



Wednesday 9 September 2009

In this week's Midweek Moments, we meet the woman who invented that most essential item for sewers, the paper pattern. Our seven-week epic journey then wraps up with the introduction of electric sewing machines, and then, in the late 20th century, computerised machines.

You'll also get some background info on Blueberries tutor Carol Roberts in the weekly profile. Enjoy!

### Sew 'n' Sews Part 7

A brief and roughly stitched together history of the people who invented the sewing machine

#### **Ellen Curtis Demorest - paper pattern pioneer**



Although technically the paper pattern is a completely separate invention to the sewing machine, the two items work so well together that they have become inextricably linked, rather like sour cream and sweet chilli sauce.

History has it that Ellen Curtis Demorest, a wealthy American hat manufacturer and strong women's rights advocate, had her light bulb moment when she saw her maid cutting out a dress from left-over wrapping paper. Demorest cleverly devised a mathematical system that would print patterns in different sizes and in 1860 published the world's first pattern catalogue, with the impressive (and slightly pretentious) title of *Madame Demorest's Mirror of Fashions*.

Five short years later she had over 200 saleswomen in her employment across America and 30 distribution agencies. The clanger to this inspiring success story however, is that Demorest failed to patent her invention. Another inventor, Ebenezer Butterick, beat her to it, spawning an empire of his own which still dominates the paper pattern industry to this day. Poor Mrs Demorest must have felt like eating her own hat!

The other major advance in sewing machine technology was the advent of electricity. Up until this breakthrough, sewing machines had been powered by steam, water, clockwork or the ever-reliable foot treadle, which was hard work on the ankle. It was Singer Sewing Co. that developed the world's first electric machines in 1889, although with the motor strapped onto the side of the machine, it was a rather clumsy-looking model. As the popularity of electric machines increased, the motor was eventually built into the casing.

*continues next page...*

Now, in the early twenty-first century, sewing machines are largely computerized and some are so advanced they can scan, duplicate and store patterns, maintain themselves and speak to the operator if there's a problem. Of course, the next important step is for them to be able to make you a cup of tea and a sandwich.

So next time you fire up your sewing machine, spare a thought for the many dramas, legal wrangles, bankruptcies, disappointments and triumphs of the men and women who each played a hand in the machine's invention – history's sew 'n' sews.

Fabric Sale continues



From Tuesday 1st to Saturday 12th September  
9:30am to 4:30pm each day  
(excluding Sunday 6th September)

There is a massive 25% off all Patchwork Fabric, including pre-cut fabric packs, such as Jelly Rolls, Layer Cakes etc.

This sale is available instore and from our website [www.blueberries.net.au](http://www.blueberries.net.au)

If purchasing from the website, enter discount code: 091267.

[Click here to view our Fabrics online.](#)

Every effort will be made to keep our website up to date, however some fabrics may sell out.

Sorry no rainchecks.

*The discount does not apply for fabric ranges "coming soon", block of the months and QuiltAid.*

Don't forget to check out the fabrics already on special, the 25% discount applies to these already reduced fabrics, [click here to be taken to the Specials page.](#)

*continues next page...*

Shop: 4C Amy Close WYONG NSW 2259 | Post: PO Box 686 WYONG NSW 2259  
Phone: 02 4355 4400 | Fax: 02 4355 4411  
Email: [enquiries@blueberries.net.au](mailto:enquiries@blueberries.net.au) | Internet: [www.blueberries.net.au](http://www.blueberries.net.au)

## Tutor Profile on Carol Roberts

### From the “rag trade”



It may sound like a handy euphemism for Cinderella’s fashion sense before the prince married her, but this time-honoured description of all things fabric and sewing-related, is how Blueberries tutor Carol Roberts describes her sewing background.

“I’ve been involved in textiles for most of my life,” she admits. “For me it’s pretty much a case of genetics. My Nan was a sewer and could turn her hand to most things and my mum

always did needlework and made clothes as well.”

As well as her “rag trade” background, Carol has also dabbled in many other creative outlets, with and without the use of needles, such as leatherwork, tapestry and pottery. “I’ve pretty much done the whole gamut,” she says.

It was through her own pattern design business, Cherry Pie Designs, that she first met Blueberries co-owner Jackie and gradually forged a friendship based as much on their diverse range of mutual interests as on their sewing connection. Now many of Carol’s patterns can be found in Blueberries and she enjoys her role of tutor.

“I enjoy guiding and empowering other people to make their own creative decisions,” she says.

No doubt her humble “rag trade” beginnings have provided a wealth of knowledge and experience, which is now being shared with Blueberries customers.

To view Carol's designs go to [www.cherrypiedesigns.com](http://www.cherrypiedesigns.com)

***Carol tutors the Sit 'n' Sew class every Tuesday, it runs from 9:30am - 3:30pm and cost \$15. Be sure to join one of these classes, just come along, no booking is required.***

Til next week!

The Blueberries Team.