

Great British Quilter Podcast

Episode 1 - Meet Jo Avery

Sarah: Hello and welcome to the Great British Quilter podcast. I'm Sarah Ashford, and as a modern quilter and founder of the Great British Quilter Instagram challenge, I've spent the last three years galvanizing and championing British quilters and the quilting industry. In this series, I speak to British quilt designers, fabric companies, publishers, and shop owners to discover their behind the scenes stories and to discuss what it means to be a part of the quilting community today. Enormous thanks go to our sponsors, Bernina, the choice of the enthusiastic quilter worldwide, and to Aurifil. With their help we've been able to bring this inspiring podcast to you.

Sarah: I'm so excited to introduce my first guest, quilter extraordinaire Jo Avery. Jo has been sewing and quilting since she was a child and began writing her blog, myBearpaw, a decade ago. Her love of intricate techniques such as needle turn, applique, and embroidery, combined with a passion for colorful improv piecing, allows her to embrace both traditional and modern aesthetics.

Sarah: She's is a regular contributor to a number of quilt publications and her first solo book will be published by Stash in early 2020. Jo enjoys inspiring others through her studio workshops in Edinburgh and the annual sewing retreats she organises. She is also an Aurifil designer, with two collections available. For this interview, I flew up to Edinburgh and met with Jo on her beautiful small holding on the outskirts of Edinburgh. We spoke about Jo's journey into quilting, her distinctive style, and what inspires her. Jo also talked about events that she organises, the Thread House retreat and The Stitch Gathering, as well as her brand new book. Jo shares how she uses social media to connect with others and what it means to her to be a part of the British quilting industry. Finally, Jo shares some top tips which we hope you will find useful. I've had the pleasure of knowing Jo for about five years now and I'm so proud to call her my friend. I know that you will love listening to her story, her infectious laugh, and all the knowledge that she has to share.

Sarah: Welcome, Jo! Thank you so much for being my very first guest on the Great British Quilter podcast.

Jo: Thank you, Sarah. I'm really, really honoured that you'd ask me to be your first guest. It's wonderful. It's lovely to have you up here to do this podcast.

Sarah: I'm really excited to be in Edinburgh. Any excuse! So let's get started, at the beginning then. Can you tell us a little bit about how you got into quilting?

Jo: Well, I've always sewn and always made things. I can remember making my first little soft toy when I was six years old, it was a red squirrel, and my sister taught me how to do a backstitch. My sister Jane, who's also part of the Great British Quilter community now, since I've dragged her into it, she's quite a bit older than me, so she was my sewing teacher when I was little.

Jo: My mom taught me to knit. My sister taught me to sew. My sister used to do lots and lots of dressmaking, and when I go and stay with her, she lived in

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Nottingham and I was in London, she would save all the toy patterns from her women's weekly magazines, the sewing magazines that had dressmaking patterns, they'd always have a little toy pattern or something. So she'd save those up for me and saved me all her scraps, and I'd go and stay with her in the summer holidays and I'd make all these toys. It was always a nice communal activity between me and my sister. Then when I was 10 years old, Jane fell pregnant with her first child, and she started to do a hexie, what we now call English paper piecing, but was then just called patchwork.

Jo: She started to make her a quilt for her new baby, and of course, I wanted to do it as well. So I got Jane to teach me how to do it. I started to make hexies, and I made a little clutch bag for my mom, which I don't know what's happened actually. I'd love to see it now, because it was my first bit of patchwork. Then I didn't really do any more patchwork after that. Nor did Jane. I kept sewing til I was about 14 and then I discovered boys. So I stopped sewing completely and making things and just had fun for many years. Then I met my husband, and moved in with him, and immediately had this urge to nest. I didn't really know that's what I was doing, but I just had this urge to go to John Lewis and buy some hexagon templates.

