

Lorna on Sewing and Embroidery with ELTA

My association with ELTA began way back in 2008 when I happened upon a notice advertising weekly embroidery classes and the as they say is history. I must admit my first attempt at a chain stitch was a bit iffy, which at the time was the only embroidery stitch I knew, but Celia in her wonderfully polite way enthused about my work and encouraged me to continue with further embroideries. With a few new stitches under my hat I went on to embroider various pieces which included, to name a few, another cat, two horses, a unicorn, lion, griffin, Letters D,H,Z and some Arabic letters. It was also exciting to learn stencilling and fabric painting and how to combine them all into a finished article that complemented the fabulous embroidered hangings. Over the years I have also made puppets, bags, a mask, some jewellery, needle cases and lately stuffed cats made from fabrics I designed and printed using my home printer.

Shortly after I joined Celia was my capabilities and offered me a position as a paid project worker which I dived head first into. It was my privilege to assisting teaching disadvantaged **children in an after school club, also the Tamil Women's group, The St Barnabas Group** and our first group for adults with learning disabilities. The latter group gave me the greatest joy and satisfaction. It was wonderful to see the enthusiasm and eagerness these adults applied to their embroidery pieces. At this time the council were shutting down so many centres due to government spending cuts i soon realised how important these sessions were. Not only did they bring together such diverse communities and groups and how much we had to offer each other, but also kept alive a needlecraft that slowly being lost to a world where machines ruled supreme.

About this time I began to see the potential of producing our own cards to help with funding and to encourage and reward participants with their own work as a keepsake to share with family and friends. I started by taking photos of all the embroideries with my trusty old camera and learnt how to load them into my new computer with the much needed patient **tuition of my late husband Bill. He showed me how to use the "Picture It" programme** and I was off and running. I began to experiment with the images changing the sizing, adding groups together, making backgrounds and so my work evolved to include bookmarks, T-shirts, decorated papers, writing set, a booklet on how to embroider an elephant and textile designs which followed at a later date. I so enjoy my journey on the never ending road of creativity and continue to achieve the success of those earlier endeavours that ELTA directed my first steps along.