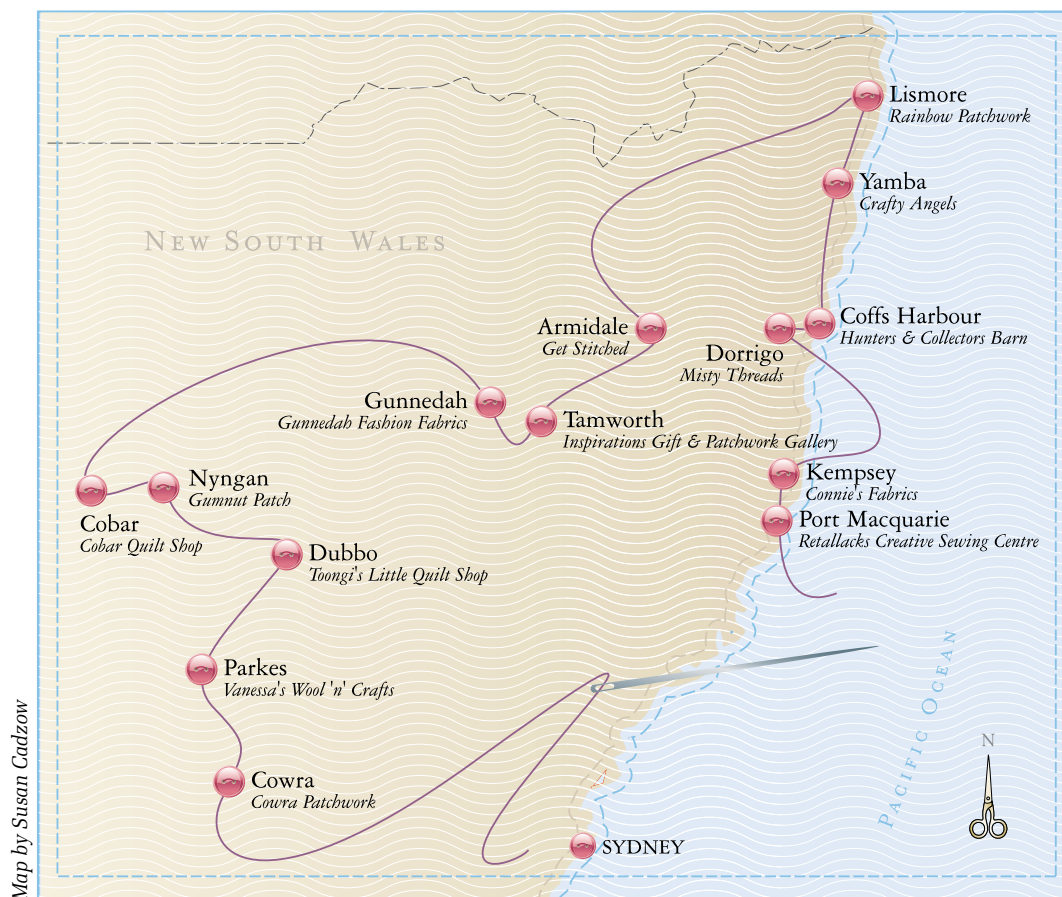


New Discoveries In NSW

By Jeannette Vermeulen



Follow the needle and thread, button by button, as we make our way around New South Wales.

From the open country to breathtaking seaside destinations, the panoramic expanse of New South Wales is the perfect setting for a classic road trip and our latest crafting adventure. In this instalment of On The Road, we take in the marvels of northern and central New South Wales, experiencing inspirational drives and stopping at some fabulous craft shops.

Our trip starts in Port Macquarie, just north of Newcastle. Nestled between the Hastings River and the Pacific Ocean and surrounded by farmland, Port Macquarie is home to the charming Retallacks Creative Sewing Centre.

From there we take a leisurely drive up the coast to Connie's Fabrics in Kempsey and after exploring every nook and cranny, it's on to Misty Threads in Dorrigo, Australia's National Park Capital.