Jo: I bought some metal hexagon templates and an embroidery hoop. Didn't really know what I was dealing with either of them. I didn't actually use the embroidery hoop for awhile, but I started to just get ahold of some remnants, obviously must've bought some fabric as well. I used to go to Liberty and buy remnants and cut up old shirts and things. I started to make this hexagon patchwork. I didn't really know anything about quilting. I don't think I'd even seen a quilt actually. Anyway, so a few years later I turned this into a quilt top, and by now we'd moved up to the Scottish borders, and I didn't know what to do with it. I had a friend there, who said, oh, I'm in a quilt group. Come along to our quilt group. We'll help you. So I went along and they did tell me how to make it into a quilt, which was really, really helpful.

Jo: But they also introduced me to a rotary cutter, and a mat, and to strip piecing, and the whole world of quilting. I was really, really hooked from then on.

Sarah: You suddenly realise, don't you, that all of these tools and gadgets make it so much easier.

Jo: Well, yeah.

Sarah: Much more accessible.

Jo: I didn't know you could do it fast. I thought that all patchwork was just hexagons. I think a lot of people did, because in the '70s there was just hexagons and that was it really. Then the rotor cutter was pretty new then. Because this was the early 1990s, so it was a revelation.

Sarah: Would you say you have a particular style of quilting now?

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- Jo: Well, I think because I have been quilting for so long really, and I went on and off, I didn't quilt continually.
- Jo: I had a big burst of passion then, when my kids were little in the '90s, and there wasn't really any styles then, there was just quilting. There also wasn't a lot of patterns then, because there just wasn't all the stuff that was available now, wasn't really available, quilting cottons. So you would look at old quilts and you would just work out how to make them. That's still really what I do. I do like traditional quilting. But then when I got really inspired back into quilting, really with modern quilting, about a decade ago when I discovered people like Denise Schmidt, and I was like, Oh wow, I'd never thought about doing that with it. I just love that aesthetic. So I do think that I'm somewhere between modern and traditional. Sometimes I do very modern quilts, but I'm probably happier putting a modern twist on a traditional pattern and giving it my own spin.
- Jo: I like to try and take traditional patterns and make them easier to make. But at the same time, I don't like to make really easy quilts. I like to put in some details, so I like to add in applique and some hand work as well, or hand stitching on them. So I like to put the effort into quilting, definitely. Some more simple patterns, I want to make them more complicated, and some more complicated patterns, I want to make more simple. I've got a very low boredom threshold, so I couldn't just stick to one style anyway. I would want to try something new all the time.
- Sarah: You do bridge that gap, don't you? Because you work for publications that are more traditional but also the modern ones as well. So it's a really lovely hybrid I guess, of both camps.
- Jo: Foot in both camps. That's a way of hopefully always staying in employment, as far as I'm concerned. I tried to deliberately give myself as many options as possible.
- Sarah: You said you were very much inspired by Denyse Schmidt. Who else, and what else inspires you?
- Jo: Well, I'm inspired by lots of other quilters and they're beautiful patterns. Instagram. I've never been one for Pinterest really. I've never bought into that at all. So my inspiration really comes from Instagram, and also blogs. Quite often, I see a quilt on there and think, Oh, I absolutely love that. But I'll never want to make that quilt. I'll want to take some inspiration from it, whether it's the colors or the shape, but then build my own quilt around it. It's the same with old traditional quilts. I never would make anything exactly like anybody else.
- Jo: I can't actually follow patterns. I always have to do my own thing. I'm incapable of it, which is why I write my own. So I'm inspired by lots of other quilts I have. I love color. Just seeing any groups of colors together can really inspire me. I'm inspired by looking at my fabric stash and just seeing a lot of fun. A lot of what inspires me is just the fabric really. I have a thing I often say that I think we

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quilt because we need to justify buying fabric really. We love the fabric, we buy the fabric, and then we've got to do something with it, so that we can buy some more. So we cut it up and sew it back together again.

