

A journey of discovery – grounded!

Annie Folkard, winner of the 2020 Guild Member Travel Award, shares her experiences of online tuition

In 2020, Annie Folkard was the winner of the Guild Member Travel Award (to be used in 2021). The prize of £1,000 is awarded to a member of The Guild to provide financial assistance for attendance at an international event, with the purpose of extending the patchwork and quilting skills or knowledge of the recipient. Of course, COVID-19 upset any plans for travel – here Annie explains how she used her winnings instead.

WHEN I WON the Guild Member Travel Award in 2020, my intention had been to use the money towards a visit to the USA to attend a Nancy Crow workshop in October 2021. I felt sure that COVID-19 would be a thing of the past by then, but as the year progressed, overseas travel looked increasingly unlikely. Given these special circumstances, The Guild kindly agreed that I could use the prize money to further my quilt education via online workshops instead. Through these my skills have increased, and I've got to know some brilliant quilters in the process.

Online workshop choices

There are of course numerous online workshops. On platforms like Craftsy and Creative Bug you can access pre-recorded classes – there's no live in-person input from the teacher, you simply download instructions and follow video tuition. Other classes more closely resemble in-person workshops, such as those organised by Papper Sax Sten (Jenny Haynes) and Irene L. Roderick, where you can get individual attention from the tutor just as you would in real life. Others are a blend and might

include a Facebook group where you can ask for help and show your work for comments and feedback.

Prices of online workshops vary from free or just a small amount to being much more expensive when they are live, with limited numbers and individual attention. Creative Bug classes, for example, are free if you complete the classes you want to do within the introductory free period. After that you pay a small fee each month to access the platform. With Craftsy, you can join for a year and even invite a few friends to benefit from your membership.

The hazard of undertaking live workshops from the western side of USA (and not reading the small print) meant that I found myself with a class time of 10pm–1am for one of the workshops I did. Not good for someone who is not a natural night-owl! But my

Below:
Annie's 'Fantastic Fusion' quilt: see 'Lisa Walton', page 17.



"I'm no longer making some of the basic errors and my accuracy is improving"

Above:
Annie's 'Skinny Insert Strips' quilt: see 'Papper Sax Sten (Jenny Haynes)'.

Below:
Annie's 'Give and Take' quilt: see 'Tara Faughnan', page 18.



enthusiasm and enjoyment are evidenced by the fact that I was still there and working into the early hours. Some courses run over two workshops, set a week apart, which works well as it allows time to do 'homework' in between, so you can fully benefit from the tutor's input.

'My' workshops

Here I highlight some of the courses I did using my Guild Member Travel Award prize money.

Lisa Walton

One of my first online classes was the excellent Lisa Walton's 'Fantastic Fusion' workshop. My local quilt group (Southwest London Quilters) had booked Lisa to run this course prior to the first lockdown, so it was a chance to do the workshop I had previously planned to do in person. 'Fantastic Fusion' is an improv, fused raw-edge appliqué technique using Mistyfuse (a sheer fusible). The online Facebook critique I received from Lisa regarding fabric choice and composition was extremely helpful in pulling my final quilt together, and her comments were also very encouraging.

I did this course via the Coursecraft online platform, but

this has now closed. The class is now available on demand at: <https://lisawalton.podia.com/fantastic-fusion-on-demand-class>

Joe Cunningham

I attended a few Zoom workshops by Joe Cunningham, where Joe demonstrated various of his techniques. The classes were live and had large numbers of participants. Whilst being highly enjoyable, I didn't end up making any quilts. However, I subsequently completed a 'Fantasy four patch' improv quilt which loosely followed an online Craftsy tutorial that Joe presents: www.craftsy.com/class/pattern-free-quiltmaking/

Craftsy offers a huge number of courses and currently the annual membership allows you to invite three of your quilting friends to benefit from your membership. Alternatively, you can purchase individual classes. Short, pre-recorded demonstration videos are also available.

Papper Sax Sten (Jenny Haynes)

A year or so prior to lockdown I went to a live workshop with Jenny Haynes at the Village Haberdashery in London. It was my introduction to precise curved piecing, and I purchased a set of her Drunkard Path templates. This was followed by a series of skills-building workshops on Zoom: 'Thistles, Cogs and Caterpillar Wheels', where I learned how to do freezer-paper piecing; 'Skinny Insert Strips', which taught me how to make precise, skinny-strip inserts; and 'Floating Stairs', where I attempted Y-seams. Jenny teaches from her studio as if she is teaching a live class. She demonstrates each step and repeats anything people need to see again. The Zoom recordings are then available afterwards so that you can go back over any sections you need to. Encouraged by Jenny, I subsequently entered the quilt I made at The Festival of Quilts in 2021 and was delighted to receive judges' comments about the level and quality of my work.

