

Repairing Santa Piper

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When I saw this Scottish piper Santa figurine in a charity shop, I couldn't resist his \$4 price, especially since I'm guessing he would have gone for somewhere around \$35 when new.

He's in great shape, except for one significant detail, and if you've got a sharp eye you'll already have noticed that his pipes are missing the drones.

I took him anyway, figuring I could do something about that.



(You'd think by now that I would remember to take photos when I begin working on a project like this, but I completely forgot to take a shot of Santa Piper without the drones. I have rather inexpertly removed them from the photo above, so you can see more or less what he looked like when I brought him home).



To make the substitute drones was actually fairly straightforward, using small dowels (approx 1/8") and silver colored eyelets.

I painted the dowels black, then slid the eyelets up the dowels and secured them in place with a spot of glue.

Each drone took five eyelets: two at the very top, then two more spaced about 3/4" apart, and finally one near the bottom, just where the drones insert into the pipe bag.

There were holes in the bag where the missing drones were attached, so I was able to glue my dowels-and-eyelets replacements into position using Goop.

Once the glue was dry and the drones were completely secured, I used a drop of tacky glue to attach a band of narrow (1/8") ribbon to the tops of the drones.



The rest of the Santa, including the chanter, is made from resin, so my drones aren't an exact match. But I doubt that anyone will notice with a casual glance. Until I told them, my friends didn't know that the drones weren't original.

You might wonder if it's worth buying a used item in the thrift shop, even for so little, when it needs this much work to restore.

For me, there's no doubt. Quite apart from saving a bit of money on my Christmas decor, I like the creative challenge of figuring out a workable repair.

I also get some satisfaction from rescuing a still-good item from the landfill. Plus, it's just plain fun to restore something to like-new condition – or in some cases even improve on it.

And because I had a hand in refurbishing my Santa figurine, it's truly mine in a way it wouldn't be if I just bought it new. How satisfying is that?

