

## Manchester Cloth Stories

Names in brackets are the people who created the artwork that represents that particular story in the Blanket.

1.

Julie

This is bunting I made for the caravan when we went to a music festival.

I didn't realise when I was making it, but when the bunting was up I realised that the bits of material were bits of dresses I'd made for my girls, curtains for daughter's room at university, curtains or blinds for the house we lived in for 35 years. Each flag was a memory.

2.

Louisa

The cloth is nylon, printed with an image of the blue sky which makes up a large umbrella, I'll tweet to you a picture of it :)

Living in Manchester the sky is mostly dull, whenever I use the umbrella is really cheers me up and makes me feel as though I've created a bubble for myself, my own little blue sky. It brightens my day! And give me a bit of a lift.

3.

Alison (Janice)

There's a bit of me that can't really fathom that my mum wore them at all!

She just had her 80th birthday earlier on this year, she's quite frail now, and to think that she was wearing these really bright floral 60's mini dresses.

I can think of a photo of myself and my twin sister in baby carriers, and her behind with my dad and she's wearing one or other of these. But to think of her in it a bit is quite shocking really, because she's quite conservative and quite traditional and this to me is a bit of rock and roll that my mum doesn't really possess! I'm really fondly attached to them because there's a side of her that I never really knew....I'm happy there was that side, I'm sad that I never knew it.

4.

Jeni

A Liberty handkerchief that belonged to my Grandma. It is in good condition and is clean. It has a Liberty pattern on it which is pink, white, orange and purple flowers on a dark blue background. The hem is zig-zag stitched in pink cotton. There is a Liberty label sewn in along one edge.

I bought this handkerchief for my Grandma in the latter years of her life, it was a Christmas present with another hankie, also from Liberty. I think I may have been to London and bought it there, but I can't recall the exact story.

My Grandma was a lovely lady, quite small with a lovely smile and always willing to lend an ear to someone else's desire to talk. She lived on her own for many years after her husband, my Grandad died. I don't remember him as I was very little when this happened.

Grandma always had a handkerchief with her, in her handbag which was brown with a gold top clip.

When she died I wanted to have the handkerchiefs to remember her by. Every now and then I'd get them out and put them first to my nose - the lovely clean washed scent brought back fond memories of her.

In the last few years the smell has diminished and they no longer really have much that triggers a significant memory of her through their aroma.

5.

Sue

An unfinished patchwork sheet - started in the late 70's and is spasmodically ongoing.

The patchwork materials came from left over clothing from the scout jumble sales (held every 6 weeks). As a venture scout leader we all helped in collecting and sorting the jumble. Great fun was had having modelling shows and finding impossible items to sell, so as well as raising money, it was good fun.

At the end the rag man would call and give a nominal sum for what was left. I claimed all the brightly coloured frocks that were left over. After washing, they were sewn onto the paper shapes and arranged in patterns.

I suppose this was an early form of recycling before charity shops etc.

The patchwork reminds me of the fun of being a leader in scouting.

6.

Diana

Diana contributed a number of items, saying about that having them part of the work; "I would be delighted, and the other people involved with these stories would be delighted. It would show them honour and respect"

- Remnants of the dyed Indian material bought in South India.
- Material used to make my wedding dress and my husband's outfit. It was in 2012 in Orkney where we had a pagan ceremony on the beach.
- Crocheted mats and coasters; my mother's hard work. The green one was on her dressing table with glass lidded jars. This was to do with being respectable.
- My friend Remi gave it to me. I used it to back packs for International Women's Day. She was part Nigerian and died five years ago.

7.

Deborah

Green/black/white patterned kaftan - cotton. Given to my mother as a gift from Uganda. She gave it to me and I wore it as a nightie until the fabric deteriorated and tore.

My mother was a missionary in Uganda for eleven years, going there at age 65, and often wore the traditional loose kaftan style dresses, even after she came back to the UK for good.

It is a memory of my mum who died three years ago.

8.

Alison (Naila) see no. 3

9.

Jeni (Naila) see no. 4

10.

Shamin

Silk shalwar kameez

It was given to me by a friend of mine, going back several years ago, to 1986.

I think I wore it to her wedding, and she let me keep it.

She was like a mentor, very inspirational to a lot of people of South Asian and Caribbean background.

She inspired me. I feel really lucky to have met her when I met her, because it enabled me to build up the skills that I've been using to date.

(Shamin's shalwar kameez is the one piece of cloth that links all three of the blankets together as there a piece of her cloth in each blanket.)

11.

Jayne

The fabric is from the base of my Nan's bed. It is Muslin, old, worn, dusty and stained. To me it is a golden colour without the sparkle.

I removed it from her bed after she had died. My family were clearing out her house and I wanted to use it in my own work as an Artist.

(Jayne's muslin was posted to me folded. The folds had been created after a long time being safely stored away. In order to keep hold of the folds, I sewed onto them with gold thread.)

12.

Susan

Pieces of silk, and stitching from my artists 'Manifesto'. The writing was a poem I wrote and transferred onto the silk sculpture in the form of a cushion. Hidden inside was my old Tiny Tears doll that I had kept from my childhood. The work was made at Norwich University of the Arts for an end of year show. I used remnants of silk as I had previously worked as a wedding dress designer before deciding to go back into education and study for a degree in fine art...

