

I.Q. QUARTERLY

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*It is as scandalous for a woman to know how to use a needle
as it is for a man not to know how to use a sword.*

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, 1689–1762

Our meetings

TO COME

11 June: To bead or not to bead (Eliza MacClelland)

9 July: Hot and cold (EQA Suitcase Collection)

13 August: How to be a domestic quilter (Judi Mendelssohn)

10 September: A quilt for all seasons (Margaret Johnson)

15 September: Visit to Hever Castle (see below for note from Anita)

VISIT TO BRAMBLEPATCH, WEEDON, 10 MARCH

A posse of quilters travelled up the M1 early one Saturday to have our usual annual visit to Bramblepatch for a workshop, this time on appliqué methods. Jane was on hand to give us tips and help, and of course the shop was just a second away to fill our needs for all those bits that we had forgotten to bring!

Jane taught us various methods that were perhaps new to some of us. These and other tips included:

- using a Hera marker around a plastic template on an emery board, which gives a good 'folding line' to use when needleturning – the Hera is a Japanese plastic (probably bone or ivory originally) tool with a rounded edge to it
- using a very lightweight Vylene sewn to the right side of your fabric around the pattern marked on the Vylene, split carefully and turned right sides out, toothpicked carefully around the seam to get out those little curves and points, then slipstitched around the edge
- using Bondaweb for the patterns, but cutting out the middles to obviate Bondaweb buildup – if anybody wants a workshop on this, let me know
- using bias binding for stems, made with the Clover bias maker and thin Bondaweb on a roll
- using silk or invisible thread for sewing on the machine, with either a neat machine blanket stitch or the Dawn Cameron Dick method of invisible hemming
- using a metallic machine needle for metallic thread (thanks – just too late for my project I'm doing and tearing my hair out as the thread keeps breaking!).

We also had a chat about how to use all those packs of material that come out as a 'blended' mix of patterns, with a show and tell of those that the shop had already made; and we also had access to a dyeing workshop next door, a good old children's play day

obviously for those who were attending – there was paint and dye *everywhere!* A fabulous day out as usual in this wonderful shop.

Michèle Clarke

MARCH MEETING – WENDY RANKIN FROM THE QUILTERS GUILD

A goodly number of us attending our March meeting to welcome Wendy Rankin from the Quilters Guild as our speaker. She is new to her position as Region 7 (Herts, Beds, Bucks and Northants) Area Representative and came with a small selection of the touring miniature quilt suitcase – which included Dorian's lovely winning piece – and lots of details about the Quilters Guild, its history and future. The main aspect now of the Guild is to preserve our heritage aspects of quilting with its new headquarters coming on line soon in York. They are also keen to promote their study packs, library, Young Quilters section. Visits to York can be arranged. There is a fundraising challenge for the new centre for a postcard design. I have seen some of these and many use an actual postcard for the 'address' back, then pelmet Vylene for the base of the design for the front. I think there will be more about this at the Festival of Quilts. The new QG Challenge is 'Seasons', any style but keeping to 8 x 11 inches. There is a coffee morning on 16 June at (see Diary). Their next Area Day is Oct 6th at Leverstock Green near Hemel. There is also a day in Dec to be held in Northants. One thing I learnt is that you can ask for a newsletter to be sent from other regions – so I might well ask for Region for Cambridge as it is so much nearer than some of our areas in Region 7.

There was some show and tell, Monica's fabric stall for which we are truly grateful (!), and Janet showed some of the lovely blocks that are being returned for the banner. There are still some to come in.