The next stop is at Hunters & Collectors Barn in Coffs Harbour. While in town, a stop by the infamous Big Banana is a must. Continuing up the coast, we next call in to Crafty Angels in Yamba, a town at the mouth of the Clarence River, before reaching the furthest northern stop of the tour — Rainbow Patchwork in Lismore.

We take some time to appreciate the sub-tropical climate and rural charm of the area, before heading further inland. At Armidale, we call in to the stitcher's haven Get Stitched and in Tamworth we visit the enchanting Inspirations Gift & Patchwork Gallery. From there, we continue on to Gunnedah and the appropriately named Gunnedah Fashion Fabrics.

Next it's on to Cobar, a town with a strong mining history, where we visit Colleen at the charming Cobar Quilt Shop. Our next stop is right at the geographical heart of New South Wales — Nyngan, a small town at the junction of the Mitchell and Barrier Highways in a prime agricultural and wool-growing region. Here, we call in to Gumnut Patch, a welcoming shop filled with delicious patchwork products.

The thriving regional city of Dubbo is our next port of call, home to the delightful Toongi's Little Quilt Shop. To get a real taste of the city, visit Western Plains Zoo, the Old Dubbo Gaol and the Farmer's Markets. Next we head on to Vanessa's Wool 'n' Crafts in Parkes before our tour finally comes to an end in Cowra at Cowra Patchwork.

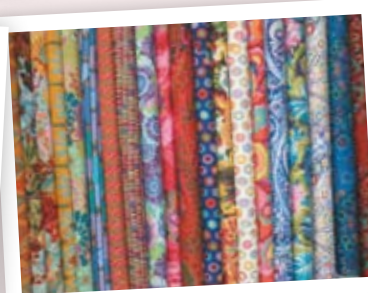
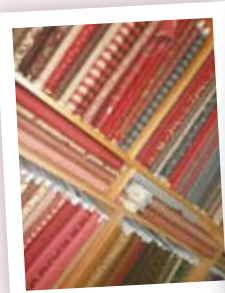
Retallacks Creative Sewing Centre

Port Macquarie

This wonderful shop has been looking after Port Macquarie's stitching needs for years, and no one knows what local stitchers want more than Gail Irla. Gail has been Retallacks Creative Sewing Centre's owner for two years and has been working with the business for 15 years.

Like many others, her love of craft began in the family. "My mother has always been my main teacher," she says. Gail took the opportunity to attend TAFE when her children were young, and stayed for seven years, furthering her knowledge of patchwork and craft.

Retallacks Creative Sewing Centre is best known for the magnificent range of good-quality fabrics, as well as haby, patterns, books, and products from Australian designers. The shop specialises in modern, pretty and



reproduction fabrics, as well as ranges from Moda, XLN and Leutenegger and Michelle Marvig, Anni Downs and Saffron Craig designs. Also available are sewing and embroidery machines from Bernina, Janome, Baby Lock and Horn.

When it comes to friendly, knowledgeable service, the shop simply can't be beaten. Four ladies work alongside Gail to make your shopping experience the best it can be. Weekly classes are held for quilters, often with visiting tutors, and a monthly Bernina and Janome class is also held.

Local knowledge:

Port Macquarie is a delightful blend of city and country. Take advantage of the beautiful beaches or visit the historic courthouse, museum, renowned Billabong Koala Wildlife Park and fascinating Timbertown.

Address: Shop 11, Port Pacific Building, Clarence Street, Port Macquarie NSW 2444

Phone: (02) 6583 3257

Email: info@retallacks.com.au

Website: www.retallacks.com.au

Connie's Fabrics

Kempsey

What started off as a dress-fabric store 17 years ago has evolved into a gorgeous craft shop to keep up with changing trends and interests. Connie's Fabrics owner Connie Norberry still has the same passion and dedication she had when the doors first

opened in 1993. "I still love it," Connie says. "If you enjoy what you do, you never really work a day in your life."

The shop looks deceptively small and as you step inside, you will be pleasantly surprised. A veritable cave of wonder, the sheer amount and variety of stock will capture your interest with thousands of rolls of patchwork fabric on offer.

