

# Quilters' corner

## QUILTS FINISHED:

None

**NEW PROJECT STARTED:**  
One major series, lots of fun dyeing fabric this week

## MONEY SPENT:

The Festival of Quilts was very bad for my wallet! Thank goodness I get the credit card bill, not Darling Husband

## Gillian Cooper describes her fantasy shopping spree

**T**his year, for my second fabulous visit to the Festival of Quilts, I tried a new strategy. To get from rural Scotland to the NEC Birmingham, the only practical way to go was to fly. As all the budget airlines now charge extra for putting luggage in the hold, I decided to take hand luggage only. This was not simply to save the £10 or whatever it was to have a suitcase with me. It was for two reasons: firstly for speed, so I did not have to wait for my baggage to arrive, with the attendant fear of it becoming lost and secondly (and more importantly!), for economy so I did not have much room to buy things at the Festival of Quilts.

If you have not been to the Festival of Quilts, then I would thoroughly recommend a visit. Not only is it the biggest quilt show in Europe, with something for everyone, from traditional to beyond cutting edge contemporary art quilts, it also has the biggest array of traders I have ever seen at an event. If I had taken a suitcase with me, it would have been filled with all types of fabric from cute Japanese prints, beautifully reflective woven shot cotton to hand dyed silks and cotton. On top of these, stuffed into the pockets, would have been an assortment of threads: every colour in the rainbow of machine threads, some shiny, some variegated and some hand sewing threads. The assortment of different types of yarns, hand dyed, space dyed or even not dyed at all was irresistible. After all of these, I would need some embellishments, such as buttons and beads (plenty of choice of these too) and some needles to attach them. A new type of rotary cutter, and a few more rulers and nifty things from Clover that I never knew I needed, but now



**Despite luggage restrictions and an economy drive, Gillian still manages a spot of shopping!**

can't live without would complete the shopping frenzy. Throw in a few of the fabulous books on offer, a new sketchbook or two, some fabric paints and a couple of extra bits for my sewing machine and I would have needed an extra suitcase and would have been entering the domain of excess baggage! In which case, I may as well have had a new sewing machine too. Perhaps a longarm quilting machine would have been a bit too big to get on a plane and, to get back down to earth, I do not have room for one at home either. But, of course, all I had was a small rucksack as hand luggage, which already had a camera, a computer, my notebook and some clothes and toiletries in it; but there was no harm in dreaming.

I was at the Festival of Quilts for three days. My first day, I looked, maybe even touched some fabric, but purchased nothing. I was too busy looking at quilts and thinking about how little room I had in my bag. On the second day a bad thing happened. My friend,

Ruth, came to look at the show with me. It was fatal. With two of us to egg each other on, we managed to start buying things. Ruth, although only there for a day by train, came prepared with a suitcase. That's what I call organisation. Mindful of my space issue, I only bought small items. However, when we finally sat down to dinner and looked at our goodies, I discovered that my new walking foot had a small screwdriver with it. Oh dear, current flight regulations would not allow it on the plane. I had avoided needles and large quantities of fabric paint for that reason, but had not expected a problem with my walking foot. Ruth kindly offered to send it to me, which was great.

On my third day, with my bag packed and probably weighing more than the 20kg allowed for hold bags, let alone the 10kg for hand luggage, I had time for one last look around. Admiring the lovely shot cottons on the Oakshott stand, like a good salesperson should, Michael offered to send them to me, rather

than taking them away at the time. Oops. That was my austere spending habit strategy totally blown. The following week, I received a lovely box of beautiful fabric to stroke, admire and eventually use, but no walking foot. Ruth and I were both getting worried. Two phone calls and a visit to both my local post office and sorting office later, there was still no sign of it. Even more bizarrely, it had been signed for by a person I had never heard of before. Finally, Ruth realised she had put the wrong house number on my parcel and it was with the only people on my street I don't really know. With a feeling of trepidation I went to see them, one week after they had signed for the parcel, not knowing whether my walking foot would still be there, or in the bin or sent back and cursing myself for being too mean to have hold luggage. To our great relief, the parcel was handed over at the front door, not even opened. So I now have all my Festival of Quilts goodies. All I need to do now is find some time to use them!