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PRICE • TWO SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE

And so to BEGIN



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Needlework Development Series



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At the classroom shop Elizabeth and Olwen discuss ideas for dressing dolls, whilst Morag identifies the embroidery stitches which decorate the boy doll's costume.



AND SO TO BEGIN

IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL both boys and girls use fabric, needle and thread as a means of expressing ideas just as they also use paint, clay or any other medium. These craft activities are closely connected with other subjects. For example, needlework materials are bought and sold in the classroom shop; objects can be planned for definite purposes so that measurements must be made; fabric may be used for picture making as well as the more traditional paint and pastel.

Stories of other lands and other times suggest ideas for making dolls and these in turn excite interest in these lands, peoples and habits. Doll-making presents the problem of creating “in the round” and doll-dressing at first, may be just a matter of draping snippets of fabric or shaping pieces as they are fixed in position. The piece box will provide a rich background introducing a wide range of materials, just as the dressing-up box gives opportunities on a larger scale for experience in the selection and handling of materials, colours, patterns and textures. Later the children may make paper patterns for their dolls’ clothes—perhaps by the simple method of laying the doll on a piece of paper and cutting round the shape. The edges of the clothes will probably be left raw at first and later turned in to form a hem when the child feels the need for making a better finish. Doll-making can be related to the home through the making of a family of dolls or a group of children may combine to furnish a dolls’ house. Threads of many different kinds will be used for this very informal work.

Children will also want to make other objects, perhaps things to use or wear, which require more accurate planning, measuring and cutting; these will be constructed mainly from rectangular shapes. The first thread used in this very formal construction will possibly be a thick soft embroidery cotton, then *coton à broder*, and with both of these threads a short sturdy needle with a large eye should be used so that, from the beginning, the correct sewing rhythm is possible. Sewing cotton will come into use when the child is ready which may not be until she reaches the very top of the Primary School. Real clothes will be made only if it is possible for the child to see the job right through, which means that she must be able to do the planning, cutting, fixing and sewing for herself.

Techniques are learnt as a child needs them to solve some problem of construction or work out some idea of decoration. Creative experiment will go on together with the more utilitarian work, and for this the contents of the piece box will continue to be the best source of inspiration. That experiment and the acquisition of technical skill should go on side by side is essential in the development of any craft, whether the craftsman is a growing child or a mature student.



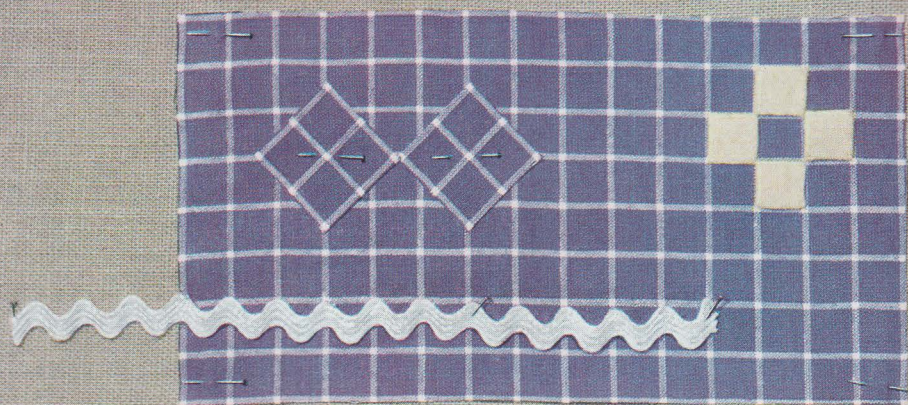
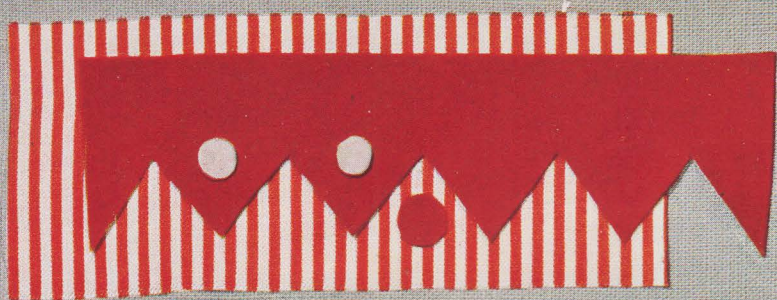
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A piece box decorated with cut paper motifs. The little boxes and a bottle are decorated to match and can be used to hold small precious things—ribbon, sequins, beads.