Michèle Clarke

APRIL MEETING – SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD ON BALTIMORE BEAUTIES WITH AN ENGLISH TWIST

Me again purely because my list of writers for evening meetings has been going awry from absenteeism! Shirley was welcomed to our meeting and we looked forward to a fabulous evening of stunning quilts that she has made over the years in the Baltimore style. Starting off with the original format, Shirley has developed an English style of pattern, encompassing all the flowers in an English garden, these being or more subtle colour than the American ones. There are three types of pattern to use: papercut (like the Hawaiian, wreath or crossed laurel type, and the more complicated basket or pot of flowers. There is a lot of symbolism in Baltimore quilts with the old Elizabethan language of flowers used on the quilts to give as gifts with a message, e.g. cherry = perfection, lyre = eternal music, rose = love. They were executed by the American leisured middle classes in the mid-19th century, using expensive chintz fabrics cut and applied like broderie perse, and later properly cut out shapes and designs. The technique tended to die out after 1852 but has had a revival now with Societies abounding and patterns revived from old quilts, replicated and raffled to raise funds to buy and restore the heritage quilts. Old reproduction fabrics are being made but Shirley prefers to use batik-type material to 'soften' the petals or stems etc. [See the article on the QG Area Day where Shirley was speaking in March – there is more on her tips for success in this type of quilt.]

Michèle Clarke

MAY MEETING

This month was a sewing evening giving us an opportunity to make progress on group quilts and our own projects. Dorian Walton brought along the Meadow Flower Quilt so that members could begin assembling returned blocks. Penny collected a number of blocks for the group banner.

Stephanie North had found not one but three group quilts lurking in her loft. A baby quilt was layered and basted using the tacking gun and grid. A star quilt of donated blocks had earlier been assembled with maroon sashing by Teresa Webster. A start was made on the quilting. Work was also done the Snowflake Quilt using blocks that members had completed after the sewing meeting in October 2006.

Jacqui Wilson showed a delicately coloured quilt using a sew and cut technique that has us considering the possibilities hanging around in our scrap bags. Amazingly, we were shown two completed 'Iris' wall hangings and two in progress from the Stained Glass Patchwork workshop tutored by Gail Lawther (see below), two days earlier. Dorian and Stephanie North must have been busy on Sunday!

Gillian Mulder

STAINED GLASS PATCHWORK (GAIL LAWTHOR) 12 MAY

Eleven of our members gathered for a workshop to make an Iris wall hanging using techniques promoted by Gail since 1998, when she published the first book in the UK on 'Stained Glass Patchwork' and developed further in 2005 in 'Stained Glass Patchwork Techniques'.

She showed us a variety of finished pieces in vivid colours, some with gold or silver 'lead' instead of the traditional black. We found these so fascinating that we were in no hurry to start work ourselves! However, Gail soon has us cutting out templates and attaching the shaped fabric to the background with a fine zigzag stitch. The complete design was laid against border fabric and attached in the same way. After trimming, the design was ready for the black 'lead' of ¼ inch wide fusible bias, which was applied in layers. In this way, with T-junctions, each end was covered by a run of bias at right angles.

Even backing and binding was made easy: the backing was brought round to the front and sewn using fake mitres to complete the border. So with no turning under, no hand appliqué and no quilting, two members were able to bring completed wall hangings to our group meeting two days later. Definitely a quick and easy technique worth mastering, which also made possible the use of difficult fabrics such as silks, satin or lamé, though these may need to be stabilised using very light iron-on interfacing.

Since a number of us bought books or patterns, we are sure to see more items designed using this technique at our Show and Tell sessions. A most enjoyable and satisfyingly productive workshop.

Gillian Mulder

SEPTEMBER 15TH VISIT TO HEVER CASTLE

Can **all** members please read the information overleaf about the Hever Castle trip in order that Anita can check numbers etc. so far.

HEVER CASTLE TRIP

I should be grateful if everyone can check the following detail carefully in order to ensure that I do not sell too many spare seats on the coach!!

Thanks to everyone who has returned their slips. I have yet to have a response from Mavis Butler, Christine Bull, Alison Foster, Monica Latham and Anne Sach. Please phone me ASAP on 01462 676161 or return the slip to me at 9 Chaomans, Letchworth, SG6 3UB.

