



## Remote Reminiscence – Getting Elders Online

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### Theme #12 – Make Do & Mend

This activity pack looks at memories of Make Do & Mend.

You can use this resource as a stand-alone series of activities or in conjunction with a short film available for free on our YouTube channel.

Why not have a look through and pick ideas to support activities with friends, family and in groups too.



The link for the accompanying film can be found at the end of this activity.



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- This section is all about Make Do & Mend. This includes making items from scratch and repairing things too.
- We will cover the ways in which people used to renovate old clothes and materials and create things from scratch, through sewing, darning, embroidery, etc.
- The accompanying short film will also look at some of the tools you could use to trigger memories.

### **Icebreaker Activity**

- Can you share memories about taking Domestic Science at school? Or did you make things at home perhaps?
- What can you remember about that time – Why not discuss some of your successes and disasters!



Figure 1: Buttons. Image taken by Summer Dean. Copyright - Strike a Light - Arts & Heritage.



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### Activity – Discussion about Make Do & Mend

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- Why don't you see if rationing in World War II is a subject for discussion? This might offer some interesting reminiscences.

**Why Was Clothes Rationing Introduced and When Did It Begin?**

In Britain during World War II, up to one quarter of the population was entitled to wear uniform. The vast resources required to supply all these uniforms meant that production of civilian clothing had to be limited. The rationing system was a way of ensuring that everyone had equal access to clothing.

Rationing for clothing was introduced on June 1<sup>st</sup> 1941 and took most people by surprise!





### Make Do & Mend

## What Was Make Do and Mend?

Mothers were encouraged to buy bigger clothes for their children so they would grow into them and get more use from them.

Looking after clothes became more important and people definitely thought more about how to make clothes last longer.

The concept of Make Do and Mend began with a government pamphlet, which was published during the war. The leaflet advised people on how to use patches to cover holes, how to turn men's clothing into women's, and how to unpick woollen jumpers to make new garments.

Making clothes at home also became popular – fabric made for furnishings, black out fabric and parachute silk were all used for making clothes.





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### Activity – Making and Mending

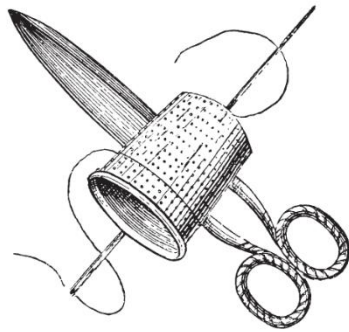
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- Why not bring some darning, mending or a new sewing or knitting project, get together with friends and have a chat whilst you work? This can make for a lovely get together and encourage memories too!



### Make Do & Mend

WHAT MENDING OR MAKING DID YOU DO WHEN  
YOUNGER?  
DO YOU STILL DO THIS NOW?



WHY NOT GRAB SOME MENDING, A FRIEND AND A  
CUP OF TEA AND HAVE A KNIT AND NATTER.

WHAT OTHER THINGS CAN YOU MAKE USING  
LEFTOVER FABRIC OR OLD CLOTHES? HOW ABOUT A  
LAVENDER BAG MADE FROM OLD HANDKERCHIEFS  
OR A BRACELET MADE FROM OLD BUTTONS? SEE  
WHERE YOUR IMAGINATION TAKES YOU.

### Activity – Remembering the tools you used

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- Find some objects that used to be used for making and mending and talk about them in a group.
- Do you know what the object pictured below is?
- Ask people in the group if they can remember what the tools are and what they were used for.
- Think about who you remember using tools like these in the past – do you have memories of grandparents or great-grandparents using them?
- Watch our accompanying video to get some ideas about tools that might have been used for making and mending and see which ones you can remember.

