

Ornament Faves II: Jen's Picks

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Back in September I wrote about some of DH's favourite ornaments from our treasured collection of handmades, and my sister suggested that I do a similar post with some of my own favourites. It's been really tough to choose, since I love them all, but here are a few of the extra special ones.

I'll begin with these vintage sequined mini stockings: the first ones I ever made, way before I began machine embroidering. Back then, I used to stitch the stockings and little teddies entirely on the sewing machine. These ones have graced my tree for over 40 years now, and they'll continue to do so for many years to come.



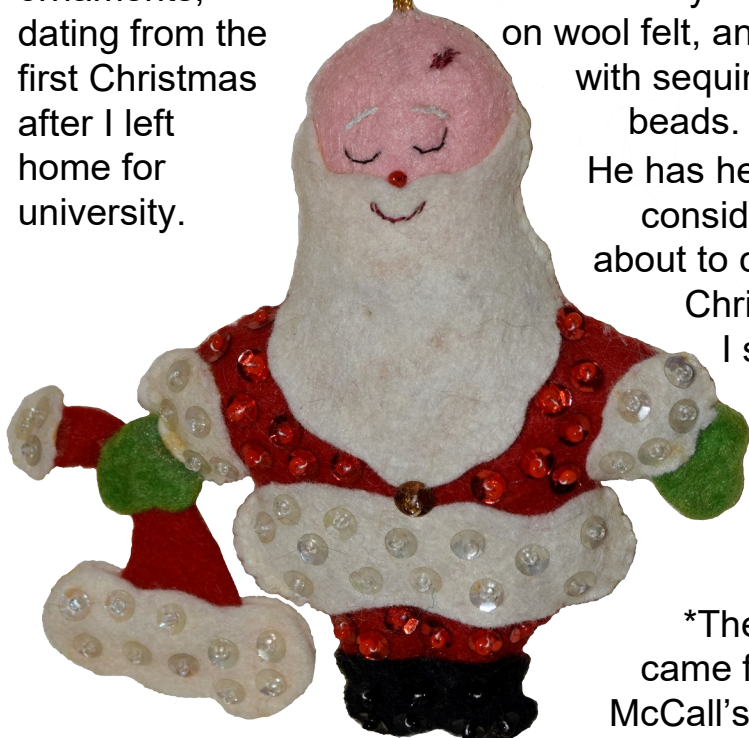
This Santa under the mistletoe is the oldest of my handmade ornaments, dating from the first Christmas after I left home for university.



He's entirely hand-stitched on wool felt, and embellished with sequins and seed beads.

He has held up pretty well, considering that he's about to celebrate his 50th Christmas (!).

I still love him.



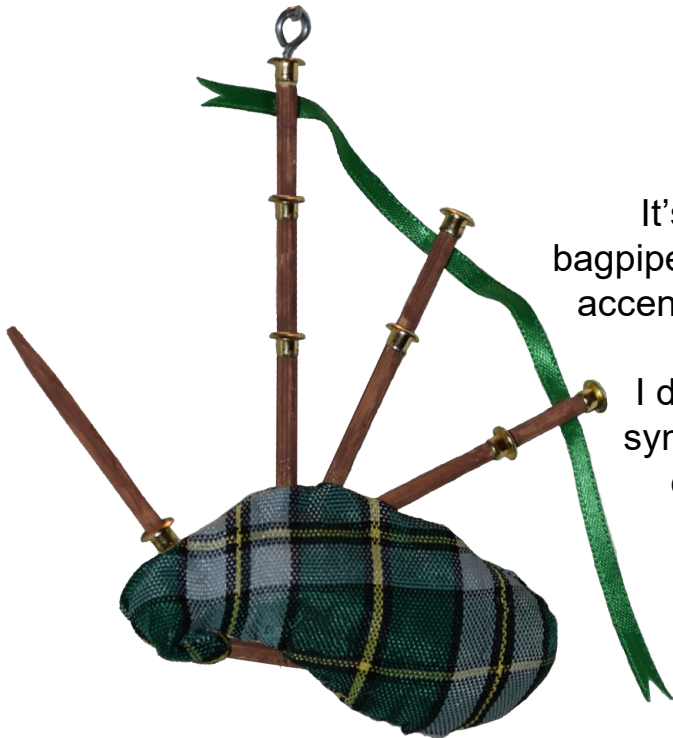
*The design came from this McCall's booklet, a vintage item now.



I've made many ornaments with my button machines, but this is one of my favourites. Under that beard is the real Santa, the one who filled our stockings and left us gifts of treasured toys, often ones he built with his own hands. He created those childhood Christmases that my sibs and I remember so fondly. Dad.

He didn't *play* at being Santa. He *was* Santa, who made Christmas happen for us, though of course we didn't realize that when we were kids.

My dad loved Christmas, and the season will always bring thoughts of him, captured in this forever ornament. I think he'd have gotten a kick out of it.

