

individualised with printed images, piecing or appliqué, perhaps mirroring the style of the front. Most are generally appliquéd to the lower right or left-hand corner on the back of the quilt; however, this means they can also be unpicked quickly, without damaging the quilt or leaving any trace. Attaching the label with fusible webbing is one way of overcoming this problem, but due care must be taken when pressing it to the quilt backing.

The increase in the theft of quilts in recent times has added a whole new dimension to the labelling issue, as it's very simple to remove a label, leaving no proof of ownership. Theft can occur anywhere and at any time, and thieves don't necessarily target only well-known quilters. While many instances are purely opportunistic, it's good to get into the practice of making it more difficult to unpick the identifying label in the first place. One method is to sew it into the seam when you attach the binding, leaving only two edges to appliqué. If a thief simply cuts the label off, there would be a fragment of the label fabric under the binding edge, but a canny operator would unpick that portion of the binding, remove the label in its entirety then sew the binding back in place. If you piece the back of the quilt, you can incorporate the label or at least include a lighter-value fabric upon which information can be written at a later date. While this cannot be removed easily, it does come with its own problems as some of the details you might want to put on a label, such as the completion date, aren't known until the very end. Writing details on the quilt after it's finished could result in an accident with the permanent pen, exacerbated by the batting and quilting lines. Quilting through the label, however, remains one of the most secure ways of identifying a quilt.

How you label a quilt and what wording you include is probably determined by its purpose. For example, if it's a gift, you may only want to mention the maker, who it's for and the occasion. This information could easily be prepared on a label and attached before the quilting is done. Quilts that you keep – especially any that are exhibited – take to classes and so



on, have a greater risk of both accidental loss and opportunistic theft. Some methods to add identifying features to a quilt include incorporating your initials and a date in the quilting in some inconspicuous place, or sewing an identifying mark into the binding itself, which is then hidden when it's slip-stitched at the back. These methods are good to identify a quilt if it's relocated. When a quilt is a present or a 'keeper', it's a good idea to include the maker's full name, street address, state and country. Including the materials used and washing and quilt-care instructions are also handy.

Another good idea is to document the steps when making each quilt, both photographically and in writing. This serves the dual purpose of identifying it and also proving ownership. Documentation should include sketches if it is an original design, fabric swatches and receipts for the purchase of any materials, as well as photos of the work in progress. Not only does this provide a fairly watertight case for ownership, it also makes a wonderfully detailed story of the quilt itself. Even if it's given away, this

can be kept as an important record of the journey. In later years, the story of the quilt will provide family and friends with the best bequest from the quiltmaker. It is also important to include ideas of the direction you want the work-in-progress to take – having helped to resolve the accumulated patchwork stash of a couple of friends over the years, there is an added element of sadness when you're not sure how the person wanted a particular project finished.

In short, by jotting down your project ideas, adding swatches of the fabrics used, and taking the odd photograph throughout the process, you can be assured that you have provided every means possible to tell the story of your quilt. If you do have to put it to one side for an extended period of time, these notes can serve to reacquaint you with all the preparations, hopes and dreams you had for it.

*For more information, visit the Lost Quilt Come Home website: [www.lostquilt.com](http://www.lostquilt.com)  
Further reading: *A Treasury of Quilt Labels* by Susan McKelvey. ❖*