Papper Sax Sten (Jenny Haynes): www.pappersaxsten.com



Above:
Annie's 'Small World' quilt: see 'Tara Faughnan'.

Tara Faughnan

I love the colourful work of Tara Faughnan and she's a great teacher, too. I followed a couple of her free online workshops on the Creative Bug platform, which involved playing with colour, simple freezer-paper piecing and hand quilting (which I hadn't done before). I then did her 'Give and Take' Zoom workshop in May 2021, a 'directed' improv quilt technique which uses sashing to help define random areas of colour. I was delighted that this quilt, which I exhibited at The Festival of Quilts 2021, was also highlighted in the blog of the US quilt publication *Curated Quilts* in October 2021.

More recently, I enjoyed another live Zoom workshop with Tara. The 'Small World' quilt class is another paper-piecing workshop, concentrating on colour placement and pattern. I'm pleased to say I'm no longer making some of the basic errors and my accuracy is improving – I'm quite proud of some of my points!

Tara Faughnan: www.tarafeughnan.com

Irene L. Roderick

Another of my inspirational teachers is Irene L. Roderick. In May 2021, I was lucky enough to get a place on Irene's very popular live 'Dancing with the Wall' workshop on Zoom. Irene is an excellent teacher and I thoroughly enjoyed her two classes. Generally, she starts with a PowerPoint presentation to explain what the class is setting out to do, and she uses pre-recorded videos to demonstrate various aspects of the design and construction. It was a challenge working in two colours but I ended up with a satisfying balanced piece of improv work.

I then did her 'Voltron' Zoom workshop, another 'directed' improv class which involves strip piecing. The first stage is to produce your strip-pieced material and the second designing a balanced symmetrical piece using the fabric you have created.

Recently, I've been joining the free monthly Zoom chats hosted by Irene. These give quilters the opportunity to seek advice and discuss their work, as well as contributing to discussions about



Above:
Annie's 'Dancing with the Wall' quilt: see 'Irene L. Roderick'.



Above:
Annie's 'Voltron' quilt: see 'Irene L. Roderick'.

various topics of interest to modern quilters. Quilters from across the world join these monthly sessions and it really is helping to build an international quilting community.

Irene L. Roderick: www.ireneroderick.com



Left:
Annie's quilt made using silk monoprint fabric: see 'Committed to Cloth: Claire Benn and Jo Lovelock'.

Contemporary Quilt London Challenge: 'Ripples on Still Water'

During the first lockdown the Contemporary Quilt London (CQL) group that I belong to arranged for textile artist Christine Chester to run a series of monthly mentoring sessions. The group was divided into two, with one group doing journaling and the other making collections. My collection turned out to be a series of photographs of swans on a local pond, taken on my daily lockdown walk.

Christine facilitated the sessions and enabled us to discuss the ideas we were developing. They were designed to make us take a different, more thoughtful approach to our work. For my final piece I constructed a raw-edge appliqué tiled background from a variety of 'watery' fabrics, overlaid the background with silk organza which I cut away, and then superimposed a digital image of a swan I had photographed and had printed onto fabric. I was fascinated by the ripples on the water that my phone camera captured brilliantly.

This quilt was exhibited at The Festival of Quilts 2021 and also at a CQL exhibition in late spring this year.



I'm still determined to do the actual travelling part of my bursary to attend the much-anticipated course with Nancy Crow. I will report back on how that goes! Finally, my grateful thanks to all the quilt tutors and quilters out there and, of course, to The Quilters' Guild who have helped me so much along this journey of discovery.

Committed to Cloth: Claire Benn and Jo Lovelock

Throughout last year, whenever it was possible for in-person classes to be arranged, I also worked on completing the surface design course at Committed to Cloth taught by Claire Benn and Jo Lovelock, which I started in 2020. I have four completed quilt projects that were begun at these workshops, and a pile of fabrics that have yet to be utilised. My most recently finished piece that started life there is a silk monoprint, included here as an illustration of this type of work. I loved having a studio space to dye and print fabrics from scratch, and learned several techniques, such as resist, breakdown, discharge, paper lamination, dyeing and using acrylics, all under the watchful eyes of Claire and Jo.

The Studio has unfortunately now closed but Claire Benn still teaches at In Stitches: www.institchestextilecourses.co.uk/studio-days.html

Left:
Close to Home by Annie Folkard: see 'Contemporary Quilt London Challenge: "Ripples on Still Water" '.

