

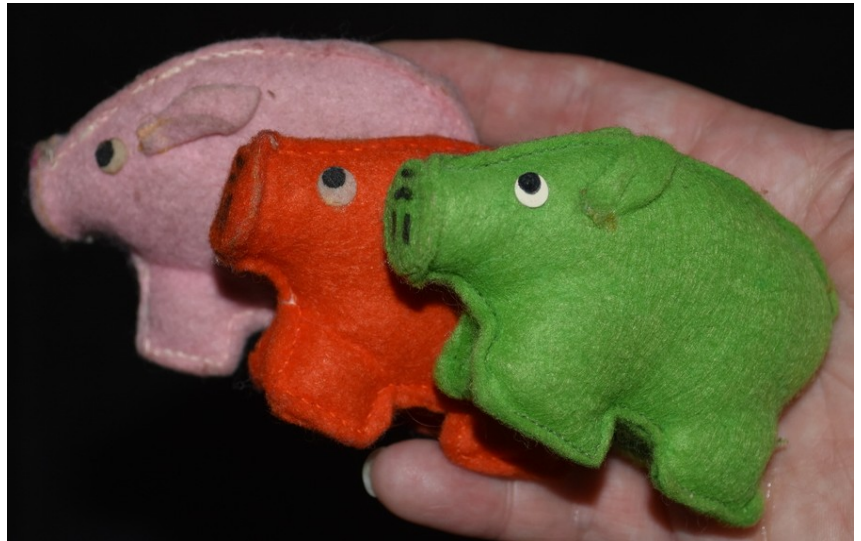
Cal's Little Piggies

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On one of my visits home since my dad passed away, my sister gave me these little felt piggies. They're in pretty good shape, considering they are over 50 years old!

She gave them to me because I made them; in fact, I used to make one each Christmas as a sock gift for my Dad, way back when I was a teenager and he was younger than I am now.



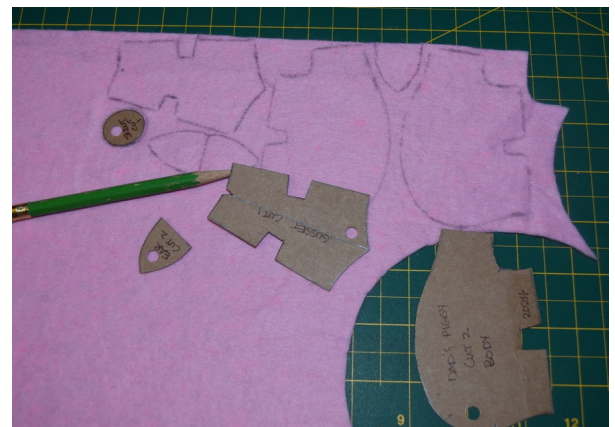
My little Christmas piggies were part of a larger theme that started with my sister and me. Others caught the trend, and before we all knew it, Dad had a sizeable piggy collection. So far as I know, Dad didn't buy any of his pigs himself: he received all of them as gifts from family and friends, and he treasured every one. After he passed away, each of his kids got a selection of his pigs. Nowadays the tradition continues, and from time to time we still get pig-themed gifts from each other.



I thought it might be fun to make up a piggy or two for old time's sake, so I dug out the cardboard template and a piece of wool felt, and got to work.



In the old days I made the piggies in an assortment of colours, but for the re-make I'll go with pink. I'm using wool felt, but I suppose acrylic felt would do. I started by tracing the pattern pieces onto the felt using a pencil.



