**COMMUNITY SEWING CLEASPHN2012**

**FROM BLOCK TO FINAL PATTERN**

The process of making a pattern is best understood by seeing it as a number of steps. The first step is an examination of the sketch or photograph and ‘using our elbow’. This is thinking for some time about what the picture or sketch shows. To interpret what can be seen requires some practice but the beginner’s task is ensuring that nothing escapes her attention.

Often the picture shows only one view of the garment. It may be the front or even a close up of an interesting detail. The pattern cutter must decide what the unseen part of the garment looks like. In deciding this she should recognise that all garment details should add up to a harmonious whole. For instance, points and rounds on details do not mix, a yoke on the front often means a yoke on the back; a full front is accompanied by a full back; a narrow front may not mean a narrow back but often does.

After the sketch has been studied a new sketch can be made of the unseen parts of the garment.

The pattern cutter must now consider what block patterns she will use. Has the front bodice a bust dart? What kind of sleeve, a high or low crown. What collar; a flat collar, a stand or flat collar. In short, what **BLOCKS** can she use as a starting point to make the style she wishes to make.

The problem in al pattern cutting is “What do I have to do to my blocks to make the style I require?” It is this that affects the starting point (block) that will be chosen. It is best to find something that will provide an easy, direct way to the final pattern.

The block, having been chosen, should be traced out carefully on plain paper; all future work will be done on this copy and this forms the basis of the **Working Pattern**. Lines, pockets, panes etc. will be drawn on this working pattern. Collars and all other details including any thoughts and instructions to remind the pattern cutter of her plans towards the final **production pattern** will also be noted down.

The stages from the working pattern to the **Production Pattern** should be planned carefully and should be a number of easy and logical steps to change the block to give it the characteristics of the style that is required. The steps will be similar to the techniques described during the course.

The **Working Pattern** is the pattern cutter’s plan, and time spent on planning is time very well spent. A typical working pattern brings together a number of design components, and each component is treated separately. The components generally are as follows:

* The body – back and front
* The armhole
* The neckline
* The collar
* The sleeve
* Details on the body and the sleeve

Some of these may be tested by making the parts in calico. This is to ensure that the shape and proportions are what is required. The try-outs may be placed against the body or a workroom dummy to assess what has been done. **The shapes and proportions we make on the flat will look differently when seen ‘on the round’**.

The pattern cutter will now be ready to make a production pattern, the pattern from which the fabric can be cut. To do this the working pattern is used. Pattern pieces will be traced out, using a tracing wheel. All seam and hem allowance will be included.

As each piece is traced off, the following procedure should be followed:

* Trace through the piece required. Join up the tracing wheel marks with a smooth pencil line. It is very difficult to trace through straight lines or curves perfectly.
* Add correct seam allowances and hem. Be precise.
* Mark notch positions that were on the block. Add others freely to aid sewing
* Check each piece with its neighbour to ensure seam lengths match as well as notches.
* Where lines meet on a fold check that the continuation over the fold does not make a dump.
* Check that lines are smooth at the top of a dart after they are closed. Check that the lines are smooth after a pattern piece has been manipulated. Check that when shoulders are joined, both neck and armhole seams make a smooth run

Before cutting out the pattern pieces, check that all pieces have been made and that all necessary seams and hems have been included.

The finished pattern should also be marked clearly with instructions that will help in the construction.

The competence of a pattern cutter is often judges by the appearance of her pattern. Make a neat and tidy pattern. Cut out carefully.