



In this week's Midweek Moments we introduce a new club, new fabric and Blueberries newest tutor, Anne Sommerlad, who will be taking workshops on the first Friday of every month, starting this week. As well as our penultimate episode of 'Stitches Through Time', where we examine the first of two historically significant twentieth century quilts that arose out of calamitous circumstances and have now come to represent human resilience.

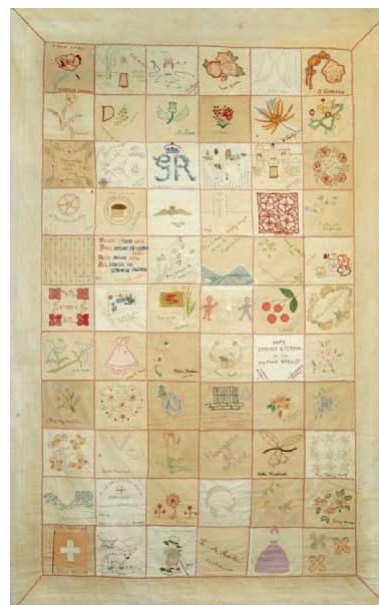
Happy snaps from the Newcastle CraftExpo! [Click here.](#)

Stitches Through Time - Part 7

Due in large part to the industrial revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, quilting and patchwork traditions had become widespread both geographically and socially by the twentieth century. No longer merely the domain of the privileged classes, its relative accessibility meant that it continued to evolve in new and previously unimagined ways. Perhaps the most significant example of this was as a form of political/cultural expression and a symbol of hope, liberty and freedom during times of repression or hardship. Two legendary twentieth century quilts that arose out of such conditions were the Changi Prison quilt, created during WWII and the AIDS Memorial Quilt, first conceived in the early years of the AIDS pandemic in the 1980s.

Changi Prison was a civilian prison in eastern Singapore, which became a POW camp during the Japanese occupation of that country from 1942 to 1945. About 400 of its over 2,000 internees were women, principally the wives of mainly British and Australian military personnel plus some Red Cross representatives and missionaries. During 1942, a group of these women oversaw the making of what resulted in being three separate quilts, known as the British, Australian and Japanese quilts, although collectively would become known simply as the Changi Quilt.

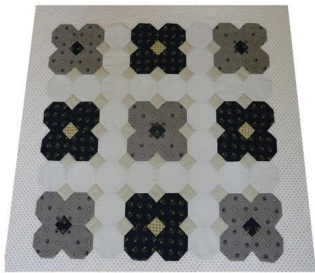
Originally the quilts were intended as an activity to relieve boredom, but they quickly became a covert way for the women to pass on coded information to their segregated male counterparts, as well as becoming a symbol of hope and patriotism. Women were asked to contribute personalised panels, which were then stitched together by machine and the edges over-embroidered in red. The contents of each panel were strictly scrutinised and vetted by the Japanese, who often demanded that words like 'prison' be unpicked (although they didn't mind the word 'gaol', possibly because they didn't recognise the Australian spelling of the word). After the war, the Australian quilt was presented to the Red Cross, and in 1968, it was permanently donated to the War Memorial in Canberra.



*one of the Changi Quilts
(possibly the British one),
showing the different,
individually designed panels*

continues next page...

English Paper Piecing Club



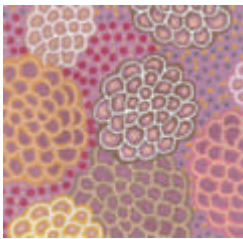
If you would like to try your hand at an age-old technique, why not join our new English Paper Piecing Club.

Bi-monthly you will receive one of Sue Daley's ([Patchwork with Busy Fingers](#)) Playing with Paper Packs. The packs include precut paper pieces and clear perspex templates. You will also receive swatches of the sample fabric, and a newsletter with hints and tips.

Click [here](#) to find out more and join the club.

New Aboriginal Fabric

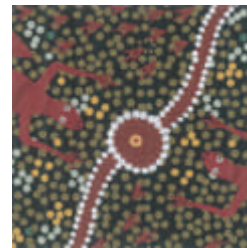
Get your creative juices flowing with these new aboriginal fabrics...



Dancing Flower Pink



Gathering Bush
Tomato Red



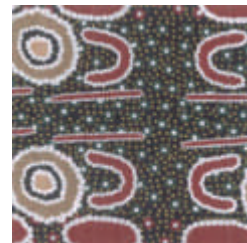
Goanna and Snake



Plum and Bush
Banana Gold



Plum and Bush
Banana Green



Seed Dreaming Black



Women Dreaming
Natural



Witchety Grub Gold



Women Searching
Green

continues next page...

Tutor Profile with Anne Sommerlad



How long have you been quilting and what got you started?

I've been quilting for about 20 years now. I was first introduced to it by a neighbour a few doors up the road from me who was quite a passionate quilter herself. I've always been a sewer and I've made my own clothes, plus a lot of costumes for amateur musical productions over the years, so moving on to patchwork seemed a natural transition.

How long have you been teaching and what do you specialise in?

I've been teaching since 2006. I began teaching a night class while I was still a high school teacher, then took long service leave on half pay to try my hand as a sewing teacher. I wouldn't really say I have a specialised area as I'm a very eclectic designer. I like both machine work and appliqué. I like to design quilts that cater for the different tastes and needs of the students. I feel it's my role as a teacher to tease out the students own ideas rather than imposing my ideas and tastes onto them.

What inspires your creative ideas and/or projects?

I do love antique and reproduction and I enjoy reproducing museum quilts. I also get a lot of inspiration from tiles and architecture. I just love colour and fabric.

Do you have a favourite colour or design style?

No, I love them all, from beautiful English florals to wild gypsy colours. I love playing with colour. This is my palette. I can't use oils and a brush but I can use fabric. Patchwork makes the artistry accessible to people who can't work with other mediums.

What are you most looking forward to teaching at Blueberries?

I just love the atmosphere at Blueberries! It is very inclusive and I feel very accepted. It's very friendly and comfortable, which is also important for the students.

Anne will be holding workshops at Blueberries on the first Friday of the month from 9:30am to 3:30pm, starting this week, Friday 5 March, (except for Friday 2 April which is Easter).

Click [here](#) to find out more about Anne's workshops.

Til next week!

The Blueberries Team.