The work was personal and the cloth a reminder of my childhood and life. I re-used the off cuts of silk from wedding dresses I had made and recycled braid and fabrics I had used to furnish my home to make the art

work. The poem was pretty much how I felt about my approach to art and life and symbolic of time passing by and of my decision to re discover my love for art by becoming a full time artist.  
I think life and art are closely entwined and to be part of a bigger picture of other lives that have their own stories and personal recollections is an interesting concept... I can't wait to see how these thoughts and fabrics come together.

13.

Sandra

My dad's pose was posting!

(Sandra's dad was called Terence. It is him in the picture and his hankie with his initial on it)

14.

Christine

It was a small piece of thick white lace. My elder sister made her own wedding dress in 1967, helped by me and this was a bit left over. They will be celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary next year.

It brings back memories of a completely different part of my life - childhood - early adulthood. Margaret got married the summer I left school and went to university. It was a gathering of my parents, aunts, uncles, who are now no longer alive. That summer was the beginning of adult life for me.

I would like to be part of a general memory (in the artwork)

(The thick flowery velvet on side A was also Christine's; a part of the bridesmaid's dress)

15.

Lillian

Chair back covers (2). Sage green with trimmings. Made 63 years ago

These items were made by me on a hand weaving loom at teacher training college. We had to design them and choose colours etc. Different looms were used in all cases.

They remind me of the time so long ago, and I can remember the looms.

We also did teasing and spinning sheep's wool, being using natural dyes. I can still see the tutor, and remember the panicky feeling when I wasn't too sure of designing these items and I don't remember getting any real help. I was quite pleased with the finished articles.

The chair back covers have never been used. I don't like the colours, and they never fitted in well with my colour scheme. They just bring back memories.

I suppose I would be quite delighted to have found some use for them, all my work would not have been in vain!

16.

Margaret

Cream lace and fabric used to make my daughter's wedding dress in 1997.

My sister and I had made our wedding dresses in July and October 1969 and it was good to continue the tradition.

The bill for the fabric, lace, pattern etc. was £115.13

17.

Tim

It's just a jumper, it's Angora, and we spun it and knitted it. Me and my wife. This is one of the Angoras, that was Willie (Tim has a photo of himself with a very large rabbit on his knee). It's a rabbit, an Angora rabbit. It's got no coat, it's off, we've taken it off. He belonged to anybody, he used to run in the house, everywhere, him and Henry, I'll show you a photo of Henry. (They) used to live in the house with us. We had these because they had a bit longer coat. In the late eighties. On Anglesey. About 20 to 30 rabbits. They used to come and sit on your knee. I'm combing Henry, and he just lay there.

They liked it when it was cut off (the fur). You know lambs, when you see them dance, they went like that. It would be about twice a year.

Irene used to do the spinning and the knitting. And my mother-in-law knit.

It is warm cloth to wear. I think I've got a waistcoat somewhere. A grey one I think it is, one of the grey ones. A memory of the 2 who did most of the work - Irene and Elsie

18.

Jenny

I made this for my daughter aged eight, thirty years ago. The fabric is polycotton - cream with decorative smocking.

This was my first attempt at smocking. My machine was second hand but it had several decorative stitches that I used for the smocking. My daughter loved to wear it to parties.

19.

Jacqui

My father always wore a 'Flat Cap'...I think it was a traditional form of headgear for working class men in the early part of the 20th century. My father was an engineer, he worked in a factory that made tractors where he was a centre lathe turner and latterly a trainer of the companies apprentices. He came from a very large family, he was the youngest of 17 brothers and sisters, and all of his brothers, my uncles wore the same style of cap. I have such fond memories of Dads cap....he would come home every night and as he walked through the door would take off his cap and place it on my head.....it was still warm from his body heat, and it smelt of his shampoo - Vosene - and engine oil from the factory. To this day I find the smell of engine oil a comfort. It was soft woollen textile, brown and green small tweed checks on a beige background with a quilted silk shiny lining....dulled over time by the various oils that it came in contact with. It was like a huge comfort blanket that made everything in my world well. When the hat was in the house it meant Dad was home and we had love and laughter a plenty and we knew we were safe. The cap became a symbol of security and love. Dad passed away in 2008, he didn't leave us money but he left us a lifetime of happy memories and he left me his cap.

20.

Aileen

It is a seventy-four and a half year old doll. I got it when I was four and a half years old, and I love it as much as I did then, even with the patches.

I got my doll on Christmas Day, the same year my brother Ronald was born. My Dad put him in my doll's cot, and said Father Christmas brought him. I have never forgot that Christmas, seeing my doll in the same cot.

From the age of ten I made clothes for my doll from old rags I found in the house.

It would be great to bring my doll back to life (in the artwork), as it lives in a shoe box

21.

Rebecca

This is an apron made by my great auntie Nan. It is over forty years old. She made it for me, it is an exact smaller version of one of hers. Somewhere along the line it has acquired some blue ink stains.

My aunt kept the apron at her house for me to wear when I visited, eventually she gave it to me to take home. I can still visualise the drawer in which she kept it. She died nearly twenty years ago. I wonder what she would think if she knew that I still had it?

Thank you for making me look at it again and evoke happy memories!

22.

Jane (Shiela)

It's a baby's christening robe and is in perfect condition.

My parents bought the christening robe on their honeymoon in Eire thinking it would serve as an heirloom for the future. My brother and I were both christened in it but my brother gave up any religious belief shortly before he died aged 21. The christening robe is now defunct as I, my children and my grandchildren follow no religion. It's a beautiful item but is outmoded. However, since both my parents are also now dead it is the only item I have that links us together as a family.