



Talking Quilts: Saving Quilters' Stories

Handbook

An oral history project in association with

The Quilters' Guild of the British Isles



How to use this Handbook

This Handbook is for the quilters and volunteers involved in the Talking Quilts project, and we hope will also be a useful resource for those interested in quilting and oral history. It has five parts;

Chapter One explores the Talking Quilts project, detailing the ethical, copyright and data protection issues involved in the project as well as a 'Ten Steps to Talking Quilts' guide.

Chapter Two explains how to conduct an interview, discusses best practice guidance for interviewing, and helps you to tackle sensitive subjects.

Chapter Three provides guidance on photographing for Talking Quilts.

Chapter Four relates to the transcription, explaining what information needs recording about the interview, how to write a summary and complete a transcription.

Annexes include templates for letters, project documentation and consent forms.

Contact us

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Any individual or group wishing to use the name 'Talking Quilts' or 'Talking Quilts: Saving Quilters' Stories' in conjunction with an oral history project must adhere to the policies and procedures described in this Handbook.

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Acknowledgements

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This Handbook was compiled by Pauline W Macaulay PhD (Chair of the Talking Quilts Committee and lead for the pilot project) and Victoria Martin (Talking Quilts Project Manager). We are grateful to Professor Jacqueline Atkinson, Gillian Harrison, Jane Rae and Professor J Patrick Vaughan CBE for commenting on earlier drafts of the handbook, and to the many volunteers who tried it out and gave us useful feedback.

We would like to acknowledge that the Quilt Alliance of America, QSOS Manual was a source for this Handbook.

Useful Publications

L Abrams, *Oral History Theory*. London: Routledge, 2010.

R Perks and A Thomson (Eds), *The Oral History Reader*. London: Routledge, 2nd edition 2006.

D Ritchie, *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide*. New York: OUP, 2nd ed., 2003.

P Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*. OUP, 3rd edition, 2000.

Websites

The Quilters Guild of the British Isles:

www.quiltersguild.org.uk

Quilt Alliance (Alliance for America Quilts):

www.quiltalliance.org/qsos

Oral History Society (UK):

www.ohs.org.uk

Oral History Association (USA):

www.oralhistory.org

British Library, London:

www.bl.uk

Voluntary Arts:

www.voluntaryarts.org

Heritage Lottery Fund:

www.hlf.org.uk

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Chapter One: Talking Quilts: Saving Quilters' Stories

*"We can learn a lot about a quilt by looking at it, but that doesn't tell us the whole story.
Listening to the quiltmaker does."*

(Karen Musgrave, Quilt Alliance, America, 2009)

1.1 What is oral history?

Oral history is a field of study and a method of gathering, preserving and interpreting the voices and memories of people and communities. Oral history is the oldest type of historical inquiry, predating the written word. It is a traditional way of passing on the memories, skills and knowledge of people and communities. Modern oral historians record these stories using digital technologies, which preserve their stories and their voices, as well as making them accessible to a wider audience.

1.2 What is Talking Quilts?

Talking Quilts is a three-year project to record, preserve and share the stories of living quiltmakers from across the UK. Talking Quilts is community based, with volunteers being trained to conduct oral history interviews. Digital audio recordings and transcripts of the interviews, along with accompanying photographs, will be safely stored at The Quilters' Guild of the British Isles, and shared through an accessible online archive. It provides a sound working template which can be used to continue building the collection in the future and easily adopted by others wanting to document quilters' stories.

Talking Quilts is a project of The Quilters' Guild of the British Isles (QGBI), supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The project was inspired by Quilters' Save Our Stories (QSOS), organised by the Quilt Alliance (see www.quiltalliance.org/qsos), which has documented over 1000 recorded interviews across the United States of America since 2009.

Talking Quilts is guided by three key concepts:

1. Focused interviews

Each Talking Quilts interview is a guided conversation using a quilt or quilted object made by the interviewee as the starting point for the interview. It lasts approximately an hour. The interview focuses on the quilter's personal experiences in quilting, as well as exploring their views on quilt design, techniques, inspiration and other quilt related topics.

2. Touchstone object

The interviewee chooses one quilt or quilted object that they made, to be a 'touchstone object'. The quilt or quilted item should be finished. The touchstone object is a meaningful object that provides a consistent point of reference throughout the interview.

3. Accessibility and Ethics

Talking Quilts follows good oral history practice, adhering to the standards set by the Oral History Society. The project has been designed to enable anyone to gain the skills, support and resources they need to be able to conduct an oral history interview which follows current best practice. Volunteers are required to commit to the ethical standards set for the project, which seek to protect and respect the interests of the interviewee.

1.3 How will Talking Quilts be delivered?

Talking Quilts aims to be inclusive both culturally and geographically. The project is being rolled out using the regional structure set out by The Quilters' Guild, and will be implemented in eight Regions over three years. Regions will be selected to participate based on the following criteria; at least one Region from England, Scotland and Wales, a strong regional interest and commitment to the project, and a good geographic spread across the UK.

The project is delivered locally in each Region by volunteers trained as interviewers and transcribers. Volunteers will learn oral history interview techniques, how to use audio recording equipment and about interview transcription. Each volunteer commits to complete a minimum of two interviews and / or transcriptions. In each Region the volunteers are supported by a Talking Quilts Coordinator. The Talking Quilts Coordinator will work with volunteers to select a minimum of 10 quilters for interview.

Talking Quilts interviewers, transcribers and interviewees should be quilters. They include Quilters' Guild members and non-members.

Talking Quilts is overseen by the Talking Quilts Project Committee, with each member having a particular area of expertise that ensures that the project is delivered to a high standard. It is co-ordinated nationally by a part-time Project Manager who trains and supports volunteers. Talking Quilts liaises closely with the Chief Executive and Committee of The Quilters' Guild.

