



UPPER HUNTER MUSEUM of RURAL LIFE Inc

P O Box 140 Aberdeen NSW 2336

NEWSLETTER

April 2017

The much needed rain has greened the whole valley and brightened everything up before Autumn really sets in. We were lucky to miss out on most of the flooding but our thoughts and best wishes go to those that have suffered through fires, the Queensland cyclone and are still experiencing floods. Australians are a tough lot and no wonder. We need to be.

The Aberdeen Quilt Affair is fast approaching, Sunday 30th April, well worth a visit. The Local Studies Group will also have a display in our showcase in the Library. Be sure to pop in our door in the Library to see it. The information on the back page mentions the Wagga quilts, another uniquely Australia solution to our tough environment. My family has a story of Waggas being used back when times were hard. Do you have any stories of your family using them? Who made them and what were they made of? The Local Studies Group would like to hear these stories. Mention it to one of the ladies working today or send an email to our address below and we can arrange for someone to record your story.

**Golden Oldies
Lunch & Movie**



Tuesday 9th May 11.30am
for Lunch \$10 donation

Bookings Daphne 65438356 Jan 65437150

Next Meeting UHMRL

**Wednesday, 26th April, 2017
4.30pm at Aberdeen Library.**

**New members and volunteers always
welcome.**

**Next scanning afternoon for the
Aberdeen Local Study Group
Friday, 28th April, 2017
2pm - 4.30pm at Aberdeen Library.**

We will be there to scan your photos or you
can have a look through the collection of
Aberdeen memories we have collected so far.

Upper Hunter Museum of Rural Life Inc. raising funds to establish a Museum and Cultural Centre in Aberdeen.

www.aberdeenmuseum.org.au

Email: uhmrl@skymesh.com.au

QUILTING and PATCHWORK

Quilting:

Quilting is the process of sewing together two or more layers of fabric to make a thicker padded material, usually to create a quilt or quilted garment.

The origins of quilting remain unknown but sewing techniques of piecing, appliqué and quilting have been used for clothing and furnishings in diverse parts of the world for several millennia. The earliest known quilted garment is depicted on the carved ivory figure of a Pharaoh dating from Ancient Egypt (~3400 BC). In 1924 archaeologists discovered a quilted floor covering in Mongolia. They estimated its date as between 100 BC to 200 AD.

Crusaders brought quilted objects from the Middle East to Europe in the late 11th century. Quilted garments were popular in the European Middle Ages. Knights wore them under their armour for comfort and sometimes as an outer garment to protect the metal armour from the weather. The earliest known surviving European bed quilt is from late fourteenth century Sicily. It is made of linen and padded with wool. The blocks across the center depict scenes from the legend of Tristan.

In the past the art of quilting was a craft practiced by female amateurs who made quilts to provide warmth and decorate a home. Over the years the craft has grown in popularity and today many enthusiasts enjoy all areas of this art.

Waggas:

Men played a role as quilt makers in the history of Australia as the first wagga quilts were made by men. Waggas are a type of utilitarian quilt that have become identified as uniquely Australian and are believed to have been first made in the wheat farming and milling district, near the town of Wagga Wagga, in NSW. The first waggas were made from wheat or flour bags, sewn together with twine by shearers and bushmen. Waggas also get a mention in the writings of Henry Lawson and Banjo Patterson, usually in the context of describing itinerant rural workers and their possessions. In 1906 the Bulletin newspaper described how to make a genuine wagga: *“Take three wheat and corn sacks and sew them together, Nothing more is needed”*

Waggas and their utilitarian cousins were made throughout country and urban Australia in the first half of the 20th century by women and men whose philosophy was one of thrift and resourcefulness. Over time, the term wagga has been used to describe a type of quilt made by women for use in the home or for their menfolk to use while out camping. The essential characteristic of these quilts is that they are made from recycled fabric or old clothing, with some kind of decorative cover.

Patchwork:

In the nineteenth century, patchwork (or piecework) is often seen as the preserve of wealthy genteel ladies with time on their hands.

Below is a quilt from one of Australia's most famous quilt makers, **Mary Jane Hannaford**.

In 1842 Mary immigrated to NSW from Devonshire, England. Her father obtained work at Goonoo Goonoo near Tamworth and she eventually settled at Blandford, near Murrurundi, where she lived until her death in 1930.

Mary Jane never married and made her quilts when she was an old lady in her eighties.

Known as “The Wedding Quilt”. This quilt is all appliquéd with figurative and naturalistic designs. Her quilts were often based on a workbook of drawings and religious poem she completed in 1861. Appliqué, the stitching of shapes of fabric onto a backing fabric to create an overall design, is unusual in the history of Australian quilt making as most quilts were pieced in geometric designs.



Mary Jane Hannaford's "The Wedding Quilt" 1922

Over the years quilt making has grown in popularity. Today modern quilts are not always used as bedding. To present day quilters, the works of quilt makers from the past have been a source of inspiration for the contemporary artists. [JS]