

Make-do-and-mend

Ireland was not unusual in having to repair or repurpose clothing, shoes, household or farm items which were damaged or worn. Sewing and dressmaking skills were taught to girls at school, while boys might have learnt carpentry or bicycle repairs from the men in the family.

They are a rich source of memories for older people

Some useful questions to trigger discussion

Did you learn how to darn? Were your socks, sleeves, darned?

Did you ever wear patched clothes? What parts were more likely to need patching?

How did you repair laddered stockings or tights?

Do you remember clothes being dyed to give a new lease of life?

Were you ever aware of sheets being made from flour bags?

What happened to sheets when they wore a bit thin?

Do you remember anybody “turning” a collar?

Did you learn to knitting or crochet?

Did your mother shorten or lengthen hand-me-downs to fit?

What is the name of the iron object used for mending shoes ? (a last)

What carpentry tools you remember?

Do you remember anybody coming to repairing pots and pans?

How did your father sharpen knives or blades?

Can you recall what you needed to repair a puncture?

What other bicycle repairs have you done?

The images below can be downloaded, printed and used to trigger memories



