front of the case was permanently sealed. It was now ready to be presented to Parliament.

Presentation to Parliament

Two functions marked the completion of the embroidery and its presentation to the people of Australia. At 11 a.m. on Wednesday, 25 May 1988, more than six hundred people gathered in the reception hall at the invitation of the Parliament House Embroidery Committee to celebrate the handing over of the embroidery to the



Top: Some of the audience at the presentation of the embroidery to Parliament, 25 May 1988

Bottom: The embroidery in its case at Parliament House



presiding officers of the Parliament — the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Honourable Joan Child, MP, and the President of the Senate, Senator Kerry Sibraa.

Mr J. D. (Ian) Fowler of the Parliament House Construction Authority was chairman of proceedings. He welcomed the official guests, especially Her Excellency Lady Stephen, wife of the Governor-General of Australia, patron of the Embroiderers' Guild of the ACT and member of the Embroiderers' Guild of Victoria.

Short speeches were given by Katrina Rumley, the Parliament House Construction Authority's curator; Romaldo Giurgola on behalf of the architects; Kay Lawrence, the designer; and Dorothy Hyslop for the guilds. Dorothy also made the presentation.

Luncheon at the Australian National University followed the presentation ceremony. It was chaired by Lois Evans, the ACT panel supervisor. Petronella Wensing, the president of the ACT guild, welcomed guests. Lady Stephen congratulated all the

embroiderers on the successful achievement of their goal. Anne Richards, the national coordinator, spoke of the future for embroidery in Australia and Wanda McPherson of Victoria spoke on behalf of all the State and Territory supervisors. In her handing over speech at Parliament House Dorothy Hyslop said eight years of endeavour had made the presentation possible. A wealth of experience in craftsmanship and a lot of friendly co-operation had gone into the work. The embroiderers' guilds were proud that the project had enhanced their craft and brought it onto a new and higher plane in Australia. This was gratifying for embroiderers but it also improved the public perception of embroidery.



Lady Stephen and Dorothy Hyslop cut the cake following the presentation ceremony. Kay Lawrence and Anne Richards stand behind

Katrina Rumley representing the Parliament House Construction Authority makes her address at the presentation ceremony at Parliament House

CHRONOLOGY

1980	The ACT guild approaches the Parliament House Construction Authority and the presiding officers of the Federal Parliament suggesting a gift of an embroidery for display in the new Parliament House. Joint Standing Committee 'delighted' to accept.
Oct	Parliament House Embroidery [PHE] Committee formed by the ACT guild.
1981	Guilds in States and Territories agree to join project.
Feb	PHE Committee's first consultation with architect Mr Richard Thorp of Mitchell, Giurgola & Thorp.
May	Guilds' representatives meet in Canberra. Research begins into fabric and threads.
1982	
Mar	Josephine Carter from the Australian National Gallery agrees to assist on conservation matters.
Nov	Submission from the PHE Committee to the Parliament House Construction Authority includes an outline of how the project is to be managed and how much it is likely to cost.
1983	
Apr	Parliament House Construction Authority agrees in principle for project to go ahead and provides funds for a design competition to be held.
Jun	Dorothy Hyslop and Pam Berg decide where the embroidery will be displayed in Parliament House.
Nov	Six artists visit Canberra.

1984	
May	Entries for design competition close.
Jun	Kay Lawrence of South Australia wins competition.
1985	
May	Decision on fabric: linen is bought as one piece. It is agreed colours of threads will be chosen by each guild. Newsletters to supervisors in each guild are started.
May	Designer Kay Lawrence visits the guilds to discuss her design.
Aug	Stitching of samplers begins.
Nov	National co-ordinator, Anne Richards from Melbourne, is appointed.
Dec	Conference in Canberra attended by the designer, the national co-ordinator, supervisors from each guild and the PHE Committee. First round of samplers assessed by the designer and national co-ordinator.
	Fabric washed and supplied to each guild.
1986	
Apr	Kay Lawrence and Anne Richards visit the guilds together to assess the second round of samplers.
May	Fabric pieces framed up for stitching in each guild. Design transferred to fabric in each guild. Stitching of embroidery begins.
1987	
Jun	Stitching of embroidery completed.
Jul	All panels of embroidery reach Canberra from guilds. Panels are rested at the Australian Archives Repository in Canberra. Conservation work begins.
Dec	Joining of panels begins. Panels of embroidery all reach the same level of humidity.