1.4 How will Talking Quilts benefit the quilting community?

Talking Quilts will promote our rich and diverse quiltmaking heritage to a wider audience through regional and national events, exhibitions and publications. Interview recordings and photographs will be made available to historians, researchers and the wider public through a digital online archive, as well as ensuring they are preserved for future generations. Talking Quilts will provide a legacy of trained volunteers, who can continue collecting quilters' stories, as well as providing a template for others to use in their own oral history projects.

1.5 What ethical issues are important?

Talking Quilts aims to follow high ethical standards, going beyond the requirements of copyright and data protection laws. Ethics concerns the treatment of an interviewee and their oral history testimony, before, during and after an interview. It concerns everyone involved in Talking Quilts, from project planning, to interviewing, photography and transcription, through to subsequent publication. Confidentiality, trust and integrity are essential.

Talking Quilts has its own ethical principles and encourages a strong commitment to these principles. The ethics statement is based on the guidelines developed by the Oral History Society of the United Kingdom. All interviewers and transcribers must sign the Volunteer Ethical Agreement form (see Volunteer Ethical Agreement in Annexes).

All Talking Quilts interviewers and volunteers need to follow these best practice principles:

- Acquire sufficient technical knowledge to conduct an interview to the best standards
- Treat all interviewees with respect and courtesy
- Inform interviewees of the arrangements for custody and storage of the recordings and photographs
- Inform interviewees that they will receive a copy of their interview recording and photographs when the transcript has been completed
- Ensure that personal details are kept confidential and not passed on to third parties without consent
- Ensure that interviews are documented, catalogued and made available as agreed
- Ensure that all interviewees give their informed consent to the above.

1.6 What about copyright and data protection?

Copyright

Both copyright and data protection laws present legal issues that affect oral history practice. Copyright is a civil law designed to protect the creative interests or 'intellectual property' of all those who create a product, such as a quilt, as well as those who invested to enable its production. Recordings of oral history interviews are classed as intellectual property and are therefore also subject to this law.

There are two copyrights involved in these interviews and recordings:

1. Copyright for the spoken word of the interviewee belongs to the interviewee under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. In 1995 this copyright was extended (from 50 years) to 70 years from the end of the year in which the speaker dies, under European Union law.
2. Copyright for the recording itself belongs to The Quilters' Guild as Talking Quilts is one of its projects. Copyright for written word is 25 years (from publication date) and for spoken word is 75 years (from broadcast date).

It is important that the interviewee gives formal consent to Talking Quilts and The Quilters' Guild for the recorded interview to be stored and used. This is known as giving consent by 'assigning copyright'. If this consent is not obtained, then use of the material is strictly limited under the law. Consent is obtained by the interviewee signing a form that indicates their 'informed consent' for the uses that the recording may be put to.

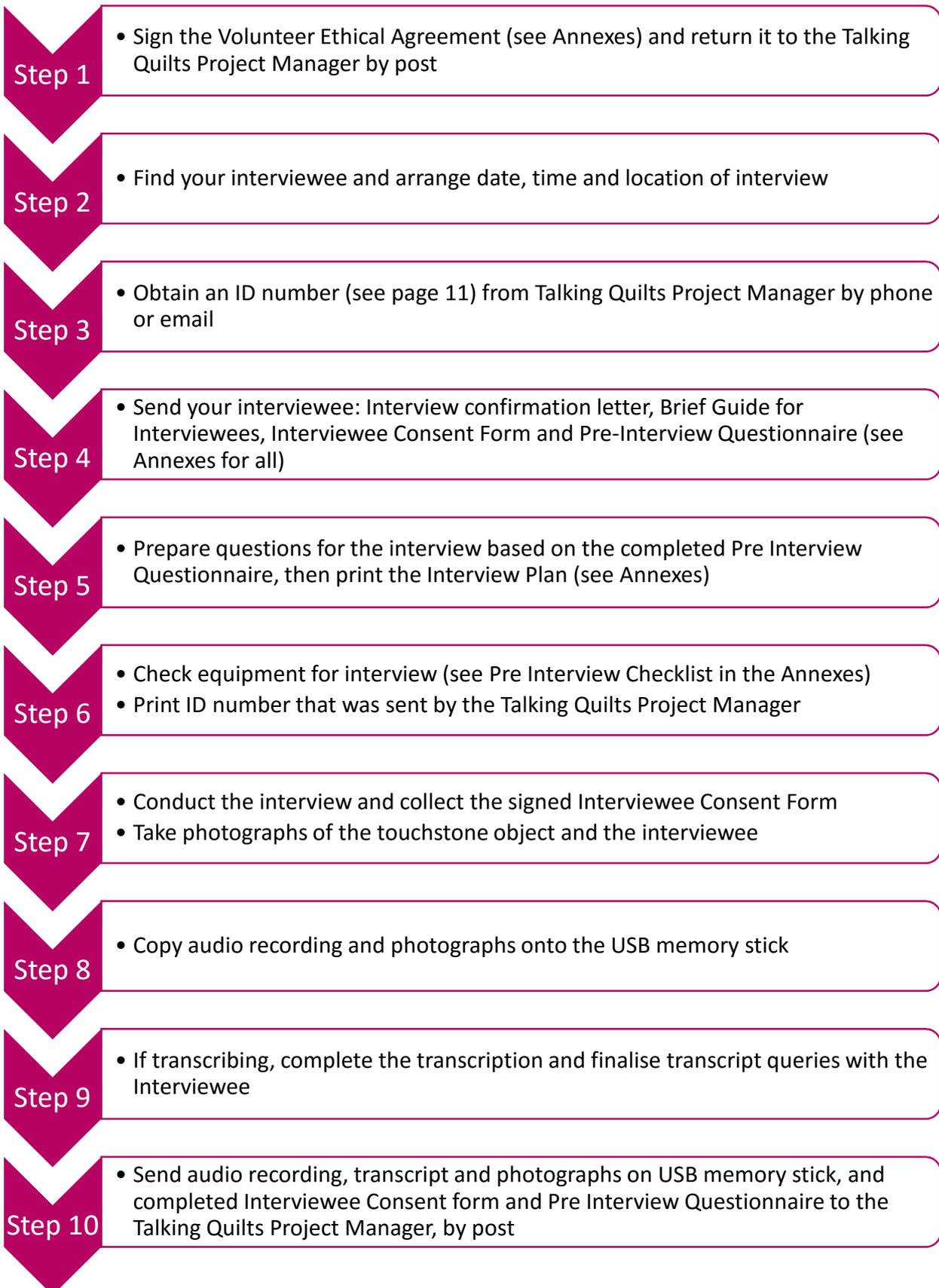
Data Protection

The Data Protection Act of 1998 imposes certain restrictions on the collection and use of personal data, including the contents of oral history recordings and any associated documentation. Talking Quilts must have written permission from interviewees to enable it to enter personal data onto a computer.

