

A LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Quilters

It was good to see nearly 30 of our Members at our **Zoom Christmas Party** even though we were not able to have the usual fun games. The little packs of fabric which **Jennifer Shields** so kindly put together were sent out to all members and seem to have been well received; no excuse now not to have a fat quarter for the next time we play 'Lefty-Righty'!

Once again the planned week-end of quilting at **Denham Grove** this month has been postponed because of the current crisis with the variant of Covid19.

But, not all has been doom and gloom. I had my elective surgery for hip replacement in December at the Lister Hospital and I cannot be thankful enough for the care taken to keep me Covid free and I am now pain free but walking like a drunken sailor! Added to that I had my first vaccination before Christmas and my second this month. Hopefully many of you who qualify will have had yours or will be summoned to a centre very soon.

At our January morning meeting, **Ginny Edwards** and **Caroline Ellis** showed us photos they took of all the items donated for Christmas to the **St Albans Women's Refuge**. There will be another opportunity to see them at the February evening meeting. Meanwhile, I hope as many of you as possible will join us at 7.30 on Tuesday 19 January when our new **Programme Organizer**, **Heather Hunt**, will be introducing **Brenda Rowe**, a national judge at Quilt Shows, so it should be a very interesting evening. We plan to invite **Mimram** Members to join us if they wish. I will send out a reminder a day or two before by email.

As affiliated members of the **Quilters' Guild**, we can all access the **QG January Newsletter** which hopefully will inspire new projects. Among several interesting topics

there is an article on waddings (!) which I plan to look at later.

Meanwhile the **Committee** join me in wishing you all a **Happy New Year** and hope you are feeling inspired to 'keep quilting' through the winter months. In addition, a walk outdoors every day, weather permitting, will help to keep the blues away! Keep safe and well.

Valerie Pollington

R U ZOOMing?

We have made changes to the **Members' Zoom meetings**: these are now on the **first Tuesday** of each month *in the morning* and the **third Tuesday** of the month *in the evening* in line with our normal meeting arrangements.

The next dates will be our **Zoom meeting on Tuesday 19 January at 7.30pm** then **Tuesday 2 February 2021 at 10.00am**

Join us then on **Zoom** for a **chat**, '**Show and Tell**' and exciting ideas from **Heather Hunt**.

Your contact is **Caroline Ellis**,
caroline@meadquilters.org

The code for Zooming is:
and the password is:

If anyone would like to lead on a quilt related topic, please offer! It makes the sessions more interesting.

MEAD MEMBERS MOMENTS . . .

From Carol Wort . . .

I would like to wish you all a Happy, Healthy and better New Year than 2020. We are all waiting with great anticipation for the next stage of the Covid virus, the **VACCINATION!** We will still have to take care, the same as before. We will still need to wear our masks and keep our distance from others for some time yet. With the rollout of the vaccine we

should find ourselves in a better position as the next few months pass and this year will be better than last.

The [Quilters Guild Region 7](#) Newsletter is available to anyone through corporate memberships (our [Mead Affiliated Membership](#)). We can also get onto the [European Quilt Association](#) site during this pandemic; we hope full details will be on our website www.meadquilters.org by the time you read this.

In the meantime, my sewing machine is out again and I have been doing small items to get my enthusiasm up and running again. Some of you have managed to continue sewing and making lovely quilts; I look forward to seeing them all in the near future.

Coming retreats from [Justhands-on.tv](#) are at [Denham Grove](#) in May: quilting with [Janet Clare](#) and [Paula Doyle](#) and [Recycling and Upcycling](#) by [Sallianne Harrison](#).

The days are getting a little bit lighter now and we even had a little sunshine this week. That is what makes us all feel so much better.

Carol Wort

. . . from Alison Williams . . .

Something I have been missing while we can't all meet in person is the inspiration and new ideas we get from each other when we can see, touch and admire each other's work. Whether it is someone else's choice of colours, a new block to try, or a two-minute 'how to' demonstration, the things that get shared amongst quilters are one of the joys of belonging to [Mead](#).

And although a lot of us have been sewing over the last 10 months, sometimes it is nice to take a break and watch someone else do it! I have certainly made more use of [YouTube](#) and [Instagram](#) lately, and wondered if others might like to explore some of the videos and teachers on there, if you haven't already.

Two of the most well-known websites, which many of us already know, are [Jenny Doan's Missouri Star Quilt Company](#), and [Donna Jordan's Jordan Fabrics](#). They

release new videos every one or two weeks, demonstrating a quilt pattern and how to make it. Some of the patterns are free, others are to buy, either paper or PDF - but bear in mind any physical pattern bought directly from them will have to be posted from the US.

