

ANZEG THREADS PROJECT

Jean Rothwell's small machine embellished bags



This is a good project for using up those small lengths of braid, ribbon, novelty threads and incorporating beautiful beads or other decorative bits that we all accumulate. This is for a finished 200mm bag with a flap over. Two options are shown: the red one (next page) is a simple leaf shape, the blue one includes flower motifs. Instructions are given for the example with a leaf motif.

Materials you will need:

- **Pattern** (next page or see note 1);
- **0.5m firm fabric** – furnishing fabric is good
- **0.5m lining fabric** – cotton plain or patterned in a colour that matches or contrasts with the outer fabric
- **Threads, braid, ribbon, metallic threads, beads, sequins**
- **Scraps of fabric** (plain or patterned) for motif on the front
- **Machine embroidery threads** to match your main fabric
- **1m lengths of braid or cord** – one metre of each to plait together to make the shoulder strap (note 2)
- **Button** covered with main fabric or a decorative button
- **0.5m cotton batting or Vilene** to give body to the bag and hold stitching firm, no thicker than 2mm
- **Vliesofix iron-on** to attach the motifs to the main fabric
- **Sewing machine with exchangeable feet** if you need something special to attach the braid, an embroidery foot or ability to drop the feed dogs for free-style machine stitching.

FROM TOP:

Bag made by Jean Rothwell using red velvet with a green leaf and gold braid.

Jean made this blue chintz bag with lace motifs and a blue, lavender and white strap.

Photos: Ian Rothwell.



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METHOD

Preparation

1. Assemble your threads etc. Do some practice with the threads and braid to see if they will attach with the machine and which stitch looks best;
2. Print the patterns. If you want a different size bag, you can enlarge or reduce at this stage;
3. Cut out one of each pattern piece front (A) and back (B) in each of the main fabric, the lining fabric, and the wadding, adding a seam allowance. Note there is a notch (note 3) to indicate where the lower part of the bag attaches.

Front of bag

4. Tack the batting to the inside of piece A in the main fabric;
5. Lightly mark where the button will go on the outside of A. This is so you don't sew sequins over it;
6. Select decorative threads etc and place them on the outside of A in the main fabric piece in parallel wavy lines. When you are happy with the design, pin them in place – then machine on. If you are using strips of sequins lay them so that they lie flat and the machine foot does not catch them. Braid can be layered over ribbon; beads can be attached on top of ribbon or braid – let your imagination run free.
7. When complete, lay the lining piece of A over the (now decorated) main fabric piece, right sides together and machine stitch the top hem. Trim, fold over to the back and press.

Flap and back of bag

8. Tack the batting to the inside of piece B in the main fabric.
9. Iron a piece of Vliesofix on the back of the fabric to be used for the leaf motif. It is useful to match the grain of the motif fabric to the grain of the main purse. Cut out the leaf shape. Remove the backing paper and iron the motif to the right side of the flap (above the notch).
10. Machine stitch around the edge of the leaf carefully with a close zig-zag stitch. Repeat with a wider stitch if needed. Then add other decoration. In the example shown there are three leaves in the motif with a central vein. The decoration includes free-motion stitch (note 4) in a contrast thread on the margins of the leaf, braid forming the central vein and outlining the leaves, plus some hand-sewn sequins and beads.
11. When complete, lay the lining piece of B over the (now decorated) main fabric piece, right sides together and machine stitch the top between the notches. Trim round the curved top then turn right side out and press.

Assembly

12. Make a shoulder strap one metre long by plaiting three different braids, threads or ribbons matching colours or a contrast. Secure the ends with no-fray glue or sellotape (note 2).
13. Stitch firmly to the bag (right side) at the notches, so that the strap lies on the bag and the ends are stitched into the seam;
14. Lay piece B on a flat surface with the right side up and the shoulder strap lying on it. Place piece A right side facing over this to match the seams. Pin. Machine from one seam notch round the outside raw edges to the other notch. This is the pocket part of the bag. Trim the seam and overlock neatly before turning the pocket front to the front of the bag.
15. Attach the button and make a buttonhole stitch loop to fit (note 5).

