

Nicky Fraser – The Vintage Magpie www.thevintagemagpie.typepad.com

Nicky Fraser creates all sorts of handmade lovable characters to be treasured. Her ever-growing menagerie includes rabbits, bears and even an elephant.

How did you get into sewing?

I've been sewing or knitting something for as long as I can remember. Some of my fondest childhood memories revolve around being taught to sew or knit. One summer holiday, I went with my best friend once a week round to her grandmother's who taught us to make soft toys. I think I made a dog - or something that resembled a dog! My summer holidays always involved a sewing or knitting project of some kind or another. I just didn't like not having something to do and I'm still the same today. I drifted away from craft for a while, whilst working full time in London, but as soon as I was expecting our first child I picked up the sewing needle once more and have never looked back!

The Blog

I published the first post of my new blog in February 2007. I couldn't wait to get into the creative blogging world and start chatting to like-minded people. As the blog grew, so too did my interests. There's so much eye candy out there – so many inspirational people doing inspirational projects. I couldn't get enough! However, as with anything involving the internet it is very easy for it to take over your life. I have three children and my life is very busy with them so I limit myself to three blog posts a week. I look forward to publishing those and hearing from readers. The rest of the week I read and lurk on some of my favourite blogs, constantly being inspired by others. I write about all sorts of things on my blog – what's inspiring me that week, my love of the Devon countryside and our surroundings, my passion for thrifting and revamping old furniture, what my children are up to (they love to get involved with the blog) and what I'm working on in my studio.

My love of creating bears and rabbits came from wanting to create something for my children that they would cherish and it grew from there. As I watched my young children's pile of plastic and 'of the moment' toys grow and grow I was aware of them not having a favourite – a classic case



of too much to choose from and nothing being special. I wanted to create something handmade for my children to treasure and to teach them the meaning of being given something handmade and individual to them. So, I based my first bear for them on my own first bear that, as a child, I took everywhere. The more characters I created the more stories I would hear from people about their treasured bear or toy from childhood. I think that this is something truly special, the bond that can form between a person and a bear.

The best part about having my blog is the wonderful people I have met as a result of it - truly talented, inspirational people who have similar values and ideas as me; people who get excited about a vintage piece of fabric and who see the value in handmade and vintage items.

Since starting my blog two and a half years ago my life has totally changed direction. It has given me a wonderful chance to focus on what I love to do and to be surrounded by people that I love to be with. I have taken my Magpie bears to two wonderful Vintage and Handmade fairs started by bloggers and have two more to go to this year. I have had my home featured in a magazine (a dream come true), had my vintage rabbits featured in Country Living magazine (another dream come true) and continue to have some wonderful offers to feature my work. I feel truly privileged to be able to work from home doing something I love and being a part of the blogging community.



Vintage trimmings make Nicky's handmade treasures unique