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# LONDON QUILTERS

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Winter 2006 Newsletter

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## The Emperors' Clothes

*By Hannelore Braunsberg*

Another wonderful exhibition at the Royal Academy of Art; "China - The Three Emperors 1662 - 1795" is a must for quilters, embroiderers, lovers of textiles and anyone interested in Chinese culture, art and crafts of that period.

The exhibits cover the periods of the Kangxi Emperor (1662-1722), the Yongzheng Emperor (1723-1795) and the Qianlong Emperor (1736-1795). Exquisite design and craftsmanship characterise all the garments on show. Yellow silk satin was used for most garments and rich embroidery, using floss silk and gold thread, featured dragons, a symbol of good times, waves, birds and flowers. Brocades made from silk and metal threads were added as edgings for sleeves, fronts and collars.



The designs of garments and embroidery did not change much over 130 years. Threads of different shades of blue, merging into white, formed the main areas with splashes of red used sparingly to create focal points.

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## Passing on the Comfort

**Kathy Thiessen, Presenter**

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2006**

Time: 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Fee: £10 (£5 unwaged) includes VAT and hot meal  
Location: London Mennonite Centre, 14 Shepherds Hill, Highgate, N6 5AQ  
(5 minute walk from Highgate tube station)

For details or to reserve a space, call 0845 4500 214

Or download booking application at:

[www.menno.org.uk](http://www.menno.org.uk)

Throughout the centuries women have "passed on the comfort" by creating blankets and quilts. These have given warmth in times of crisis, sickness, mourning and war. During the morning hours of this seminar we will be looking at the story written in the book *Passing on the Comfort* by An Keuning-Tichelaar and Lynn Kaplanian-Buller. An was a member of the resistance movement in the Netherlands during WWII. Just after the war ended, she provided sanctuary for Mennonites fleeing from Russian forces.

North American Mennonites heard of the need for comfort and sent hundreds of quilts to England. They were dispersed to Holland from a house on Shepherds Hill, run by the Mennonite Central Committee, just a few doors down from where the London Mennonite Centre is now. Decades later Lynn discovered some of these quilts in An's house and decided their story needed to be told. Thus the book was written.

In the afternoon, the group will continue the tradition by creating together a simple quilt to be given to a charity (participants will decide on the charity together).

Kathy Thiessen is the resident quilter at the London Mennonite Centre. She has been quilting for almost twenty years and especially enjoys hand-appliqué. She is a member of the London Quilters Guild. ❖

Red is the main colour of a magnificent 18th century ceremonial costume for an imperial lama. It consists of a skirt, beaded apron, collar, sleeves and ornaments richly embroidered with silk and metal threads and decorated with beads and red-stained carved ivory. Two 18th century robes for women, showing a Western influence in their floral designs, contrast with other exhibits.

As well as the eight garments exhibited, others are shown in paintings and scrolls. A portrait of the Xiaosheng empress dowager shows her in a stunning garment, and the clothes worn by the three Emperors in their portraits are truly magnificent. Paintings of "Twelve Beauties at Leisure" by anonymous court artists (first quarter of the 18th century) show simpler clothes together with furniture, artefacts and furnishings.

An example of 17th century armour of embroidered blue silk was padded and lined with silk, the layers being held together with bronze studs. Its epaulettes were bordered with gilt dragon motifs inlaid with coral, agates and malachite. Also on show was an 18th century saddle and a richly, embroidered saddle cloth of yellow silk satin, embellished with velvet trimmings.

The most lavish embroidery was on a huge wall hanging, possibly made for a 60th birthday. The design, in blue, red and gold on a gold ground with a swastika-like design, is of symbolic figures associated with a long life.

The exhibition continues until 17 April - don't miss it. ❖



**Would you like to contribute to the newsletter?**

Email your articles/information to the editor at:  
[nebraskanative@yahoo.com](mailto:nebraskanative@yahoo.com)

**Spring deadline: 28 April 2006**



## **Canadian Guild Visit**

*By Margaret Cooter*

When I visited Canada last year, my sister-in-law took me along to a meeting of her guild. The Ridge-Meadows area, just outside Vancouver, has a population of 90,000 – and the guild has 158 members, about 70 of whom were at the meeting.