Data Protection also relates to identifiable persons who 'appear' in the recorded interview. For example, the interviewee may refer to another individual. If the third party is 'identifiable' either by name or through an identifiable description, and is still alive, then they are also a subject of the Data Protection Act. In this case there are two options: you can 'risk assess' whether the person mentioned is likely to suffer damage or distress as a result of appearing in the recording, or you can obtain written permission from the third party. The Project Manager will assess all interviews for potential Data Protection issues.

Interviewers will need to obtain a signed Consent Form (see Annexes) from interviewees. It provides evidence that we have the interviewee's consent to store and use material in line with Copyright and Data Protection laws. We cannot store or use any of the interview material without a signed consent form.

1.7 Talking Quilts in Ten Steps



Talking Quilts Project Manager will send a thank you letter, on behalf of Talking Quilts, including a copy of the audio recording and photographs to the interviewee.

Chapter Two: Conducting an Interview

2.1 Who is being interviewed?

Every quilter has a story to tell that is unique and is part of our quilting heritage. If we do not preserve these stories they will be lost forever. Talking Quilts seeks to interview everyday quilters, to highlight the stories of those who are rarely represented in quilting history. Interviewees will range from those who have just tackled their first quilt, to those who have a long affiliation with quilting.

The chosen interviewees should be representative of the quilting community in that Region. Therefore it should include both Guild members and non-members, and reflect the diversity within the quilting community from across each Region. A minimum of ten interviews will be conducted in each region. Each interviewer should conduct a minimum of two interviews. Resources (e.g. travel expenses budget, number of audio recorders available and project timescales) will place restrictions on the maximum number of interviews that can be conducted in any one Region. Talking Quilts Coordinators in each Region play an essential role in identifying interviewees that are representative of the quilting community in their region.

Regional Coordinators and interviewers should be proactive in recruiting interviewees through their own personal and informal networks. Talking Quilts is publicised through existing networks, particularly The Quilters' Guild, and local and national media, social media, and quilting groups.

2.2 What makes a successful interview?

In a good interview the interviewer talks as little as possible while listening actively. Their role is to elicit information from the interviewee, helping them to feel more at ease and be forthcoming.

The interviewer should listen carefully and avoid interruptions. Use non-verbal communication to show you are interested and encourage the interviewee to continue or explain something in more detail, such as eye contact, nodding or gestures to demonstrate supportive listening. Try to avoid using verbal affirmation, such as 'mmm' or 'yes', as it will be heard on the recording.

Use open questions, try not to use questions where the interviewee can answer 'yes' or 'no', or where your question may influence their answer, for example instead of 'do you enjoy quilting?' try 'what do you enjoy about quilting?' or 'why do you quilt? Think about asking what, when, why, who and how questions, but also starting a questions with 'explain' or 'describe'.

Keep in mind the people who later may listen to the interview. If acronyms or specialist terms are used, for example when referring to a specific quilting technique, even if the interviewer knows what is being talked about, they should ask the interviewee to explain it. Also

remember that the listener cannot see the interview, therefore visual references should be described for them.

A good interviewer is fully prepared for the interview and knows their equipment well. Once interviewers have been trained to use the audio recording equipment they need to sign a Volunteer Ethical Agreement form (see Annexes) before conducting an interview. This states that they will do their best to adhere to best ethical practice as promoted by Talking Quilts, please return this to the Talking Quilts Project Manager.

Please revisit the 'Ten Steps to Talking Quilts' chart on page 8 to help you follow the interview process.

2.3 How do we prepare for an interview?

When an interviewer makes contact with a potential interviewee, they should explain why they are being contacted and give them some basic information about what is involved in taking part in the project, reassuring them that they will follow up the conversation with information in writing.

An interviewer should share some important information with a potential interviewee:

- Describe the Talking Quilts project and the importance of preserving quilters' stories
- Explain that the interviewee should select a quilt or quilted item that they have made, as a touchstone object
- State that the interview will be audio recorded, and photographs taken of them and their quilt
- Outline the topics to be covered in the recorded interview, but explain that they can stop the interview whenever they wish and do not have to answer any questions that they do not want to.
- State that the interviewee will be required to give consent to taking part in the recorded interview and to being photographed, as well as to the storage and publication of recordings, transcriptions and photographs (including online).
- Explain that the interview takes 30 to 60 minutes, and that you will need approximately two hours of their time (including interview, setting up and packing away).

If they have any queries refer them to the Talking Quilts Project Manager.

Important – ID number – When an interview date is agreed contact the Talking Quilts Project Manager to obtain an interview ID number. This is important as the ID number identifies all interview materials (audio recording, photographs and documentation). The interviewer should print out the ID number and take it to the interview, to use when photographing the quilt. It is important that the ID is added to every form, interview recording, photograph and any related documentation.

Once you have received an ID number, send your interviewee an Interview Confirmation letter (template in Annexes) stating the time, date and location for the interview. Include the following documentation that they might find useful when preparing for their interview (all can be found in the Annexes):

- Brief Guide for the Interviewee
- Interviewee Consent Form
- Pre-Interview Questionnaire – complete the ‘Interviewer Information’ section prior to sending

The interviewee should return the Pre-Interview Questionnaire to the interviewer before the interview. The interviewer will use this information and the questions on the Interview Plan to prepare for the interview, see section 2.4 on how do we plan the interview questions.