Some others I have come across are [Fat Quarter Shop](#), [Midnight Quilt Show \(Angela Walters\)](#) and [Lori Holt](#).

If you already view videos, you probably have your own favourites. [Alison King](#) recommended [Teresa Down Under](#), and [Ginny Edwards](#) referred us to [Just Get it Done Quilts](#).

[Philippa Naylor](#) does a paid-for course of videos called [Quilters Question Time](#), and no-one could argue that she doesn't know what she is talking about!

[Lily's Quilts](#) is [Lynn Goldsworthy's](#) website. She often has patterns in magazines, including [Today's Quilter](#).

And don't forget [Arnold's Attic](#) where [Catherine Hill](#) has 'Meet the Artist' videos.

Probably enough for now, but there are loads out there, worth a [Google](#) when you have a spare half-hour.

Alison Williams

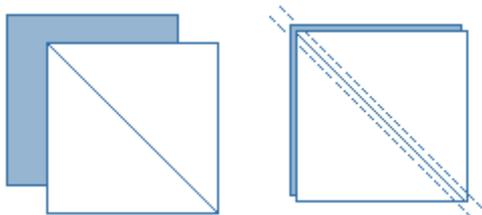
. . . and from Hilda Goddard . . .



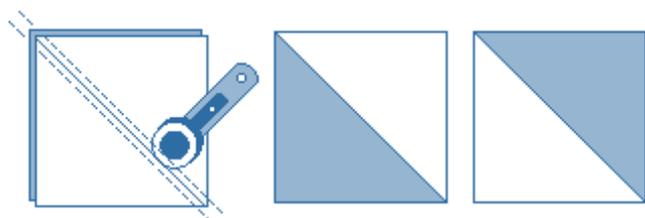
This is a 'MAGIC BLOCK' - an easy way to make a quilt from scraps, which is not just squares put together; it will test your accuracy and also your creativity. Details follow . . .

Making a MAGIC BLOCK . . .

Cut four $5\frac{1}{4}$ " squares, two in white, say, and two in a patterned fabric. Draw a line corner to corner on the white squares, line up with the patterned squares, right sides together, and sew $\frac{1}{4}$ " on either side of the drawn line.

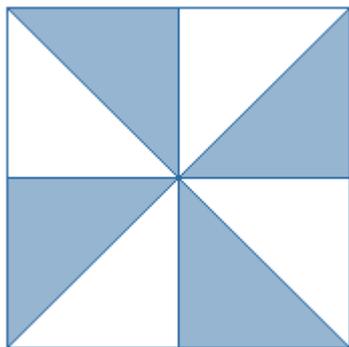


Cut along the diagonal and press the squares and seams open; you will have four (half-square triangle, HST) squares (each should be at least $4\frac{3}{4}$ " square).



It is very important to press at each stage.

Join these 4 HST squares together to look like a windmill; this block should be exactly 9" square.

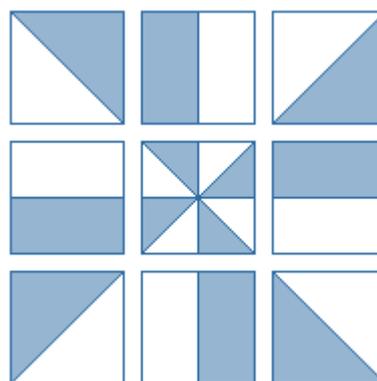


If it isn't then you have not been accurate enough - either with your original cutting or with your machining. You need to ensure that it is well pressed, too.

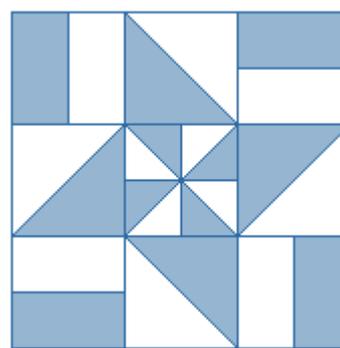
If it's under-sized, you'll need to start again; if it's oversize, check out [TOP TIP 2](#).

Press this 9" block well and lay on the cutting mat. Measure 3" from the bottom and cut across; measure 3" from the top and cut across.

The 3 resulting strips then need to be cut (vertically) into three, yielding nine 3" squares in total . . .



Re-arrange these squares around the central Windmill, with a Friendship Star and the Half-and-Half blocks . . .



. . . and sew together in strips of three and then sew the three strips together. Make sure you press at each stage. *Your finished block will be $7\frac{1}{2}$ " square.*

More arrangements can be found if you Google '[Magic Blocks](#)'.