Along with Connie, you will find her mum Gwen in the shop on Mondays and Jill on most other days. Connie's Fabrics carries Janome sewing machines that Jill is always happy to demonstrate. The staff all have years of experience in various crafts to their names and customers regularly come in to get advice about their latest projects.

Customers are also more than welcome to take advantage of the friendly, relaxed atmosphere and the knowledgeable help on hand by bringing in their sewing machines to work in the shop.

Patchwork classes are held every Thursday night from 6pm to 9.30pm. Day classes take place on Tuesdays from 9am to 2.30pm. Macleay Quilters also has a night group that meets in the store on the second and fourth Wednesday evening of every month.

Local knowledge:

The original hometown of Slim Dusty and Akubra hats, Kempsey is ideally located close to national parks and magnificent beaches. Take a cruise along the lower Macleay River, bird watch and explore the town's fascinating history at the Macleay River Historical Society.

Address: 22 Clyde Street, Kempsey NSW 2440
Ph/fax: (02) 6562 7792



JANOME

Misty Threads

Dorrigo

When Carolyn Hulbert first opened her shop 11 years ago, it wasn't quite as it is today. In fact, Carolyn originally started out manufacturing local school uniforms and her shop was mostly filled with dress fabric and baby items. But with a passion for craft and beautiful fabrics, it didn't take long to extend into the patchwork industry.

Misty Threads offers friendly, helpful service accompanied by quality fabric. Along with the gorgeous array of fabrics, the shop carries patchwork books and specialty rulers, knitting yarns, beads and findings, craft paints, scrapbooking goodies, and a variety of creative patterns.

Carolyn is joined in the shop two days a week by Helen, a whiz with colour combinations and an extensive knowledge that can help with any fabric conundrums. Occasionally Rosemary pops in to share fabulous ideas and stitching techniques.



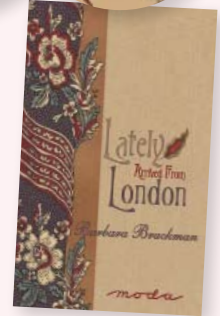
Lately Arrived From London by Barbara Brackman for Moda Fabrics.
The full range of 30 bolts is now available in store.

Well-known patchwork designer and tutor Chris Timmins teaches classes four days every month. All Misty Threads classes are limited in size to ensure maximum quality for all participants and regardless of whether you're a beginner or an experienced patchworker, you will be well catered for. Best of all, Carolyn prepares gourmet homemade morning teas, an extra delightful bonus.

Local knowledge:

Carolyn and Chris host a yearly Misty Mountains Getaway during the September/October school holidays.

Featuring talented tutors, the retreat runs for six days with six different workshops per day.



Address: 40 Hickory Street,
Dorrigo NSW 2453

Phone: (02) 6657 1200

Fax: (02) 6657 1300

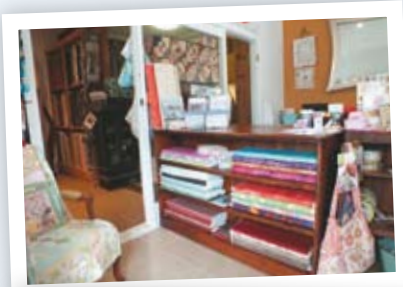
Email:

mistythreads@aussiebroadband.com.au

Website: www.mistythreads.com.au

Hunters & Collectors Barn

Coffs Harbour



This delightful patchwork store and studio is owned by Jennifer Herington and operated by two very lovely ladies. It has evolved over the past 16 years to accommodate a growing demand for specialist fabric and quilting supplies, and it certainly meets the challenge.

Hunters & Collectors has always been known in the region as the shop that has all your quilting supplies and fabulous fabrics. Originally it was perched atop banana-clad hills overlooking the Pacific Ocean, but in the last six months the shop has relocated to a more central spot in the heart of Coffs Harbour.

The shop still has the same fantastic range including a great selection of DMC and King Tut threads, buttons, embellishments, patterns and books, and now there are also three rooms full of delicious patchwork fabrics, quilt samples and plenty of packs and kits ready to go.