- Jo: So quite often just some lovely fabric in my stash. I must use this, what can I do with it? Then also I'm very much inspired by nature. Anyone that knows my work will know, I do love a leaf or a tendril. The shape of a leaf comes up a lot in applique, in embroidery. Also in quilt patterns, and flowers, and any sort of nature. I'm surrounded by nature here where we live. Wildlife, birds and things like that. Yes. Shapes of nature and shapes from quilts really. It's all about the shape and the color.
- Sarah: Lovely. Amazing. Your work's really distinctive and beautiful, and like you say it does have that element of nature within it so often.
- Jo: Thank you.
- Sarah: Can you tell us a little bit about your sewing space?
- Jo: It's very messy, and Sarah has been in it recently, because she's staying with me. In fact she did say to me, because, really, my desk is on the dining table, and that's where my laptop and all my notes are. She says, do you do not have a desk in your sewing room you can use, Jo? I said, Well, I do have one, but you can't actually see it because it's full of stuff. I've got a quite a big sewing room, which is one of our spare bedrooms here. We moved to this house nearly nine years ago now, and it coincided with both my boys growing up and flying the nest. Which is great because it means I've got a whole room I haven't had to give over to a child that I can have as a sewing room.
- Jo: It's got two smallish dining tables next to each other. They were both dining tables previously. One full of absolute rubbish, which you can't, well books, paper, and magazines, which is supposed to be the desk area, which you can't see. The other being the cutting area, which I have to keep clear, because I have to work there. Every time I finish piecing and I've got to start quilting, I have to clear that area because that's where the quilts all going to be spread out while I free motion quilt it. Then my actual sewing machine is set into a table that my husband's built with me, which is really quite low because, I think one of the problems with sewing machines is, most of us put them on top of a table, like a dining table or a work table, and there it's just too high.
- Jo: Especially if you quilt at home, you really need it to be low. So it's really low, and my chairs really low, and I used to have a lot problems with my shoulder and neck before I did this, and now I have no problems at all. If you're going to do a lot of sewing, you really need to think about lowing your sewing machine somehow.
- Sarah: That's really useful advice, isn't it? It's definitely a barrier to quilting your own quilts.

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- Jo: Yes, yes. Well, I know we're not doing tips now, but one of the things people often ask me about, because I free motion quilt all my quilts myself, I don't have a long arm, and they'll often say, but can you get the quilts through the throat of the machine? I always say, that is not your issue, because really when you scrunch up a quilt, it'll fit in your palm of your hand.
- Jo: You will easily get it in the throat of machine. When you free motion quilting, you don't roll your quilt at all. What you need is loads of space around you. So I clear one of these dining room tables off, and then I have my sewing machine butting up against it in this lower down table. I also get my ironing board, put that low at the same height as the sewing machine there, and put that at the back. It just gives me all this space around the machine to prop the quilt up on, because that's the thing. It's not about space in the machine, it's space around.
- Sarah: That's what you need, isn't it? To support that quilt.
- Jo: To support it. Yeah, absolutely. [crosstalk 00:13:05] Mustn't have it being dragged down anywhere. So you need lots of space around.
- Jo: Then I also have a sofa bed in the sewing room, which until Sarah came, you couldn't see, but I managed to find some storage space and stuff a load of stuff in there so she can actually, didn't think she's going to hyperventilate when she came into the room. Then all of my fabric stash is in these Ikea stacking boxes. So they're shallow, clear, plastic, Ikea stacking boxes. My husband, who, as you'll know I suppose, he's incredibly handy and can make me anything. I know not everybody has a husband like this. But Jonathan is amazing, and he's made me these trollies. I've got three of them, and they take two of the stacking boxes each, and then they stack right on top. So I think I've got basically six towers of stacking boxes and I can pull the trollies out when I'm really doing fabric pulls and stack between them.
- Jo: Then, when I'm really running out of space, I can just buy more Ikea boxes and keep stacking them higher and higher. They all live in the corner of the room and they can be pulled out. Then there's various other superfluous storage things in there. I really need to declutter badly.
- Sarah: Decluttering is a great opportunity to realise what you've got, actually, isn't it?
- Jo: Yeah. I'm not a hoarder. I do try and do it. It's just I've been really, really busy at the moment. That's the thing that gets put aside. When I've got time, I'm going to chuck so much stuff out. So yeah, I will do it.
- Sarah: Have a de-stash.
- Jo: Yes. Well the thing is I don't tend to ever do those de-stash's because I've got a shop. So de-stash happens at the shop, and a lot of stuff goes to the shop. I've got a wonderful assistant who's the manager of the shop, Jane, who I just cannot live without basically. Jane takes all my scraps and turns them into little scrap packs, turns them into all sorts of things. So I take a lot of stuff in