Check all the equipment is ready. Check there is enough space on the audio recorder’s memory card for the interview, and that the batteries are fully charged. Also check that your camera battery is fully charged and that there is plenty of space available on the memory card (see Pre Interview Checklist in the Annexes).

For personal safety, leave contact details with a third party, including the address for the interview and expected return time. If communicating with a potential interviewee through social media, do not give any personal information that could be seen by others.

2.4 How do we plan the interview questions?

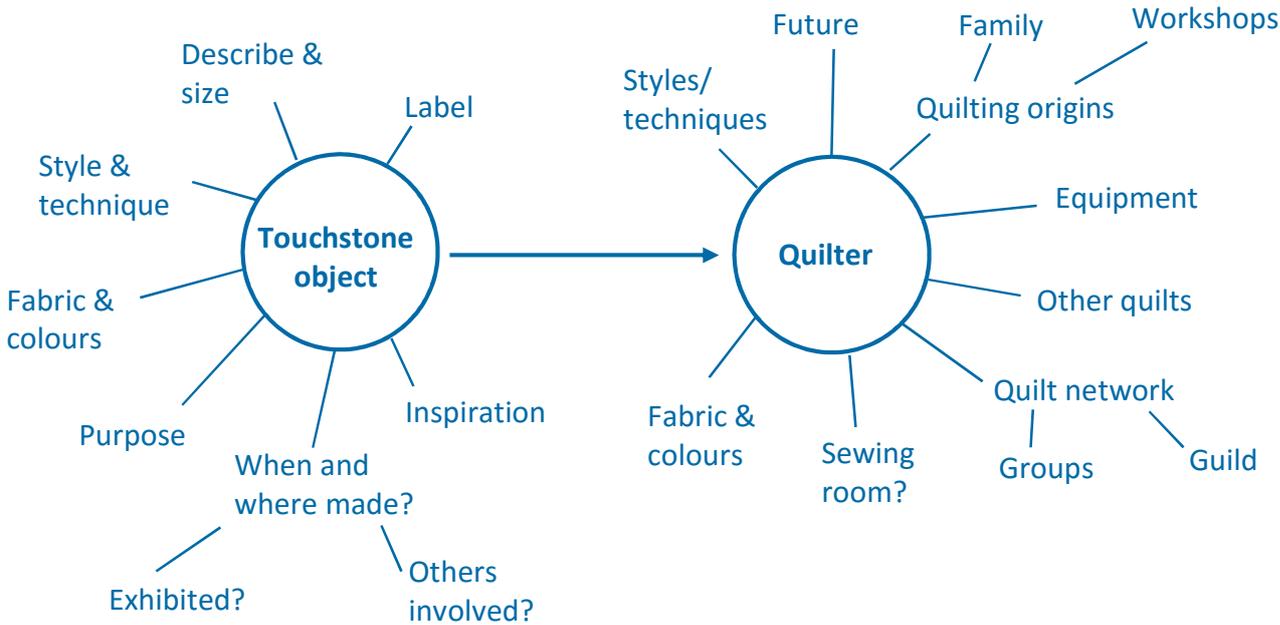
Interviews should focus on the interviewee’s touchstone object and their quilting story, and are not intended to be whole life stories. The interview should be free flowing, not one based on a set list of questions. You might discuss a variety of topics including quilt design, techniques, training, influences, etc.

Talking Quilts has provided a sample list of interview questions that you might use when planning the interview (see Interview Plan in the Annexes). The interview questions are divided into four categories;

1. Interviewee’s touchstone object
2. Interviewee’s involvement in quilting
3. Craftsmanship and design in quilting
4. Function and meaning of quilts

Your Interview Plan should be tailored to fit the interviewee and their story. The Pre Interview form will give you some ideas on what questions you might need to ask. Every interviewer is different and will plan their interview questions in a different way.

See below for an idea on how you could begin to plan interview questions;



2.5 How do we conduct a Talking Quilts interview?

Decide where you will conduct the interview and set up the equipment. Ideally the interview would take place in the interviewee’s home, where they feel most comfortable. If this is not possible, think carefully about where to conduct the interview. Public spaces can often be noisy or large, giving a poor quality recording. You may need to move furniture so that you can set up the equipment correctly, to ensure a good quality recording. Ideally the recorder should be a maximum of nine inches from the interviewee’s mouth, but also remember that the recorder needs to pick up your voice. Try to eliminate background noises, such as roads, clocks, pets and TVs. Test the recording equipment is working correctly with a short test recording.

Start by recording the Interview Information which includes stating place, date and start time for the interview, as well as the names of the interviewee and interviewer. Completing the Interview Information section on the Interview Plan (see Annexes) will remind you what you need to state. Do not state on the interviewee street address or postcode, just the town, city and/or county. Then begin the interview by asking the interviewee about their touchstone object. Each recorded interview could take from 30 minutes to an hour and a half, but most take 45min to one hour.

At the end of the interview thank the interviewee and put any furniture back that you needed to move. Discuss the Consent Form and ask them to complete it. Remind them that you may contact them at a later date to check spellings and names that they referred to in the interview. Let them know that a copy of the interview recording and photographs will be sent to them by the Talking Quilts Project Manager, but that it may take several months. If you wish you can send them a thank you note, but they will also receive a thank you letter from the Project

Manager, on behalf of Talking Quilts, along with a CD of the interview recording and their photographs.

After the interview make sure that all the documentation is accurate and up to date. Save the audio recording and photographs onto your computer and a USB memory stick.

If you are not completing the transcription; send the USB memory stick and any paper documentation (Interviewee Consent form and Pre Interview Questionnaire) to the Talking Quilts Project Manager. Alternatively you can send the audio recording and photographs electronically using a file sharing site, such as Dropbox. The Project Manager will forward the audio recording to a transcriber.