Hunters & Collectors Barn is actively involved with the community and has been connected with the Coffs Quilters' annual show since its inception, as well as supporting other local events.

Classes are run on a regular basis with three talented tutors with their own unique style, offering a lot of variety. The studio is open 9.30am–4.30pm every day except Sundays.

Local knowledge:

There's tons to see and do in bustling Coffs Harbour. If surfing, mountain biking or scuba diving aren't quite your style, visit the regional markets or simply relax and soak up the beauty of gorgeous beaches and luscious national parks.

Address: 203 Rose Avenue,
Coffs Harbour NSW 2450

Phone: (02) 6650 0017

Fax: (02) 6651 4982

Email: contact@huntersbarn.com.au

Website: www.huntersbarn.com.au

Crafty Angels

Yamba

Crafty Angels recently relocated to sunny Yamba. With its stylish village charm, stunning beaches and natural parks, Yamba has been voted the “Number One Town in Australia”. This well-stocked craft shop is bound to be the number-one choice for patchwork fabric — there’s a delectable variety on offer to suit every taste.

Visit the shop’s website for a comprehensive look at the range of fabric available, including novelty prints, florals, flannels, black and whites, batiks and more. There is a wide variety of panels available, as well as a selection of fun quilt kits and a range of sewing accessories to make life easier.

Owner Leonie Saunders has run the shop since it first opened eight years ago and while the business is now more focused on mail order, customers are still encouraged to stop by for a browse and a chat. Leonie is always on hand to give advice on your patchwork needs



Advent calendars are now in stock. Grab a kit for \$35, including everything necessary to complete the project. Visit the website for more details.

and Crafty Angels offers such a laid-back shopping experience, you’ll keep coming back.

Phone the shop for easy directions as you arrive in beautiful Yamba or hop online and see what’s on offer. Better yet, mention this profile when buying something from the site and you’ll receive a free gift.

Local knowledge:

Yamba offers a relaxed lifestyle all year

round and there are some wonderful natural activities not to be missed. Go swimming, fishing or surfing; stroll along the beaches; or sample some fine cuisine at award-winning restaurants.

Address: 63 Witonga Drive,
Yamba NSW 2464

Phone: (02) 6646 8682, 0401 669 290

Email: craftyangels@optusnet.com.au

Website: www.craftyangels.com.au

Rainbow Patchwork

Lismore

New to the patchwork scene, this delightful shop first opened its doors in May this year and owners Helen Spurgeon and Karen Traise have a wealth of knowledge to share with their new customers. Karen has been making quilts for more than 20 years and has also taught patchwork through Adult Learning for many years, while Helen has been a professional machine quilter for eight years.

This specialist patchwork and quilting shop is a first for Lismore, combining

fabric, patchwork classes and professional quilting services. The store is bright and light, with an open feel that matches the colourful, inviting products available. You’ll find everything you need at Rainbow Patchwork, including a beautiful range of modern fabrics from well-known designers such as Kaffe Fassett Collective, Jan Mullen and Jinny Beyer; and a large selection of palette colours, both solid and textured. The shop also carries a variety of patterns, including original creations by Helen and Karen.

Inspiration is easy to find with a range of completed quilts hanging off shelves, the ceiling and anywhere space permits! At the front of the store, the Gammill quilting machine is usually working its way through another masterpiece. The onsite quilting service ensures you can get a practical consultation as well as watch your quilt being quilted.

Local knowledge:

Lismore is located in the heart of the Northern Rivers and is a great place to base yourself if you want to see the surrounding areas. Rainbow Patchwork services customers from Nimbin to Casino, Byron and Ballina.



Address: 75 Union Street,
South Lismore NSW 2480

Phone: (02) 6622 3003

Email: info@rainbowpatchwork.com.au

Website:

www.rainbowpatchwork.com.au

Get Stitched

Armidale

For Karyn Herbert, craft is a way of life. “Even before I started school I was attending a craft group with my mum,” she says, and it’s that passion and dedication that she shares with visitors to the shop she’s owned for nine years.

