



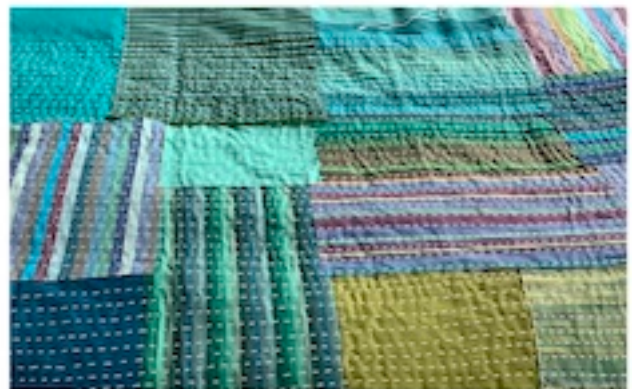
Quilters In Common

Now in our third month of lockdown albeit with a slight loosening of the restrictions, most of us will still be finding time to be creative and to reduce the stash or the pile of UFO's. I know that when I went rifling through my various piles of scraps for something to use for a birthday postcard for a niece I was amazed to find a large number of completed but discarded blocks or pieced strips. Whether I will be able to put them together to make something credible I have no idea.

However one project I have started to keep my hands occupied whilst watching TV is a version of Kaffe Fassett's Japanese Rags. It comprises of sections of two pieces of fabric stitched together in layers (no wadding). A modern version of the old Japanese method called BORO. Of course then it was real rags that were used to make a cloth covering that was warmer than its individual parts. There was an exhibition of the real BORO at Somerset House about five years ago. I was very lucky to be able to see it but was staggered to see such throwaway items, mainly cottons in dark blues, in such a state of disrepair being used to make something that was useful. There are closeups of the unique artefacts on

<https://www.thewomensroomblog.com> (search for BORO).

My WiP opposite, a sanitised version, is a combination of blues and greens in Kaffe Fassett woven stripes and Oakshott solids. I started off not worrying about the raw edges as in the KF example but but on reflection decided they needed turning under unless they had a natural selfedge. The finished size will be 44"x 60"



Meg Pope writes

I'm really enjoying Mysolation, a mystery quilt in 4 parts plus cutting by Rachelle Denny. Week 2 sewing instructions arrived today. Never mind I haven't yet cut the pieces, let alone sewn week 1, the pictures are addictive. With more than 900 people in the group I'm learning a lot about fabric palettes for scrap quilts. Rachelle has gone to the trouble of providing cutting and piecing instructions for 4 different types of palette: really scrappy, fat quarter scrappy, fat quarters in 2 colourways, and 4 fabrics plus background, so everyone has a chance of joining in no matter what type of stash they have. Then she gave instructions for cutting from layer cakes. What a gal! Mysolation Free Mystery Fundraiser can be found at

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/850224988794269/>

I had three goes at trying to put a palette together, all very different (that's where my time went and why there is fabric everywhere). The selection with the white background, 'Field', is the final choice being posted for approval tonight. After all that effort I remembered that I had already prepared a bunch of fat quarters for Louisa's Linus quilts and most were not used.



I quickly tossed in a few more, selected the only fabric that anywhere near worked as background and 'Fire' was born in 30 minutes, with 30 minutes more to tweak and photograph. It could turn out really awful but I'll enjoy the process of finding out. The red background is much redder and brighter than in the picture.

Another project I have finished is the top for a Linus quilt (36" x 36"). The New Malden group provided starter kits (centre squares plus strips) for making the courthouse steps blocks which was the design for FOQ 2020. Mine has the centre squares and maybe one fabric, the rest were swapped out. Quite an easy pattern to make.



Then there were scrubs. Here are the bottoms I made, the fashionable Vivenne Westwood number and the rest in blue drill. Not the most exciting things to sew but in a good cause. I now appreciate the advice I heard as a teenager 'never start making your husband's pyjamas as you'll be expected to from then on, and it is so boring.' Scrubs were in very high demand, as this virus is most contagious before people have symptoms. Hospitals very quickly moved to requiring all staff, including non-medical staff, to wear scrubs is my understanding. This quickly depleted stocks and people began to help out. Every hospital had different requirements for style, colour, pocket numbers and placement, and labels. A nightmare. Luckily some people with medical knowledge and computer skills set up sites to coordinate a lot of the activity. Anything made for hospitals had to be well constructed and the right quality fabric to withstand repeated industrial washing at 60 deg C.