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there and then it gets re modelled and re sold, or it gets given away, because sometimes you just want to share the love.

Sarah: That's it. It's about giving new life and new homes to things.

Jo: Well, as a designer, you do get a lot of fabric given to you to make stuff with. So I do like to give away stuff when I've got it as well. Share it around.

Sarah: Can you tell us a little bit about the retreats that you run? You're very busy with those.

Jo: Yes. I now have three, which slightly wondering whether that's too much. So I started The Stitch Gathering retreat, and it's actually just about to have its seventh, not just about, but later this year in October, it will be it's seventh event. So that it started in ...

Sarah: Time is flying.

Jo: I know. 2013. So I was very much inspired by the Fat Quarterly retreats, which were started by the Fat Quarterly group of various quilters, including Lynn Goldsworthy and Katie Jones, that happened in London. In fact, that's where Sarah and I met. We met at the second one, didn't we?

Sarah: We did. Yes!

Jo: I went to the first one, I thought, what a great idea. But there was hardly anyone that could afford to come down from Scotland to go to it, because it was July and it was central London.

Jo: So I thought, well, why don't I do just a one day one in Scotland? The first one, I had an exhibition as well, an exhibition of Scottish modern quilts. I had a much bigger shop then. I had lots of space and we did it during the festival, Edinburgh Festival, so we could be a fringe venue. It's a good way of promoting the shop. Then the culmination of this exhibition was this retreat day, called The Stitch Gathering. I think we had about 60, about 60 quilters that first one and it was very successful. So we've built up over the last few, six or seven years to having about eight ... There's 80 tickets get sold. Then obviously with the teachers and helpers, there's about 90 of us actually there on the day. This year has been the most successful ever as far as ticket sales.

Jo: They sold out after just two weeks, which is amazing. So thank you very much. It's a really great day and I keep adding, it's just one day but we keep adding stuff to it. So we started to do an evening meal on the Saturday before, because a lot of people are coming up from elsewhere, staying for the Saturday. So we'd go out for a meal. There's usually about 30 of us. Then I introduced a sort of Prosecco party at the shop on the afternoon, so there's lots going on.

Sarah: It's a fantastic weekend. I've been to many of them.

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- Jo: Sarah comes. I think you'd come to all of them if you could. If you get invited. Yes, and we've just announced the teachers, so I can say Sarah will be coming to teach you this year and she will be teaching two classes this year.
- Sarah: I am, yes. I shall be there.
- Jo: We just announced the teachers, and we'll announce a workshop soon, and it's really fun day. Then the other things I do is the Thread House retreats, which I run with my friend partner Karen Lewis. We started off with Lynn Goldsworthy as well, but she's just leaving Karen and I to do it now. The first one we did three years ago in Bristol, so that's in the winter, in January. It's a great time to go away when everyone's got the January blues, post-Christmas blues. So it's a nice time to go away, and have a retreat. We go to a place called Folly Farm near Bristol, which we have the whole run of the place. It's a really great place. It's like an eco farm, and it's got the various barns and buildings where we can have the classrooms.
- Jo: Then we all gather together. It's all catered, so they come and cook amazing food for us, and it's just great to have the run of this whole place of ourselves. That's about 45 quilters for the whole weekend, Friday lunchtime to Sunday lunchtime, and we will be having another one. I think we've announced the dates already for next January. The tickets will go on sale in June, so check out the website if you're interested. You can sign up for the newsletter. Then this year we brought in a summer retreat as well. This is a smaller one. There's just going to be about 25 of us, can be a bit more low key. We're not planning lots of classes, only going to be Karen and I teaching, and we're going to do a shared project that we haven't actually announced yet, but it's in the planning stages. A couple of week's time and we'll be sharing what we're going to be doing on that. It's in the Yorkshire Dales.
- Jo: Again, a similar place where we'll have the run of the place, a little bit smaller, and I'm really looking forward to that one because I'm going to have to drive down and bring a little pop up shop as well. Whereas Bristol I'll have to fly.
- Sarah: Fantastic. You're covering quite a lot of areas of the country, aren't you?
- Jo: Yes.
- Sarah: Between Edinburgh and Bristol and Yorkshire.
- Jo: Yeah, we pretty much are.
- Sarah: Absolutely.
- Jo: Yeah, they are fun to do.
- Sarah: What are you working on right now? You're always so busy and have so many things on the go.

