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Images from top: Unknown quilters at Aberdare Technical College during the early 1930s. **Image courtesy of St Fagans: National History Museum**

Below: Gold satin, wholecloth dressing gown created by RIB students in the 1930s. Quilters' Guild of the British Isles

Quilting in the early 20th Century

During the first thirty years of the 20th Century quilting and patchwork declined. Although many people in the rural and mining towns of the North East of England and Wales still made quilts, the craft suffered from lost skills and competition from mass-manufactured quilts and coverlets.

In 1928 the Rural Industries Bureau (RIB) investigated the quilting industry and commissioned a very influential quilter and teacher called Mavis Fitzrandolph to report back on the state of the craft. She reported that many quilters would be able to sell their quilts and make a living again if they could afford to buy better materials and receive a better rate of pay for their work.

The RIB helped quilters in many rural areas to buy fabric, held exhibitions of their work, attracted interest from big companies and hotels and organised quilting classes. The demand for their high-quality work grew until 1939 when the Second World War broke out and many quilt clubs and classes disbanded.