At the same time other health workers who didn't normally wear scrubs were wanting to – GP clinics, care homes, visiting health workers who were required to change their top garment between every visit, etc. Scrubs could be changed into at work, taken off at the end of the day, carried home in a laundry bag, and washed at 60deg C. On a domestic washing machine these days with predetermined groups of settings, it's a fairly tough cycle that allows 60 deg (don't get me started on my pet hate of constrained washing machine settings – how I long for a gentle cycle at 60 deg C...if anyone has a machine that does this please let me know the brand). Most people's clothes wouldn't stand that sort of treatment for long. The materials for these scrubs were much less controlled as long as they could withstand 60 deg wash, so many truly creative and lovely examples can be found on the internet.

Meanwhile, from Pippa:

I haven't got much to add to a newsletter at the moment but I have managed to get an 84 year old doing some hand sewing in my quest to add occupational health into home care. She has sewn a bag, appliquéd a heart onto a fabric card and I left her making a face mask.

What struck me was that she had only ever sewed for functional reasons (darning or buttons) but never for creative reasons or simply for fun. She is really enjoying it.

From Viv:

I've been dyeing with indigo. I made the red & white Navajo quilt & dyed an old pink Irish linen sheet that I bought at a car boot sale for the backing. I also dyed some white linen for blue & black zig zag quilt. I used synthetic indigo in a hydrosulphite vat. The indigo & reducing agent, hydros, came from Kemtex, who also supply dyeing instructions. The hydrosulphite vat is the quickest, easiest & most reliable indigo vat. You can get a range of shades of blue by adding more dye & dipping the fabric more times.



Tips for getting the best out of the vat

- . keep oxygen out of the vat - use a dye vat with a lid, stir very gently & don't let your fabric drip into the vat when you take it out.
- . let your fabric oxidize fully between dips - hang out for at least 10 minutes
- . exhaust the vat - leave fabric in it overnight at the end of dyeing to take up any excess dye.

And the good news is that Viv is very willing to have a Group Dyeing day once we're back up and running. Yippee!

The Modern Sampler.

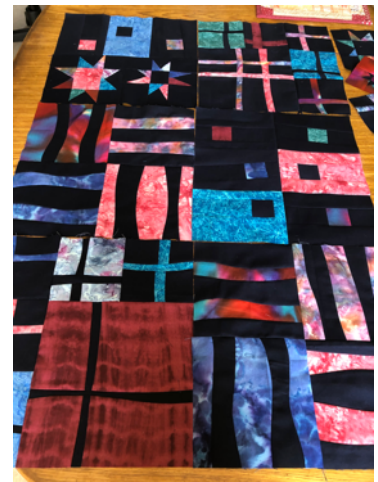
You may remember that before lockdown we were each going to make a quilt featuring the modern blocks devised by Helen Howes and Helen Aitchbee in their Tutor Boxes. The idea being that at the end of the year we would each have a quilt using similar blocks but with individual designs. We had started off last year with the Tiger Tiger block for our Group quilt.

This year we tried the crosses, floating blocks, triangles, wonky stars etc. Here is Annie's quilt hung up at a window showing the transparent nature of the fabric and the stained glass window effect.



Here on the left is my quilt, destined to hang in the window of the kitchen/conservatory door. I have used Dancing Squares designed by Ricky Timms for the borders.

And on the right is Alison's work in progress. Three quite different quilts made from the same building blocks in different colourways.



Annie on her Fantasy Four Patch Quilts:

The latest couple of quilt tops I have been making have been based on a Joe Cunningham tutorial, except I didn't adhere to the instructions too closely. It was loosely based on an improv 4 patch, except my four patches didn't meet in the centres. Joe actively encourages deviation from the instructions, because as he says, it is after all, just a starting point.