1988	
Mar	Joining of embroidery completed.
Apr	Embroidery mounted in case.
May	Embroidery handed over to presiding officers of the Parliament.

SUPERVISORS AND SECTION LEADERS

ACT	
Supervisor	Lois Evans
Section leaders	June Weatherstone Elva Oakley Betty Bourke Liz Evans
Queensland	
Supervisors	Joan Selnes (to 1985) Eva Wilcox (1985–88)
Section leaders	Lyle Burns Marion Rohde Lorna May Margaret Sydes
Tasmania	
Supervisors	Freda Tilsley Nance Ryan
South Australia	
Supervisor	Peg Saddler
Section leaders	Jo Fuller Jean Lange Meg Douglas Elsie Moss
New South Wales	
Supervisor	Marjorie Beck
Section leaders	Jocelyn Gay Jenny Priestley Jacqueline Macdermid
Northern Territory	
Supervisor	Kathleen Short

Victoria

Supervisor
Section leaders

Wanda McPherson
Norma Bain
Margaret Jessel
Betty Luke
Wanda McPherson
Margaret Miller
Helen Mitchell
Lema Spotswood
Alison West
Julia Wood

Western Australia
Supervisor

Rusty Walkley

EMBROIDERERS WHO STITCHED THE EMBROIDERY

ACT

Armstrong, Patricia
Bates, Kitty
Battaerd, Beryl
Bennett, Ina
Berg, Pamille **
Betts, Joy
Blake, Rosemary
Bourke, Betty
Bowry-Bruggeman, Sonja
Brice, Enid
Bridge, Eslee
Briscombe, Deirdre
Brown, Alison
Carter, Patricia
Cheel, Gwladys
Conroy, Cheryl
Copping, Irene
Crompton, Heather
Cureton, Audrey
Daley, Marjorie
Darby, Vivienne
Davies, Esther
Davis, Joy

Daw, Sue
Downes, Tess
Dudgeon, Phyllis
Duncan, Robyn
Dunn, Elsie
Dusting, Ellestan
Evans, Liz
Evans, Lois (supervisor)
Evans, Rebecca
Farrow, Ena
Featherston, Ann
Fenwick-Williams, Libby
Finnegan, Jean
Follett, Judith
Ford, Sheena
Fowler, Jeanette
Gilfelt, Dagmar
Gilman, Frances
Greenwood, Marlene
Greville, Nan
Hadley, Marjorie
Hamilton, Allyson
Hardie, Helen

Harrison, June
Haughey, Betty
Hawkins, June
Henty, Margaret
Hogberg, Blanche
Hunt, Gillian
Hyslop, Dorothy
Irvine, Barbara
Jamieson, Thelma
Jensma, Helen
Kane, Patricia
Kelleher, Maureen
Kennedy, Alison
Kennedy, Barbara
Lawrence, Kay **
Lemon, Lorraine
Ludgate, Dora
McCarthy, Robin
Macdonald, Anne
McMahon, Wanda
McNab, Gwen
Mellor, Ethel
Mickleburgh, June
Mickleburgh, Sue
Miller, Marjorie
Minns, Sandra
Mussett, Anne
Mussett, Sally
Oakley, Elva
Pateman, Eileen
Penniford, Barbara
Peoples, Sharon
Refshauge, Lady