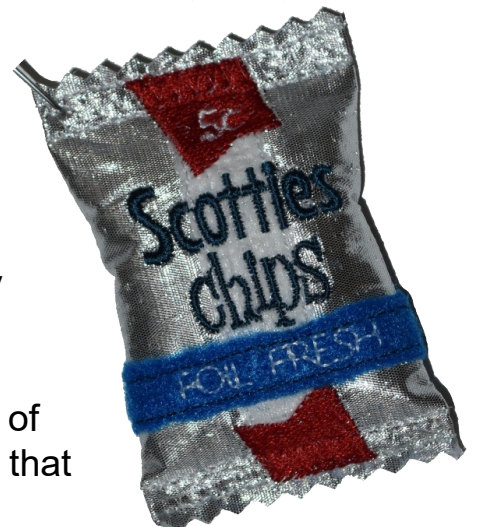


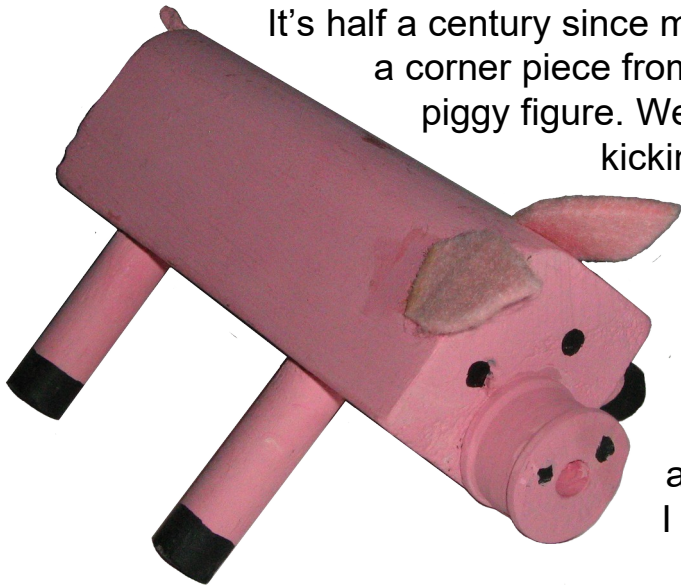
It's many decades since I made this tiny set of bagpipes. The drones and chanter are thin skewers, accented with small eyelets and a length of ribbon.

I don't play the pipes, but this special ornament symbolizes Cape Breton, where Celtic culture is celebrated. It's also unique to our tree, since it's the only one of these I've ever made.

DH and I both love miniatures, and this tiny bag of Scotties chips, a made-in-Nova Scotia brand that dominated the local marketplace when I was a kid, is possibly my favourite mini ornament. I just love how it turned out.

I made these for all the sibs and a couple of friends, one of whom declared it hands down the best gift he'd received that year. High praise indeed.





It's half a century since my sister and I, as a joke for my dad, recycled a corner piece from a discarded wooden table into this primitive piggy figure. We gifted it to him for Christmas, inadvertently kicking off a theme that brought my dad, and later

my brother, a huge variety of pig-themed objects and ornaments.

Decades later, in memory of Dad and of our old jest, I created these two mini ornaments of the original piggy,

one for my tree and one for my sister's. (The original is about 7" long from tail to nose; the mini versions are only 2" long.)



They are full of meaning and memories for my sister and me: of ourselves as silly teenagers, creating the first pig as a joke; of my dad, who patiently accepted that first pig and then all the rest that followed over the years, whether he wanted them or not; and of my brother, the inheritor of the pig tradition after my dad died. This little piggy will always go on the tree, with all those accrued memories, for the rest of my life.



I really like these geodesic ball ornaments. They are sturdy and unbreakable, and when carefully executed, they can be absolutely beautiful. Best of all, they can feature any image you choose.

We own a couple dozen of them.

I had a difficult time isolating one geodesic as my favourite, but in the end I chose this one, from a series I made using images of each of our cats.

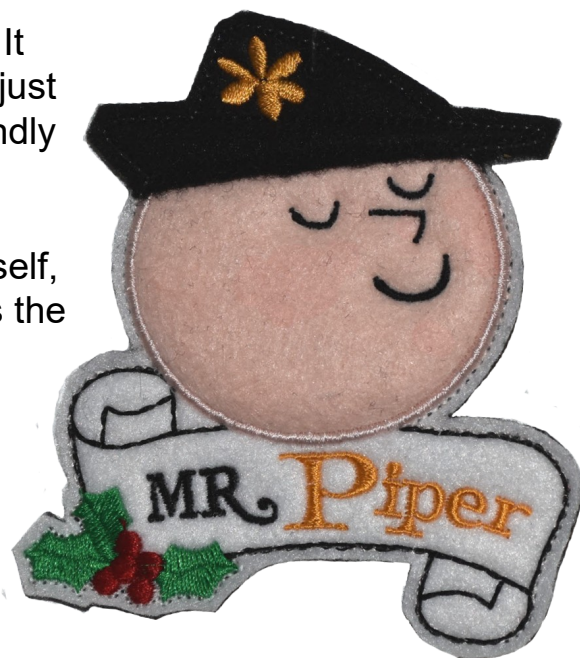
Although I love all the cat-themed geodesics, my pick of the litter is sweet little Fearlie.

The rich red-brown colour of this ornament is striking, as are its pretty copper glitter trim, and Fearlie's golden bright gaze. She's gone now, but she'll be in our hearts – and on our tree – for always.

As a child, I adored the *Mr. Piper* television show. It aired for only one year on CBC, but I guess I was just the right age for it, because I've remembered it fondly all of my life.

I made only three of these ornaments: one for myself, one for my sister, and one for a friend, who recalls the show with a fondness equal to my own.

The design is based on the logo that displayed during the show's opening credits, and it brings back such fond memories that I can't help but smile whenever I see it.



For me, as for many folks, the festive season brings thoughts of family Christmases when we were all together at home. When I was a small child, the house was colourful in that Maritime way: golden yellow with bright red trim.

Home, they say, is where your story begins, and the yellow house is where my own Christmas story began, with all its excitement and wonder. This simple little ornament captures those memories, and – for a moment -- takes me back home for Christmas.

I love handmade ornaments, especially the ones that give glimpses of a life lived. They are more than simple adornments for the tree; they are deeply personal, accruing greater significance as the years pass and becoming more meaningful with time.

It's tough for purchased ornaments, no matter how pretty, to compete with that.