



The Arts Society Medway celebration banner

The idea for a quilt came about when Louise Jupp and I visited Rochester Cathedral to see the huge bog-oak table and enquire about the possibility of having our Annual General Meeting around it – sadly that was not possible. In the Nave we came across a lovely quilt made by one of the societies in Rochester and thought that that might be an easy way to celebrate our Society's 25th anniversary!

We worked quite hard persuading members to create a four inch square of fabric into a Work of Art, and they responded magnificently ... there are embroidered squares, knitted squares, painted squares, cross stitch squares, printed squares and even a bamboo square ... they are all wonderful and show our differences ... thank you all who contributed.

That was just the beginning, the easy bit; as a sewer I expected everyone to be able to create something, anything, and imagined that there would be about 120 plus perfect squares to work with! Expectations were managed and the idea of a quilt was down sized drastically to a tea towel!

When all the 'squares' were positioned together I realised that they were not all four inch squares, indeed some were not even square! This needed more thought.

It would be sensible to mount the squares separately onto fabric rather than sew them all together in order to see these mini works of art better. Pat Lock very kindly agreed to paint the background and I left her to decide the colour palette and design.

During this time many things happened in my family that slowed me down and Pat and I both had holidays which took more time away from the creation.

Pat's painting is perfect, The Medway River runs through the borough and is the name of our Society; it flows down the centre of our banner.

The fabric was then quilted, two layers of calico sandwiching one of wadding. The quilting, which would have been squared in the original concept, took on a life of its own and now looks like the contour lines found on a map, Medway is very hilly.

So far there have been at least 70 hours of hard work done by our members, I suspect more, but in order for these squares to stand proud on their background some of them had to be padded out, some shaved down a bit, and a lot of them put onto a felt backing in order for them to be safely sewn onto the banner.

It arrived a bit later than anyone expected but has had more thought put into it that you can imagine ... and then we couldn't hang it up anywhere in the hall because the walls have a powdery coating on them! Big think now, what was the previous longest thing I'd ever had to hang up ... my daughter's wedding dress.

Now our banner has a super safe hanging frame of its own which should keep it in pristine condition for many years.

Thank you everyone for your patience

Suki Calder