* Wife of the governor-general of Australia

** Non-member by invitation

Queensland

Avery, Lou
Blackwell, Mary
Board, Hilary
Burns, Lyle
Common, Jill
Condy, Laurel
Davison, Chris
Dean, Joanne
De Chenu, Sheelah
DeVoss, Evelyn

Richards, Anne
Roberts, Margaret
Roberts, Win
Rudduck, Loma
Ryan, Jean
Schultz, Audrey
Sharp, Lois
Shearstone, Lexie
Smith, Doreen
Smith, Dorothy
Smith, Liz
Snedden, Esther
Spottiswood, Melissa
Spottiswood, Rhonda
Spring, Janine
Stephen, Lady *
Thatcher, Bette
Thomas, Beverley
Thomas, Margaret
Thompson, Margaret
Thorne, Kath
Tow, Gweri
van Berlo, Finy
Vlieks, Betty
Vollmer, Win
Warby, Deirdre
Waugh, Joan
Weatherstone, June
Wensing, Petronella
Wilson, Jean
Wilson, Jill
Zimmerman, Hannah
Zwillenberg, Miri

Josan, Bimal
Kirby, Peg
Lemon, Betty
Luck, Jen
May, Lorna
McConnel, Jackie
Morgan, Lillian
Pearson, Margaret
Philp, Beryl

Tasmania

Allwright, Sue
Attwood, Pam
Beale, Heather
Boersma, Sijtje
Brydon, Betty
Cameron, Raylene
Carpenter, Erica
Cossins, Pat
Darlow, Jane
de Bomford, Jo
de Jong, Rubi
Elkerton, Betty
Fletcher, Janet
Gardner, Jean
Gardner, Norma
Goldsteen, Lillian
Hebblethwaite, Elizabeth
Hewitt, Marjorie
Johnston, Edith
Kennedy, Tiny

South Australia

Anderson, Julie
Ashby, Marion
Avey, Jennie
Baker, Ida
Bartley, Lois
Bassett, Jean
Beale, Jennifer
Beer, Joan
Blackwell, Winsome
Briand, Joan
Carslake, Madge
Carstensen, Marie
Csaszar, Marie
Chambers, Eva

Reitano, Mary
Roberts, Heather
Rohde, Marion
Selnes, Joan
Spelling, Peg
Sydes, Margaret
Tolmie, Lillian
West, Joyce
Wilcox, Eva (supervisor)

Kruysmulder, Dora
Lambert, Yula
McGhie, Judy
Mol, Jo
Niebur, Inga
Rees, Brenda
Ridley, Edna
Robbins, Jane
Ryan, Nance (supervisor)
Sice, Pat
Statham, Helen
Teesdale-Smith, Pat
Thompson, Margaret
Tilsley, Fiona
Tilsley, Freda (supervisor)
Tyson, Joan
Walker, Noelene
Webster, Mary
Wolff, Pat

Coates, Rhonda
Cook, Jean
Connell, Maralyn
Crane, Ruth
Crierie, Mary
Dabinett, Heather
Davenport, Poppy
Davies, Robyn
Douglas, Meg
Dunstan, Lady ***
Evans, Rita
Ewart, Maxine
Fuller, Jocelyn
Gardner, Elaine

The following Queensland embroiderers were inadvertently omitted from the first issue of this publication:

McLennan, Nan
Moen, Ailsa
Randall, Jill

Rubb, Isobel
Sharp, Heather

Gifford, Claire
 Goode, Jillien
 Gorroick, Ann
 Hart, Jean
 Holbrook, Maureen
 Holds, Enid
 Huff, Lila
 Ide, Mignon
 Inwood, Rhonda
 Kelsey, Barbara
 Lambert, Robyn
 Lange, Jean
 LePlastrier, Patricia
 Levinson, Iock
 Macdonald, Decima
 McGeorge, Vonnice
 Matthias, Edna
 Miles, Ian
 Milics, Solly
 Milne, Pat
 Moore, Jean
 Moss, Elsie
 Muncey, Stella
 Nitschke, Emily
 Norman, Beryl
 Nowak, Phyl
 Paton, Cynthia
 Pearmain, Pat
 Pearce, Win
 Pearson, Edith
 Ragless, Mary
 Rawnsley, Jean
 Ralston, Dorothy
 Reid, Mona
 Richter, Susan
 Rodgers, Mary
 Saddler, Peg (supervisor)
 Schmidt, Loris
 Shepherdson, Noel
 Shortridge, Patricia
 Spencer, Annie

