

Hunting for old to combat the cold

ELIZABETH BEAN

OPINION: This year I resolved not to buy new clothing and, five months later, I'm still on track.

But I'm still looking for a winter coat, and as the days get colder, my search is getting more intense. Luckily, my resolution allows me to buy second-hand. Coincidentally, a well organised clothes exchange called 'Swap Til You Drop' was recently held at Founders Park. I joined hundreds of other Nelson fashionistas and went home with some summer tops and a 'new' woollen coat.

I was attracted to the coat by its vintage style, and was amazed to find, after looking at the label, that it truly is vintage. I reckon it was made in the mid-1960s – about the same time as me. The coat is well worn – as am I – but I knew that a little bit of TLC would bring it back to life. I loved the coat's cut and that it was wool and fully lined, means lots of warmth.

Fortunately, I can sew – albeit rather basically. Even more fortunate for me is the forthcoming visit from my Aunt who is a fantastic seamstress and who will be able to sort out any mistakes I make. I have addressed the lining that was coming undone with needle and thread, and the sleeves, which were a bit short, by adding luxurious new cuffs (did people have shorter arms in the 1960s?).

Being able to mend – or alter – clothing gives them a new lease



Elizabeth's coat needs a matching vintage hat - looking for options at Eclectic.

ROB GREENAWAY

of life. If you don't sew then there are places to learn. Waimea College offers a six or eight-week 'Sewing with Confidence' course

each term. These are popular and fill up fast, so if you are inspired phone them on 544 6099. If you're after a quick tutorial,

the internet provides videos on how to sew on a button, alter a hem, take in (or out) a garment waist and how to darn.

If you would rather pay someone else to do the sewing there are many local options. I have often used Nelson Tailors Menswear on Trafalgar Street for alterations or more complex restyling work. While there, I have even heard people ask for buttons to be sewn on.

As an aside, I understand that while at University my cousin used to do minor repairs on clothing in return for chocolate. For more major repairs she took them to the aforementioned Aunt.

To find out who provides professional alterations, type 'Nelson Tasman sewing alterations' into your internet browser. Or ask a friend for a recommendation. Professional alterations are usually cheaper than throwing away an item and buying a new replacement. Plus, you're helping the environment – it's a win-win for your wardrobe and our world!

Finally, a little know-how in the care department can make all the difference when it comes to keeping clothes looking great. Pay attention to washing instructions. I know Kiwis hate instructions, but reading the relevant tag on your clothes will help ensure that they stay in great shape. Correct washing also ensures that whites stay white and dark garments stay looking sharp.

I wonder if a bit more caring and repairing could help me to become similarly sharp, or even vintage chic.



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