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Some of the fabrics contained in the piece box. These are kept pressed and ready for use.



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Different kinds of fabric suggest borders, patterns and motifs.



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The embroidery on the back of the waistcoat and bonnet can be seen in this illustration.





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A belt with a pocket, a waistcoat and a cap made from richly embroidered felt to wear with a striped cotton skirt and a crisp white blouse.

The blue apron which forms part of this costume is decorated with embroidery in white on the ties and round the pockets. Hat and shoes are made from felt.





A doll's head with plaits made from cotton thread. The features, and those of the other dolls, are embroidered.



Loops of rug wool used for a thick mop of bright red hair. This doll is made from felt.





Glossy brown raffia forms a neat plait which surrounds the face and continues in a coil at the back of the head.



This doll has a fringe and short thick hair made from strips of gold coloured felt.



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Father wears a coat of thick white cloth decorated with black braid and embroidery. His cap is made from astrakhan.

Mother wears a richly embroidered apron and bolero. Baby has an embroidered shawl and sleeps in a basket made from raffia.





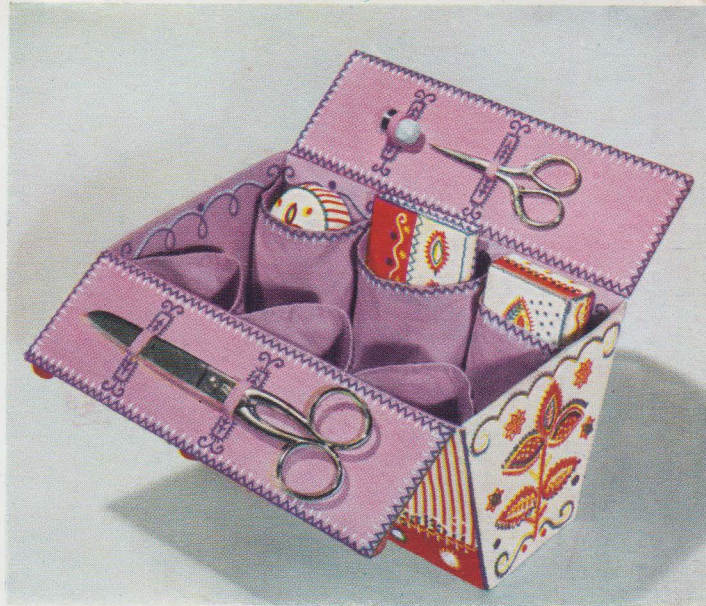
Here are some ways in which an embroideress can take care of her equipment. This is a simple case made from cotton fabric to hold a felt pin cushion, needlebook and scissors holder.

A drawstring sewing bag with a stiffened base decorated with bias binding and embroidery.



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Pockets inside the sewing box keep equipment neat and tidy. Scissors and thimble are ready to use.



A skilled embroideress made this precious embroidered box to hold a needlebook, a box for pins and a pin cushion to wear on the wrist.



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Morag selects embroidery cottons and Elizabeth, the shopkeeper, wearing a checked gingham apron, tells her the cost of these.

The wall pocket at the back holds samples of fabric which can be bought at the shop. Olwen, now in charge, cuts off a length of gingham which Morag has purchased. Elizabeth awaits her turn.

DRAPERY STORE

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