

Wednesday 16 September 2009

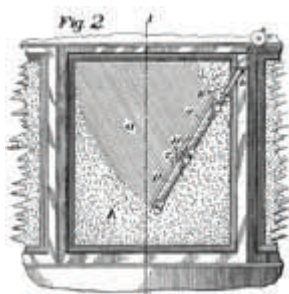
We received so much positive feedback over the Sew 'n' sews column, which finished last week, that we've decided to follow up with a short run of everyday items that were invented by women. Admittedly these aren't sewing-related, but the inventions these gals came up with are such an entrenched part of everyday life, that you're sure to get a bit of a kick out of the fact that they were invented by women, and mostly in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, not the most empowering times for females in the first place. This week, we kick off with Mary Anderson and her brainwave of windshield wipers for cars. Enjoy.

Mothers of invention

Mary Anderson – inventor of windshield wipers



Mary Anderson



Windshield
Wiper Diagram

In the early years of the twentieth century, motor cars were more of a strange new curiosity than the practical and widespread means of transportation they would eventually become. Very early models still had a lot of impracticalities, such as hand-cranking to get the engine started, and frequent build-up of snow and ice on the windscreen during inclement weather.

That is, until 1903 when Alabama housewife Mary Anderson took a short holiday to New York City. Practical and inquisitive, Anderson noticed that during bad weather, drivers of streetcars had to constantly stop their vehicles, get out and manually clear snow and droplets of rain from the outside of the windscreen. That got Anderson thinking that there must be an easier way of doing it.

There was, of course, and in 1905, Anderson was issued a patent for the world's first windshield wipers. Her prototype consisted of a swinging arm with a rubber blade attached to it that could be operated by the driver from inside the vehicle and would sweep across the surface of the glass, thus clearing build-up of snow and rain. It was so simple, it was a wonder no-one had thought of it before.

Initially, many people were scornful of Anderson's invention and she became the subject of much ridicule. However, she who laughs last, laughs longest. By 1916, windshield wipers were standard issue on all American cars and today, it's almost impossible to drive in the rain without them. Incidentally, the world's first *electric* windshield wipers were patented in 1917, also by a woman - Charlotte Bridgwood.

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New Block of the Month

The Sewing Circle - By Robyn Allen-Waters

Meet the modern woman of the 50's in this quilt that incorporates 19 stitchery designs and 42 unique handmade buttons.



Option	Description	Price	How to Buy
1	Block of the Month - Patterns and Buttons.	\$29 per month plus postage	Click here
2	Block of the Month - Patterns, Buttons and Fabric for quilt top and binding.	\$35 per month plus postage	Click here
3	Block of the Month - Patterns, Buttons, Threads and Fabric for quilt top and binding.	\$40 per month plus postage	Click here
4	Buy upfront - Patterns and buttons.	\$300	Click here
5	Buy upfront - Patterns, Buttons, and Fabric for quilt top and binding.	\$400	Click here
6	Buy upfront - Patterns, Buttons, Threads and Fabric for quilt top and binding.	\$450	Click here

Join our Block of the Month class and we can provide assistance if you need a helping hand or you may just like to come along each month and set the time aside to complete your block. Click here to find out more information about our Block of the Month class.

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Tutor Profile on Karen Cunningham

Passing on the needle



Like many of the Blueberries staff and tutors, it was her grandmother that initially encouraged Karen Cunningham to turn to sewing.

“She was a quilter herself,” Karen recalls. “She always used to say to me that in every family there’s a needlewoman someone who instinctively could sew quite well, and she obviously saw that in me and she left me all of her sewing things because I was the next generation needlewoman. She just used to always look for someone in the family who was interested and who could do it without a lot of instructions.

Grandma’s instinctive assessment of Karen as the family’s next needlewoman was obviously a direct hit, as no other members of Karen’s family have so far turned out to be interested in sewing.

“I have always loved fabric,” Karen says. “I think it was the colours - in textiles fabrics are often multi-coloured. I think you can mix colours much better than in other kinds of art without following colour wheels, which allows you to make unexpected things happen. So part of the attraction for me is that I could break the rules a little bit by putting colours together that perhaps don’t go together on a colour wheel.”

For Karen, her interest in sewing really took off after she started having children and setting up a home of her own. It was the combination of the creative and the practical that made quilting such a part of her life.

“When I started having kids I really got into quilting,” she says. “I wanted them to have cot quilts and I wanted to have quilts in my home. Also, when you’re a young mum you don’t get much time to yourself. Now I encourage young mums to take the time because no-one gives it to you. When I took the time to learn how to do my craft, it was my time out, and then it became a career later on. But at the time it was something that I could do that was just for me.”

Karen has been a tutor for 12 years now, and has worked in locations all over the state. Early in 2009 when Jackie asked her to join the team at Blueberries, Karen was delighted to add it to her circuit of regular monthly venues and has built up a loyal following amongst the Blueberries clientele in a relatively short time. It just goes to show how wise Grandma was in choosing Karen as the family member she would pass the needle onto.

If you would like to join one of Karen’s classes at Blueberries click here to find out more information and register.

Til next week!
The Blueberries Team.