

Ellen Stapleton - CGQ 092,093,094,095
[1940 -2025] [Interview March 2025]

Ellen joined the guild in 1987, and is now a lifetime member. Her quilting story starts in ~1985. She was working full time as a lab technician at the local hospital, but her two children had finished school and had left home. She had some free time and thought she'd fill it with quilting. Ellen tells that she had been browsing through the paper and saw an ad for a quilting course so she convinced a friend to take it with her. Ellen had quilting knowledge because both her mother and grandmother quilted. Her mother started in earnest when Ellen and her twin, Helen, left home. And Ellen had already made the *Trip Around the World* top using cardboard templates, a 'school-type' ruler and scissors. But, her mom and grandmother lived too far away to teach her more. The beginners course was taught by Dominique Drummond at *Shannon's Fabrics*, which by then was bringing in quilter's cottons. Ellen still has that small sampler quilt. The course had been the answer to getting Ellen's quilting hobby started as it "taught a lot of techniques". Dominique Drummond and Lisa Sharpe were the two quilters that advertised for interested quilters to form a guild - fall 1984.

In that first year with the guild, 1987, Ellen travelled to Creston to the first East Kootenay hosted *Regional Quilters' Conference* with Lisa Sharpe (#023) and Judy Wright (#043). They joined 52 quilters from Creston, Fruitvale, Nelson, Kimberley and Salmo. In 1989, the Cranbrook Guild hosted the conference in conjunction with its first quilt show. The conference was at the Seniors Hall and the show was down the street at the Girl Guild Hall. Muriel Neale of Grand Forks spoke on "Quilters Challenges - Cut from the Same Cloth" and the guest was Beverley MacMillian, the Vice President of the *Canadian Quilters Association*. Ellen has likely attended all the regional quilt conferences since 1987. Also, she enjoyed many of the guild retreats at Three Bars Ranch.

From 1992-94, Ellen was the guild's secretary and Alden Hess and then Wendy Litz (#055) were President. During those two years guild members made a "Daffodil Quilt" to be raffled by the local Cancer Society in memory of local nurse, Chris Ferrier. The funds for the quilt came from the family as a thank-you for hand-quilting a quilt that Chris had started for her young daughter. Ellen was the guild's Librarian from 1994-96 and again from 1999 - 2000. She created the first catalogue of the books, patterns and other resources that members could borrow like hand-quilting stencils. She was part of the 'raffle quilt committee' twice. The first time in 1998-99, for the "Tulip Quilt" with Jeanette Oddy and Betty Wardle (#050), and then again in 2003-4 for the "Thistle Quilt" with Erika Schulz (#028), Susan Alexander, and Heather McKay. She helped hand-quit all the guild quilts through the years and for many years after she retired, Ellen was one of the Tuesday Morning Hand-Quilters.

In recent years Ellen has been a key contributor to the Community Quilts donations. She joined the "Worker Bee Wednesday" group at its start in 2016 (#046). She was part of the "cutter cast" for the *Peak Freak T-shirts Quilt* the group made as a fundraiser for the *Fisher Peak Performing Artists Society*¹. Ellen is precise when cutting the various patches for a quilt block; she could not abide being an $\frac{1}{8}$ " of an inch off. Her other contribution is in the specialty quilts that she makes for care home residents with dementia. Ellen initiated adding "reminiscence quilts" and "fidget quilts" to the guild's donations. Reminiscence quilts are lap size made of "conversational prints" - those with common items like watering cans or strawberries and scenes - that might trigger a memory. The fidget quilts are smaller quilts with zippers, buttons, empty spools that a person can "fidget" to reduce tension, or for sensory input.

¹ See eknow.ca "Quilters re-invent Peak Freak T-shirts" - Barry Coulter/Mar 22, 2019

Ellen showed a wide array of quilts at her trunk show in 2022. One she made for her son was from “Crown Royal” bags! Another was a vintage piece made by her grandmother from men’s suits. She is seen in the guild’s photo albums at many workshops starting with the “Amish Roman Strip Wallhanging” in 1987 with Joan Hodgeboom (Quilt Gallery, Kalispell, MN) and a “Bargello - Around the Twist” taught by Judy Burley (Beaver Valley) in 1991. Two favourite wall-hangings that have pride of place in her home are “Heavens Above”² from a workshop with Lorraine Stangness (Strathmore, AB) in 2001 and her *Colorado Star Logcabin* (#096) taught by Mary Lindquist in 2004. Ellen gives a lot of ‘comfort quilts’ to friends, relatives, and friends of friends. She made the “Shroud Gift” for Kootenay Village and has donated a *Quilt of Valour*.

Ellen’s quilting space in her large log home is now a ‘bedroom’ on the main floor with a walk-in closet and plenty of shelving, plus a long cutting bench and pressing surface under the window. Everything is neatly organized. A lot of her stash was purchased and a lot she ‘inherited’. Her machine is a *Janome Horizon* with a built in walking foot, which makes machine quilting easier. She has also switched to putting the binding on totally by machine. It’s rare that Ellen sent a quilt out to be longarm quilted - she likes to make her quilts completely from start to finish and still prefers to complete one piece before moving on. She still pre-washes all the fabrics she will use.