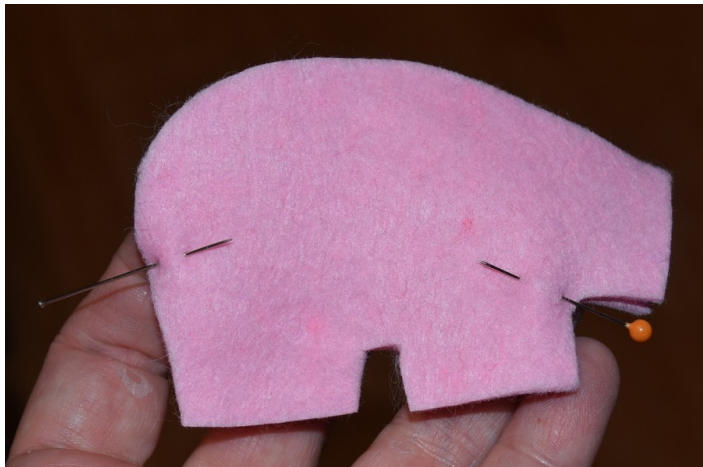


I'm cutting out the pieces right on the traced line, or even slightly inside the line. When I stitch, I'll position the pencilled lines to the inside so they won't show.

At right are the pieces, all cut out and ready to sew.

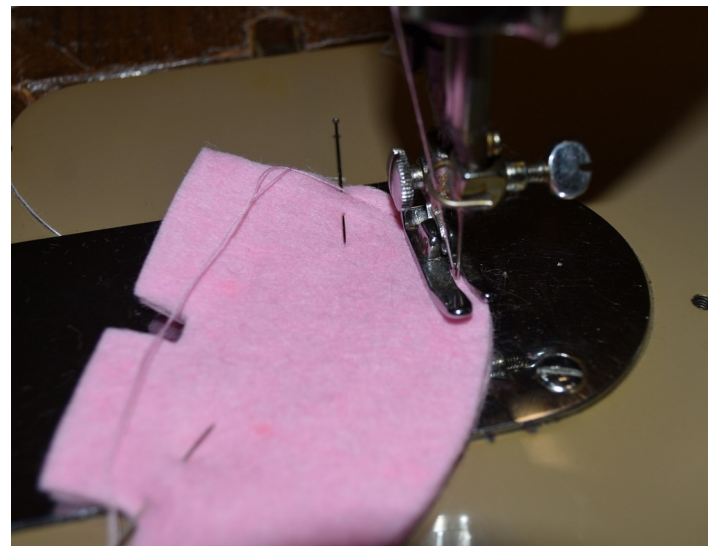


When I assemble the piggy, I'll leave the leg edge open between the pins, so I can attach the gusset.

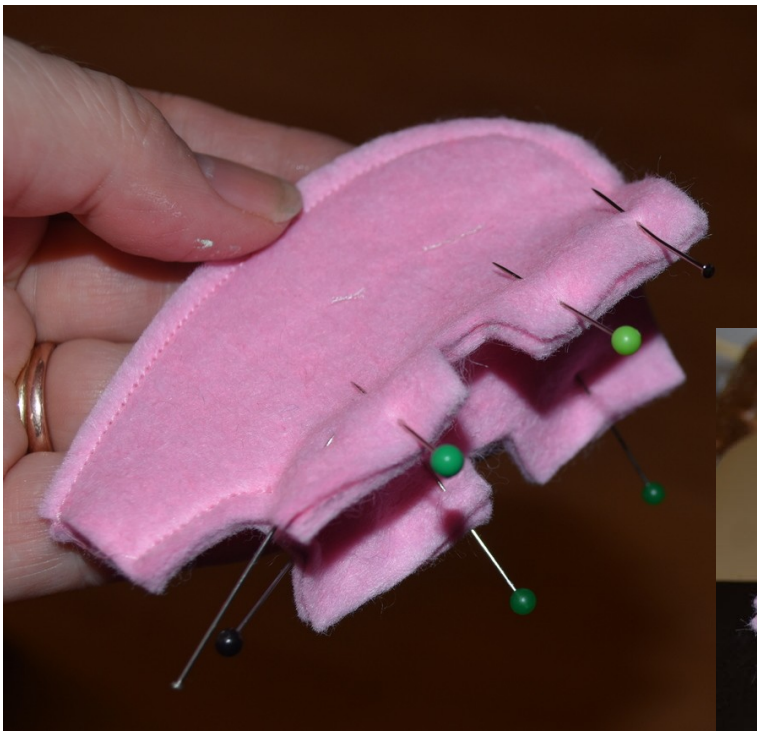


I'm sewing the piggy on a straight-stitch sewing machine using a very narrow seam allowance (about 1/8"), but he could be stitched by hand if a person found it difficult to manage on the machine.