Originally known as In Stitches Armidale, the shop became Get Stitched as a tongue-in-cheek reference to how Karyn felt at that time in her life. The name certainly reflects her engaging personality, at once opinionated, happy, funny and cheeky.

The front of the shop showcases displays of kits, buttons, fat quarters, baby and quilts, but wander to the back room to see where the real magic happens. There you’ll find the classroom as well as scrumptious fabric lining the walls.



Get Stitched carries a wide range of quality fabrics that cater to many tastes, including everything from brights and florals to muted country tones. There is also a comprehensive range of original kits and patterns for cushions, runners and quilts of all sizes. These gorgeous unique items are all designed by Karyn herself. Find the shop on Facebook to stay up to date with all the latest news.

Local knowledge:

“Armidale and the New England area

is a beautiful part of the world, with heritage buildings, the UNE, art gallery, cathedrals, and a natural wonderland of spectacular waterfalls and national parks,” Karyn says.

Address: 22 Moore Street, Armidale NSW 2350

Phone: (02) 6771 5122

Fax: (02) 6771 2515

Website: www.getstitched.com.au

Inspirations Gift & Patchwork Gallery

Tamworth

Inspirations Gift & Patchwork Gallery is operated by Leonie and Peter Bell, who have owned the business since June, 2009. It’s an enchanting, multi-faceted business, wrapping up patchwork, gifts and delicious treats in a one-stop shop.

The café in front of the shop serves homemade slices, cakes and light lunches, and patrons have a choice of eating outside in the morning sun under the bullnose verandah, or inside among an extensive range of beautiful giftware. This includes Willow Tree statuettes, Ashdene kitchenware, Lang calendars,

Banalasta skin care products, jewellery, artwork, men’s gifts, furniture, gift cards and a whole range of keepsakes.

The main focus of the business is patchwork, with an impressive variety of supplies on offer, including fabrics, batting, backing fabrics, patterns and patchworking tools. Patchwork classes are held on Mondays, Wednesday evening, and Thursday, Friday and Saturday mornings. There is also an embroidery class on Tuesdays. Classes are designed for beginners through to experienced patchworkers and offer flexibility in the projects being undertaken.

Inspirations is also an accredited Bernina sewing-machine dealership offering a comprehensive range of Bernina sewing machines/computers, overlockers and accessories. Full after-sales support is offered, which includes full training when you purchase a machine and in-house warranty and service work.

Local knowledge:

On the first weekend each November, The Blue Angel Foundation, of which Leonie was a founding member, holds a Quilt and Collectables show at the Moore Creek Hall, approximately 15km north of Tamworth.



Address: 515 Peel Street, Tamworth NSW 2340

Phone: (02) 6766 6800

Fax: (02) 6766 2300

Email: inspatch@tpg.com.au

Website:

www.inspirationstamworth.com.au

Gunnedah Fashion Fabrics

Gunnedah

This excellent shop in Gunnedah has been around for 25 years, with current owner Kathie Spence taking over in February 2005. Kathie had been working in the shop for five years and when the owner decided to move on, she couldn't resist the opportunity to have her own patchwork shop.

Gunnedah Fashion Fabrics has a lovely range of quality patchwork and dress fabric, including a good range of Moda fabrics — Kathie's personal favourite. There's a nice range of novelty fabrics, as well as scrumptious jelly rolls and layer cakes. The shop also sells Janome sewing machines, patterns from various designers, ribbons, laces and haberdashery. The excellent range of products and helpful staff have led to the good reputation the shop has cultivated over the years.



Kathie is helped in the shop by Melissa on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Classes are held with Therese Rankmore, a TAFE qualified and Guild Accredited teacher, on the second Thursday of each month. Weekend workshops are also run about three times a year.

Local knowledge:

Situated in the heart of the Namoi Valley, Gunnedah is known as the Koala Capital of the World. You can get up close and personal with one of the largest and healthiest koala colonies

The full range of Dr Seuss fabrics of 22 designs, plus four flannels, is available for \$22 per metre. Free patterns available from www.robertkaufman.com

in Australia by visiting the stunning Waterways Wildlife Park.

