Happy New Year to all our Co-ordinators, Quilt-makers, knitters and those who support us by their donations

Total Donations - 300271. Donations this year - 23,109
definitely the best year yet - it is over 1,000 more than last year.

News from H.Q.

We are becoming, or at least trying to become, a more organised sort of organisation. Up to last year we were a network with various Presidents trying to keep things connected. I took it over in 2007 and spend the first year just trying to remember who everyone was and what needed to be done. As I was slowly getting on top of that, and arranging for an improved website, lots of our coordinators were busy, not only inspiring people to make quilts and blankets, but also fund raising. We have lots of volunteers able to provide their time and skills, and many donors who provide fabric for the quilts they make or for others to use, but we always need to be wadding or fleece and it is nicer to be able to choose the fabrics for the quilts rather than always making do with what is available. So, quite a few coordinators are now raising funds via organisations like Waitrose as well as WI groups and church ladies and so on. This has meant we need to be accountable and have vastly increased the amount of paperwork going through the centre.

So, last year we set up a Community Interest Company. This is a new type of organisation which can raise funds via commercial activities as well as donations. There is less paperwork than becoming a registered charity but it is does mean that we have to keep proper accounts.

We have started selling scrap packs and other small items at our stands at various shows along with printed copies of quilt and blanket patterns. We also plan to increase our publicity as we believe that there are lots of other people out there who would enjoy getting involved in our activities. There is something extremely satisfying about groups getting together to make cheerful and comforting quilts and blankets (and a number of other things like prem baby hats, teddies, etc) for children in their local community.

Last year we were involved in a number of activities introducing beginners to quilting, particularly the workshops arranged by the Quilters Guild at the Knitting and Stitching
show at Olympia. So many people enjoyed having a go at making a Patchwork block and realised that it is actually much easier than it looks. I have met so many people at shows who look at the quilts on display and say ‘they’re beautiful but I could never do that’ which is so sad. Linus quilts make the perfect opportunity to do something simple that is really appreciated and raises your own spirits as you make it as well has cheering up sick or needy children and their parents.

I was also delighted by the interest in a simple blanket pattern which I discovered when some kind, but anonymous, donor sent me. It is made of squares joined by picking up stitches from one square to knit the next rather than sewing the squares together. This was shown at Olympia and the Festival of Quilts. I make no pretences to great skill or artistry in my quilts and blankets so the praise for this blanket pattern was good for my self-esteem! The pattern is available on our website www.projectlinusuk.org.uk. Happy Quilting (and Knitting)

Lyn Antill

It is with great sadness that I am sharing with you the passing of a wonderful lady, last August - Joan Dengel of Great Longstone, Derbyshire. She has been a massive contributor to Project Linus over the last few years, making lovely quilts along with her daughter Paula, which I had the subsequent pleasure of donating to various causes, her last count was 431!!Although her health was not good, she was a cheerful and inspirational lady, getting others to help too with knitted and crotched blankets. We met twice a year and put the 'world to rights' and shared lots of quilting ideas and tips; hers always much better than mine. I personally shall miss her very much and the organisation will be a few quilts less without her generous contributions. God bless you Joan,

Meg Clowes (Staffs Moorlands)

July was a very busy month for us with our record number of 92 quilts donated. We held an exhibition in Shaftesbury with the North Dorset Quilters and raised £74 from donations. Several people came in and said they had a grandchild who had received one of the Project Linus quilts and how they loved them. Always good to get positive feedback.
Each year a different group of children who have been affected by the Chernobyl disaster come over to Sherborne for a month’s holiday with host families, this month gives them an extra unbelievable 3 years of life. We have been involved with this group called ‘Chernobyl Children’s Life Line’ for 3 years now and give all the children a quilt to take home. It's wonderful to see how the children blossom in this short time and the delight on their faces when they choose their quilts.

We were recently contacted by Homestart who were very keen to be supplied with quilts for children under 5 so our first delivery of 41 quilts was made in July, with more to come in the future. They are most appreciative of them and have sent a lovely letter saying thanks to all our ladies.

We would like to thank Carol Scott for all her hard work for Project Linus in this area as she has now retired as co-ordinator but will surely keep in touch and continue to make quilts for us. Carol and Anne started the group in 2008 which is gaining momentum every month.

Barbie, North Dorset

We had a ‘monster’ time at a sew4others meeting - all the ‘monsters’ were made from strangely shaped scraps that we all have after cutting out shapes from bond-a-web backed fabric. We just added the eyes!