They meet twice a month in a community centre; this time it was a "business meeting" which lasted over two hours and was kept to topic by a chairwoman with an agenda and a microphone. There was a 15-minute break halfway through for getting a cup of coffee, chatting and finding a new library book.

On arrival, I signed the visitor's book and was given a name tag and a little bag containing a 10" square of fabric, wrapped sweet and leaflet with information about the guild. At the start of the meeting the visitor's book read and visitors were welcomed (three of us). Then it was down to business.

The Ridge-Meadows guild's "internal events" include an annual Silent Auction to raise funds for the guild's library; weekend retreats; an ongoing block-of-the-month; a biennial quilt show, supported in part by sales of special T-shirts; challenge quilts, to be shown at the quilt show; and of course a Christmas party. Unfortunately, its website is accessible to members only.

The guild's involvement in the community was an eye-opener. It gets part of its funding from the local Arts Council. Members are asked to participate in various craft markets run by the council and to volunteer for other council-sponsored activities, such as paying out winnings at a bingo night. Members of the guild make numerous "community quilts" – about 80 a year. These are given to various care facilities, made out of donated fabrics in different sizes, starting at 36 inches square. There is a well publicized, annual raffle quilt which is worked on during some of the retreats.

At the end of the business part of the meeting came the door prize draws, raffle tickets, winner of the dozen or so block-of-the-month entries and show & tell. Among the assortment were a quilted bag, stencilled shirt, yellow scrappy quilt, Seminole table runner and an old, red quilt. A large, yellow 25-patch was the piece-de-resistance: displayed on the quilt were shelves of painted, embroidered and appliquéd teapots, made with skill and care as a gift for a friend having cancer treatment. Included in the representations were favourite teapots of the recipient.

What a lot this guild is up to; I was impressed by the number of committed members, the community involvement and the welcome for visitors. ❖

Dear LQ's,

New Year is traditionally a time for resolutions. So far I'm quite pleased that I've managed to keep most of mine. I'm determined to spend more time with my sister and make sure that I ring my children every week if they haven't rung me. So far easy! One of my resolutions, to get more exercise and lose weight, never even got started. I could be generous to myself and say I'm still working on the logistics of joining a gym which is open when I'm not working and isn't full of beautiful people to make me feel completely inadequate.

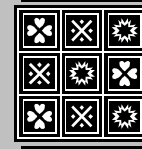
One of the resolutions I'm questioning the logic of is to finish off all the quilts I've started. I have a large pile of unfinished quilts. Most of them are in the pieced-but-not-quilted stage, although many of them are already layered and basted. When I got them off the top of the cupboard, laid them out on the bed and refolded them trying to eliminate the permanent creases, I was struck by the heretical thought that maybe I didn't need to finish them all.

One is the result of an internet swap over five years ago. It's massive, which is a bit of a deterrent, and this many years down the line I'm not sure I even like it. I certainly have no idea what to do with it when it's finished. If I thought it would sell for enough, I could have it professionally quilted, but I'm not sure who would want it. Another one is so lovely I don't want to spoil it by messing up the quilting. I keep practising my machine quilting so I can start it, but I still lack the confidence to get started.

This pile of quilts is haunting me. Every time I think of starting a new quilt, the little demon pops up and says, 'Why don't you finish the other ones?'. All of my traditional, suburban, postwar upbringing is telling me I should finish what I've started or it's a waste. But all of the 60s, go-with-the-flow relaxed attitude is saying just do my own thing. So what can I do with a load of half-finished quilts? Should I work on them, bin them, give them away... suggestions would be welcome. And if anyone wants a blue and purple monster with a cream background, all reasonable offers will be considered!!!!!! ❖



**Don't forget!** A comprehensive list of LQ library books is available online at: [www.londonquilters.org.uk](http://www.londonquilters.org.uk)  
Keep in mind, about 1/3 of the books are on loan at any given time.