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- Jo: Yeah. I'm super busy at the moment. I am doing a lot of magazine commissions, mainly for Today's Quilter, some for Love Patchwork and Quilting, and they're just starting to come in now. I had a bit of a break, because I was working on a book. So I didn't do anything for magazines for six or seven months and there's such a big lag period with with them.
- Jo: So I feel like I've been working all year but only now as the first issue coming out. So Today's Quilter is latest issue, which is out on Thursday, has got a new project for me, and then pretty much for the foreseeable future, it's going to be something in Today's Quilter and some in Love Patchwork and Quilting for awhile.
- Sarah: Going to be seeing a lot more of you.
- Jo: Going to be seeing a lot of ... Yeah. There's some amazing quilts coming upstairs. Sarah's seen a couple haven't you, recently?
- Sarah: I have seen a few sneak peeks, yeah.
- Jo: It sounds like I'm blowing my own trumpet there, but when I make a quilt, I'm often really in love with it. So I'm like, oh, this quilt's amazing. Sometimes not, but usually I'm like, yeah, I love the quilt. I go off them. Not all of them. But yeah, the [inaudible 00:20:39] just made of favourites.
- Sarah: You invest so much time in a quilt. You have to love them.
- Jo: Yeah. You have to fall in love with them. They're like your children, aren't they really?
- Sarah: They become very special and very precious. Because you know the work and the love that's gone into them.
- Jo: You've created it. Your creation. Yeah, you're right. It's a little bit of a love affair. Yeah.
- Sarah: How do you use social media to connect with other quilters?
- Jo: Well, we talked a bit about Instagram and it being a very inspiring place, but yes, it's a wonderful place to share. I do love Instagram. My two main places are Instagram and also my blog I write. The whole thing really started me, this whole career started on my blog, which is coming up to its 10th anniversary in June. So we'd be having a big giveaway, guys. So check the blog out in June, and my whole current career has come from that blog, so I've got a lot to thank it for.
- Jo: A lot of people have stopped writing their blogs and gone on to Instagram, and I know it is much easier and quicker on Instagram. But I still love that space to write my blog and I've never stopped writing it. I think the longest I have gone without writing a post is maybe three weeks, maybe [crosstalk 00:21:48] but I usually write something every week or at the most, 10 days. Not usually much

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more than that. But yeah, usually three or four blog posts a month, because I really like the space to properly tell a story. So every quilt I make will have its own blog post and I'll tell the story of that quilt. I like to take it around our Shangri-La farm where we live, and take lots of photos of it, and just make the most of it.

Jo: It's a little star of the show. It needs its own little story post. Yeah.

Sarah: That's so lovely because that is digital, that will be there forever.