Address: 177 Conadilly Street, Gunnedah NSW 2380

Phone: (02) 6742 1235

Email: gff@bigpond.net.au

Cobar Quilt Shop

Cobar

The Beatles famously sang "I get by with a little help from my friends" and Colleen Flynn must have agreed, taking the advice of family and friends and opening her own patchwork shop three-and-a-half years ago. The Cobar Quilt Shop takes its name from the historic mining town it calls home, located 706km west of Sydney.

As you enter the shop, your eyes are immediately drawn to the unique murals and quilts decorating the walls, before taking in the selection of Brother sewing machines and the extensive display of haberdashery.

The welcoming atmosphere and the excellent customer service quickly put you at ease to explore the huge range of fabric on offer, featuring designs by the likes of Robyn Pandolph, Amy Butler, Robert Kaufman, Henry Glass and Nancy Halvorsen, to name just a few. Cobar Quilt Shop also carries amazing patterns

and books from a range of talented designers including Amy Butler, Hugs 'n



Playing with Angels BOM, \$33.95 per month for nine months, including p&h. Fabrics used differ slightly to those shown, mainly in replacing the blue with a variety of purple and aqua. You can view the first block on the Cobar Quilt Shop website.

Kisses, Bareroots and Teddywinks. All the necessary patchwork supplies are also available. The shop stocks Sew Easy rulers, Olfa cutting mats and various brands of rotary cutters, needles, pins and just about anything you will need. With a further marvellous selection of kits and BOM programs, Cobar Quilt Shop truly has something for all.

Local knowledge:

The hotel with the longest wrought-iron veranda in the southern hemisphere is located directly opposite the shop. An "Experience Cobar" tour is a great way to take in the town's extensive history, and includes visits to the New Cobar Open Cut Mine and the Peak Gold Mine.

Address: 25 Marshall Street, Cobar NSW 2835

Phone/fax: (02) 6836 3606

Email: cobarquiltshop@aapt.net.au

Website: www.cobarquiltshop.com

Gumnut Patch

Nyngan

A jewel right at the heart of New South Wales, Gumnut Patch was opened in 2002 by Denice Simpson. At the time, Denice couldn't find fabric or sewing notions in Nyngan so opening a shop was a means of getting supplies not only for the community, but also for herself.

The shop was first located in a quaint old building with lots of character, before outgrowing the premises and moving next door. Situated on the main street of Nyngan, the shop can't be missed and there is plenty of on- and off-street parking.

There is plenty of space in store so customers can clearly see all the fabulous fabrics showcased. Gumnut Patch's favourite ranges are from Australian designers Leesa Chandler and Anni Downs. The shop also offers classes from beginner level.

As a small, independent operation supplying a close-knit community,



The Southern Jewels quilt pattern is just one of many Leesa Chandler patterns available at Gumnut Patch.

Gumnut Patch has a homely atmosphere that makes visiting a delight. Friendly service is a priority, and there are always

a lot of giggles and chatter going on. "Some of our customers have been involved with the 'Wraps with Love' program," Denice says. "This year it looks like they'll be sending around 40 knitted and crocheted rugs away for those in need."

Local knowledge:

Nyngan is situated on the Mitchell Highway, halfway between Sydney and Broken Hill, and on the banks of the Bogan River. There are many attractions in the area such as the Nyngan Museum in the old railway house and the Mid State Shearing Shed Museum. The Macquarie Marshes, with its wildlife and birdlife, are also not far.

Address: 85 Pangee Street, Nyngan NSW 2825

Phone: (02) 6832 1922

Fax: (02) 6832 1926

Email: gnpatch@bigpond.com

Toongi's Little Quilt Shop

Dubbo

No town is complete without patchwork shops and it was precisely this sort of thinking that led Toongi's Little Quilt Shop owner and manager, Lesley Morgan, to open her store four-and-a-half years ago.

When you enter the shop, you'll be greeted with a smile, friendly

service and a welcoming cup of tea. The shop carries a brilliant range of fabric including blenders, florals and panels, as well as a nice selection of bag accessories and Janome sewing machines and accessories.

