

Grandad's Hat – the story

One day a bundle of old woollen jumpers arrived. Big ones, small ones, ones with holes, ones with the hems unravelling. Some knitted in thick 12 ply, some in 5 ply and many in 8 ply. Some lacy patters, some ribbed, one with cables (the 12 ply one) and a couple of tweedy flecked ones. A huge jumble of many colours.

'Great!' said Gael. 'Stephen needs a hat.'

Mum, Dad, Johanne, Gael, Moira, Brian and Stephanie set to work. Mum and Johanne cut off buttons and unpicked seams. Brian unravelled the stiches while Moira wound the yarn into balls. Gael unravelled stitches and Dad wound the yarn around the back of a chair. 'I want to try to steam these skeins,' he said. 'My Grandma always did this – she said it helped to get the crinkles out of the wool.'

By the end of the evening they had two baskets of yarn and a jar of assorted buttons. Dad took his basket, got some coat hangers and tied the skeins up to them so that he could hang them in the shower recess when it was used the next day.

The following evening they sorted needles and chose their wool.

Mum started on a jumper for the toddler, Dad stretched one of the skeins around each hand while Brian rolled the yarn into balls. When they'd finished Dad showed Brian how to knit a hat using 4 needles so it had no seam. 'Your Grandma Maude taught me to do this when I was six,' he told Brian.

Moira chose a soft blue wool and cast on for a scarf, Stephanie got a crochet hook and began making Afghan squares from all of the tiny balls of odds and ends, Johanne used the brown and red yarns to knit socks and Gael picked up the green, tweedy looking yarn to knit her boyfriend a hat.

By the time the baskets were empty the family had produced a crocheted Afghan rug, two scarves, three cardigans, four toddlers' jumpers, five pairs of socks, six tea cosies, seven pairs of booties, and eight hats – some plain, some striped and one for a baby in soft blue knitted with 4 needles so it had no seam.

'That was a good winter's work,' Dad said.

Gael presented her boyfriend with his hat – it came down over his nose. 'Oh dear, I wanted to be sure it covered your ears. I hate it when my hat doesn't!'

'Mission accomplished,' said Stephen. 'I'll just fold the ribbing up.' The hat fitted snugly and Stephen wore it when he

Walked to the station.

Sat in the caravan studying.

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Drove to work.

Went hiking.

Cooked the barbeque.

Built bookshelves.

Moved house.

Cleaned out the chook shed

Took the children to the park.

Repaired the swing at the working bee

Tidied the shed

Dug in the garden.

'It's got a hole,' he said sadly. 'Could you fix it do you think?'

Gael collected her darning mushroom, a darning needle, a skein of darning wool and a pair of scissors.

As soon as the hat was fixed Grandad put it back on.