If you are completing the transcription: complete the transcription (see Chapter 4). Save the completed transcript onto the USB memory stick with the audio recording and photographs. Send the USB memory stick and any paper documentation (Interviewee Consent form and Pre Interview Questionnaire) to the Talking Quilts Project Manager. Alternatively you can send the audio recording and photographs electronically using a file sharing site, such as Dropbox.

Charge the rechargeable batteries in the audio recorder and camera, ready for your next interview!

2.6 Dealing with sensitive subjects

Oral history interviews can sometimes evoke strong feelings or distressing memories. Sometimes it can be planned for, for example if you know that a quilt was made during a difficult time for the interviewee, and sometimes it cannot. Sensitive subjects are part of an individual's story, and if the interviewer and interviewee are happy to discuss them, can be a positive experience for both. They also can help produce memorable and thought provoking testimonies for the listener.

If you know that an interview may involve discussing a sensitive subject then you can prepare yourself and your interviewee. Discuss how they would like to talk about the subject. Are they happy for you to ask particular questions? If they feel in control of how the subject is discussed then may be more at ease.

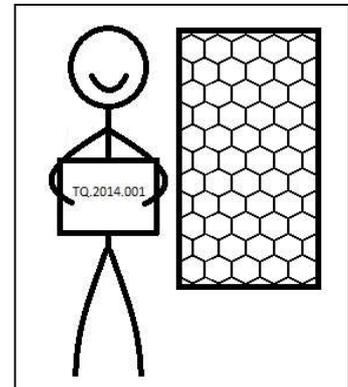
However even with the best preparation the interviewee may become upset. Don't be embarrassed if they get upset, try to be supportive and ask the interviewee if they would like to continue or take a break. Be aware of their body language, if they are fidgeting, appear anxious or tired then stop the interview.

Chapter Three: Photographing the Quilt and Quilter

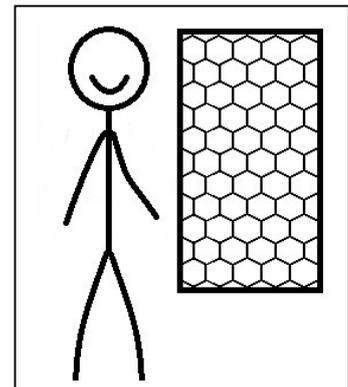
3.1 Photographing the interviewee and their touchstone object

Photographing the interviewee and their touchstone object is an important part of documenting every interview. A set of good photographs is essential and the following photographs are required:

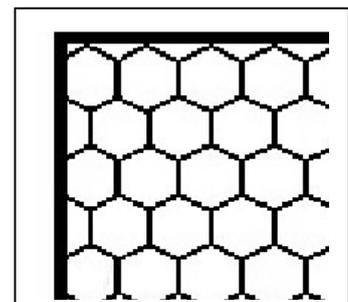
1. **Main photograph with ID number** – Three photographs of the interviewee with their touchstone object, together with their ID number on a large card



2. **Main photograph without ID number** – Three photographs of the interviewee with their touchstone object without their ID number



3. **Detailed close-up photographs of the touchstone object** – ID number is not required – Include details to which the interviewee refers during the interview, for example if they talk about a particular fabric, block or label, photograph it



Remember: it is better to take too many photographs, than taking too few, then the Project Manager can select the best.

The Project Manager will send copies of the photographs, along with their recorded interview, to interviewees.

3.2 What makes a good digital photograph?

Digital cameras take good photographs, suitable for archiving, reproducing, publication and uploading to the web. Talking Quilts recommends that you use your own camera, as you know how it works. Most digital cameras will meet Talking Quilts minimum specification of 9 megapixels. Mobile phone or tablet cameras are improving and some produce good quality photographs (such as iPad's), but generally these should only be used in an emergency. Make sure your camera has sufficient space available to store the images. Here's some more hints on how to take good photographs;

Automatic or manual – Cameras have both automatic and manual options. If you are comfortable with your camera and its functions, you can use the manual settings to achieve the best images. If not, trust the default automatic setting as this is designed to take good photographs under most circumstances.

Lighting – Natural sunlight in the morning or late afternoon is best, but avoid bright midday sunlight. Try to avoid shadows being cast onto the interviewee or quilt. If there is insufficient light, move the photography session outside to take advantage of natural light or use the camera's flash. Flash in poor light conditions tends to 'wash out' the colours and create reflected highlights, therefore it is best, to capture images both with and without the flash

Framing the photographs – When taking the main photographs stand well back to ensure that the whole of the interviewee and their quilt are in the picture, as well as a margin of space around them. If you are struggling to fit them in, try to think creatively. Could you hang the quilt on the washing line? Could you lay the quilt over a bed? Try not to have the interviewee 'hiding' behind the quilt but standing beside it. When doing the close up photographs try to lay the quilt on a flat surface.

Review and retake – Immediately after taking the photograph use the camera's digital playback facility to review the pictures. This is useful for checking for the picture frame and that the photographs are in focus, sharp and detailed. If you are unsure, take more pictures.

Backup your photographs – As soon as possible, download the digital photographs to your computer and also back them up on a USB memory stick. Once saved, open the images in your computer and make sure that they are all of good quality and usable. Double check that all the photographs have been copied off your camera's memory card before deleting.

Important - On some digital cameras (mainly older ones) the date and/or time is stamped onto the image when date and/or time stamp setting is on, make sure this setting is turned OFF, so the date and/or time do not appear on the image. If you are unsure how to do this either speak to the Talking Quilts Project Manager for more support, or use another camera.

Chapter Four: Transcribing the Interview

4.1 What is transcribing?

When transcribing audio-recorded interviews, you are translating verbal speech into written speech. It is important that everything is typed exactly as it was spoken in the recording. Do not correct grammar or remove repetition or tidy up sentences. People's speech contains hesitations, 'unfinished' sentences and false starts, the transcript should contain these as well.

