



Detail, 'Hole Cloth', Birgit Schüller. Best in Show. First place Contemporary Quilts

Quilt & Stitch Village Show

BY JOANNA KENT

A beautifully spring-like day in mid April saw me heading off to the British Quilt & Stitch Village Show at Uttoxeter Racecourse in Staffordshire. I've not had the opportunity of going for the last few years, but my memories of this show are that the sun is always shining!

The racecourse is very easy to find in Uttoxeter, being only a few miles off the nearest A road and is a lovely setting in itself. The organisers, TPL Exhibitions, make good use of all the various buildings around the parade ring with the main event, the quilt show, being displayed in the exhibition hall behind the main grandstand. The show also hosts a competition embroidery exhibition which is displayed in the Staffordshire Stand. Another lovely touch was the Tilly Rose Slow Stitch Cafe where visitors could enjoy a little quiet time, a cup of tea and sit in comfort quietly stitching in the company of textile artist and author, Tilly Rose.

The competition quilts are displayed on the first floor of the exhibition hall and it is nice to see them in a u-shaped formation so you can look at every entry head on. It makes it so much easier for taking photographs but also means you can appreciate each quilt from a distance and close up more easily. The organisers had reworked the categories for this year, choosing to focus on styles of quilting rather than separating quilts into different sizes such as bed quilts and wall hangings and I think this worked well.

The first category was the Traditional Quilts. Being a traditional quilter at heart, I always love looking at these entries at any show. There is something comforting about traditional quilts, perhaps because that is where a lot of us started when we first embarked on our quilting journey? First place went to Claudia Taeubert with her quilt, 'Rainbow Splash' and what a riot of colour it was. And it sparkled with the addition of tiny crystals! The design was based on Birgit Schüller's quilt 'Splash or Headfirst into Quilter's Paint Pot' with a few little

modifications (with Birgit's permission). It was also longarm quilted by Birgit. Second place was awarded to Frances Meredith for her interpretation of the 'Dear Jane' quilt; pieced and appliquéd by hand, Frances had quilted it freehand on her longarm machine in her trademark style. The scalloped edges were particularly stunning. Third place went to Norma James for her quilt, 'Golden Threads'. Norma had made her quilt to celebrate her upcoming golden wedding anniversary and it was a lovely traditional quilt featuring fabrics from the Morris Holiday collection from Moda, but oh, those tiny hexie flowers; so beautiful!

As is usual with competition quilt shows, there was a theme category and this year the theme was The World About Us. Not surprisingly, this resulted in a variety of entries, many of which were thought provoking. First place went to Kathy Unwin for her quilt, 'Plastic Ocean'. It was my favourite quilt in the show; such beautiful, gentle colours but also reflecting on our damaging use of plastic on the environment. The images in the quilt, which used hand-coloured fabric with stencilled and painted images referenced Cornish fishing villages and harbours. It was a wonderful piece. Second place went to Sue Turner for her wall hanging, 'Tracks'. The quilt commented on how we leave our mark on the landscape with a pieced hexagon background, shadow quilting and free machine quilting. Third place went to Sally Kerr for 'Interconnectivity'. This lovely rainbow-coloured wall hanging was also beautifully quilted. Her artist's statement quoted how Buddhists believe that everything in the world is connected, 'If you pull a thread here, you will find it attached to the rest of the world'. Never a truer word spoken in today's interconnected world.