Jo: Exactly, it's a wonderful archive. The 10 years of those blog posts, I can look back and, even though I don't put a lot of personal stuff on there, still enough there, when we moved here, various stuff about the kids at various points doing things, and there is enough there to make it almost like a bit of a diary, especially early on. It's really interesting. Even just if you look at really early posts and you see who left comments, and then you're like, oh my goodness. [crosstalk 00:22:49] It's somebody you know really well, or it's someone that you didn't even remember had ever left a comment all those years ago and that now you know from a completely different way.

Jo: That's really nice. So I love to do my blog posts because why I started to write the blog in the first post was sharing and communicating. I felt I was really working in isolation and none of my friends were really into sewing at all. I tried going back to quilt groups, but I really felt like they were not appreciating what I was doing. They weren't into modern quilting at all. Then when I discovered blogs, finally. Took me a while. I don't know why I never thought about looking for quilting on the Internet, but I never did for quite a while. I realised that this was exactly what I needed. I could share what I was doing, share my wisdom and experience, and just communicate with people, just communicate what I was interested in.

Sarah: I think it's that thing isn't it? You feel like you found your tribe in a way. You found people who get what you do.

Jo: That's an even better benefit that you have found this global community and real friends all over the world.

Sarah: More friends than you need in a way.

Jo: There's so many friends. In fact, a lot of them have ... I have time to keep up with my non quilting friends because there's so many. So that's been wonderful. Because you do work in isolation, but one of the things I love about Instagram is being able to get people's opinion and be able to get that instant feedback. You put something out and nobody reacts at all. All of a sudden you're like, well I don't think I'm going to make that into a... because nobody really ...

Jo: But other times you put something out and everyone goes crazy for it. You go, oh, I think this is going to be a good new quilt.

Sarah: I'm onto something.

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Jo: That is really valuable. Being able to get that immediate feedback of ideas. It saves you a lot of time, and ...

Sarah: From the people who know.

Jo: From your audience, exactly.

Sarah: Family members and real life friends.

Jo: They don't want to know anyway. Yes. So the feedback elements really good, but the sharing element as well. Because obviously you're looking at other people's things, and I just think it's a really nice place. I've never had any trouble on there at all. I think we self police so well, if anyone's ripping someone else off or doing anything like that or someone's stolen your photos, somebody else will know and they'll get back to you.

Jo: I think that's brilliant. We're like little warrior's.

Sarah: Such a supportive community.

Jo: Yeah. Protecting our safe space. I think that's great. We can all rely on each other as well. It's wonderful.

Sarah: Definitely. That leads me on nicely to my next question actually. What does it mean to you to be part of the British quilting community?

Jo: Well, I think it's great to have this British quilting community. When I first started the blog, I couldn't find any other British blogs. In fact it was really when I finally found one, which was Marguerite, Adventures In Sailing and Quilting, if anyone remembers that. I happened to, not long after I started the blog and I really didn't know anybody and nobody was reading my blog. I'd just about discovered Flickr, which was a great way in, but I don't think I really knew how to use it.

Jo: But what I did find was the Bloggers Quilt Festival, which Amy's Creative Side started. I thought, oh, this is good thing. I'll join in this. I think it was only the second one she did. The next person that added a quilt after me, because they used to just all get added in chronologically, was Marguerite, and I looked at her profile. Oh my God, she's in the UK! She's in England! Through her, started to meet a few other British quilters and get involved in the swaps on Flickr, and eventually started to come through. People like Lynn Goldsworthy, she was a real galvaniser of the whole community ...

Sarah: Yeah, she was.

Jo: Started a Brit quilt group on Flickr, and we started to do some Brit quilt swaps. I think it was really nice to feel like we had that identity, our own identity.

Jo: Then I think what you've done with the Great British Quilters brought that all to Instagram as well. So yeah, I'm super proud to be part of the British quilting

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community. I think we've got a lot to give. We've got really, really talented quilters, and I think we've got a lot of individuality and originality in what we do. I think we went as a little tribe to QuiltCon this year, and I have to say, I think the British quilters are the party animals of the quilting world. Certainly I think, we were out there partying and taking part in everything Nashville has to offer.