4.2 Transcribing for Talking Quilts

The transcription contains three sections:

Interview information – this section contains key information about the interview itself; time, date, locations, name of interviewer and interviewee, etc. See section 4.4.

Summary – this is a brief summary of the interview content, described using keywords. It is 'timecoded', so acts as an index for the audio recording and main transcript. See section 4.5.

Transcript – this is a verbatim representation of the interview, including everything that is said during the recorded interview by both the interviewer and interviewee. See section 4.6.

Please see Sample Transcription for interview information, summary and transcript in the Annexes.

4.3 How should the transcription be presented?

It is important that all Talking Quilts transcriptions follow the same formatting.

For the required format:

- Use the 'Word' processing programme (preferably version 2007 or if necessary 1997-2003. Do NOT use '.docx' as some computers will not be able to read these).
- Justify text to the left. Set page margins to 2.54cm (left, top and bottom) and 1.5cm (right)
- Select font Calibri, size 12 point
- Set to single line spacing. Separate interviewer and interviewee speech with a space
- Do not use **bold** anywhere, apart from headings 'Summary' and 'Transcript'
- Insert page numbers in the footer, bottom centre
- Insert the ID number in the header, top right
- Save your file with the ID number first, followed by the last name of the interviewee and finally the date of the interview, e.g. TQ.2014.001 Smith.doc

4.4 What is the Interview Information?

At the beginning of the transcription, include the following information in this format:

ID Number: *TQ.2014.001*

Name of Interviewee : *Sue Smith*

Name of Interviewer : *Jo Bloggs*

Name of Transcriber: *Jo Bloggs*

Location: *Sue's home*

Town/City/County: *York, Yorkshire*

Date: *1 Jan 2015*

Length of interview: *1:02:30 [for 1 hour, 2 minutes and 25 seconds]*

The first time that a new speaker is heard, the full name is given followed by their initials in capital letters in parentheses e.g. Jo Bloggs [JB]. After the first passage type in the initials only to indicate who is speaking. If a person cannot be identified, use Unidentified Person [UP].

4.5 How do we write the summary?

The summary should serve as a list of keywords, giving a brief overview of what is discussed in the interview. It will ultimately help users to navigate the interview and the archive. The summary may include names, places and events, as well as general topic headings (see sample summary in the Annexes). Completing the summary should be quite a quick process, taking about as long as the original interview took, stopping the recording to check timecodes, accuracy, etc.

Every digital recording is timecoded, usually displaying the hour, minute, second and milliseconds or frames, e.g. 0:00:00:00. For Talking Quilts you only need include the hours, minutes and seconds of the timecode, e.g. 0:00:00. Approximately every three to five minutes jot down the timecode when there is a natural break, for example when a question is asked, and describe what is discussed during that time, e.g.

0:00:00 – introduce interviewee, date, location of interview, touchstone object

0:03:05 – first quilt, log cabin quilts, friend's quilt...

Digital recordings are divided into WAV files or 'tracks' and an interview may be made up of more than one track, for example if you stopped the recording part way through the interview. As each track begins with a new timecode, starting at 0:00:00, your interview summary will have one or more 'restarts' of the timecode for each separate recording. In each case please include the ending timecode, e.g.

0:00:00 – introduce interviewee, date, location of interview, touchstone object

0:03:05 – first quilt, log cabin quilts, friend's quilt

0:07:25 – ends

0:00:00 – work as volunteer, York, fabric, old shirts, paisley, quilting workshop

0:04:30 – fabric dyes, dye workshop...

4.6 How do we transcribe?

If the interviewer is also completing the transcription this is best done as soon as possible after the interview when it is still fresh in the mind. Try to complete a transcription in two or three sessions. In this way the process becomes easier as it reveals the flow of the interview, the emerging story.

Once you have completed the transcription, listen to the whole interview again to ensure accuracy as you read through the draft. For a 30-60 minute interview, transcribing will take several hours, depending on the skill of the transcriber and the quality of the recording.

Some important transcribing conventions are:

- Type in what is actually said, not what you think the interviewee meant to say
- Include asides, hesitations, repetitions, use of phrases like 'you know', 'see' and 'sort of'
- Do not correct grammar, word use or sentence structure as we often talk in phrases
- Do not alter spelling of local words/ accents, for example if interview says 'yeah', do not change to 'yes' or if they say 'mam' do not change to 'mum'
- Exclude all *err's*, *um's* and *well's* unless they are really meaningful
- Leave the original word order and local dialect words and phrases as spoken
- Note interruptions, gestures, noises, other speakers e.g. [dog barking] [stroking the quilt], [both talking together], [laughing], [sighing], [telephone rings], [break in recording]
- If the interviewee doesn't complete a sentence put three full stops e.g. '...'
- If a word or phrase cannot be heard or deciphered it should be denoted as [inaudible]. Another listener may be able to understand the word(s) or the interviewee may be asked to fill in the passage
- Use a comma to indicate a momentary pause, three full stops ... for longer pauses, and [pause] for very long pauses insert [pause: 10 seconds]
- Reported speech should be in single quotation marks. Titles of publications and foreign words should be italicised
- Write quiltmaker and quiltmaking as one word, not as two words
- Numbers should be in words under 10 and in numerals for 10 upwards
- Dates should be as spoken
- No full stops in acronyms

4.7 How do we complete the transcription?

Once the transcript and summary are finalised they should be sent to the Talking Quilts Project Manager.

Finally, the Project Manager will send a thank you letter to the interviewee with a copy of their recorded interview and photographs.

