

May 26, 2009

It's official – homecraft skills should be back in style

More than nine in ten women wish they could make or update their own clothes and would love to learn how to embroider, knit and dressmake, according to a recent survey of women aged 20-40, carried out for the UK's first ever Three Shires Textile Festival.

Currently only a quarter of those questioned make or even try to update their own clothes while over three quarters of respondents have never made their own curtains, rugs or soft furnishings to give their homes a more contemporary look, although 88% would love the chance to do so.

84% believe that cheaper clothing can look as good as catwalk fashion if it is customised or embellished. Sadly however, when the brave few have tried to improve a piece of clothing it has all ended in tears with one in three claiming attempts to breathe new life into an old favourite have ended up ruining it for good.

Despite the bite of the credit crunch, an astonishing 76% of respondents admit that as many as one in five items of their clothing have only been worn once before being banished to the back of the wardrobe.

However, most of us dislike the idea of 'disposable' fashion and firmly believe that the 'make do and mend' culture could make a comeback. This is borne out by the popularity of programmes such as Channel 4's Kirstie's Homemade Home and Gok's Fashion Fix, which clearly demonstrate we are hungry for advice, whether it is re-vamping old cushion covers or creating a glamorous catwalk look in minutes with high street bargains and some deft needlework.

Many people clearly regret either rejecting or not learning the skills that their mothers or grandmothers took for granted and more than nine in ten of those surveyed thought that crafts such as sewing, embroidery, knitting and curtain making should be taught in schools from a young age.

[More](#)

The results of the survey have caused great interest for the July Festival's organisers and speakers. One key Festival speaker is Diana Springall, internationally renowned as one of Britain's leading embroiderers. She says:

"I am not surprised and I am of course delighted that there is this growing trend for re-discovering a long forgotten hobby or acquiring a new skill. As well as being great fun, in the current economic climate, there has never been a better time for people to make do and mend rather than just throw away and replace. People are also taking great pleasure in the art of creating their own work – whether in customising an outfit or creating a new look for their home."

Diana Springall is holding a day school at Macclesfield Silk Museum as part of the Festival on 4th July. Other speakers at this event also include leading knitting designer Kaffe Fassett and Edwina Ehrmann, Curator of Costume and Decorative Arts at the Museum of London.

The Festival, which runs from 4th-19th July, will provide an ideal opportunity for anyone learning to sew, customise clothing or uncover a hidden passion for fashion. Courses on rag-rugging, felt-making and knitting are just a few of over 100 events being held across Cheshire, Derbyshire and Staffordshire, which include 'hands on' workshops, contemporary textile arts shows, a grand auction held by TV antiques expert Adam Partridge and major exhibitions.

The Festival is managed by local tourist board Visit Chester & Cheshire in partnership with Macclesfield Borough Council, Congleton Borough Council, South East Cheshire Enterprise, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and Visit Peak District.

Ends

For more information.....