At present 33 members will be heading off to Hever Castle on Saturday, 15 September. Earlier in the year the following advised they could not join us: Elaine Bloomfield, Michèle Clarke, Joy Ewington, Sandra Holloway, Melanie Theakston and Dorian Walton. If your plans have now changed, please contact me ASAP. Likewise if anyone who originally said they would be coming but cannot now make it, please contact me.

The following have said they would like to bring a friend/partner: June Crumpholt, Gill Harkett, Beryl Ragless, Joan Smith, Christine Taylor, Anne Wakefield, Andy Walmsley, Dene Wearden, Muriel Whittle and Jacqui Wilson. Again if this is no longer the case, please contact me or if anyone else would now like to book an extra seat please call me.

At the July and August meetings, I will hand out slips reminding everyone of pick-up points and timings as well as requesting the £16 payment for friends/partners. On the day I will need to know how many of you are 'senior citizens' in order to pay the correct fee!

If anyone has any other queries, just give me a ring. By the way who is organising the weather?

Anita Johnson

Committee News and Views

AUGUST MEETINGS

From August 2008, the Committee is proposing not to have meetings in this holiday month, but we need your views on this. Numbers are usually down in August and we wondered whether to offer a visit instead of a Monday evening meeting. Various suggestions have been made – one is to a craft centre near Braintree that has various shops on site plus an amazing maze or a trip up north to see the Quilters Guild new heritage quilt exhibition space and offices. Views please to me (Michèle: Tel 01462 790577; mikindex@mikindex.co.uk).

MACHINE

Some meetings ago, we discussed the possibility of purchasing a new machine for the group. The Committee thought it best then to buy a small standard machine, such as a Janome or Brother, that did a decent range of straight and zig-zag stitches, with a walking foot etc. We are going to take a raincheck on this purchase as our storage capability is poor

and insecure at the moment, and we also need to see what our accounts are like at the end of the year, after we have spent most of our windfall. Watch this space, as they say.

CHANGE OF DATES

The original **UFO day** for Sat 23 June has been changed to **30 June**. There are still some places left so get your form in quickly if you want to come to Studio 39 for a fun stress-free day.

The **Tudor Rose visit** (3 Nov) has been cancelled as we had such little response from them. We are having a second **UFO day** instead, again in Monica's Studio 39. Forms for this will be out later.

WORKSHOPS

From 2008, we shall be asking for full monies to be paid up front along with your forms for any workshops offered. We have been previously asking for a £5 deposit, but we need to know much more firmly who is coming and this will prevent people blocking a place that subsequently they cancel (losing £5 is not so serious as £15 or whatever the price may be!). Sorry if this sounds draconian, but we have been on the point of cancelling some workshops simply because of cancellations.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Sadly two of our committee have had to resign: Christine Taylor (Secretary) who only came on this year but who has had family pressures, and Teresa (Membership Secretary) who has been on board for some years now. We give our sincere thanks to both Christine and Teresa, especially Teresa for her long-serving help over the years. Coming to our rescue is Margery Allcock who will be Membership Secretary and Andy Walmsley Secretary – both of them deserve our gratitude, but we are always on the lookout for names who can help out either as future Committee Members or just people we can call on particularly at meetings, if things are getting a little hectic. Do let me know if you are interested.

COMMITTEE MINUTES

If anybody wants to see these, they are very welcome. Contact me and I can send them on via email or post.