The highest complement she has received was from a six-month old baby who would not put down the quilt she made for him. No one could pry it from his grip.

Quiltmaker	Ellen Joyce Stapleton (nee Morgan)
Date and place of Birth	April 26, 1940 (Twin girls) Indian Head, Saskatchewan
Father Occupation Birthplace	Thomas Buckley Morgan Armed Forces (WWII), Farmer England (1900)
Mother Occupation Birthplace	Jean Leone Morgan (nee Munn) Housewife Saskatchewan (1915)
Date and place of Marriage	October 8, 1964 Cranbrook, BC
Date and place of Death	June 18, 2025 Cranbrook, BC
Spouse Occupation	George Woodrow Stapleton Logger, Truck Driver
Quiltmaker’s Occupation	Medical Laboratory Technician
Children	1 daughter, 1 son
Education of Quiltmaker	Laboratory Technician Diploma, Regina College, Regina, SK

² Pattern by Lorraine Stangness in “Heavens Above”, Boyd Publishing; 1992

Where quiltmaker lived	Indian Head, SK; Queen Charlotte Island, BC; Vancouver, BC; Regina, SK; Saskatoon, SK; Trail, BC; Cranbrook, BC.
Ethnic/ancestry background	English

CQG#092 - *Stained Glass Poinsettias*

Quiltmaker/Owner: Ellen Stapleton

This is one of Ellen's favourite Christmas pieces. She thinks she bought the fabric at Shannon's Fabrics. She remembers she was working and would quilt upstairs in the evening. Ellen worked as a 'lab tech' for 48 years starting at St. Eugene Hospital and moving to the new, East Kootenay Regional Hospital when it opened in 1969.

At the time her sewing machine was a *Janome My Excell 23x*. Ellen started the "Poinsettia" stained glass pattern at a guild workshop, while other members made more spring floral patterns. The workshop was taught by Joan Hodgeboom of the Quilt Gallery, Kalispell, MN.

Pattern	<i>Poinsettias</i> by Cathy Robiscoe, "Spectral Designs", Bozeman, MT: 1993
Subject	Stained glass window, Poinsettia
Date	Specific date: 1995
Size	L 34" x W 23"
Overall style	Finished Wall Hanging Realistic, Art Medallion
Block	Layout - Pictorial, Medallion L 29½" x W 18½" Rectangle
Border/frame	W 2", straight, one fabric, Colour: red Motif: geometric
Edge finishing	Binding: W ¾", straight, machine front/hand back
Batting	Unknown, low loft
Top fabric	Cotton, plain weave Motif: plain/solid Feature colour: black
Top piecing	Machine piecing Freezer paper templates Appliquéd

Appliquéd	Feature - realistic (Poinsettia and stained glass frame) Raw edge/Machine stitched Decorative Stitch (zigzag), Machine Feature fabric: cotton, plain weave, metallic Feature colours: red, green, purple, mint, gold Motif: plain/solid, leaves
Backing	One fabric, cotton, plain weave Colour: black Motif: plain/solid
Quilting	Domestic machine Thread: black cotton Patterns: in-the-ditch
Condition	Good

CQG#093 - *Memory Quilt for Jean Morgan*

Quiltmaker: Ellen Stapleton and Helen Tempel
Owner: Ellen Stapleton

Ellen and her twin sister Helen made this picture quilt for their mother Jean Morgan - to hang on her wall so she could easily see the pictures of her children and grandchildren. Jean's family holds the centre aisle, Ellen's family is on the right (facing the quilt) and Helen's on the left. The family members all signed the label.

Ellen printed all the pictures onto fabric using the bubble-jet method (see FN2 under CQG#104). Then in their yearly family get-together, the twins created the top and Ellen quilted it by machine.

Pattern	Picture memory quilt designed by the quiltmakers
Subject	Family photographs
Date	Specific date: July 31, 2000
Size	L 58" x W 47¼"
Overall style	Finished Wall Hanging Realistic Sash and block Non-traditional (pictures)
Block	Block layout, plain sashing spacing Number of blocks: 21 Block 1: L 9 1/4" x W 9 1/4", square, Number: 19 Block 2: L 9 1/4" x W 4 3/4", rectangle, Number: 2 Photographs on fabric

Sashing	W 1¼" and. W ¾", plain, one fabric, straight Colour: navy
Border	W 2¾", one fabric, straight
Edge finishing	Fold Over Binding, W ½" (backing brought to the front), straight, square corners
Batting	Polyester, low loft
Top fabric	Poly cotton, plain weave Colour: white, navy Motif: plain/solid
Top piecing method	Machine piecing
Embellishments	Photo transfer (bubble jet) Hanging tabs
Backing	One fabric, poly cotton, plain weave Feature colour: blue Motif: geometric
Quilting	Domestic machine Thread: poly cotton, white and navy Pattern: outline, cable
Condition	Good
Label	Hand printed on Muslin <i>Joan Morgan</i> <i>Happy 85th Birthday</i> <i>July 30, 2000</i> <i>Love from your children, grandchildren and great grandchildren</i> <i>[signatures] Ellen, George, Helen, Barry, John, Rhamona, Marlon, Stacey, Debbie, Gil, Jesse, Gillian, Jason, Keon (sp), Baby Taylor, Tyler,</i>

