



# Talking QUILTS

UK's quilting stories told by the  
quilters who make them

In 2014, The Quilters' Guild of the British Isles embarked on an exciting three-year oral history project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. In this article, Talking Quilts Project Manager Vicky Martin tells us more about this fascinating project that aims to document, preserve and share the UK's rich and diverse quilting heritage.

We have a rich quilting heritage in the UK that dates back hundreds of years. Whilst there are many excellent sources of published information relating to our textile history, what we lack is an archive that captures the memories, experience and stories of everyday quilters. As people move away from recording their personal histories in letters and diaries to means of communication that are increasingly digital, the need for recording and preserving their stories for posterity has become ever more important. As interest in quilts and quiltmaking is growing across the UK, it's important that we seize the opportunity to engage the public with this heritage, as well as educating them about the important role it plays in art and society.

The stories focus on a 'touchstone object', one quilt or quilted object made by the interviewee, exploring the story behind it. The interview then broadens out to explore the quilter's relationship with quiltmaking and the role quiltmaking plays in their life. The resulting digital audio recordings and transcripts of the interviews, along with accompanying photographs, are safely stored at



*Region 12 volunteers*

**The Quilters' Guild** and will ultimately be shared with the public through an accessible online archive.

**Talking Quilts** is being led by volunteers and since April 2014, over 30 volunteers have become involved in either interviewing or transcribing for the Project, and over 40 interviews have been recorded.

In 2015 we aim to create our very own **Talking Quilts** website but in the meantime, you can find updates on The Quilters' Guild website under "learn" in the menu.





- 1 • Janet Crossley with the quilt made in memory of her daughter, Rebecca.
- 2 • Kate Smith with her quilt «Bletchley Park» made in memory of her mother, who served with the British Forces during the Second World War
- 3 • Jennifer Nathan and the quilt made for her son Jonathan
- 4 • Working session for Nicky and Glenda from Region 14, as they get used to voice recording !!

If you'd like to be kept up-to-date with the Project, then I'd love to hear from you. You can join our mailing list and receive **Talking Quilts** news bulletins by emailing me:

[info@talkingquilts.org.uk](mailto:info@talkingquilts.org.uk)

**Talking Quilts** was inspired by Quilters' Save Our Stories (QSOS) organised by the Quilt Alliance:

[www.allianceforamericanquilts.org](http://www.allianceforamericanquilts.org)