My starting point was a piece of brightly coloured Kenyan cloth I had been given by a friend in the US. It was a rectangle with Swahili words "Wema Ulnitendea Sitoacha kukuomba" printed on the fabric. I discovered, courtesy of Google translate, that they meant,

"The goodness you have done to me I will never stop praying for you"

I cut off all the borders and treated them separately from the main centre panel which was now surprisingly small. Would I have enough fabric for my project? To compliment the starting point, I ordered some Moda grunge in a strong yellow colour and some plain magenta fabric from Doughty's. I then cut 5.5", 4.5" 3.5" 2.5" 1.5" strips across the widths of all of the fabrics, including the narrow borders.

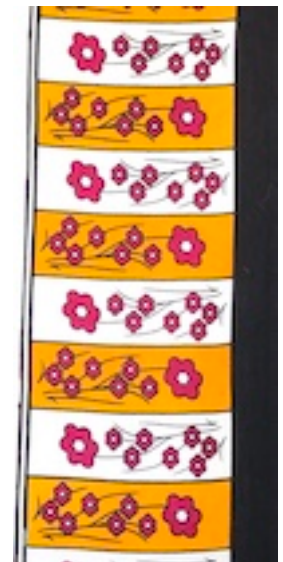
They were then married up with fabrics to make them measure 7 " across, before the paired strips were sewn together to measure 6.5" in width. I mixed up the cerise and yellow with the pattern and without the pattern, just as I fancied, until everything had a partner.

These pieces were cut again according to the rules that Joe had set at the start, and the process was repeated: matching up the pieces according to width and length, so as not to waste any material and to a certain extent according to the colours and pattern. They were then assembled into

the final blocks which measure 6.5" square.

These were then arranged to please the eye, easier said than done, and a design wall comes in very handy for this process.

Once stitched together I then cut 6.5 " borders to add to all sides in the cerise colour and a 4 four patches were used for the cornerstones.





For the second quilt I used the same technique using the left-over fabrics. I introduced a very dark navy as I didn't have enough and I have now been waiting for more magenta to be delivered as I ran out. This was going to be the backing but I think I shall make it into a separate quilt as I think it stands up in it's own right, giving me more quilts on which to practice quilting. This is a great way of using all the fabric there is very little wastage and it is great fun to do. I will stitch on the slogan:

"The goodness you have done to me I will never stop praying for you". And I think that will be the title of the quilt.

On the right is the quilt I made from a photo using Phil Thomas's tutorial as an online workshop which is available to our members for £10.00. It is a raw edge appliqué method. Phil works on your photo for you and sends you instructions in five stages, The final instructions is information required for editing your own photos so that you can then do this in the future. I found it an enjoyable process to go through. It was different in a few ways to the method I used in the photo portrait class that I did with Lea McComas at the Festival of quilts in August 2019.



Sue writes:

I started the workshop a couple of weeks ago. Having chosen a photo with help from Phil, I am at stage 4, trying to source my fabrics. I am hoping to report more progress in the next newsletter. It's an excellent opportunity to learn a new skill at a very reasonable cost and with no pressure.

Karolina writes:

One of few projects I've been working on recently is this blue and aqua quilt. It's 83" square and I have just finished hand quilting it. It will be a present for my nephew and his wife. They both like scuba diving so the colours are perfect for them.



Sue write:

To finish, I'll include a pic of my African quilt which I finished hand quilting recently. I started with the four small (Indian?) elephant motifs which I applied on to black and white backgrounds. I added a selection of African fabrics surrounding the elephants. Having added sashing between the blocks I was puzzled as to how I could quilt it. Because there was no obvious symmetry, some squares being in reality rectangles (I must improve my accuracy!) I decided to hand quilt it using Big Stitches in perle No 8.



Finally, if you want to see how Louisa is getting on with her 90 circles with Sue Spargo, checkout her facebook page. Stunning embroidery!

Until we are able to meet again, keep stitching and keep safe.
Sue.