

Bear in Mind

An electronic newsletter from Bear Threads Ltd.

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From The Editor –

Alas, my crocus' are blooming, the daffodils are budding, and my tulips are peeking up from the ground. What a wonderful sight after the winter we have had – and I am certain we will have more cold weather before spring is officially upon us.



I am delighted to have Jeannie Baumeister back with us to share another of her precious baby confections. This month she has used the newest Bear Threads, Ltd. fabric, our 'baby dimity'. The pale blue is just the right shade for little ones, both boy and girl.

Many of you have already tried this fabric (and fallen in love with it!), but have asked me "what makes dimity – well DIMITY"? Jeannie tells you all about dimity and its' wonderful features.

Next month we have a surprise issue for you as we publish our first 'themed' issue.

Until then, remember

"I cannot count my day complete, til needle, thread, and fabric meet." Author Unknown

Sheila

Wonderful Blue Dimity

By Jeannie Downs Baumeister



"Baby's Smocked Layette" pattern
from The Old Fashioned Baby.

Dimity, (from Greek *dimitos*, "of double thread"), lightweight, sheer cotton fabric with two or more warp threads thrown into relief, forming fine cords. Originally dimity was made of silk or wool, but since the 18th century it has been woven almost exclusively of cotton. Definition from the Encyclopedia Britannica

But Dimity fabrics are *not* created equal. Like all other fabric, the quality differs greatly. And the Bear Threads Dimity is like the real old fashioned fabric which was a popular choice for Little Girls and Baby Dresses as well as fine Women's blouses. The Dimity that Bear Threads offers is the finest quality available today.



And I love this fabric!! I mean I *love* it! This Dimity fabric is just like the old fashioned Dimity that has not been available for years. I have been waiting for this fabric all my life! This fabric is sheer and the stripes that are woven into the base fabric are fine. And it is available in soft blue, pink and white. It's all beautiful but the blue is my favorite.



Because this fabric is so exquisite, there is little need for extravagant embellishment on your garment, making it a very cost and time effective choice for a little Baby Dress.

Lace Insertion Embellishment on a Hem



When you sew lace insertion onto your fabric as an embellishment, you can choose to leave the fabric behind the lace or remove the fabric from behind the lace. The look will really be quite different.



This picture shows the hem with the fabric remaining behind the lace. I often choose this look because it is pretty with out being quite as fancy. The garment is also much stronger and durable when the fabric is left behind the lace. And this is a wonderful way to introduce students to Heirloom Sewing with out the fear they have working with lace!



Here the fabric is cut away from behind the lace. The look is more airy and the design of the lace is more visible.

I love both looks and make my choice dependent on a couple of factors. If I want this garment to be worn (and washed) a lot, becoming a beautiful but everyday dress, I am going to choose the more secure method of lace/fabric. If this dress is going to be a special occasion dress then I think cutting the fabric away from the behind the lace gives it a more elegant look. And I am not concerned about it because it is worn only “occasionally”.



The sleeve is finished with Swiss Baby Beading and edged with the narrow lace edging.

Lace used on Baby's Smocked Layette Dress:
L – 264E edging for neck and sleeve
L – 265E edging for the Hem
L – 2688 insertion for the hem.

The fabric is Blue Baby Dimity.

**Jeannie is the designer for
The Old Fashioned Baby Pattern line.
Visit her Heirloom Sewing Shop at
www.oldfashionedbaby.com
and read her
Old Fashioned Baby Sewing Room Blog at
<http://oldfashionedbaby.blogspot.com/>**



“ORTS”

Sewers Going Green

I assumed everyone knew what ‘orts’ were but when I asked the question of the girls in our office I could tell from the expression on their faces that was not the case. Every seamstress, embroiderer – anyone using a needle and threads – encounters ‘orts’. If you are a crossword puzzle aficionado you have undoubtedly come across this clue:

“A four letter word for the strings, scraps and clippings from a sewing project”

Thirty some odd years ago when I was introduced to orts, going green was not such a consideration. Since I have always done a lot of sewing in the car, doctor's offices, etc. it just seemed the logical thing to do. Now, how many folks really carry a small trashcan with you in your sewing bag! I found that a small clean plastic butter tub worked great. Not breakable and lightweight. Simply cut a small slit in the lid and every time you clip strings, yarn, etc, stuff them in the tub. Even fiberfill scraps add density to the collection. Now, when you want to stuff a pincushion – presto you have your orts and you have saved some small portion of the environment! Several of the pincushions in the photographs on the next page are stuffed with ‘orts’. So now you know!

Sheila Nicol

PINCUSHIONS

By Sheila Nicol

Metal pins are an invaluable tool for today's seamstress and no less so for sewers throughout history. With pins came a variety of ways to store them, including boxes, tins, cases, and cushions.

A pincushion (or less commonly pin cushion) is a small cushion, typically 2-3 inches across, which is used in sewing to store pins or needles with their heads protruding so as to take hold of them easily, collect them and keep them tidy. The earliest metal pins debuting in the 14th Century were rare and expensive and as such were stored in a variety of protective cases made of bone, ivory or silver. The first reference of the 'tomato' pincushion appears in the 15th Century. During this, the Tudor Era, it became common practice to use fancy, stuffed shapes to store needles and pins. The familiar tomato shape evolved due to the folklore surrounding the fruit, which symbolized prosperity and repelled evil spirits. Apparently, it was tradition at that time when visiting a friend or family's new home to place a fresh garden tomato on the mantel to guarantee future prosperity. However, since fresh tomatoes were not available year round, red fabric stuffed with sawdust or sand was sometimes substituted. These, then, became used as holders of pins and needles.



The Victorian Era saw the further popularization of the 'stuffed tomato'. As parlor rooms became more opulent, the lady of the house displayed collections of pin cushions in various shapes.

Many were fans, dolls, shoes, fruits and vegetables. The tomato pincushion has survived till today as the most popular. It is typically stuffed with wool roving to prevent rust and the infamous attached strawberry is filled with an abrasive such as emery to clean pins and needles and remove burrs.

Magnetic pincushions are handy to collect errant pins and needles, but the drawback is that the pins become magnetized therefore making it difficult to pick up just one.



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