Anne and Fay, who help Lesley with the shop, offer classes in hand embroidery and patchwork. Machine-embroidery classes are also available and every Friday is Bag Day. The more the merrier, so stop by and join in the fun! Every

May, Toongi's Little Quilt Shop holds a Biggest Morning Tea.

The shop has recently opened a quilter's retreat, which offers accommodation for up to 10, with king-single beds, fully functioning kitchen and barbecue area. It is available for weekend retreats or through the week, and is the perfect place to sew or just relax for a few days.

Local knowledge:

You can't visit Dubbo without stopping at the Taronga Western Plains Zoo. Unlike other zoos, here you can drive around in your car as if you're on safari. It's also the only place in Australia where you can see African elephants.

Address: 15R Toongi Road, Dubbo NSW 2830

Phone: (02) 6887 7272

Fax: (02) 6887 7154

Email: lesley.morgan@toongiquilts.com

Website: www.toongiquilts.com



Vanessa's Wool 'n' Crafts

Parkes

After 15 years servicing the community, this fabulous craft shop in serene Parkes knows what stitchers want. The shop is owned by Vanessa Ford, who acquired a small wool shop and expanded it to include embroidery needs. Before long, Vanessa's Wool 'n' Crafts had to move to bigger premises and Vanessa started stocking more craft, patchwork fabrics, beads and haberdashery.

It's not surprising, then, that the shop is best known for its huge variety of stock, all colourfully displayed throughout the welcoming shop. "Visitors to Parkes often comment that they don't see shops like this in the city," Vanessa says. Among the shop's fantastic products are Patons and Cleckheaton wools, Appleton crewel wool, cross-stitch kits and patterns, tapestries, embroidery threads, quilting



fabrics including Moda jelly rolls and more, a large range of books, sewing threads, and accessories for most crafts.

While Vanessa doesn't have permanent staff, good friends often help out as needed. The shop's friendly atmosphere will put you at ease as you shop, or even attend one of the patchwork classes currently running. "Every year Deborah Louie runs quilting and appliqué workshops for me and I also have knitting and crochet classes," Vanessa says.



Local knowledge:

On the second weekend every January, Parkes comes alive with thousands of Elvis fans for the Elvis Festival. The town is also famous for the radio telescope as featured in the movie, *The Dish*.

Address: 304 Clarinda Street, Parkes NSW 2870

Phone: (02) 6862 3774

Email: vanessapford@bigpond.com

Website:

www.vanessawoolncrafts.com.au

Cowra Patchwork

Cowra

This wonderful shop in the central-west town of Cowra has been operating for more than 30 years, with current owner Joanne Cameron looking after customers for the last two-and-a-half years. Joanne got started in the industry because she simply couldn't stand to see her favourite shop close and the patchworkers of Cowra are certainly lucky she stepped in.

Cowra Patchwork is a smorgasbord of delicious fabric and is best known in the area for its selection of well-priced patchwork fabrics and haberdashery. You will be greeted with a smile as you step inside before your imagination is swept away by all the marvellous products, such as a large range of tone-on-tone fabrics, machine embroidery threads and accessories, Janome sewing machines and overlockers, DMC stranded



cotton threads, tapestry wool and Gütermann threads.

Joanne is supported in the shop by her daughter, Michelle, who lends a warm and welcoming family atmosphere to the shop. Sit and sew classes are offered

for beginners to more advanced levels, and a machine-embroidery group also meet and produce some exquisite pieces. "We endeavour to cater for all our customers by providing a special-order service," Joanne says. "Sewing-machine and overlocker demonstrations are available and specialty workshops are listed on our website."

Local knowledge:

Must-sees in Cowra are the magnificent Japanese Gardens and Japanese War Cemetery, and a visit to this charming town would not be complete without sampling some of the local wine at one of the many cellar doors.

Address: Shop 2, 119 Kendal Street, Cowra NSW 2794

Phone: (02) 6342 3854

Email: cowrapatchwork@bigpond.com

Website: www.cowrapatchwork.com