*** Wife of the governor of South Australia

New South Wales

Beck, Marjorie (supervisor)
 Betteridge, Margaret

Steffensen, Janette
 Strath, Jean
 Szuster, Ann
 Trembath, Mary
 Webster, Valda
 Whallin, Kath
 White, Irene
 Whitehead, Ruth
 Widdison, Toni
 Wilson, Jane
 Wright, Josephine

Juniors

Balnaves, Rachel	11 years
Beer, Philippa	14 years
Bishop, Zhenka	14 years
Bowman, Chicky	14 years
Bowman, Chloe	9 years
Bowman, Heidi	11 years
Downing, Kirsty	12 years
Eardly, Felicity	14 years
Ferguson, Brianna	14 years
Hyde, Mary-Anne	14 years
Isaacs, Jane	13 years
Jenner, Elizabeth	13 years
Kearney, Emma	10 years
Lee, Emma	12 years
Legoe, Cecelia	13 years
Manthey, Sue	16 years
Miles, Anna	9 years
Ordon, Antonia	11 years
Patterson, Lindley	11 years
Ramsay, Sally	8 years
Rumbold, Sophie	11 years
Schahinger, Caroline	15 years
Schahinger, Jennie	13 years
Tucker, Samantha	10 years
Wakefield, Julie	9 years
Wilson, Ailsa	8 years

Bisset, Lex
 Bowyer, Iris

Clarke, Marguerite
 Clover, Elizabeth
 Dickson, Eve
 Gay, Jocelyn
 Gude, Sue
 Hart, Helen
 Macdermid, Jacqueline

*** Wife of the governor of New South Wales

Northern Territory

Banks, Gillian
 Banks, Lisa
 Bates, Sally
 Conway, Penny
 Dryden, Heather
 Fraser-Alan, Laurel
 Geke, Margaret
 Goodall, Elaine
 Hazell, Jenny
 James, Alesia
 Jones, Marjorie
 Jones, Tamara
 Lawley-Brown, Patricia

Victoria

Adams, Betty
 Addlem, Dorothy
 Adeney, Margaret
 Amor, Shelagh
 Anderson, Betty
 Anderson, Ioan
 Armstrong, Rhonda
 Bain, Norma
 Ball, Chris
 Bateson, Carol
 Batycki, Willy
 Berry, Norma
 Betheras, Mollie
 Bickerstaff, Glenys
 Binns, Esda
 Bishop, Sue
 Blackmore, Lorraine
 Bolton, Mae
 Bowen-Allen, Heather
 Bradford, Kerry

Mordin, Ada
 Priestley, Jenny
 Rowland, Lady ***
 Smith, Audrey
 Thomas, Joy
 Wood, Marjorie

May, Sidna
 Morrow, Janine
 Nicholas, Alison
 Purdie, Chris
 Ralph, Katherine
 Ralph, Ursula
 Short, Kathleen (supervisor)
 Short, Merran
 Short, Susan
 Taylor, Kerry
 Wathen, Karien
 Womersley, Peggy

Breukhoven, Pam
 Buick, Ann
 Burr, Connie
 Burrows, Jean
 Campbell, Marjorie
 Campbell, Muriel
 Carey, Mable
 Carson, Margaret
 Cavanagh, Elizabeth
 Chambers, Gwen
 Cheevers, Marie
 Chester, Ian
 Christie, Betty
 Clarke, Gladys
 Coleman, Edna
 Crawford, Lesley
 Currie, Linda
 Davidson, Suzanne
 Ditterich, Nancy
 Diviny, Margaret