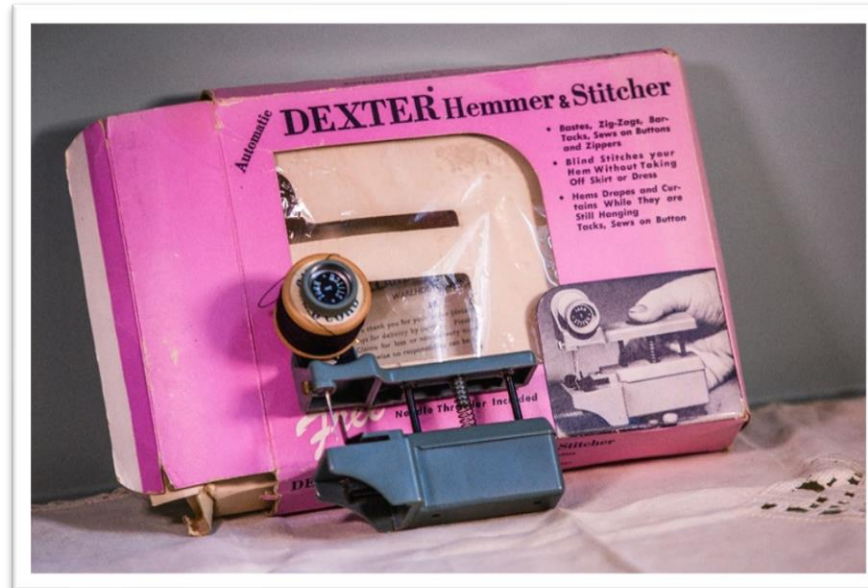


Figure 2: Dexter Hemmer & Stitcher.  
Image taken by Summer Dean. Copyright  
- Strike a Light - Arts & Heritage.



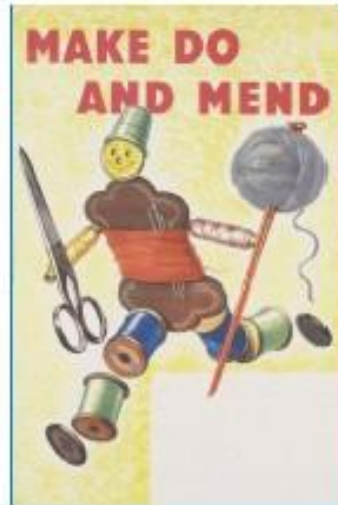
### No Sewing Wartime Make-do-and-Mend Bunting

Resources were scarce during the Second World War and clothes were rationed from 1<sup>st</sup> June 1940. This meant people had to be more inventive if they wanted to make new items of clothing or other material items. The 'Make-do-and-Mend' scheme was backed by the government and encouraged people to make new things from old clothes. This is one of many propaganda posters promoting the campaign:

Have a go at making your own make-do-and-mend wartime bunting by following the instructions below:

#### You will need:

- scraps of red, white and blue fabric (alternatively you can use the paper cut-outs included in this resource.)
- ribbon
- pins
- fabric glue or white glue (such as PVA)
- scissors
- paper

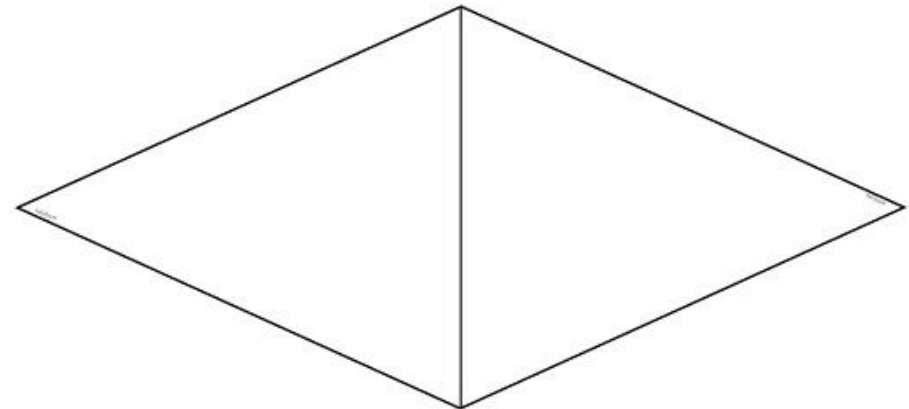


#### Instructions:

1. Cut out the diamond-shaped template below. Alternatively, you could draw your own template - it needs to be around 27 cm high and 20 cm wide to give it a good shape.
2. Pin the paper template onto your fabric and carefully cut round it.
3. Place glue across the middle of the fabric diamond and along the edges of the two upper sides (making a triangle shape with the glue).
4. Take a long length of ribbon - it needs to be as long as you want your stretch of bunting to be.
5. Place the ribbon horizontally across the middle of your diamond shape on top of the glue.
6. Fold the diamond in half over the ribbon to make a triangle, making sure the fabric edges are stuck together.

### Activity – Making from scratch

This activity is a good way to think about home-made outfits: Knitted swimming costumes, following a sewing pattern, making toys or even dressmaking. See the suggestion for no sew bunting (left), and template below.



### Activity – The Way We Wore

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- What used to be in the mending pile?
- What sort of things used to be repaired which aren't usually repaired now? Tights and stockings are often seen as disposable nowadays.
- Did you enjoy making things from scratch? Or were you made to do it at school?
- Can you make a list of the making and mending skills that you or others in your home have or had?
- Are you good with crafts and sewing, or is it 'not your thing'?



Figure 3: Cotton reels. Image taken by Summer Dean. Copyright - Strike a Light - Arts & Heritage.





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### Visual Resources

Watch our short Make Do & Mend film here for more ideas  
and support: <https://youtu.be/aJBKdGBCXEc>

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