



Needlework Tool Collectors Society of Australia

25th “Silver” Anniversary Conference

21-22 July, 2012, Melbourne, Australia

by Norma Shattock

Over 100 members attended our conference and enjoyed the speakers, the competitions, raffles and the sales mall. The Melbourne Committee did a great job in developing the silver anniversary theme, even with silver placemats at the Saturday night dinner where we heard a talk by Kevin Murray on... Silver.



A highlight of the whole conference was the recognition after Saturday lunch of those founding members of the society still active with us. NTCSA was also pleased to receive a message of friendship and encouragement from its sister society, Thimble Collectors International in the USA.

Speakers on both days offered new knowledge and some glimpses of modern efforts to organise and preserve the past. It was a privilege to hear them and enjoy their willingness to share their time and knowledge with us. They included :

- Alison Cole, embroidering for over 30 years, with workshops in Paris and at the Royal School of Needlework in the UK, spoke on “17th Century Stumpwork and Related Tools”. Her examples were outstanding and gave us a better appreciation of the craft and techniques.
- Dr. Morna Sturrock, OAM, is a founder and life member of the Embroiderers’ Guild of Victoria. Morna also took classes in ceremonial embroidery at the Royal School of Needlework in London. Morna’s talk “My Love Affair with the Needle” took us from London where items were being created for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II to many wonderful experiences in ecclesiastical embroidery throughout Australia. Who will forget the red mitre!

- Kay Sullivan, author of *Needlework Tools and Accessories: A Dutch Tradition*, presented areas of research and some tools new to us. This was an interesting change from the English and American items usually available to us. Kay has lectured around the world to other clubs, and the first Dutch thimble club resulted from Kay's publishing of "De Vingerhoed" (The Thimble).
- Kerry Easton spoke on "Three Centuries of Worktables/The Jewel of the Cabinetmaker's Art". Kerry explained, and showed us, that the sewing table, often known as the work table, was the first functional piece of furniture created specifically for the gentler sex. As usual, Kerry's humorous approach made this a very interesting talk.
- Helen Fowler spoke on the on-line Dress Register and the conservation of Australian clothing. Most of us were not aware of this register, and perhaps new items will be found for the group. "The Australian Dress Register is a collaborative, online project about dress pre 1945. This includes men's, women's and children's clothing ranging, from the special occasion to the everyday. Museums and private collectors are encouraged to research their garments and share the stories and photographs while the information is still available and within living memory." Helen said the Dress Register team hopes to expand the dates to later costumes.
- Trevor Robertson spoke on "Scissoroo and Ned Kelly Thimbles". He started "Scissorsman", a family owned and operated business in 1995. Trevor designed the "Scissoroo" scissors which are hand finished in Italy and took us over the journey from his ideas and struggles to make it come true to the standard he wanted. Trevor is also the designer of the Ned Kelly pewter thimbles which are cast and hand finished in Australia. Several members gave him some drawings of other animals.
- Patricia Begg, OAM, is a social historian, her major interests being porcelain and lace. Patricia spoke on "18th Century Toys/The Lowe & Walker and Chelsea Girl in a Swing Collections". The items were so tiny but the details were incredible. We were privileged to be in the same room as them, and to see them up close was exceptional. Up to this time, they were only objects you read or heard about and here they were in front of our eyes.
- Our final speaker was Jennifer Forest, 2010-2011 Curator of Conservation and Management Plans-Collections, for ACT Historic Places, Canberra, which manages three house museums. Jennifer spoke on "Jane Austen's Sewing Basket & Georgian Times". We enjoyed the tools and items and their relationship to the times of Jane Austen. Jennifer is also the author of "*Jane Austen's Sewing Box*".

It was also announced during the conference that our **2014 venue** will be the Harbour City, **Sydney**.



Guessing Competition

Recognition

Foundation

NTCSA meets in three state capitals, Adelaide, Melbourne, and Sydney; for each group those members who joined during the first active year and still with the Society received a certificate and pin as a founding member. The sisters who actually created NTCSA and ran it for 10 years, Jenny and Katrina Cowen of Melbourne, were separately recognised. Also other members outside the three capitals but joining in the first year were recognised. (See our photograph.)

Those receiving Foundation awards were :

Founders Katrina Cowen Jenny Cowen	Foundation Members Victoria Leslie Bell Doug Birrell Joan Blaney Sue Butterley Margaret Frecker Wendy Ritchie Norma Shattock
NSW Lee Bateman Edna Boyd Helen Burgin Sue Claydon Lyn Dennis Fay Griffiths Sybil Harland Margaret Hendricksen Valerie Hoskin Heather Joynes	Edna Luster Jill Lyons Hilde Marynissen Jeanette Moles Norma Anne Pearce Dawn Perrin Rosemary Shepherd Bernadetta Thomas Sue Wilson
South Australia David Birch Clarice Birch Judith Durbridge	Queensland Sue Gowan
Life Membership Also, a new life membership was awarded to Sue Butterley, a founding member, previous committee member, and for 15 years the Melbourne librarian. Sue's father Doug, also a life member and foundation member, was able to join the conference briefly to receive his Foundation Member award and to witness Sue's Life Membership.	



Foundation and Life Members



The Sales Mall !!