Dixon, Betty
 Donald, Marie
 Donaldson, Mary
 Dowson, Annette
 Dubois, Carol
 Duffield, Rosalie
 Dunn, Jessie
 Edmonds, Norma
 Fitchett, Robin
 Fletcher, Jeanne
 Flood, Gwen
 Gerrand, Chris
 Good, Elwyn
 Good, Margaret
 Gordon, Dorothy
 Gowers, Gill
 Gray, Jean
 Gray, Joan
 Gray, Muriel
 Green, Nancy
 Greenwood, Jean
 Hales, Ailsa
 Hall, Joyce
 Harper, Mavis
 Haugh, Nancy
 Henley, Nance
 Higgins, Theresa
 Horne, Eileen
 Hyde, Margaret
 Jacobs, Lucie
 James, Grace
 Jardine, Clare
 Jessel, Margaret
 Jones, Jenifer
 Kennedy, Elizabeth
 Kent, Beth
 King, Trixie
 Kings, Beryl
 Landman, Val
 Law, Lorna
 Lloyd, Joy
 Loch, Judith
 Luke, Betty
 Lynch, Irene
 McCarten, Thelma
 McCaughey, Jean ***
 McDonald, Marie
 McGeorge, Nina

McLaren, Joan
 McPherson, Wanda (supervisor)
 Mann, Mary
 Marks, Ruth
 May, Norah
 Miller, Margaret
 Mills, Margaret
 Mitchell, Helen
 Moffatt, Virginia
 Morrison, Barbara
 Moscato, Maree
 New, Pat
 Oates, Ethel, BEM
 Parkhill, Beryl
 Parkin, Ruth
 Parsons, Marion
 Paterson, Nancy
 Patrick, Aileen
 Payne, Beverley
 Phillis, Betty
 Popple, Marli
 Powell, Marjorie
 Reynolds, Pat
 Rice, Lorna
 Richardson, Grace
 Rijs, Jeanne
 Rimington, Jane
 Ritchie, Wendy
 Rowe, Kit
 Saunders, Win
 Sawers, Mary
 Shaw, Ilma
 Smith, Peg
 Soulsby, Helen
 Spear, Elizabeth
 Spotswood, Lema
 Steel, Margaret
 Stephen, Lady *
 Sturrock, Morna
 Swindon, Shirley
 Thomson, Jean
 Tilley, Cath
 Timms, Sheila
 Vaux, Margaret
 Walker, Fay
 Wark, Edna
 Washbrook, Ethel

West, Alison
 Wilkie, Netta
 Williams, Hilary
 Williams, Rita

* Wife of the governor-general
 *** Wife of the governor of Victoria

Wilson, Kath
 Wilson, Rita
 Wisdom, Helen
 Wood, Julia

Pratt, Marion
 Richards, Belva
 Rogers, Marguerite
 Rose, Gwen
 Schott, Edna
 Shepherd, Win
 Tonson, Glad

Van der Laarse, Anna
 White, Beryl
 Wilkinson, Valerie
 Williams, Dorothy
 Willison, Betty
 Wilson, Peg

Mussett, Anne
 Newman, Rae
 O'Neill, Elaine
 Refshauge Helen (Lady)
 Roberts, Margaret
 Schultz, Audrey
 Sharp, Lois

Snedden, Christopher
 Snedden, Esther
 Spottiswood, Rhonda
 Thompson, Margaret
 Vansweeden, Kobi
 Waugh, Joan
 Wensing, Petronella

Western Australia

Anderson, Ruth
 Bagley, Imelda
 Bessen, Mena
 Coleman, Marjorie
 Considine, Ruth
 Edwards, Willa
 Fletcher, Joan
 Holman, Joy
 Knight, Joy
 Perkins, Olive