## Dear Jane Group Quilt

In response to my request for suggestions for our next group quilt, the best (and only) suggestion was a Dear Jane quilt. This is an excellent idea. If you have not seen this magnificent quilt, it can be viewed at: [www.dearjane.com](http://www.dearjane.com). The original quilt has over 150 square blocks plus the triangular blocks which form the border. Some of the blocks are really simple and others much more complicated, so there will be suitable blocks for all members. If each member does 2 or 3 blocks we'll soon have them all done. Meg Turner is lending me the book of patterns, so I'll try to get them sorted out for the March meeting. Before then we must decide on a theme for the quilt, a range of colours and type of fabrics. Because all the blocks are different there is no need to have any two blocks in the same fabric. A coordinated style will make it much more effective. ❖

Please visit [www.dearjane.com](http://www.dearjane.com) to see the variety of color, fabrics and "theme" combinations quilters have used for their own "Dear Janes".



## Chair's Challenge

*For our March meeting we need to chose a "look" (i.e. color and fabric schemes) for our group Baby Jane quilt.*

1. Go to your stash and pick out a selection of scraps you think will make good fabrics for this quilt. Keep in mind, we will not be using these exact fabrics; we want to create a "look". Red & whites? Balis? Bright primary colors? Pastels? 1930s reproduction fabrics?
2. Chose a selection of foreground and background fabrics.
3. Cut a small swatch of each fabric; stick them onto a piece of A4 paper.
4. Write your name on the back and bring it to the March meeting.

We will pin up the sheets and members can chose the ones they like best.

**Editor's Note:** *I received two lovely pieces on the 2006 Designer Crafts Exhibition. Because of the writers' unique perspectives, I felt it important to include both. I believe you will find them informative and interesting.*



## 2006 Designer Crafts Exhibition

*By Linda Seward*

The Designer Crafts Exhibition is held at the Mall Galleries every January and I always enjoy it. Put on by the Society of Designer Craftsmen, it contains a plethora of articles in many different media—ceramics, furniture, glass, jewellery, metal, mixed media, and of course, textiles. It is fascinating to see what other crafts people are doing and I always come away full of new ideas.

The London Quilters were well represented here with works by Janice Gunner and Alicia Merrett. There were also three quilts by Janet Cook, who recently spoke to LQ. Janice and Alicia's quilted wall hangings were outstanding and really brightened up the areas in which they were featured.

I also enjoyed the pieces made by Susan Macarthur, who draws the human form on paper, then stitches textiles in place on the body in a subtle "patchworky" way to provide contour and focus. But the pieces that I coveted most of all were felt scarves made by Jacqui Morton that resemble octopus tentacles. They were fantastically whimsical pieces which may not appeal to everybody, but I loved them. Unfortunately, they were quite expensive, but this only reflected the amount of work it took to make them.

Next January make sure you take the time to go to this exhibition—it's well worth a visit. There's a shop selling small items made by the artists and also an area which serves drinks and sandwiches so you can sit amidst the artwork sipping your tea, reflecting on the creativity all around you. ❖

## Designer Crafts Exhibition 2006 at the Mall Galleries

*By Heather Bridger*

The 2006 exhibition was as good as ever. I find much of the work a quilting inspiration - not only the textile creations but the ceramics, furniture, glass, jewellery and metal objects.

All of which are wonderfully wrought by artists who must feel about their materials the same way we feel about fabric. The materials and styles show enormous variety, but the workmanship is uniformly excellent.

The Mall Galleries has three rooms, the biggest with a friendly café area. There are no windows, but the works are so beautifully lit that shadows often add extra charm. An example of this is free machine embroidery on a soluble background by Arlene Shawcross.

I liked the way Janet Cook used photographic images of her local bridge, focused on different light conditions, in two hangings. Essentially, they are abstract arrangements, but the single A4 bridge pictures in each had been so expertly cut up and inserted that the visual experience is like driving past and recognising a well loved scene. Janet very generously shared some of her fabric colouring techniques with us, which I shall try soon.