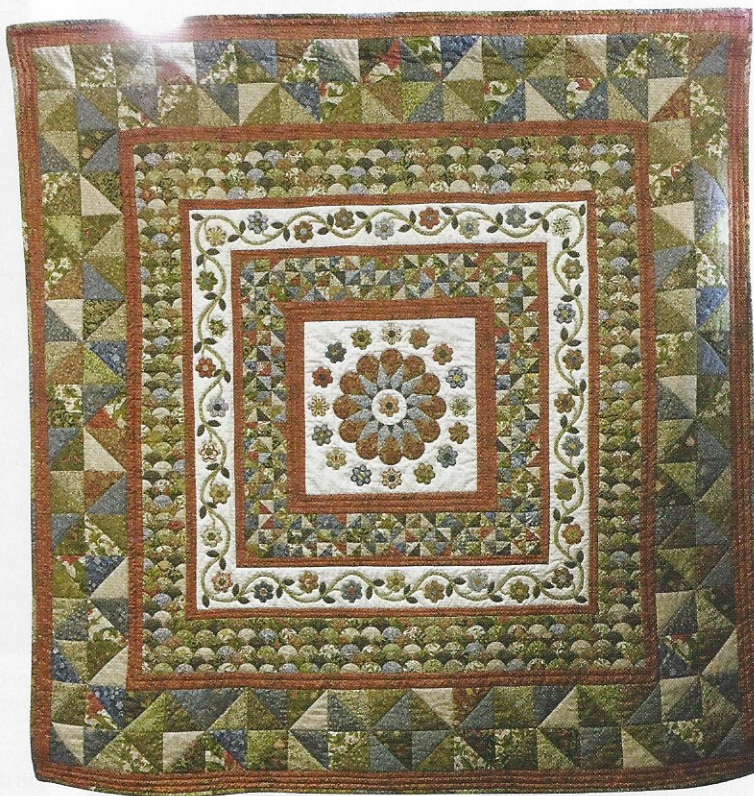
'Rainbow Splash', Claudia Taeubert. First place Traditional Quilts.



'Dear Jane', Frances Meredith. Second place Traditional Quilts. Top: Detail, scalloped edge.



'Plastic Ocean', Kathy Unwin. First place Theme Quilts.



'Golden Threads', Norma James. Third place Traditional Quilts. Left: Detail.





'Tracks', Sue Turner.
Second place Theme Quilts.
Right: Detail.



'Interconnectivity', Sally Kerr. Third place Theme Quilts



'Spring in the City', Frieda Oxenham. Second place Contemporary Quilts.



'Hole Cloth', Birgit Schüller. Best in Show, First place Contemporary Quilts.

Turning next to the Contemporary Quilt category, this also featured the Best in Show quilt which was kept under wraps until the prizegiving ceremony on the Sunday. A lovely play on words, first place and the overall winning quilt was awarded to 'Hole Cloth' by Birgit Schüller. Because of the black hanging cloths hung behind each quilt, at first glance I didn't notice that the quilt had holes in it! Normally an indicator of rough usage or poor care, these stylised holes in the quilt were a design element and added an exciting aspect to the overall quilt design. Birgit had also explored extending the piecing design of the quilt into the quilting. A worthy winner. Second

place went to Frieda Oxenham for 'Spring in the City'. Inspired by a trip to New York in April 2016 (Frieda was the winner of our 30th Birthday Make It competition with the prize being a trip to NYC courtesy of former editor and owner of P&Q Tours, Judi Mendelssohn), the quilt noted not only the skyscrapers in the city but the wonderful blossom that adorned it that spring. Third place went to Helen Stamp for her quilt 'A Night on the Tiles'. The design was based on an enlarged Portuguese ceramic tile made for her son's wedding to his Portuguese wife. It was hand appliquéd and machine quilted.

Quite closely related to contemporary quilts is the Modern Quilt category. Perhaps for discussion another day, but I wonder at times whether modern quilts are in fact contemporary quilts i.e. of today. There are some similarities for sure and whilst I consider myself a traditional quilter, I feel I also have modern quilt leanings with my love of background quilting;



'A Night on the Tiles', Helen Stamp. Third place Contemporary Quilts



'Improv 9-Patch', Hilary Jackson. Second place Modern Quilts



'Log-a-Rhythm', Susan Brown. Third place Modern Quilts



Mini to Maxi - Churn Dash', Abigail Sheridan de Graaf. First place Modern Quilts.



