

# Five-and-a-Half



## Bristol, Gloucestershire and Somerset March 2023



**The Quilted Steeple in Iowa**

Dear Member,

A quick reminder that our Regional Day will be this **Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2023** at Failand Village Hall. All those not yet signed up for it, please contact Lesley on [reg5@quiltersguild.org.uk](mailto:reg5@quiltersguild.org.uk). We are all so looking forward to this Saturday, it looks to be a great day out for all of us.

See you on Saturday!

**Michaela Knight**

[newsreg5@quiltersguild.org.uk](mailto:newsreg5@quiltersguild.org.uk)

March 2023

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## A quilting retreat with a difference...

On my most recent trip to Iowa, my sister and I took a few days off from the task in hand so that she did not miss her quilt group semi-annual retreat. Susan has been on retreat to this venue a number of times so I was curious to see what it was like. As I had been told the dates, I sorted some small projects easily packed and with the promise of a loan sewing machine, I was booked in.

The retreat venue was called "The Quilted Steeple" and it was based on a small acreage in the middle of Iowa farm country. Originally Good Hope Methodist Church built in 1897 with a 4 bedroom parsonage it was purchased by the granddaughter of the last minister. After a time, a new purpose was found and the church and parsonage was refurbished and opened in 2013 as a creative retreat venue.



There are 6 bedrooms for up to 14 people, a fully equipped kitchen in the parsonage with another in the church basement, the usual amenities and a fully accessible and equipped workroom with 24 workstations in the church basement. In the parsonage, all the rooms were filled with Iowa antiques and quilts. Each bedroom had a quilt theme with examples of every quilt style that you could name, there was a whole cloth and EPP hexagon quilt in my room.

Although the loan sewing machine was a bit basic, I managed to get started and make good progress on a scrappy quilt. Susan had a number of Christmas present quilts to finish and the other members of her group got on with the blocks of their challenge quilt. There was a prearranged rota for brunch and dinner and everyone brought lots of snacks, I ate some very interesting meals. And the biggest bonus was the fabric shop upstairs with a retreaters' discount! The fabric range was great and it was so fun getting access outside shop hours. They had kits by Sew





Kind of Wonderful and a very local designer, Sandy Gervais which if I had room in my suitcase. And to provide a distraction there was an excursion to another little quilt shop about 6 miles away in a small town consisting of a grain elevator, bar, farm machine workshop and 20 houses. The shop looked like a large metal garden shed but specialised in French General and Janet Clare fabrics.

And as always, quilters are the same everywhere. Everyone got on and we shared some ideas when one of us got stuck. I am expected to go back for another retreat with the group and I want to spend some money then!

Now some facts about Iowa: It has about 4 million people in a state just under half the size of the UK. There are at least 100 quilt shops in Iowa. There is a quilt shop hop organised in July / August each year. (It can take approximately 9000 miles and a week to travel even with careful planning.) Fons and Porter set up the Iowa Quilt Museum in Winterset. John Wayne (Marion Robert Morrison) was born in Winterset. Winterset is in Madison County, the home of the Bridges of Madison County. Barn Quilts panels are on many farm building and houses across Iowa. Dotdash Meredith Des Moines (formerly Better Homes and Gardens Publishing) are the publishers of American Patchwork and Quilting Magazine. The American Quilter's Society organise the Des Moines Quilt Show. There are about 7000 Amish with the larger centres near Kalona. There is the Kalona Quilt and Textile Museum as well as the Kalona Historical Village.



Mary-Jane Hutchinson





## Montpellier Quilters Exhibition

Montpellier Quilters in Cheltenham held a show last Autumn at the Reddings Hall in Cheltenham. It was easy to attend as it was just off the M5. Liz Christie and I went to see what the quilters had made during lockdown. There were two rooms full of challenges; groups of small quilts and a Chinese whispers display, several larger quilts using simple designs with a trompe-l'oeil, summer flowers in plain colours, indigo dyed Sachiko quilts and the results of a workshop by Gail Lowther (silhouetted birds on different backgrounds) and other quilts. There was a series of 12" x 12" quilts representing English sayings, which had to be deciphered.







Indigo dyed Sachiko quilt



Gardening Day by Day

The tea and cakes were excellent, lots of handmade items and a pile of books. It was well worth a visit on Sunday morning.

Ruth Case

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Montpelier quilters put on a vibrant exhibition packed full of quilts created over the Covid period. Their last exhibition was five years ago so they said they had a lot of entries. On their sales table, they had their cup holders to which they used then to take their own cups to the group. The group meets twice a month and they're friendly bunch of ladies who enjoy the meeting and would welcome new members if anybody is interested here is the link below.

We had a lovely cup of tea and slice of cake along with a browse of the supplies by their trader for the day. The rooms are perfect for holding exhibitions and we will look forward to holding our October region day there; there is easy access from the motorway! Maggie was the lead organiser and did a sterling job; here she is with her quilt.

Lesley Hagan

<https://montpellierquilters.weebly.com/>

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## **The Sewing Machine Museum, London SW17**

This is an article Sue had previously published in Our Patch, the London area QG newsletter.