Thanks to Jill at Thimbles and Threads of Upper Hutt who gave me ideas for my bags.

Jean Rothwell, Upper Hutt

NOTES

1. The pattern was first published in ANZEG's magazine, *Threads*. See Issue 82, April 2021.
2. Alternatively use a ready-made cord (see red bag). The attractive triple braid cord is shown on the blue bag.
3. Leave the notches to mark the position of the flap.
4. Loosen the tension on the thread for free-motion stitching, especially if using metallic thread
5. The final size is 19cm wide by 20cm high – you can scale the pattern up or down for a smaller/larger bag.

Full size patterns follow on the next pages...

FRONT OF JEAN'S BAG

Remember to add a seam allowance.

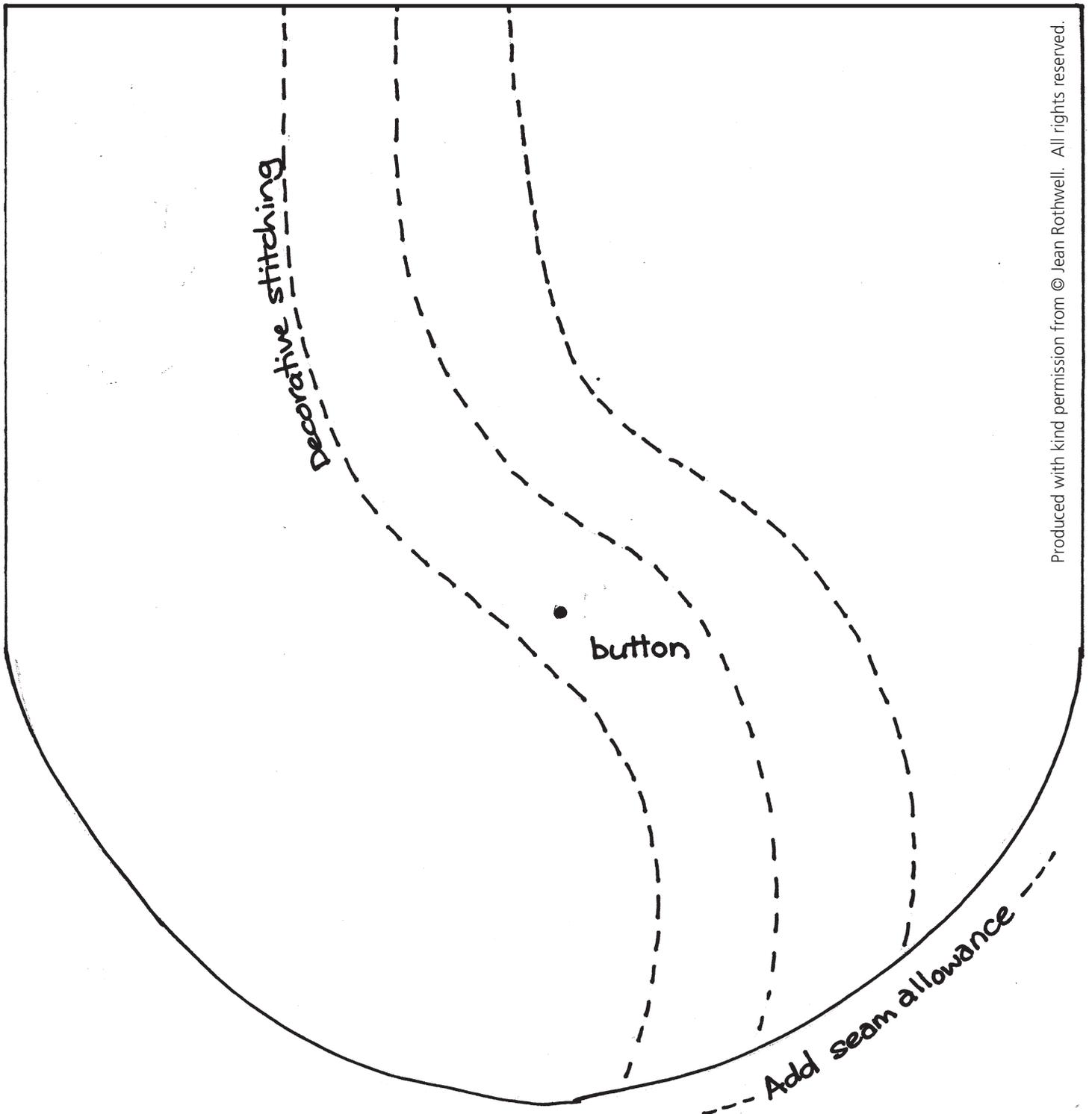
- Cut: one main fabric
- one lining fabric
- one batting.