Reid, Ruth ***
 Robertson, Thyra
 Rowe, Elvie
 Spitteler, Audrey
 Strang, Doris
 Taylor, Joyce
 Thomas, Coral
 Walkley, Rusty
 (supervisor)

*** Wife of the governor of Western Australia

Northern Territory

Parker, Maggie

Victoria

Bagdon, Kerry
 Burgess, Helen
 Calcutt, Yeutha
 Chapman, Phillipa

Dunstan, Edith
 Hall, Joyce
 Sedgley, Mary
 Sparks, Cynthia
 Taylor, Gwen

CONSERVATION, JOINING AND MOUNTING TEAMS

Conservation

Team leader Betty Bourke

Embroiderers
 Betts, Joy
 Copping, Irene
 Ford, Sheena
 Gilfelt, Dagmar
 Hadley, Marjorie
 Hyslop, Dorothy
 McSpedden, Florence

Mussett, Anne
 Schultz, Audrey
 Thompson, Margaret
Others
 Carter, Josephine
 Ford, Micheline
 Ward, Debbie

Joining

Team leader Margaret Roberts

Armstrong, Pat
 Betts, Joy
 Blake, Rosemary
 Bourke, Betty
 Copping, Irene
 Daw, Sue
 Downes, Tess
 Evans, Lois
 Ford, Sheena
 Gibson, Jane

Gilfelt, Dagmar
 Hadley, Marjorie
 Hyslop, Dorothy
 Irvine, Barbara
 Jamieson, Thelma
 Macdonald, Anne
 McSpedden, Florence
 McMahan, Wanda
 Mellor, Ethel
 Minns, Sandra

Mounting

Team leader Margaret Roberts

Armstrong, Pat
 Betts, Joy
 Bourke, Betty
 Copping, Irene
 Ford, Sheena
 Hadley, Marjorie
 Hyslop, Dorothy
 Irvine, Barbara
 McSpedden, Florence
 McMahan, Wanda
 Mickleburgh, June

Roberts, Margaret
 Schultz, Audrey
 Sharp, Lois
 Waugh, Joan
 Wensing, Petronella
Others
 Josephine Carter
 Gordon Petherbridge
 Geoffrey Siebens
 David Swifte

EMBROIDERERS WHO WORKED ON SAMPLERS ONLY

ACT

Beattie, Beryl
 Crick, Bonnie
 Ford, Barbara

Forster, Lola
 Jerogin, Anna
 Sieper, Lesley

New South Wales

Aitkin, Ann
 Baker, Lochie
 Bennett, Gwen
 Bishop, Patricia
 Brown, Margaret
 Chate, Kath
 Dicker, Norma
 Doust, Nancye
 Duncan, Rosaleen
 Edwards, Gwen
 Emmett, Hett

Fethers, June
 Janny Geldens
 Hilliard, Margaret
 Horsburgh, Betty
 Irwin, Verle
 Keogh, Dymphna
 Lambert, Sylvia
 Mathews, Heather
 McSpedden, Florence
 Newton, Dorn
 Powys, June

STATISTICS OF STITCHING

Guild	Number of embroiderers who stitched the embroidery	Hours spent stitching
ACT	112	2 689
Queensland	38	1 240
Tasmania	39	1 338
South Australia	106	847
New South Wales	17	1 781
Northern Territory	25	1 514
Victoria	143	1 360
Western Australia	18	2 000
Total	498	11 769

These figures do not incorporate the stitching of the samplers.

FINANCE

Receipts and payments of the Parliament House Embroidery Committee to 30 June 1988.

