



Hobbits need feet. These are the Funny Feet from Easleys in Phoenix, Arizona. Be sure to purchase the "male" version. The "female" version has painted red toe nails.

The feet originally arrive in a truly lurid bubble gum pink. I painted them with acrylic paints. To insure that the paint stays on the feet mix it with Fabric Painting Medium following the instructions on the bottles. A costuming friend gave me this hint after running into some issues with her plastic feet. This leaves the paint flexible enough to walk about in without cracking.

These are Bilbo's feet after painting and before I put on the hair.

The bottle that looks like nail polish is in fact, nail polish. I put it on to give the nails a glossier appearance than the rest of the feet.



Once the feet are completely dry, you can add the hair. I purchased "Wavy Wool" at the craft store. It can be dyed any color to match the wig you are using for the hobbit. I attached the hair to the feet with "Goop". It works well for latex applications and stays flexible.



I always start by collecting all the different photos I can find of the costume. My task was to replicate the Birthday Party outfit. I began building it from the skin out. This is one of the costumes from the film worn by the small size Bilbo double. >

The cover picture on the album is the full size costume being worn by actor Sir Ian Holm.



I was lucky enough to find some very heavyweight, yet finely woven cotton for the shirt. It was made for upholstery. There are not many good photos of this piece, since Bilbo usually keeps his vest and cravat on. The sleeves can be seen in some shots, but it is difficult to get a good look at the collar. I did some guessing and quite a bit of ripping and re-sewing.





The trousers came from the thrift store. I was fortunate to find a very similar color and fabric appearance to the research photos. I also purposely bought them a size or two bigger than my model normally wears them. I shortened the legs, and added buttons for the grey paisley suspenders, which I already had. I also added buttons to the bottoms of the trousers. The decorative buttons I found were originally white. I could not find anything in grey similar in size and pattern to the correct ones, so I painted the white ones to match.



This is a picture of the “real” trousers with > button.



The suspenders are part of the costume which do not show. In fact, there is no proof that this character actually wears them, but many of the other hobbit characters in the film are seen in them, so I assumed there are suspenders under the vest.



The cravat was tricky. I wanted a silky fabric, but could not find a match for the pine green and yellow paisley used in the film. In fact, I was not finding a pattern match in any fabric. After several tries, I was about to give up, when I ran into a co-worker at the fabric store. When I showed her what I was working on, she claimed to have seen the very thing! in the store! over there SOMEWHERE!

An hour later I finally turned up three quarter flats of pre-cut quilting cotton in

pine green paisley. They are stitched together, then into a tube and have a hand rolled hem.

^ This one is the actual costume cravat.



The vest began as a pattern. I used Butterick 3721 because I needed the double-breasted design. The collar on that one was wrong and began too low on the body so I made a rough version in muslin and used it to guide the alterations. The vest in the film seems to be made of matte floral brocade. I had originally planned to use one like it for the vest here, but as luck would have it, the fabric we found for the coat lining was a floral (instead of a vine) so I used the vine pattern on the vest and the floral on the coat, switching the two patterns.



The replica costume thus far. ^



< Close up of the original costume showing the floral and vine patterns.

The coat was the most difficult piece and took the longest to make. The lining had to be removed and re-cut at one point. Again I started with the closest pattern I could find. I used McCalls 3800 because it had the shawl collar that I needed. I had considered a couple of others, but thought this one would be the easiest to alter.

The velvet is a remnant that I found in an obscure corner of the shop. Summer is not the right time of year to look for rust colored velvet.

The original lining plan was for a vining pattern, but the fabric found did not have the highlights that the original showed. Then I found a floral, which did... What to do? I made Bilbo choose.



^ This shot shows the highlights on the original coat lining fabric.



The quilting closeup, for all you fellow masochists. Yes, this is done on a sewing machine. Between the green layer and the rust velvet layer is "the puffy layer" consisting of very thin pre-quilted nastily striped polyester stuff left over from a Tudor petticoat. I drew lines on the back of the white side of it and quilted the collar prior to attaching and the cuffs after attaching.



^ Replica cuff

< Original cuff and coat buttons v

The coat buttons may look familiar. There are few photos of the actual coat buttons, since they are usually hidden behind the edge of the open coat; but the centers appear to tone with the coat fabric and there is an obvious gilt edge. I couldn't find what I wanted, so, I bought some more of the ones used on the trouser legs and painted them. The gold is the stuff they use to touch up gilded chrome on automobiles; the red is standard modeling enamel.