Tack the batting to the back of the main fabric and decorate before constructing the bag.



190mm

FRONT (TOP)



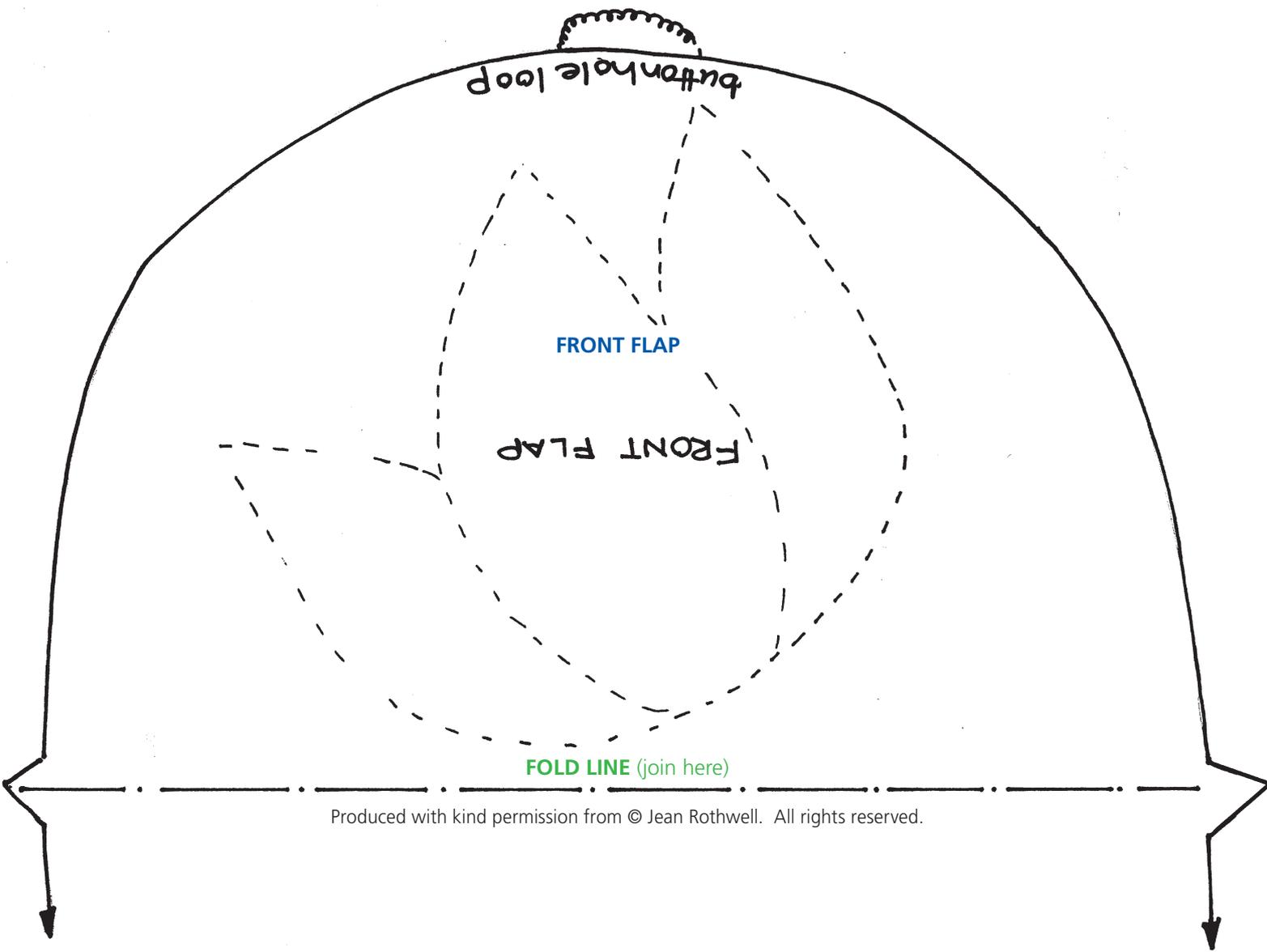
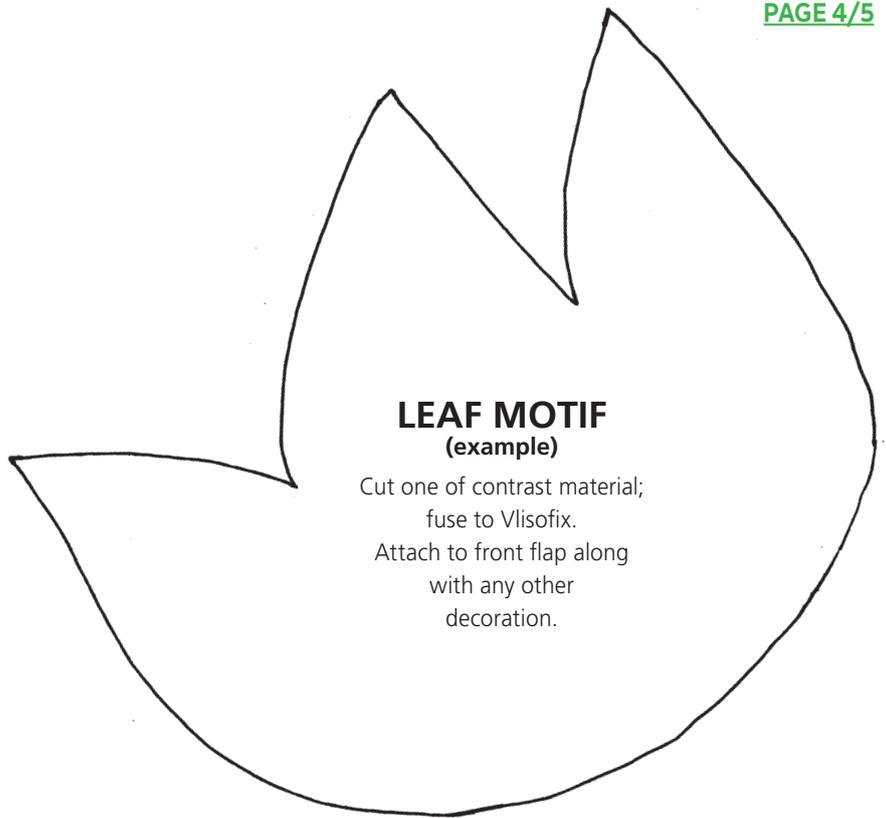
BACK OF JEAN'S BAG

Copy both these pages and tape them together on the fold line.

Remember to add a seam allowance.

- Cut: one main fabric
- one lining fabric
- one batting.

Tack the batting to the back of the main fabric and decorate before constructing the bag.



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0mm 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 110 120 130 140 150 160 170 180

190mm

FOLD LINE (join here)

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BACK OF JEAN'S BAG

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