

Refurbishing a Vintage Stocking

<jensoriginalsewembroiderydesigns.yolasite.com>

Posted 2025 August 15



As you may already know if you follow my projects, one of my treasured Christmas possessions is the stocking that my Mum made for my very first Christmas, many decades ago. It's a simple design made of plaid flannelette, with a hand-embroidered snowman rendered in fine yarn, and my name chain-stitched along the top.

It's not as fancy as the sequined felt stockings that belonged to my older brother and sister, but despite its simplicity, nothing says Christmas like that plaid stocking. Santa still fills it every year along with our more recent stockings. Or he did, until last year.

This stocking had never been laundered, and just before Christmas last year, inspired in part by the artisans of *The Repair Shop*, I decided to carefully hand-wash it using just a touch of mild shampoo. Well.

It shed a fair bit of the grime accumulated over the years, and not a little of its red dye, and the cleaning

did brighten it up some. However, handling it through the washing process made me realize just how delicate it had become.

The fabric had gotten so thin that you could see daylight through it, as in the photo at right. We're looking at the stocking from the back, and with a light behind it, the dark shape of the Snowman shows plainly, right through both layers of fabric. In fact, if you look closely, you can even see where my name is stitched. Wow. That's thin.

In fact, it's much too thin for Santa to fill, so for the very first time in my lifetime of Christmases, my Snowman stocking didn't hold any gifts last year.



I couldn't stand that, so after much agonizing, I decided – with some trepidation – to refurbish my vintage stocking. I wanted to preserve my Mum's handiwork, but I also wanted to be able to use the stocking again, not only for this coming December 24th, but for many Christmases to come.

Once I made the decision to add a new lining, the process was fairly straightforward. I began by removing the topstitching on my Mum's French seams around the edge of the stocking, working carefully with my seam ripper so as not to damage the delicate fabric.



I worked the seam ripper on the outside of the stocking and the inside, removing the stitches with care.

That done, I pressed the stocking flat, from the inside.

Then I taped some paper sheets together, and traced the stocking to create a pattern exactly the same size.

Once my trace is complete, I'll cut it out and use it as a template to cut my new lining pieces.



I used my new template to cut the lining pieces out of plain red flannelette.



I'm still not 100% certain that this was the right course, but I decided to fuse the new lining to the existing stocking, in order to shore up the delicate original fabric.



To do this, I'm using Heat N Bond Lite, an iron-on fusible film that will adhere the two layers together.

I lightly fused the paper-backed product to the lining piece, removed the paper, and used my iron to fuse the lining piece to the inside of the stocking.



I folded under the top edge of the lining piece and hand-stitched it to the top of the stocking before taking it to the machine to sew a seam around the body of the sock.



For the machine sewing, I used my Mum's 1949 Singer model 99: it's the very same machine that she used to make the stocking in the first place. Cool.



Once I had sewn the inside seam, I turned the stocking right side out and top-stitched all around the edge to enclose the inside seam, just as my Mum did when she made the original French (enclosed) seams. And just as

she did way back then, I used white thread to match the hand-embroidered trims. Then I gave the whole thing a final, gentle press with the iron.



The refurbished stocking *looks* pretty much unchanged, as I had planned, but it certainly feels a lot sturdier.

Fusing the lining in place has strengthened the delicate original fabric, so that Santa can once again fill the stocking without fear of damaging it.

The lining also means that the back of the embroidery is protected from further wear as items are inserted and removed.

My treasured vintage stocking is again ready for hanging, not only for this next Christmas Eve, but for many more Christmases yet to come.