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The Quilting World has Lost Another Star - Dianne Huck



The quilting world in the UK has recently lost one of its finest advocates. Quietly, without fuss or fanfare, **Dianne Huck** has been one of the least recognised but most influential quilt makers and facilitators of her generation.

In the late 1970s/early 80's, quilters in the UK only had access through subscription to magazines like *Quilters Newsletter Magazine*, which were eagerly awaited by mail. A chance remark that, 'it's a pity there isn't a British magazine' lead Di and her friend Elaine Hammond to start *Patchwork & Quilting* in 1985. (It became *British Patchwork & Quilting* only when other countries started using the title). When Elaine retired due to ill health, Di continued the mantle of Editor until her death at the end of February and to this day it remains one of the leading magazines of its genre in this country.

In 1988 after visiting Houston they started *Quilts UK*, a quilt show that has long been one of the major events in the British quilting calendar. Held every May in Malvern, surrounded by the beautiful countryside of Worcestershire, it attracts thousands of visitors and still retains its reputation as 'the friendly show'. This year *Quilts UK* celebrates its 25th year - a fitting tribute to the risks involved in starting it all those years ago.

Not content with encouraging and enabling quilters to enjoy patchwork and quilting here in the UK, Di also started P&Q Tours and has taken many quilters on tours, principally to the US to shows like Houston and Paducah. Other tours have included Australia, New Zealand, Tanzania, China and Japan as well as other parts of the States. The most recent tour, which sadly she was not well enough to join, was the hugely successful tour of forty quilters to Colorado where the highlight was a two day seminar in La Veta with Ricky Tims. It was a quite unbelievably brilliant tour for everyone. It seems a bit remarkable now, but when Di started the tours, women would cook for weeks in advance to fill freezers for the husbands and families left behind! But actually what she did was make travel possible, often for single women and it opened and changed many lives.

In her time in the magazine, Di's remarkable facility was not only to introduce thousands to the craft, but to nurture and encourage many a burgeoning talent. There are numerous quiltmakers, teachers and authors who owe their careers to Di's early recognition and willingness to give them opportunities, which might never have come their way without her.

At *Quilts UK*, the *Amy Emms Award* was introduced (I confess no one seems to remember exactly which year this started!). It is given each year to someone in recognition of their, 'services to quilting'. Some of the UK's most well known and revered quilters have been the recipients but there are also many unsung heroes who have won this prestigious award. I often used to say that the person who deserved it most was Di herself.

In all the tributes that have been sent to the magazine, to the family, to friends and colleagues one of the most apposite was, 'I so admire people who start something. It's so easy just to follow isn't it?' As I said at the beginning, without fuss and fanfare, Di simply instigated what turned out to be momentous occurrences for many of us and we owe her a huge debt of gratitude for enriching our lives. She will be hugely missed but she has left such a strong and vibrant legacy.

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