Other groups' meetings

QUILTERS GUILD AREA DAY 3 MARCH BARTON LE CLAY

This was the first QG Area Day that I had attended for quite a few years, but the speakers on offer were too good to miss. After a fuddle around Sunflower Fabrics stall, Four Shires Book, the QG table, the raffle, coffee and biscuits, we were treated to a master class of Baltimore quilting by Shirley Bloomfield. More is mentioned in our April meeting report (see above) when Shirley came to visit us, but just to say that here quilts are absolutely magnificent and, having learnt a better method of needle turning at Bramblepatch (see below), I think I shall feel more confident about tackling this method again – I have already made a large quilt with grapes and cornucopias all over it, but I gave it to a friend

for her wedding present in America, so haven't got a chance now to check it's professionalism or not! Some tips from Shirley included:

- use YLI Silk Thread No.100
- use straw needles, although she said these were difficult to come by in the UK and she got hers from America (I am happy with appliqué needles from John James & Sons Ltd, Studley, Warwickshire,B80 7AS)
- use a Pigma 01 pen for drawing patterns (and ironing 'sets' them)
- the old Baltimores used messages, names, pictures of clipper ships, buildings, monuments for special occasions
- use fabrics that have splashes on them, dyed or batik etc, rather than small flower prints, or use big flowers rather like broderie perse, or fussy cuttings from specific patterns
- use freezer paper on the right side, draw round the shape with a wax Clover pen, ironing the line underneath if it shows on your piece of material (I don't personally like this method and shall be using my Hera pen in future (see below)
- build up your pattern using Patternese (is this the correct spelling?!), a very fine interfacing, over the top of your background square, slipping each pattern piece underneath and tacked.

In the afternoon, we had Gwenfai Rees Williams talking about her life in quilts in North Wales. Her quilts are also stunning and she has won many prizes for them. Unlike Shirley, and more like most of us probably, Gwenfai likes to try all sorts of quilting methods and, of course, makes a beautiful attempt every time.

I must congratulate the QG, and the quilters from the area, who made the day such a good one. We all went away richer in quilting knowledge, and poorer in purse!

Michèle Clarke



One of Shirley's patterns, *Robin on holly and ivy*

SPRING FESTIVAL AT CHILFORD

I was unable to get to this exhibition on my group's usual day out, the Friday, which we combine with a lovely lunch at The Crown in Linton, so this year I went on Sunday afternoon as a treat for Mothers' Day. Oh what a good choice – it was almost empty. Not so good for the stall holders, but fabulous for the punters. I could browse the stalls and

exhibits at my leisure, chat to the stall holders, have a cup of tea with no queuing and generally experience a real feel good factor. There were some lovely exhibits this year – I hadn't realised that Gisella Thwaites had died in 2003. There was a retrospective of her work, plus an interesting challenge from The Contented Cat and Crafty Quilter, and some other pieces that I could easily have hung in my house. I always like this local exhibition because of its accessibility and the fact that it's not so huge as to be daunting.

Michèle Clarke

If you have been to other meetings recently, do let me have an account of the day!

News

SHOPS AND WEBSITES

If you want a new Bernina and haven't managed to get to the local Chilford exhibitions, go to **SEW CREATIVE** in Cambridge (97–99 King St) – they are our nearest informed dealers.

I picked up a leaflet for **BLAKE HOUSE CRAFT CENTRE** near Braintree. Lots of shops including the **AND SEW ON** quilting shop, plus jewellery, collectables and gifts etc. There is a restaurant, a Great Maze (open July 7th to September 9th) and special shows such as Tractor Show, Lawnmower Racing, Boot Fairs and Farmers' Markets, Minigolf, and Late Night Christmas Shopping. Sounds like fun for everyone there. Contact: www.blakehousecraftcentre.co.uk or 01376 344123. (See above for possible visit next August)

The Quilters Guild wants quilting groups to exhibit at the Festival of Quilts 2008 and be part of the **LONGEST BUTTONED-UP QUILT IN THE WORLD**. 'Join together with Quilting Groups world-wide and take part in the exciting Button-Up Quilt Project. We are asking Groups to make a small quilt on the theme 'From Dark to Light' which can be interpreted in any way – traditional through to innovative – depending on the interests of the members of your group. The quilts will be joined together by a system of buttons and loops.' I have downloaded the criteria, which the Committee will be considering.