The only Museum devoted to sewing machines and it is on our doorstep! Well at **300 Balham High Rd, Wandsworth, London SW17 7AA (Tel 020 8767 0036)** to be exact. I paid it a visit recently one wet, murky afternoon and was not disappointed. It is housed in the upstairs rooms of the workshops belonging to the Wimbledon Sewing Machine Company. It was opened in time for the Millennium and houses many hundreds of machines from rare toys to miniatures to those owned by royalty to special exhibition pieces.

It all started with Thomas Albert Rushton who opened a specialist sewing machine shop in South Wimbledon in 1946. He dealt in quality machines, which were sold at a fair price and were backed by unbeatable service. One of his sons, Ray, started helping his father as a young boy and developed a passion for machines, both domestic and industrial. Today he runs the industrial side of the family company and his younger brother, Ian, carries on the domestic retail side of the business.

In the Museum there is a mockup of the shop front exactly as it was way back then. With demand high for sewing machines, often in part exchange, many dealers would take in the older ones and sell them on, often to be smashed up. It didn't take young Ray long to cotton on to this and he soon became expert at refurbishing them to a high standard. His collection grew and finally he was able to realise a long held ambition to open a Museum.

One of the highlights of the collection is a machine once given as a wedding present to Queen Victoria's eldest daughter Vicky who was married to Frederick Crown Prince of Prussia and mother of the future Kaiser Wilhelm II. It has cotton reels of ivory with a crown on top and was made in Germany by Pollack & Schmidt in 1865. There is certainly variety, with one machine in the shape of a lion by Kimball & Morton in 1904 and another made from wood, acquired more recently, made in France.

Many of the machines are housed in beautiful wooden cabinets, often a statement in itself. There is a short video to watch and you are invited to take a copy of ISMAC News (the Journal of the International Sewing Machine Collectors' Society). Ray himself is often around to talk to visitors. With free admission and being next door to the Sewing and Craft Superstore it is well worth a visit. It is open on the first Saturday afternoon every month, but it would be wise to check if travelling a long way. Only two minutes from Tooting Bec Underground Station (Northern Line).

Sue Hart

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## Quilts on their travels

No, not my travels (though a long career teaching P&Q has taken me to many places), but those my quilts have been on without me.

You know those children's stories where the toys come out of the cupboard and have a life of their own after the children have gone to bed? I feel like that about quilts that go off to exhibitions without me, they set off bravely on their own to have adventures.

I was struck by this first when I had a small quilt selected for a travelling suitcase exhibition for Europe. When the quilt was returned to me, a year after I had last seen it, there was a document with it. The organiser of each venue where it had been shown had written down the name of the place and the dates.

I have never been to Germany – but my quilt had been to several places; I've only been to two places in Holland – but my quilt has been to more, and Belgium too. I found this very exciting and was very grateful that the organisers made the record.

Since then, I've had quilts go off to Japan, the USA, and places here too. Mostly they aren't away as long as the first one. At the moment I have a piece travelling around the UK with the Contemporary Quilt challenge "Uncharted".

I know it's a daft idea, but I am quite tempted to make a little passport for my quilts. Maybe they'd like some luggage? What have they seen when they are away from home? What have they got up to? I hope they had fun.

Judith Barker

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## QUILTING IN THE COUNTRY - NEW MEMBERS WELCOME

This is a rare opportunity to join a small group of quilters who meet at Greenways Farm in Worle every Thursday from 9.30am till 4.30pm. Members share the same facilities and have the same workspace – one large table each. There is no teacher present, so this is not a 'quilt class'. You should be self-directed when deciding what you want to sew, however, there is always help and encouragement on hand when required.

**If you are interested, then please email me at [cilmon665@gmail.com](mailto:cilmon665@gmail.com) or telephone 07775782351.**

Best wishes and happy sewing

Cilla Moncrieff (for Quilting in the Country)

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Please share with any young quilters or groups of YQs who you think may be interested:

### National YQ Challenge 2023 - Where in the World?

Calling all YQs and schools and groups of young quilters! We would love you to take part in our National YQ Challenge in 2023. The theme for this is 'Where in the World?'. We would like you to make a small piece of work to represent something in our wonderful world that interests you or that you are passionate about. This could be on land, in the sea or sky, or it could be a special place you have visited. The winners from each category will be announced at The Quilters' Guild's online AGM on Saturday, 20th May 2023. A cash prize of £25.00 will be awarded to each category winner.



Here are the details:

- Postcard size: 11 cm x 15 cm (4 1/4" x 5 3/4").
  - There are four categories, 5 - 9 years, 10 - 13 years, 14 - 18 years and schools/groups of young quilters.
  - Please send high res images of your finished work both front and back and detail pictures of the edges and back to [yqpl@quiltersguild.org.uk](mailto:yqpl@quiltersguild.org.uk).
  - Please include your name, age and Quilters' Guild membership number when you email your entry photos.
  - The closing date for entries is Saturday, 15th April 2023.
  - This should be your own work but if you do receive a bit of help, just let us know how you were assisted when you send in your entry.
- We look forward to seeing your work!

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