

NEIGHBOURHOOD NEWS



■ **PORTSMOUTH:** A stitch in time saves money and stimulates the creative side of life

Sowing seeds of sewing



Ella Morganoram, 14, Hermonie McCue, seated, with sewing teacher Carol Cunningham

PICTURE: CHRISTINE LORD

A CRAZE that has swept the USA seems likely to find fans in the UK with Portsmouth taking the lead with its first children's sewing club.

Youngsters from five to 16 are enjoying sewing and creating clothes, presents and toys at Sew What! – a new group based at Fratton Community Centre in Trafalgar Place.

The group, organised by Carol Cunningham, is hoping to get as many youngsters as possible away from their computers and learning how to make, mend and produce their own clothes.

Carol, of St David's Road, Southsea, said: 'Sewing is such a relaxing and amazing way for young people to channel their energies and creativity.'

'In the USA sewing clubs are opening all over the place. Families and their children are now getting bored with computers and it seems skills and crafts are leading the way.'

One of the youngest members of the sewing club, eight-year-old Hermione McCue of Wilberforce Road, Southsea, said: 'I sew at school but there is never enough time for me to make the things I want.'



by **Christine Lord**

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'Since I have been coming to the class I have made skirts and dresses for myself.'

'I see something in a magazine and bring it along with a drawing and Carol helps me to put together a pattern which means I can make anything I want in the style I want.'

'When I meet my friends I am so proud to tell them that the clothes I am wearing I made myself.'

Hermione has also made dozens of bags for families and friends and is currently making a teddy for her bedroom.

The class has had its fair share of boys joining and with some of the best fashion designers' being male the Portsmouth Sewing Club is hoping that their students could be future Jasper Conrans or Stella McCartneys.

Ella Morganoram, 14, of Whitwell Road, Southsea, said: 'I made this dress I am wearing today and am making customised cushions for my bedroom.'

'As a teenager I love being able to make clothes and decorations for my bedroom that are totally exclusive to my tastes and creations.'

'All my friends would like me to make stuff for them but at the moment I am busy making a dress for my mother.'

'When I leave school I would definitely like to go into the fashion business and coming here is a great start.'

Group organiser Carol has been sewing since she was tiny and every spare minute of her day is spent devoted to the craft.

She said: 'When class finishes today I am going to be helping a bride with the final fitting of a dress.'

'I created it from a rough drawing and ideas that the bride-to-be wanted for her special day.'

'So, her dress is totally unique to her wedding day.'

'That's what's so wonderful about sewing; you start with a piece of fabric and can create anything you want and know that whatever you make there will not be another one like it in the world.'

For more information ring Carol on (023) 9234 6687.