Hilda Goddard

TOP TIP for BEGINNERS!

There is very little leeway (just 0.02" or 0.5mm!) using $5\frac{1}{4}$ " squares and if your seams are not spot on $\frac{1}{4}$ " the result will be over- or, more likely, under-sized HST squares!

So, start with bigger $5\frac{1}{2}$ " squares and then:

1 trim **each** HST square to exactly $4\frac{3}{4}$ " square (2 sharp corners on the diagonal!)

or (less cutting!)

2 making sure the windmill **centre point** is perfect, sew the 4 HST squares squarely together. Then position your ruler diagonal along the windmill diagonals and trim the block **to exactly 9" by 9"**, making sure its corners lie on the diagonals, too.

HINTS & TIPS

Some Members have suggested it might be a good idea to have a section of the [Newsletter](#) each month dedicated to [Hints and Tips](#). Please will you let us know what you think?

To kick us off, this from [Alison King](#) . . .

I recently (well, at our last meeting) found out that we have a [Sharps](#) bin in the cupboard to dispose of worn out [pins](#), [needles](#) and [rotary cutter blades](#) and I am saving them all up until we meet again!

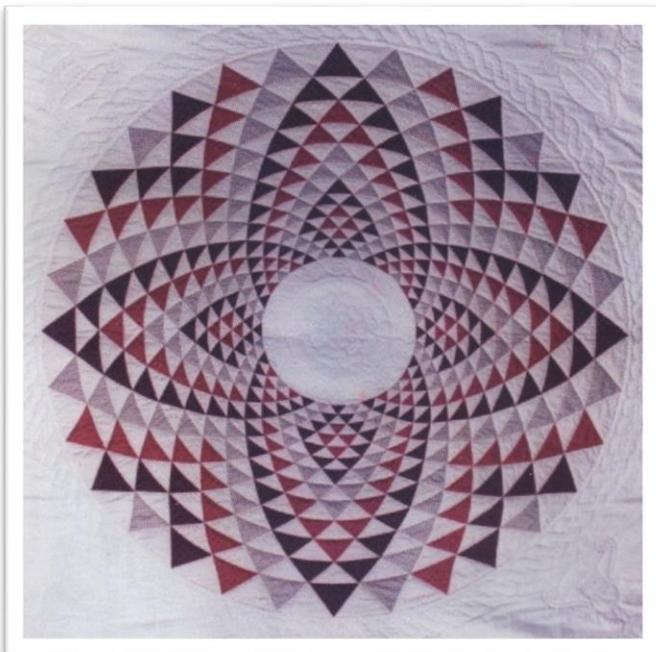
Here's a tip that I assumed everyone would know but, given comments on a recent post of mine, it seems not to be the case: if you are [pinning a quilt](#) it is helpful to use the [bowl of a teaspoon](#), to pick up the point of a pin and push it closed. Saves a lot of sore fingers! I have a spoon especially for this purpose, brought back by my son from a school trip to [Snowdonia](#).

Alison Williams

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS(letter)

We are pleased to tell you all that four [Mead Quilters](#) Members feature in the current [Quilter's Guild Region 7 Newsletter - Bits & Pieces](#).

Firstly, there is a lovely article by and about our very own [Gerry and Jean McConkey](#); it tells how they started quilting and about



their life since their discovery of Amish quilting in 1981 in the USA!

Pictured here is their quilt '[Corinthian Mosaic](#)' featured on the front of [Bits & Pieces](#) . . . and we remind you that they were awarded [Honorary Membership](#) of the [QG](#) last for their distinguished services to the Guild and the Regions.

There is also an article by [Hilda Goddard](#), describing her experiences with setting up the [Mead Block of the Month](#) challenge last year and then with following the [Guild's 2020 Block of the Month](#). Unfortunately, the [Bits & Pieces](#) photos are too small to reproduce here, so go to our website [www.meadquilters.org](#) to see details of where to find the [B&P Newsletter](#) on-line.

Thirdly, [Linda Noon](#) is the [Quilter's Guild Young Quilters Representative](#) for our local region, [Region 7 - Beds, Bucks, Herts and Northants](#). Here is an adapted version of her article . . .

Life has been difficult for all of us in these extraordinary times and it has seemed very strange not to have met our little group over the last few months.

There has however been a silver lining in that numbers in [Region 7](#) have grown to 26; this I suspect is due to the Guild offering free membership to our youngsters during this pandemic!

I have kept contact with the [Young Quilters](#) mainly through postal services as [QG Head Office](#) could not give the go-ahead for virtual meetings to happen.