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*"The materials and styles show enormous variety, but the workmanship is uniformly excellent."*

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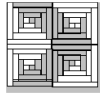
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Janice Gunner's beautiful dyed and stitched works change, as if by magic, as you get closer or further away. I drank in the textures and patterns at close quarters, then sat at a distance with a coffee, mesmerised.

Moving on to the second room, Hannah Lamb was invigilating. We chatted about her work, which she describes in the catalogue as "one-off pieces for interiors and adornment." She collects vintage fabrics, lace and buttons, using their faded colours and intricate textures to make bags, cushions and ornaments. I admired an evening bag made from an antique long glove and she encouraged me to flounce around trying it out!

In the same room were Alicia Merrett's quilts. There couldn't be a greater, more stimulating contrast in style. The lines and shapes are so strong that the exuberant colours and quilting are perfectly contained, rather like gardens where the plants can grow as they please because the underlying structure is clearly well designed.

Room three has smaller items, such as machine embroidered pictures, fabric clocks, jewellery and a shop counter. It was a very joyful, positive experience and a nice way to begin the creative new year. ❖



## A “Piece” from the Editor

Being relatively new to London Quilters and having volunteered to serve as newsletter editor, I should introduce myself. Since my childhood in a small town on the American Great Plains (Long Pine, Nebraska, population 300...well, now 299), I have loved quilts and the persona each one acquires as it is created and incorporated into our lives. One of my most prized possessions is a double bed sized “yo-yo” quilt, created 80+ years ago by a dear friend of my great-grandmother.

In 1996 I set out on my first quilting adventure. Webster’s dictionary describes *adventure* as “an undertaking usually involving danger and unknown risks” and “an exciting or remarkable experience”. I think we can all agree that quilting is an adventure! Who knew there would be danger involved with owning so many fat quarters that our closet doors could not shut; or running out of *the* fabric while piecing a border? I am certainly glad no one forewarned me of the “unknown risks” of aching backs, pricked fingers, wadding wrestling, fabric crises and binding blunders!

I consider myself a traditional quilter and enjoy both machine and hand quilting. I don’t like self-induced “quilt guilt”, therefore, I try to finish my quilts and not have too many WIPs (work in progress) lingering. I must be honest, I do have a few in that cupboard! These days, if my very active 3 year old son grants me respite, I find myself quilting on an awfully large number of baby quilts. It seems all our friends simultaneously need something to wrap the new babies in. I can’t resist! What better way to ensure quilt appreciation in the next generation?

My husband’s job as a Diplomat has enabled me to experience a true patchwork quilt of the world. We have spent time in Washington, DC, The Gambia in West Africa, Berlin and now London. Each of these locations has afforded me the opportunity to contemplate the differences in artistic expression and media, as well as compare textiles and quilting styles, all of which are infused with local tradition, culture and personal flair. I have been amazed at the common threads, even in the most remote and indescribably impoverished areas of the African bush!

With each new location, I have encountered a multitude of quilting challenges and adventures. I’m unsure whether to classify them as “unknown risks” or “exciting or remarkable experiences”! Either way, I find these adventures eventually transform themselves into quilting treasure troves. I have gone from lamenting the nonexistence of fabric stores to observing local Gambian women making beautiful, one-of-a-kind batiks in plastic buckets, then having first choice at my own “personal” fabric store with batiks hanging to dry on ancient Baobab trees in the hot African sun. I know these very experiences have inspired me as a quilter and ultimately, shaped my quilts.

And really, isn’t that why we quilt? For the adventure of expressing ourselves personally, amalgamating our very essence into every stitch? Breathing life into something beautiful to share with the world? Bundling up our life experiences and stitching them into eternity?

I wish you the best quilting adventures in 2006, and may your quilts be shaped by rich and varied experiences. I hope you will share your adventures, big or small, with our community. I look forward to hearing from you at: [nebraskanative@yahoo.com](mailto:nebraskanative@yahoo.com).