This has gone to the Children’s Hospital in Sheffield via the P.A.C.T. nurses - who said the boys would be fighting over who had this one! So as not to leave them out - we made a monster quilt for a girl too which will soon be winding its way to the Children’s Hospital.
Not just for girls!!!!

It was still school holidays at our meeting in August and the grandsons had to accompany their grannies!! - so had a lesson in knitting squares for blankets and joined in the fun of ‘show-and-tell’.

Ann, sew4others
Chesterfield/South Sheffield

The Melplash Show in August was very successful making £326. Gill did her stuff again and organised a competition using a quilt called ‘Little Dragons Everywhere’. The competition involved naming dragons and the quilt was won by a lady living in Weymouth. Our thanks go to the organisers of the Show who gave us a free pitch again and to Joan Hawes and Margaret Read who helped us on the stand.

Many of you came to the Flower and Quilt Festival held in Askerswell Church in July. As I sit here now with the central heating on, it seems like a long time ago but the weather could not have been more perfect for us. Everyone worked so hard for the event and it was a resounding success. Gill & I, together with members of Askerswell PCC, started organising this in January 2013.

There were discussions with the flower arrangers about colour coordination and themes, with agreement to produce the quilts to complement the arrangements. There were lots of good natured mumblings on the drop-in days as we asked for quilts in
particular colours! We agreed to supply a quilt for a raffle telling the flower arrangers that the quilt would be green and bright orange and would be displayed near the font. I think you will agree that they did a fantastic job! Every pew in the church was draped with quilts and almost everyone who walked through the door and saw the colourful display said ‘Wow’. We exhibited approximately 60 quilts and most of these were given to various recipients a week later. Although we thought that it would be difficult holding quilts back for the Festival and continue to ensure recipients received them, volunteers managed to produce sufficient quilts - amazing! Once we had got all the quilts ready the hardest part for us was having to pack the quilts up Friday evening, put them out again Saturday morning, pack them away in the evening and put them out again Sunday morning - the church has bats! The PCC and Project Linus made an amazing £689 each! Our thanks go to Askerswell PCC for agreeing to hold the event and all their hard work and also to all those people who made quilts that made the weekend so successful. Even Gill’s husband was roped in making road signs, erecting them and then dismantling them at the end of the weekend!

We had several visitors who had spotted the signs on the A35 and detoured to Askerswell including an Australian couple on holiday. The woman said that she didn’t think that she was going to get a quilting ‘hit’ whilst on holiday in Dorset so was thrilled.

Angela Hartie West Dorset

In July 2013 a group of ladies from around The Manhood Peninsular in West Sussex joined The Selsey Quilters for a workshop day making quilt tops for Project Linus.

This was the second year that we had a wonderful sunny day to come together to make quilts and what a great day we had. This year we took along our small stretching bars as well so that we could show how to stretch a quilt top with a fleece back or with wadding and a backing as some of the girls hadn’t done this before. Some people were cutting fabric, some sewing, some pressing, coffee and tea made and with 4 or 5 small quilts being stretched ready for quilting, 10 or so quilt tops completed and a good lunch we had a fantastic day.

Lesley & The Selsey Quilters
It’s been quite a busy time in the West London/North Surrey area. On 12th November a member of Honeybees Quilting Group organized a Project Linus Day at Tysons Sewing Centre in Southall. Tysons offered free facilities and we had a great time choosing fabric and making a variety of quilts. Thanks should go both to Tysons and to Anna East for organizing everything including the biscuits! All those quilts will go to Ealing Hospital.

Then on 16th November Thameside Quilters held a Christmas quilt-giving meeting. Several of the quilts had been made at the annual Quiltathon in July from a pattern by Karin Hellaby and it was interesting to see the same pattern with different interpretations. Altogether 45 quilts and blankets were donated to charity, as well as 4 incubator covers for St. Peter’s Hospital. A great evening spent with generous ladies.

Jacquie Cranfield, West London/North Surrey

We have a new compiler of articles for Stitching Together. Please send articles and photographs and any dates of exhibitions/workshops/events you want to advertise throughout the year to Ann Smith peter.ann.smith@gmail.com

Many thanks must go to Christine Rush for previously editing the newsletter.

Stitching Together goes to all of our supporters and to people who are interested in what we do or whom we hope to persuade to support us and does project an image of the care provided by our volunteer makers and the pleasure given to the recipients. It also conveys the fun and satisfaction we all get from taking part in Linus events or just sitting home and making something for others.