Annexes

The following pages are intended to be 'pull out' documents for use by interviewers, interviewees and transcribers participating in Talking Quilts. They include,

Volunteer Ethical Agreement

Interviewee Confirmation letter template

Brief Guide for Interviewees

Pre-Interview Questionnaire

Interviewee Consent Form

Interview Plan

Pre-Interview Checklist

Sample transcription, with Interview Information, Summary and Transcript



Volunteer Ethical Agreement

Talking Quilts (in association with The Quilters' Guild of the British Isles) is concerned that all volunteer interviewers and any other associated workers are fully committed to the rights of human subjects and that they abide by the following principles for best practice:

1. Interviewers' primary responsibility is to the people they interview. When there is a conflict of interest, the interviewee must come first. Researchers must strive to protect the physical, social and psychological welfare of their interviewees and to honour their dignity and privacy.
2. The aims of Talking Quilts should be communicated as well as possible to all interviewees and volunteers.
3. All participants in Talking Quilts must take part voluntarily and they may choose not to participate and not provide certain information.
4. Talking Quilts Consent Forms should be used for all recordings, transcripts and photographs. The interviews will only be used with the express written permission of the participants.
5. There shall be no exploitation of individual interviewees or participants for personal gain.
6. The anticipated consequences of the Talking Quilts project should be communicated as fully as possible to all participating individuals and groups likely to be affected.

I have read the above statement and agree to abide by it to the best of my ability.

Signature:

Name (capitals):

Date:

Please return to: Talking Quilts Project Manager



[Insert Interviewers name, address, telephone number and email]

[Insert Date]

Dear *[Insert interviewees name]*

We are delighted that you have agreed to take part in Talking Quilts. I am writing to confirm that your interview will take place on *[insert time and date, at insert location]*.

Talking Quilts is an oral history project that will collect, preserve and share the stories of today's quilters. Recorded interviews, transcripts and photographs will form a national archive, helping to preserve our rich and diverse quilting heritage. Talking Quilts will establish a free online archive and deliver events, to help generate public interest in quilting.

Thank you for agreeing to take part in Talking Quilts, we appreciate your help in saving quilters' stories. Please find enclosed with this letter;

- Brief Guide for Interviewees – this will tell you more about the interview process, as well as some useful contact information
- Pre Interview Questionnaire – **before your interview** please complete this form and return it to me, as it will help me to prepare for your interview
- Interviewee Consent Form – **after your interview** you will need to sign the consent form, it confirms that we had your permission to conduct the interview and photograph you. It also shows that you give consent for your interview and photographs to be stored and used by The Quilters' Guild of the British Isles.

Talking Quilts is managed and delivered locally by volunteers on a regional basis and centrally co-ordinated by Vicky Martin, Talking Quilts Project Manager. If you have any queries about Talking Quilts please contact me.

Yours sincerely,





Brief Guide for Interviewees

Things to know before the interview

- Choose one quilt or quilted item that is significant to you and made by you, to take to your interview
- Complete your Pre Interview Questionnaire, and return this to your interviewer as soon as possible, so they can prepare for your interview
- Read the Consent Form, you will need to sign it after the interview
- The interview is usually 30 – 60 minutes long and will be audio recorded, but allow two hours for the session
- Digital photographs will be taken of you with your quilt

During the Interview

- Your interviewer will make a brief statement at the start of your interview, including information about the interview date, time and location
- Your interviewer will then begin the interview by asking you about your chosen quilt
- The interviewer may ask seemingly 'simple' questions. This is because they have to assume that listeners to your interview have no knowledge of quilting
- Your interviewer will ask about your quilt, your involvement in quilting and your thoughts on quilting
- If you would prefer not to answer any of the questions or need a break, just say so

After the Interview

- Your interview will be transcribed and you may be contacted to clarify spellings or check facts such as names or places
- The Project Manager will send you a copy of the recording and photographs on CD
- The audio recording, digital photographs and final transcript are sent to The Quilters' Guild for storage and later archiving
- You will be notified if content from your interview is posted on The Quilters' Guild website

Important Information

Talking Quilts is a project of The Quilter's' Guild. If you want to ensure the UK's quilting heritage is preserved, documented and shared consider joining The Quilters' Guild and/or a local quilt group. Find out more about The Quilters' Guild on their website www.quiltersguild.org.uk.

For more information about Talking Quilts contact Vicky Martin, Talking Quilts Project Manager
Email info@talkingquilts.org.uk



Pre-Interview Questionnaire

(Page 1 of 2)

Thank you for participating in Talking Quilts oral history project. To help us prepare for your interview, please complete the following form and return it to your interviewer. The details you provide will be used only for the administration of Talking Quilts.

Please complete in block capitals.

Interviewer information – to be completed by interviewer

Name:

Address:

..... Postcode:

Tel:

E-mail:

Talking Quilts ID Number

Interviewee Information

Name:

Address:

..... Postcode:

Tel: Home: Mobile:

E-mail: Year of birth:

Quilt Information

Maker of the quilt:

Title of the quilt:

Date made (approximately):

Where it was made:

For whom and/or which occasion it was made:

.....

Dimensions of the quilt (specify centimetres or inches): Height Width



Pre-Interview Questionnaire

(Page 2 of 2)

Name:

ID number:

How long have you been quilting for?

Briefly describe your quilting background (e.g. are you self-taught; the type of courses or workshops you've done; do you prefer hand or machine quilting etc.)

How do you get the ideas for your quilts?

Why is quiltmaking important in your life?

Are you a member of The Quilters' Guild of the British Isles?

Are you a member of any other groups related to sewing or quilting?

Thank you.



Interviewee Consent Form

The purpose of this form is to seek consent for sound recordings, photographs and/or films to be taken and subsequently used by The Quilters' Guild of the British Isles (The Guild) for inclusion in the Talking Quilts Archive. In addition, you give your consent for The Guild to use part or all of the recordings and images for promotion and publicity purposes in a variety of media including, but not limited to, leaflets, adverts, publications, exhibitions and websites. This consent form enables Talking Quilts (in association with The Quilters' Guild of the British Isles) to permanently retain and use the recorded recollections of participants.

Name of participant	
Talking Quilts ID Number	
Consent for (Delete as appropriate)	Use of voice recording Use of photographs Use of film recording

I, the undersigned, confirm that I consented to taking part in the interview recording and hereby assign to The Guild all copyright in my contribution for the use of the recording and images. I understand that the recording and / or images may be used for research, promotion and publicity purposes only, and that the copyright of the recording and / or images will be retained by The Guild. I understand that this will not affect my moral right to be identified as the 'performer' in accordance with the Copyright, Design and Patents Act 1988.