Best quilting,  
Andrea Taylor



### *Thank You*

*By Linda Seward*

I would like to thank the London Quilters for their support and encouragement during my time as editor of the Newsletter. It was always a challenge as I was nearing a deadline and wondering whether I’d have enough material to fill the pages, but the members always came through and I think we had some interesting articles to read over the years. I hope you give your new editor, Andrea Taylor ([nebraskanative@yahoo.com](mailto:nebraskanative@yahoo.com)), the same help and assistance that you gave me. Remember, it’s your newsletter and even if you have a small nugget of information to share, it will be much appreciated by the rest of the membership.

I’d also like to thank London Quilters for the fabulous book and the amazing fat quarters given to me at the AGM. What a wonderful surprise—really entirely unexpected and much appreciated. I’ve enjoyed going through my new stash and dreaming of some future projects—now that I have the time! ❖

# 2006 Calendar of Events



- 20th March** – Margaret Ramsay: 'From Sketchbook to Laptop'  
**10th April** (2nd Monday because of Easter) – Diane Gaffney  
**13th May** – Alicia Merrett Workshop: 'Footloose and Fancy Free'  
**15th May** – Jenny Dobson: 'In Praise of Scraps'  
**19th June** – Barbara Weeks  
**17th July** – Sewing Evening – members demonstrations  
**August** – no meeting  
**18th September** – Susan Pritchard: Quilts from the Victoria and Albert museum  
**15th October** – Kate Dowty Workshop: Contemporary Wallhangings  
**16th October** – Kate Dowty: 'Trial & Error'  
**20th November** – AGM  
**18th December** – Christmas Party

## LQ Committee Members

### Chairman

Patricia Revest [p.a.revest@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:p.a.revest@qmul.ac.uk)

### Vice Chairman

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## INTERNET INFORMATION

The London Quilters web site address is:  
[www.londonquilters.org.uk](http://www.londonquilters.org.uk)

It is run and maintained by Tricia Revest.  
Email: [p.a.revest@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:p.a.revest@qmul.ac.uk)

**SPRING 2006 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: 23 APRIL**

## Footloose & Fancy Free Workshop

Alicia Merrett, Presenter

**Saturday 13th May 2006**

Time: 10am until 4pm

Cost: £25

Location: St. John's Church, Downshire Hill,  
Hampstead

For queries or booking contact Judy Roose  
020 8341 0769 or [jroose.highgate@virgin.net](mailto:jroose.highgate@virgin.net)  
*Requirements leaflet will be provided when you book.*

Patchwork Collage using fusible web is free and easy, an excellent way to achieve stunning effects in a short time. It is quite a different technique from fused appliqué and can be used to make both abstract and figurative pieces. In the workshop you will experiment with a variety of designs and approaches and make several small pieces in the day, ready to finish quilting at home. No sewing machines will be required, but please bring irons and ironing boards.

The venue is easily accessible by public transport. It is close to Hampstead Heath Overground train station, and in between Hampstead and Belsize Park tube stations. We are sure there are plenty of buses within a few minutes walk. Onsite parking is restricted to approximately six cars. Parking places will be allocated to those that book and pay first. Pay and park is available on the Heath with a short walk. Bring lots of irons, ironing boards and lots of people. Translation: It is advisable to car share with others and their irons! ❖



## Exhibitions

### Feb 1-28: Quiltfest 2006

Royal International Pavillion Llangollen

Contact: Val Shields e: [valatbrora@aol.com](mailto:valatbrora@aol.com)

t: 01978 852856 [www.geocities.com/ukquiltfest](http://www.geocities.com/ukquiltfest)

### March 17-19: Spring Quilt Festival

Chilford Hall Vineyard, Cambridge; Open 10-5 daily

Details 01775 712100 or 01775 722900

Email: [emma.cooling@btconnect.com](mailto:emma.cooling@btconnect.com)

### March 23-26: Stitch and Craft

Olympia 2 London; Details from Twisted Thread

### March 25-26 : Quilting Exhibition

Radley College, Oxfordshire, Abingdon

Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4 Traders, sales table, bring &

buy. Contact Judy Harris 01235 543053

### April 7-9: Quilts in the Garden

Trentham Gardens, Stoke-on-Trent

Details: 01384 277 288

Email: [Margaret@mqexhibitions.co.uk](mailto:Margaret@mqexhibitions.co.uk)