

Blog #26 - My Mum's Needlework

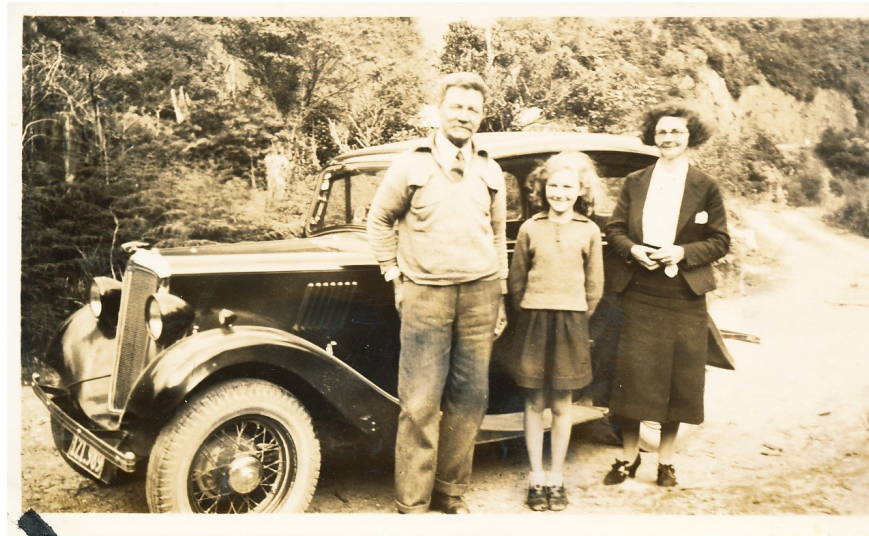
Tuesday, 16 December 2014 -

When packing up my mothers home and sorting through all her possessions, I had time to think and reflect on life. Before she passed away she became very possessive about her things and so concerned about what would happen to them, so much so that I kept feeling guilty if I did not keep an object.

As her father was a bushman, cutting down trees with an axe and handsaw for a timber milling company, she grew up way out in the bush of the Akatarawa Valley - many, many miles of dirt road from Upper Hutt.

Here she is pictured outside their home dressed in her pretty dress as she was a flower girl for an older cousin's wedding (notice the beautiful ringlets)

and with her grandfather and her mother on the Akatarawa Road to their home



Only her very early years were spent at school and then she had to have correspondence lessons until her very early teens. Being an only child and home all day, she had to occupy herself and so she taught herself from books (I have these books) to "fancywork" and crochet and some of her pieces she told me that she created them by candle and kerosene lamp before she was married at the age of seventeen - yes, seventeen!

Here is a pic of her on her wedding day -

11 October 1947

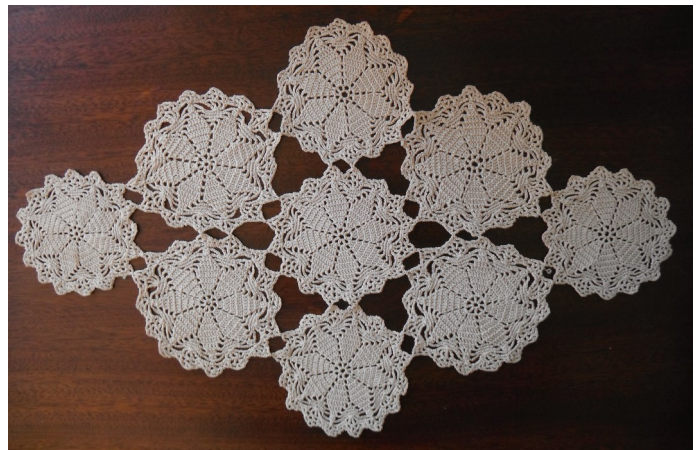


To follow are only a few of the many treasures that I have kept as they hold memories for me.

Firstly - a couple of afternoon tea cloths (36" square) which she embroidered and then worked a crochet edge around. These pieces were known as 'fancywork'. One purchased a piece of linen with the design already transferred on to it or one purchased a book of transfers and ironed their choice of design onto a piece of linen. Sometimes the linen was already hemstitched, but mostly not, and one had to finish it by hemstitching it themselves or hemming it and then finishing it with a crochet edge. Sometimes the threads would be included with the stamped linen fabric and instructions showing what stitches to use where and the colours to use - but not always.



And secondly, crochet doily's -



From the age of fifteen until I was married at the age of twenty, each birthday she gave me a piece of crochet or a crochet set that she had made for my 'glory box' or 'hope chest'.

And she taught me to embroider when I was very young. I can still remember that when I took my work to her to show her what I had done - she always looked at the back first! It had to be as neat as the front.

Here is a pic of my very first piece of needlework - worked when I was nine years of age.

I was so excited
when given the transferred piece
and a bundle of threads of my own!

(Mum crocheted the edge for me)



*And here is a pic of a piece that I worked
when I was almost 14 years of age.
This has been used many, many times
on a tray throughout
my 40 odd years of married life.*

I crocheted this edge.



*And - another piece I worked
when I was fourteen
was a supper cloth
with a stamped cross stitch pattern on it.*

*Once again this has been used many times -
and is still being used on occasions.*



It wasn't until I was thirty two years of age that I began counted thread work - after having seen it for the first time. My sister-in-law, Jillaine, was working a piece and I feel in love with it. She, her husband, and my in-laws had come to stay with us for some days (we were living in Mosgiel, not far from Dunedin at this time). As a parting gift, Jillaine gave me a cross stitch book, a piece of fabric and all the threads to create one of the designs in the book.

*I can only say - the rest is history! She ignited a passion in me that has remained ever since.
Thank you, Jillaine, from the bottom of my heart.*

Here is a pic of the book that she gave me and my very first piece of simple cross stitch - one of the designs from the book.



When finished, I worked a Hem Stitch edge around it.

Once again, I can only say - the rest is history!

From those simple beginnings, a love and a great passion for counted thread work has emerged.

The feeling experienced when beginning with a plain piece of fabric and watch a pattern and design come into being is almost indescribable.

*The peace and joy, satisfaction and contentment, when working with needle and thread is amazing.
So fulfilling.*

My prayer is that you too have this wonderful experience.