So far I have sent each youngster two packages with sewing projects. These included a [zipper pouch](#), an [easy block](#) to make, a [pumpkin pin cushion](#) and a [Robin door hanger](#). The kits contained all the elements that the youngsters needed to make each item.

In time for Christmas each [Young Quilter](#) also received a kit to make a [small hanging gnome](#) for the tree that commemorated 2020 as it's been such a difficult time.

I have been heartened by the few positive acknowledgements to these small

communications. Many remark that the youngsters are happy to get mail actually addressed to them in this time of much communication happening only through an internet connection.

Headquarters have recently posted out an invitation to take part in a challenge of making a **postcard** to illustrate this testing time.

Linda Noon

WOMEN'S REFUGE QUILTS

Mead Members **Caroline Ellis** and **Ginny Edwards** organised the donation of quilts to **St Albans and Hertsmere Women's Refuge** to which many other Mead Members contributed: here's the **The Herts Advertiser's** report and photo.

The **Lady Chapel** in **St Albans Cathedral** was turned into a rainbow of colours as quilts made for a local women's refuge charity were put on display.

Friends **Caroline Ellis** and **Ginny Edwards** asked their friends for help and support to give residents of St Albans and Hertsmere Women's Refuge a more cheerful Christmas this year.

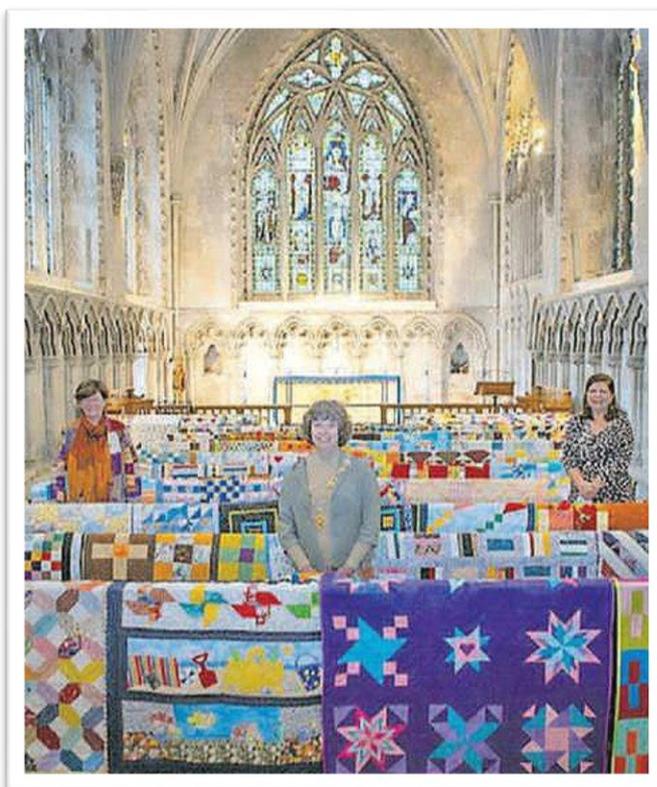
The reaction was overwhelming, with more than 60 homemade quilts provided alongside a festive bag for each resident, filled with toys, books, games, toiletries, fluffy socks and goodies.

Mayor Cllr Janet Smith was on hand to receive the donations on behalf of the **Refuge**, which is her chosen Charity of the Year.

The **Rotary Club of St Albans Priory** was also able to donate over **£200** on behalf of members and friends to the refuge, which will be used to help provide festive food over the next few weeks.

The quilts for the Women's Refuge at the Abbey received 4000 'likes' on **Facebook** and 3,500 'likes' on **Instagram!**

Caroline sent your **Editor** lots of lovely comments, far too many to print, but here are some of them:



THAT is the picture of 2020 – love, light and hope.

How amazing! Quilters are so generous with their time and effort. I'm sure they will be much appreciated.

There is so much love and hope in this photo. Well done all.

Gorgeous gift to receive in the chill of the night. Makes me feel warm just seeing this picture.

Bless you all, you lovely sewers. Xxx

Many, many hours of dedicated work gone into these beautiful quilts. How wonderful to see these works of art. Thank you to each and every one.

What a lovely, thoughtful idea. Well done for all your hard work, they look amazing x

That is lovely. Those women will be going through a time best forgotten, but these quilts will be a beacon of hope for them.

Well done to the women who made them and to St Albans Abbey for displaying them and highlighting both the plight of the women and the goodness of the donors!

Well, that fills the heart with warmth, how lovely! So beautiful to see what can be done when we work together.