Below you can see the narrow seam allowance. The seams will remain on the outside of the piggy.



The snout opening is left unstitched for now, and I've also left the body open along the leg edge, to receive the gusset, which is attached next.

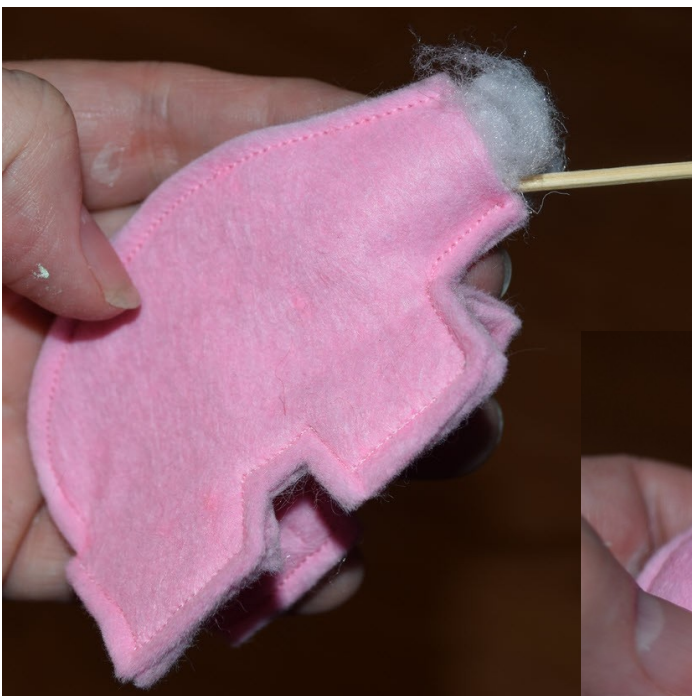


I've pinned the gusset in place, matching all edges, and with the pencilled line to the inside of the pig's body. It's important to match up the edges carefully since the seam allowance is so narrow.



I'm sewing the body to the gusset with the body uppermost, and proceeding carefully over the existing seams. I'll stitch all the way around the gusset without leaving an opening.

The piggy is stuffed through the snout opening. I'm using the blunt end of a skewer as a stuffing tool, and I'll fill the feet first using small amounts of stuffing.



Once they have been filled, you can stuff the rest of the body. Hold the feet together while you stuff the body cavity.



Stuff the pig's body until he's plump but not too firm. Fill right to the end of the snout.



In the old days, I used to glue the snout in place, but for this incarnation I've stitched it by hand, going around three times to be secure.

For the vintage pigs, I made eyes from a piece of thick interfacing, colouring in the pupils with a marker. For the new pig I'm using beads.



I stitched right through the head and pulled the beads a little tight to create an indentation on the sides of the head. I'm not at all sure why I didn't use beads back in the day – nowadays I prefer the look.



Once the eyes are sewn in place, I'll fold the ears and stitch them in position on the side of the head. All that's left is the tail.





The tail is just a circle of felt cut in a spiral, as shown. I'll stitch it in place on the rear of the piggy.

This is the same arrangement that I used for my vintage pigs' tails.



I stitched a line down the centre of the tail before attaching it to the rear of the pig – I thought it might make the tail stronger, though this might be overkill, since my vintage pigs still have their original tails after 50 years.



I'm really happy with how my new Christmas piggy turned out, and it was fun to remember making these for my Dad's Christmas stocking.

Maybe I'll have to start a new tradition for my own Christmas celebrations . . .

If my embroidery machine weren't out of commission, I might have been tempted to add a date to the rump of my little piggy, or maybe a Christmas motif. I may try that for future incarnations once I get the machine restored.