



# The Sewing Machine

**T**he other day, I was fortunate enough to visit Molyneaux and saw the old homestead. I waded through the tall ferns and finally reached the door of the house. There were lots of wasps flying around but I was able to poke my head inside without one stinging me. The old *Morris* chairs were still there, sinking slowly into the now caved-in floor. Very gingerly, I made my way over the threshold and peeped into the bedroom. There in the corner was the old sewing machine still waiting to be rescued.

It was not possible to touch it and neither could I read the name from the distance. But I didn't have to read the name because I remembered it – *Fukusuk*. This was a machine operated by a pedal that was connected by a belt to the wheel on the upper part of the machine. All the other machines that I know are either *Singer* or *Brother* but not my late father's. And I don't recall seeing another machine of that name.

My father, Abraham Greenaway, affectionately known as *Darda Freddie* was a tailor by trade. He did not do the tailoring in the house where we lived because he used to work with Son Son Allen in Plymouth and later with Sunny Buzz Greenaway of Dyers. I don't remember when he got his own machine, but I remembered him working out of the shop which he and my Mom owned and ran in the village.

As a child, I would go to the shop to either help sell or pick up items to take back to the house. There I would watch my father cut out parts for either suit jackets and pants or shorts from the various types of material that people would bring him. I cannot recall him making shirts. He did not stock materials in the workroom. On the table were the tools of the trade; scissors, curving board (an item used to trace out the shape of the arm sleeves), tracing chalk, needles, measuring tape, etc. The hot *Goose\** was always on the stand as this was used to press the material, help to form a seam or press the finished product. In those days, there were no ready-made patterns, so everything had to be done by hand. Even the buttonholes on the jacket or pants were done by hand – no fancy gadget on the machine to make them. So he would measure the client, write down the measurements and from that make the required item of clothing.

Also, *Darda Freddie* did not have a price list displayed giving the price for making the clothes, and did he reveal how much income he made from his tailoring? Not that I was aware of. My cousin Freddie said that, as children growing up, his mother did not pay to have their pants made, long or short. Perhaps as a child, it was not my business to know how much income the tailoring business generated.

As the oldest of the five siblings, my father did not ask or encourage me to take an interest in what he was doing. Maybe that was a *man thing*. But neither did he invite my brother to observe and some day carry on the trade. I may not be able to make a suit or pants without a pattern but one thing for sure, terms

like *hemming, basting, herring bone stitch* were some of the sewing terms I was familiar with growing up. I never had the opportunity to sew on the machine – the *Fukusuk*. Perhaps my father was afraid that I would damage the belt that turned the wheel and thereby ruin his trade and livelihood. I can sew, so it's possible that even by observation, some of his trade rubbed off on me.

Submitted by Mary Greenaway Chambers

On behalf of my other four siblings

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\* A Goose iron



<http://www.ebay.com/itm/Antique-Cast-Coal-Charcoal-Iron-Made-in-England-Vintage-Wood-Handle-/362079025901>