



AIRING?OF?THE?QUILTS

Margaret Tuckwell provides a stitch-by-stitch account of some of the quilters of Braidwood

There are numerous quilters within the Braidwood district with various diverse styles, and together they would fill an entire issue of BWD. To choose some and omit others whilst not wishing to offend was indeed a difficult task.

So I decided to interview ladies who are not only quilters but who share their experience, knowledge, 'stash of fabrics' and time within the community. They have all been involved in the 'Airing of the Quilts' for a number of years and continue to provide a selection of quilts and/or create bunting which adds additional colour and technique to Wallace Street.

The original reason for airing quilts was to hang them on a clothes line or balcony in the spring when the sun shines and there is a fair chance of wind. This enabled the quilts to flutter in the breeze and easily remove dust which may have accumulated over the winter months and also to reduce the need to hand wash the quilt.

Move on to the 1990s and a new reason for airing quilts began here in Braidwood; to display quilts hanging from historic buildings, in shop windows and quilts entered for the indoor competition at the National Theatre. The event has been successful for over 20 years and attracts both locals and visitors and helps provide a financial gain to the town.

Of course a project like this does not just happen — it requires good planning and assistance from the community to hang and take down the quilts. In the past this has been done using tall ladders, however, we need to take into account the occupation health and safety of all. This year the committee requests building owners either hang the quilts or permit volunteers to enter the premises to hang the quilts. Quilts hung below the balconies will be raised using a hooked pole method.

The quilts need to be hung within a short timeframe and for that we require assistance from the general Braidwood

community. If you are able to help, please contact 0458 605 786 or margaret@braidwoodquiltevent.org.au.

Gai Morgan

Gai, like many others, first learnt to sew by hand at school and remembers one of her first pieces being 'shadow work' on organza. As a member of a resourceful migrant family Gai learnt to make both clothes and lingerie at an early age.

On entering the workforce Gai first worked as a 'sign writer' for displays at Grace Brothers, then taught both day and evening classes at TAFE. She later re-educated to become a library technician.

Her first quilt was all stitched by hand, joining all the pieces and then the actual quilting with needle and thread and the aid of a thimble. Gai continues to hand stitch some of her quilts, a precise and quiet art which suits her personality.

Gai Morgan



When Gai came to Braidwood she joined a number of groups including the Quilters where she learnt to move out of her comfort zone of colours and at times be wild and vibrant, an example being one of her prize winning quilts at the 2017 Braidwood Show.

Gai has vast experience in quilting techniques and tips and tricks which she willingly shares with many of the Braidwood Quilters and is exceptional in guiding the younger members of the group. She recently ran a two day course of creating fabric from strips and small pieces stitched together — and created a clutch style purse.

Liberty fabrics are one of her favourites which she blends together for patches within a quilt or uses them in appliqué.

Gai is also a quiet achiever in the background, creating gifts for the Quilters Luncheon in July and finishing off all the stray tasks prior to the Airing of the Quilts.

Jenny Wallace

The Singer handle type machine belonging to her grandmother was the first machine Jenny used when aged 9 or 10. Then in the early 1960s she was given a brand new Singer Electric machine as a wedding present. During the following decade Jenny used many reels of cotton making clothes for her growing family as well as uniforms for school. A decade plus found Jenny entering the craze of knit fabrics where she attended one of her first ever sewing classes; more reels and fabric were acquired.

Then jump two decades and Jenny's world changed when, she made her first quilt (to right of picture). Each piece was hand sewn then hand quilted after which she was 'hooked'.

Jenny Wallace



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