

DORSET THIMBLE SOCIETY

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AT YOUR FINGERTIPS



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- * 3 Newsletters a year
- * 3 Meetings a year
- * Membership Year runs from March
(but you may join anytime)

A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

Christmas and New Year cards especially designed for needlewomen were a brilliant invention of the Victorians, combining a greetings card with a gift of needles- a suitable present for men or women to give. As the smaller card says, under an unseasonable picture of blackberries “To thee on this joyous Christmas day may this small



token my love convey". The larger card sends greetings for Christmas and New Year. The front shows a mother and daughter sheltering under a rather large umbrella. “Be thy New Year’s way all merry hours, where bright flowers smile through Summer showers”. Inside the mother and daughter are caught in a gale (joys of the seaside) “May thy Christmastide all brightly flower, over thy merry path no rough winds blow”.





There is another picture on the back showing a nice day for a change. The sun is shining, snow is on the ground and a little girl having a slide is being cheered on by her mother. “All bright and fair thy Christmastide, while watchful love thy steps shall glide”. All the pictures are marked copyright but nothing to give a clue about the producer of the card.



The impetus for the manufacture of these cards probably came from a greetings card maker rather than any needle maker. Both cards were made by the same firm, and they are identical in construction. The front and back are each made of a double layer of card, which enabled a fabric hinge to be inserted between the two and a distinctive fringe around the edge. Each inner cardboard layer, where it is intended to hold needles, is covered with satinised cotton. The set of George Goodman’s Britannia needles are light in weight, so they are just held by a ribbon. The pockets for the Avery needles are



much stronger because they have to accommodate the greater weight and sharper corners of the Silver Casket packet holders.

I would date these greeting cards to the 1870s because of the Kate Greenaway-ish clothing which mother and daughter are wearing on the larger card, and this would fit in with the Silver Casket needle holders which were patented by William Avery in 1868. Not many examples survive complete because the needles would often have been transferred to a work box and used, and the empty greetings cards eventually thrown away.

The last card I want to discuss with you is probably Edwardian and is in the form of a cotton reel. There is nothing useful about it, but its novelty shape is very appealing. It is marked inside "Hildesheimer and Faulkner copyright, Designed in England, Printed in Germany". The card wishes the recipient "A "reel" happy Christmas" and opposite is a poem by F.E.Weatherly "This reel and needle here I send

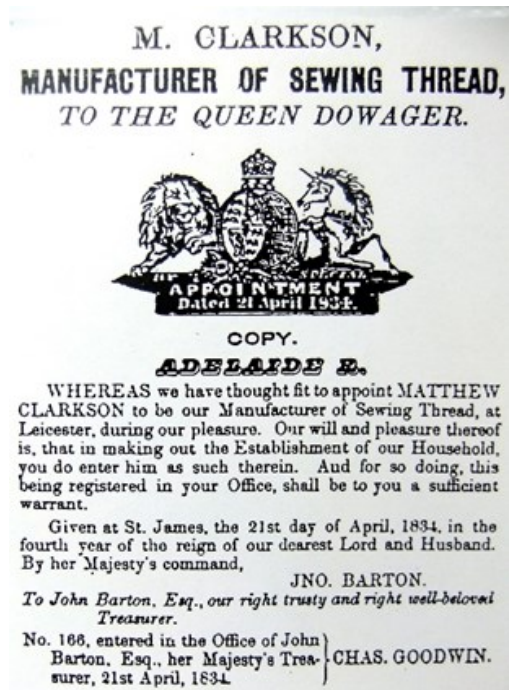
in case you have forgotten that things that break and hearts that ache are mended oft by Love – and cotton”. **Happy New Year.**



Molly Pearce

I found this notice while checking through the files and thought that it might be of interest. The end of a Molly Pearce article seemed the ideal position for it, as I am guessing that this possibly originated from Molly herself.

Editor



A “JESSICA GEM”



It was Sue Murison who first discovered the paper advertising tape measure from amongst the treasures on Jessica’s table.

The tape clearly says “Birth to Five Years”, and is advertising the wide range of Clydella produced garments suitable for this age group.

Today plain paper tape measures are still used to record head circumference and length of newborn babies. When Sue realised the memories that this simple little item invoked, she kindly passed the tape in my direction.



Safari tells us that Clydella is the trademark name for 81% cotton & 19% wool fabric produced by William Hollins & Co. of England. It was woven in a mill near Glasgow, on the banks of the Clyde River, from which it takes its name. Clydella was also developed as shirting for military uniforms in WW1. It is a less costly alternative to Viyella, also made by Hollins.



Viyella was the first branded fabric woven in England in 1893 and trademarked by William Hollins & Co. in 1894. The trademark was registered in the US in 1907. The Viyella name comes from Via Gellia, a road linking Cromford and Bonsall

in Derbyshire, England where Hollins had the mill which first produced the fabric. Viyella is 55% wool & 45% cotton, with the fibres blended before spinning. The fabric is lightweight, with the shirts, underwear, nightwear, and dresses.



Viyella was the fabric of choice back in 1971 when making nightgowns in preparation for the birth of my own baby....those four nighties gave good service and were worn, not only by both of my sons, but also my nieces. However, by



1975 nightgowns were deemed "old fashion" and Babygrows became the garment of choice. It was around this time that disposable nappies superseded terry towelling nappies.



I cannot find a date on the measure but would imagine the styles depicted being those of the 1940s, perhaps early 1950s.



Margaret Roberts