The personal details of those taking part in Talking Quilts are never made available to third parties.

By and on behalf of the interviewee:

Signed:

Name (capitals): Date:

Address:

On behalf of The Quilters' Guild of the British Isles:

Signed:

Name (capitals): Date:



Interview Plan

ID Number
Name of Interviewee
Name of Interviewer
Location
Address (Town/City/County)
Date

1 Interviewee's touchstone object

Tell me about this quilt
Can you describe the quilt? Size, colours, patterns, style, fabrics
How do you use this quilt and what plans do you have for it?
What do you feel about it?

2 Interviewee's involvement in quiltmaking

When did you first start making quilts?
Are there other quiltmakers in your family?
Have you been to any workshops or quilting courses?
What are your preferred styles or techniques?
What do you enjoy about quiltmaking? Is there anything you do not enjoy?
What technology do you use when quiltmaking?
Where and when do you quilt?
How do you go about making a quilt?
How much time do you spend quiltmaking?
What do you spend money on for your quilting?

3 Craftsmanship and design in quiltmaking

What do you look for or notice in other quilts? What do you think makes a good quilt?
Have you been to quilt exhibitions?
Where do you get your ideas and inspiration?
How do you feel about hand and machine quilting?

4 Function and meaning of quilts

What do you do with the quilts you have made?
What is the biggest challenge you face as a quilter today?

Final questions to end the interview

Why is quiltmaking important in your life?



Pre-interview Checklist

Address of interview location:

.....

Telephone number of interview location:

Interviewee telephone number (if different):

Equipment

Digital recorder, with charged batteries, power cable, USB cable and SD memory card*

Headphones

Tripod

Battery charger with mains power cable

Extension cord

Camera, with charged batteries and memory card*

Tape measure (in case the interviewee did not record the measurements of their quilt)

*Ensure there is enough space on audio recorder and camera memory cards for your interview and photographs. Do not use the audio recorder memory card in a camera.

Documentation

Consent Form

Pre-interview Questionnaire

Interview Plan

ID number

Pad for note taking, with pencil and pen

NB: For your safety – Nominate a 'buddy' who will know about your travel plans, meeting place and estimated time of return. Agree a plan should you not return on time, e.g. call interviewees landline telephone, call interviewers mobile number, call police.

ID Number: TQ.2014.002
Name of interviewee: Julie Hollings
Name of interviewer: Nicky Ryden
Name of transcriber: Nicky Ryden
Location: Nicky's home
Address: Skelmanthorpe, Huddersfield
Date: 8 May 2014
Length of interview: 1:00:00

Sample transcription

Summary

0:00:00 – introduction of quilt, the technique used
0:02:00 – explanation and use of jelly roll
0:03:44 – reasons for choosing this quilt, design related to Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the 2012 Olympics
0:04:33 – the jargon of quilting, fat quarters, fat eighths
0:06:10 – colour choice for quilt
0:07:09 – usefulness of the quilt, range of uses
0:07:40 – interest in quilting, retirement from paid employment as an opportunity to develop skills, role of friends
0:09:01 – time spent quilting, quilting as a 'stress buster'
0:10:07 – family history of quilting
0:11:50 – describing first quilt, arising from purchase of bag of fabric pieces at craft fair
0:12:40 – family appreciation of quilts
0:13:10 – first quilt memory, film 'The American Quilt'
0:14:45 – the appeal of quilts to younger people, children
0:17:05 – what's enjoyable about quilting, more satisfying than dress making, less constrained by time and season
0:19:16 – quilt making as a help through difficult times, dealing with stress...

Sample transcription**Interview**

Nicky Ryden [NR]: Ok, Julie, would you like to tell me about this quilt you have bought with you today.

Julie Hollings [JH]: Right this is... well I just call it my red white and blue quilt for obvious reasons.

NR: Right.

JH: It's a couple of years old, I was expecting a new grandson, and he was due to be born late 2011, so I knew that he would... he came New Year's Eve so very late in the end, but I knew that when his mammy went back to work during 2012 we would be having him on a Monday to look after him. And 2012 being Olympic Year, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and everything seemed red white and blue, but I didn't want to do a flag, and I didn't want it to just to be so obvious. The navy blue material I had at home already and then I saw the three fat quarters and thought they would work well, they would be as red white and blue as I wanted it to be. It's been very well used, and of course he's almost grown out of it now, but because it's got flowers on it could be girly, it's not too gender specific so it served its purpose, it went on him in his travel cot sometimes, when he slept at our house, even now if we were taking him out on a cold day, we would take it to wrap round his legs in a pushchair even though he's two and he might object. That's my little quilt.

NR: That's lovely. So many memories...

JH: As you can see its very simple, my head works in a very logical methodical way, so stripe, stripe, stripe, repeat, stripe, stripe, stripe! [Laughter] I've since learned how to do jelly rolls, and my teacher had to cut them in lengths for me because I just wanted to put, to do it row, row, row, and she said "No, no that's not what you are intended to do", so I said "well I'll do it one and a half then", but she said "no, it's not going to be one and a half, it's got to be random" and she had to do the cutting because my head is just very measured and methodical, I'm not very random at all but I like the pattern that it falls on, I like the routine of it.

NR: You mentioned a jelly roll there, what is a jelly roll?

JH: I have subsequently learned that a jelly roll is a roll of fabric about two and a half inches wide and each one would be the width of the fabric, maybe 44-45" and you would get forty different ones on a roll.

NR: Mm...

JH: And I have used a jelly roll for something else, but I'm kind of a bit averse to them, because I need a bit of control over what I'm making and there's not much control, you get this lovely roll of fabrics, rolled up in a piece about 8" wide, like in a wheel, and you can look at it and see all the colours and think "Oh that's going to be amazing" and you roll it out and I'm kind of at a bit of a loss then.