'Modern Mini', Arlene McLeish. Second place Miniature Quilts



'Roots', Mienke Vine. First place Miniature Quilts



'Wedding Bag', Tessa Box. Second place Three Dimensional



'Teeny Tiny Rainbow', Abigail Sheridan de Graaf. Third place Miniature Quilts

quilting makes the quilt is an oft heard phrase and this is often apparent in modern quilts where the quilting of the negative space is intended to enhance the overall quilt design. First place in Modern Quilts went to Abigail Sheridan de Graaf with 'Mini to Maxi - Churn Dash'. Abigail played with different sizes of the traditional quilt block, Churn Dash, giving it a modern twist with a bold stark design and that wonderful pop of green. It was quilted in parallel lines in a variety of colours to create additional interest. Second place went to Hilary Jackson and her quilt, 'Improv 9-Patch' where she had created improv blocks arranged in a Nine Patch setting. This pieced centre was framed by a strong thin white inner border and surrounded by a wider outer border that was also quilted in parallel lines with coloured thread, this time in a cross hatch pattern. Third place went to Susan Brown for 'Log-a-Rhythm', a delightful piece with free-cut improvised Log Cabin blocks and parallel line quilting.

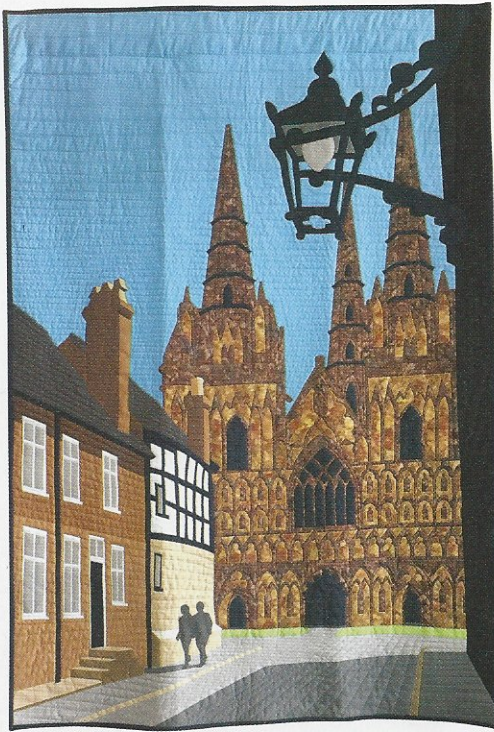
There were a good number of entries in the Miniature Quilt category and this was won by Mienke Vine with 'Roots'. A lovely piece combining appliqué, machine trapunto and machine and hand quilting. Second place went to our very own



'Mannequin', Jacqueline Harvey. First place Three Dimensional
Above right: Detail, 'Mannequin'