RECEIPTS	\$
Donations	1 363
Exhibitions, raffles, functions	11 457
Sales	1 432
Classes and workshops	829
Interest	848
	<hr/>
	15 929
	<hr/>
PAYMENTS	
Fabrics and threads	1 930
Conference expenses	7 961
Workshops, photographs, duplicating, videos, slides	1 503
Assembly and mounting	1 690
Administration — postage and telephone	961
— other	981
Publications	807
	<hr/>
	15 833
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THE PARLIAMENT HOUSE EMBROIDERY COMMITTEE MEMBERS 1980—88

Betty Bourke	Jacqueline Marsh
Marjorie Daley	Robin McCarthy
Lois Evans	Wanda McMahon
Jeanette Fowler	Sue Mickleburgh
Marjorie Hadley	Kitty Peisley, MBE
Helen Hardie	Loma Rudduck
Barbara Haynes	Doreen Smith
Margaret Henty	Esther Snedden
Dorothy Hyslop	Joan Waugh
Barbara Irvine	Jean Wilson
Ex-officio	
Presidents of the ACT guild	
Doreen Warren	
Petronella Wensing	
Secretaries of the ACT guild	
Jill Common	
Thelma Jamieson	
June Mickleburgh	
Carol Watchman	
Auditors	
Lynette Swift	
Bill Marsh	
Joe Waugh	

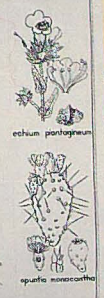
PRESIDENTS OF THE EMBROIDERERS' GUILDS

1986 (The year the embroidery was stitched)

ACT	Jeanette Fowler
Queensland	Cecily Evans
Tasmania	Sue Allwright
South Australia	Peg Saddler
New South Wales	Hilda Farquhar-Smith
Northern Territory	Kathleen Short
Victoria	Hilary Williams
Western Australia	Beryl Bassett

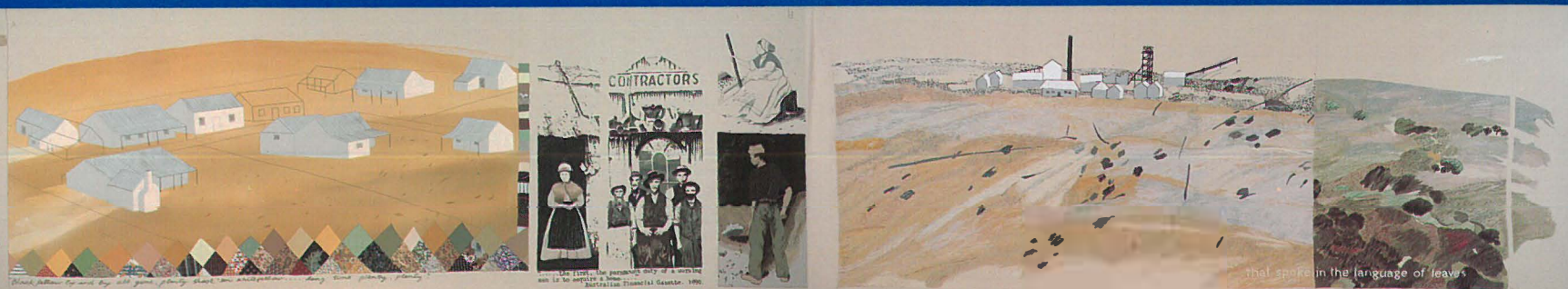


PEST OF AUSTRALIAN SHEPHERDS



Rabbit. Photographed by the author.

... see the waving plains of Mitchell grass of the rich and diverse native herbage the aborigines knew and worked.



The story of the making of the Parliament House Embroidery is told by those most closely associated with it — the embroiderers themselves.

Lavishly illustrated, the book describes • how the embroidery project originated • how the project got under way with the selection of the embroidery design • and how work on the embroidery was successfully co-ordinated between the eight State and Territory guilds. A detailed account by the designer explains the theme of the embroidery and offers an understanding of the choice and arrangement of the many different images it depicts. Also included is a full description of the fabrics, threads and stitching techniques used by the hundreds of highly skilled needlewomen involved in this great work of art.



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