Also from the QG, 'THE SEASONS' PICTORIAL/A4 SIZE QUILT is the next Region 7 challenge. There will be details in the next edition of *Bits & Pieces*. Anyone who comes to a Regional Day can join in. The quilts should be delivered to the next Regional Day on 6th October at Leverstock Green, Hemel Hempstead. They will be kept for one year by the region and displayed at every event they attend. At the end of the year they will be returned to their owners. A small prize will be given to the first 3 selected by the October speakers.

Dorian reports that there will be a **HOBBYCRAFT STORE** opening at the end of the summer near the new B&Q centre being built in Stevenage. Watch that space!

Book Reviews

21 Sensational Patchwork Bags by Susan Briscoe. David and Charles, 2006.

ISBN 10 07153 2232 X (Hardback) obtainable from D&C orderline 0870 9908222 or Freepost EX2 110, D&C Direct, Newton Abbot TQ12 4ZZ

Many of us have enjoyed working from Susan Briscoe's earlier book *21 Terrific Patchwork Bags*. This collection has bags ranging in size from tiny 'berry' bags and a dressing table

crazy patchwork pouch in embroidered silks, to a large 'pudding' bag which, open, is a large circle but, tightened by a drawstring, makes a quilter's swag bag in Dick Whittington style.

I liked the bags for quilters on the go: in sepia/taupe tones with sepia photographs printed on fabric at the centre of log cabin blocks, the saddlebag 'tringle' (a triangle with rounder corners) back pack, a rucksack and quilter's pocket book comprise a set to encompass many needs. The tringle is also shown in warm plaids and the rucksack in a striking blue and silver starry version.

A feature of each design is the way she suggests a variant in different sizing or detailing. The tiny Bollywood evening bag made three times larger becomes a retro style weekender. The elegant quilter's portfolio is restyled with diagonal ruler pockets.

Instructions throughout are very clear to help readers achieve the same excellent finish on their projects as on Susan's meticulously finished samples.

Gillian Mulder

Dates

- 16 June: **Bookbinding workshop**, held in Weston Village Hall by Weston Arts and Crafts Society. Contact Angela Walton 01462 790447
- 16 June: **Quilters Guild Coffee Morning**: Bring and Buy. Liz Jarvis' at Links End, Stoke Park Ave, Farnham Royal, SL2 3BJ
- 23 June: **Log Cabin Quilters Patchwork and Quilting Sale**, St Andrews Church, Langford (2-4pm) (01462 731356)
- 7 July-12 August: **New Horizons Textile Group Exhibition**, Wimpole Hall (01223 206000)
- 16 July to 15 Sept: **Minerva Arts Centre**, Llanidloes, Powys: Annual Summer Exhibition including Jan Hassard's antique quilt collection
- 21 July: **Basketmaking workshop**, held in Weston Village Hall by Weston Arts and Crafts Society. Contact Margaret Armitage 01462 790214
- 28-29 July: **Bedfordshire Quilters Exhibition**, Barton Le Clay Village Hall (01582 573662)
- 29 July: **Minerva Arts Centre**, Llanidloes, Powys: Feast of Quilting de luxe day out (£45 per person) including expert opinions on antique quilts, private exhibition viewing, lunch (01686 413467)
- 16-19 August **Festival of Quilts**, NEC Birmingham
- 18 August: **Fabric Dyeing workshop**, held in Weston Village Hall by Weston Arts and Crafts by our very own Penny Chattey. Contact Michèle on 01462 790577
- 6 October: **Quilters Guild Area Day**, Leverstock Green Hall, Hemel Hempstead. **Members Competition!! Make an A4-sized 'Seasons' Quilt**

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Mabel Townsend Award

Please tear off form below and return it to me (Michèle) before or at the October meeting. This award is made to a group member who has contributed the most to the group the previous 18 months (it was supposed to have sorted by this year's AGM and was overlooked!).

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MABEL TOWNSEND AWARD NOMINATION

Pattern for You – Flying Geese in a Circle

Our next goosy pattern for you. Have you made last newsletter's goose?