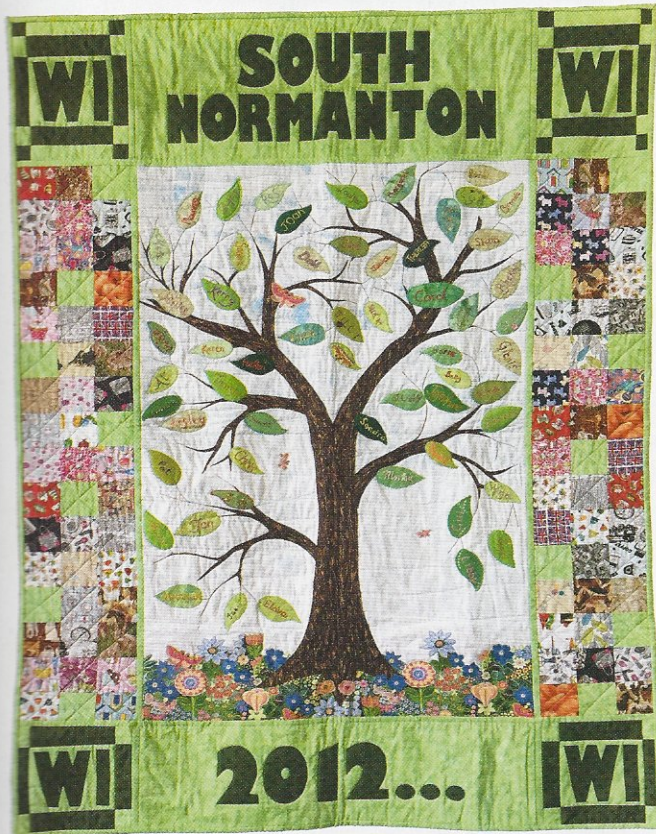
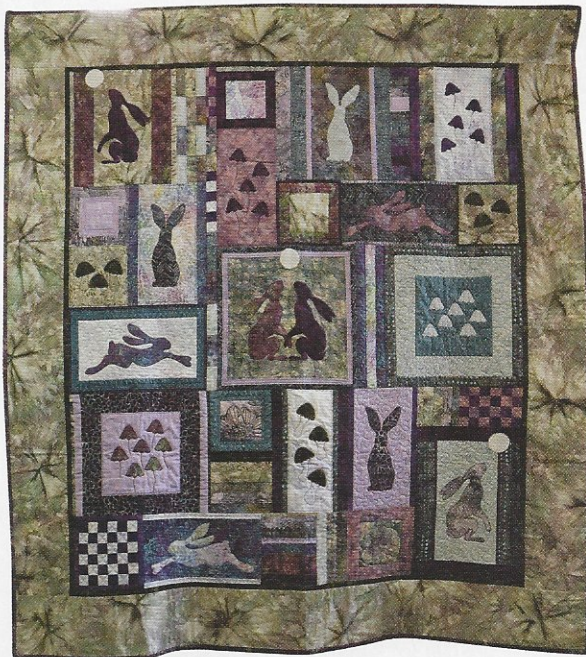
Right: 'Heart of the Midlands', Michael Fitchett. First place Group Quilts

Below: 'South Normanton WI has Arrived', South Normanton WI. Third place Group Quilts



Left: 'Modern Baskets', Heather Hasthorpe and Amanda Parks. Second place Group Quilts

Below: 'Moorland Hares', Rose Rajaratnan, People's Choice Award.



And finally to the Group Quilt category which was won by Michael Fitchett with 'Heart of the Midlands', an appliqué representation of Lichfield Cathedral Close with attention to the light and shade therein. Second place went to Heather Hasthorpe and 'Modern Baskets', a joint enterprise between Heather and Amanda Parks who longarm quilted the piece. Third place was awarded to South Normanton WI for their banner quilt, made initially to celebrate the 100 year celebration in Derby Cathedral.

Arlene McLeish with 'Modern Mini', her miniature version of a pattern from The Quilter magazine. Third place was awarded to Abigail Sheridan de Graaf, her second prize at the show. Her delightful mini, 'Teeny Tiny Rainbow' was the result of a scrap challenge seeing how many squares you could fit into a 5" square; the answer? 100!

The Three Dimensional category sadly did not receive many entries but that's not to say the winners were not fully deserved. My apologies to the winners though; it is not easy to photograph the entries as they are in glass cabinets. First place went to 'Mannequin' by Jacqueline Harvey, an adaptation of a Victorian doll pattern and second place was awarded to Tessa Box for her 'Wedding Bag'.

So in summary, a lovely day out looking at some really wonderful quilts with a high standard throughout and a good number of traders, some of whom you might not come across at other shows, and with the chance of some quiet stitching too, what's not to like? I urge you to visit next year, and maybe enter a quilt too? There's nothing like the thrill of seeing a quilt you have made hanging in an exhibition!

The British Quilt & Stitch Village Show was held at Uttoxeter Racecourse on 12 - 14 April. The dates for next year's show are 17 - 19 April 2020. For more information, including how to enter a quilt visit www.quiltandstitchvillage.com