CQG#094 - *Trip Around the World*
Quiltmaker/Owner: Ellen Stapleton

Ellen had this quilt top tucked away for a lot of years. She made the top “from start to finish” in 1982 - she preferred to make a top completely without breaking to do some other pattern. Ellen was a hand-quilter, so tops were made in quick order, but the quilting took time. In 2012, she discovered the top still unfinished and had it machine quilted by Debbie Donnan at Sew Creative Chalet in Kimberley. It’s one that she’s been keeping for good as so many quilters do.

Pattern	Common name <i>Around the World</i> . Concentric diamond layout
Date	Pieced 1982, Quilted 2012

Size	L 85½" x W 98"
Overall style	Finished quilt One patch (square)
Block	Patch: L 3¾" x W 3¾", square Patch Spacing: side-by-side Number of patches: 750 Brackman #2286a (Trip Around the World)
Edge finishing	Binding: ¾", straight, machine front/hand back
Batting	80/20, low loft
Top fabric	Cotton, plain weave Feature colours: burgundy, multi, teal, blue, green, white Motif: Plain/solid, flowers, geometric, leaf, floral
Top piecing method	Machine piecing
Backing	One fabric, cotton, plain weave Feature colour: Teal Motif: geometric
Quilting	Mid/Longarm machine Thread: cotton, teal variegated Pattern: all over design, floral
Condition	Unused
Label	<i>Trip Around the World</i> <i>Pieced 1982, Quilted 2012</i> <i>Ellen Stapleton</i>

CQG#095 - *Grandmother's Butterflies*

Quiltmaker: Hannah Rintoul (Ellen Stapleton's maternal grandmother)

Quiltmaker	Hannah Munn (nee Rintoul)
Date and place of Birth	August 31, 1875 Shelburne, Ontario
Father Occupation Birthplace	James Rintoul Farmer St. George, ON
Mother Occupation Birthplace	Margaret Jane Harley Housewife Ontario
Date and place of Death	January 6, 1969

Date and place of Marriage	August 1, 1899 Gladstone, ON
Spouse Occupation	Thomas Munn Dray Business
Quiltmaker occupation	Housewife
Children	daughters 2, sons 2
Where quiltmaker lived	Portage la Prairie, MN; Shelburne, ON; Indian Head, SK.
Ethnic/ancestry background	Scottish

Grandmother's Butterflies - CQG#095

Quiltmaker: Mrs Hannah Munn

Owner: Ellen Stapleton (granddaughter)

This quilt was made by Ellen's maternal grandmother, Hannah Munn. She lived in smaller communities in central Canada all her life. Making quilts for home use would have been the norm for her generation. The fabrics were bought from a fabric factory or garment making business that advertised fabric boxes for sale through the local paper. The butterfly motifs use small pieces of 60 different "calico themed" prints. Hannah left 19 unfinished *Dresden Plate* appliqués that feature the same fabrics and some of the uncut 6" patches. For these she used a cardboard template to shape the blades. Her sewing shows that she used a precise scant $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam to join the 20 blades.

Hannah made the *Butterfly Quilt* sometime around 1940. She used her treadle sewing machine to piece and machine appliquéd the blocks.

Pattern	Butterfly appliquéd possibly a pattern of "Laura Wheeler" sold through a local newspaper circa ~1930 OR Grandmother Clark's Patchwork Quilt Design, circa ~1930
Subject	Resting Butterflies
Date	Probably 1930-1949
Size	L 82" x W 68 $\frac{3}{4}$ "
Overall Style	Finished quilt Sash and block Appliquéd (realistic) Scrappy
Block	Appliquéd block L 10" x W 10", square Spacing: plain sashing Number of blocks: 30

Sashing	Plain W 3", one fabric Feature fabric: green print with tiny maple leaf motif
Border/Frame	W 3", straight, one fabric Colour: green print (same as sashing)
Edge finishing	Binding: W $\frac{3}{8}$ ", straight, Machine front/hand back, square corners
Batting	Unknown - possibly wool
Top fabric	Cotton, plain weave Feature colour: white, green Motif: plain/solid, maple leaves (sashing/border)
Top piecing method	Machine piecing Appliquéd
Appliquéd	Motif: resting butterfly Method: turned edge, top stitched Cotton/plain weave fabric, 60 different fabrics Fabric Motif: calico themed, flowers, geometric, polka dots Featured colours: multi (scrappy), calico tones, black
Embellishment	Embroidery, stitches: stem, satin (eyes, antenna) Embroidery floss
Backing	Two pieces seamed. cotton, plain weave Featured colours: green (Motif: leaves) - same as sashing fabric.
Quilting	Hand-quilting, 6 stitches/inch Patterns: cables, outline/in-the-ditch around butterfly motif Thread: cotton, white
Condition	Used (has been laundered), a few stains