Sarah: It was a good time.

Jo: We were the cool girls. Definitely!

Sarah: We'd like to offer some tips to the listeners, and I know that you have more tips than we have time for, but if you could narrow it down, just to one or two, what would you like to share?

Jo: Well, I know you were talking about, we've been talking about social media and I know you mentioned doing social media tips, so I did want to encourage people to go on Instagram if they haven't tried already. I know I come across lots of students who, they're a little bit afraid of it. They're afraid because they've heard bad stuff about social media on the news and things, and they also just can't find a way to actually fathom what everybody's talking about. All hashtags and how to use it.

Sarah: I think Instagram gets a bad rap quite often, doesn't it?

Jo: I don't think it gets quite as bad rap as Twitter. But yeah, I think it can. There's been stuff on the news about...the thing people don't understand is that you don't need to see any of that if you don't want to. You will just be able to follow the people you want to follow. So I would encourage people to have a go, and if they can't work out what on Earth they're doing, find somebody in your family. There'll be a child or a grandchild who will know what to do with it and will help you, or Google it. There is lots of Instagram websites out. They'll give you all sorts of information about how to work Instagram, how to do a Instagram story. Really quite idiot proof. I am not a very techie person, and I've had to pick it up as I go along, and I would say don't just stalk, just don't just go on there ...

Jo: Stalking isn't really a bad term in our world, but that did sound bad! But some people they go on, they get a profile just so they can see everybody else is doing, but they never get that great engagement. Or don't be afraid to share your photos, and don't be afraid to comment on other people's things. Everybody loves a comment or a like. Get involved, basically. Don't be afraid. Get stuck in.

Sarah: You don't have to share a lot of personal information if you don't want to.

Jo: You don't have share anything, you can put a false name on there.

Sarah: Don't have to put your face on there. You can have a quilt picture.

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- Jo: I would encourage people not to have a private account because I think that puts people off.
- Sarah: Defeats the object.
- Jo: Defeats the object. Just don't put anything, any personal information on, then you don't need to worry.
- Jo: Have a go. Get feet first in really. Then the other tip, this is really a general of organising and I'm not massively organised, but I found this really helpful. One of my students told me this, Barbara, so thank you Barbara. It's to use paper plates for organising all your cutting when you're working on a quilt.
- Sarah: So you mean actual paper plates that you would have at a party?
- Jo: Exactly. This is completely an inexpensive tool that you can just get them from the supermarket. When you're cutting up a quilt and you've got templates and you've got all the different pieces for blocks, what you do is you organise them with the paper plates. So you've got all the parts for certain block [inaudible 00:30:16] you put that on that paper plate. Then another paper plate on top, put the next one. You can get a big tower of paper plates with them all stacked and it's really good. You can write on the paper plates as well, if you need to make some notes about what happens to this one, you can write on paper plates. Then you can just keep reusing them over and over again. So it's a very inexpensive and practical little shelving system for the project you've got on the go at the moment to help you organise your cutting.
- Sarah: That's a really, really great tip.
- Jo: I think as well. I've been using it today, and I think it works really well.
- Sarah: Brilliant. Oh, well, thank you so much for coming on the show, Jo.
- Jo: It's been lovely!
- Sarah: It's been great to have you. I always enjoy chatting with you.
- Jo: Lovely to chat with you. I think this is a fantastic idea, Sarah, and I wish you lots of luck with it. I know some of the people that Sarah has got coming up ahead and it's going to be great fun for all you listening at home to listen to.
- Sarah: Thank you, Jo. Thanks again. It's been brilliant.
- Sarah: Thank you once again to our generous sponsors, Bernina, the choice of the enthusiastic quilter worldwide, and also to Aurifil. With their help, we've been able to bring this podcast to you and we thoroughly hope you've enjoyed it. If you have, we would love it if you would rate, review and subscribe to the Great British Quilter podcast. Please do tell your friends and spread the quilty love. Thank you.

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Episode 1 - Meet Jo Avery