

Spotting the Reproduction Parts and Pieces – Compiled by Chris Jordan

There is a great deal of controversy regarding whether reproduction parts are good or bad for the hobby, but that is an entirely different discussion beyond the scope of this article. The fact is that many Pez parts have been reproduced and it behooves a collector to know what they are buying by being able to identify a reproduction part or a pez factory made part. Often, that is not as easy to do as some may think or claim as the quality of the parts improved.

In the mid 1990s, the flocked pez stands were reproduced in red and white like the originals, as well as in green and blue. The difference is easy to spot because the real stands from Pez Co have the PEZ written the same way they always do, with the middle bar of the E shorter than the top and bottom bars. The reproduction flocked stands have the middle bar the same length as the top and bottom bars. Lots of these were made and then sold or given away. On December 31, 2015, a set of 4 of these sold for \$46 plus shipping, having been advertised as “Set of 4 Original Red Flocked Velvet PEZ Stand Holders Each Holds 6 Dispensers”. Whether the seller knew they were reproduction or not, they were not as advertised. A pair of green ones is for sale on Sunday 2/14/16, closing 2/19, Vintage PEZ GREEN FELT NO FEET Lot of 2 Display Stands.



The real Olympic Snowman hat and hatband are often replaced by a rubber hat and band from an Olympic Snowman keychain. Because the size and shape are very similar, you need to know what to look for in a photo, since you really can't feel the difference when looking online. The real Olympic Snowman hatband has 3 distinct vertical bars in the center below the plumes and the plumes are much broader on the real piece. The real hat itself has a distinct upside down Y shape while the keychain hat has more of an upside down V shape with a flat bottom.



Real



Keychain hat

Reproduction pez parts were likely first made in the mid to late 90s as the hobby exploded in popularity. In 2000, John King (Sergeant PEZ) was advertising reproduction parts on the PezHead Yahoo list including:

- Goatee/beard for the Mexican Boy
- Regular mustache (i.e., doctor, fireman, etc.)
- Earrings for the Mexican Boy
- Policeman's badge
- Sheriff's badge
- Mustache for Ringmaster (not molded from an 'original' mold)

He also advertised that "I can make other "smaller" parts if I happen to own that "original" part myself." He also stated "Sorry but at present time, I don't have the time or the material necessary to make reproduction of any Hats/Caps."

Most of these earlier reproduction parts were made of a resin which has very little flexibility and were painted. These parts were usually 'rough' around the edges and the texture throughout was often lumpy, bumpy or uneven, not smooth like real parts.

It wasn't long before John J. Herrmann began making parts which he sold on eBay and through the PezHead Yahoo list. Maharajah jewels in unusual colors, elephant hair, Knight's plume, and even fireman hats in standard red or easily identifiable yellow and blue were available, along with Fireman badges. He was selling repro doctors hair, reflectors, mustaches, boy's caps in standard blue as well as not so common red, and nurse's caps. He began using the name Mrs. Calabash when he introduced the reproduction stethoscope. These pieces were made of more flexible plastic, closer to the polymers used for the real parts. Some of them are very difficult to distinguish from real parts. Some collectors would obtain these pieces, then spend the time with a nail file or otherwise sanding them to smoothness, making them harder to detect. In April 23, 2003, John stated that he would stop making these parts and that if he were to start making them again, they would be marked with a letter "R" on them. These parts were still being sold by John on eBay on and off through 2011 and none were ever marked with an "R" to indicate they were reproduction parts.

The following side by side comparisons are reminders of what to be watching for in the reproduction parts.



Mexican Goatee/mustache – resin material – inflexible and rough



Mexican Earring – Real – note detail and distinct rim edge



Resin Repro Mexican Earring - inflexible, lacks distinct rim edge



Back of Resin Repro - rough, uneven and the post is made from a toothpick!



Color and feel of poly repro is harder to distinguish, especially if you don't have a legitimate comparison.



Front side Black Mustaches – notice the unevenness of the post and lumpy texture



Back side Black Mustaches – notice the rough edges and post differences



Doctor and fireman mustaches



Real Ringmaster mustache smooth and even, with 2 flat circles
Rounded post tip, even width top to bottom



Repro Ringmaster – notice primitive roughness on resin stache, polys look pretty good



Policeman Badge – real has more edge detail and is shiny silver color; Repro has a flat grey color and lacks scallop edge on top and the back side of repro is rough, lacks edge detail and post is very messy.





The Fireman Hat and Badges were reproduced, not only in red but also in blue and yellow. Notice the roughness of the lines in the hat and the lack of distinct edges on the Badge.



Doctor hair real and repro



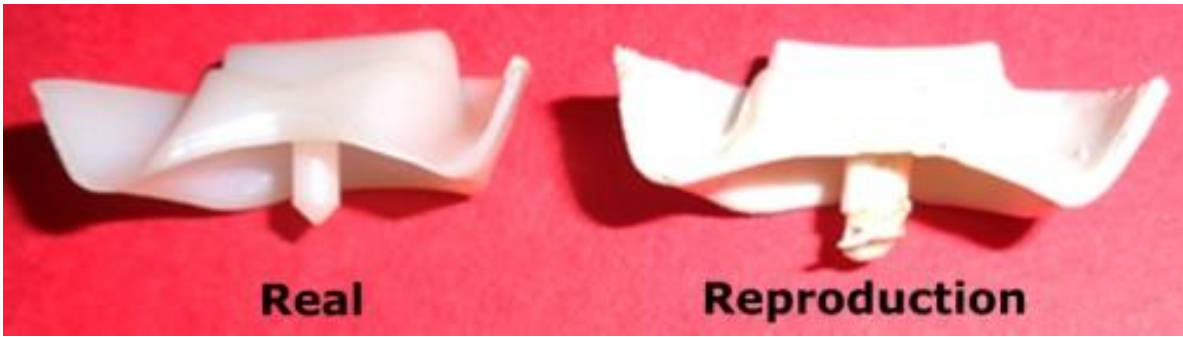
Real Reflector with dark line in smooth plastic



Repro Reflector is rough and uneven and it has no line



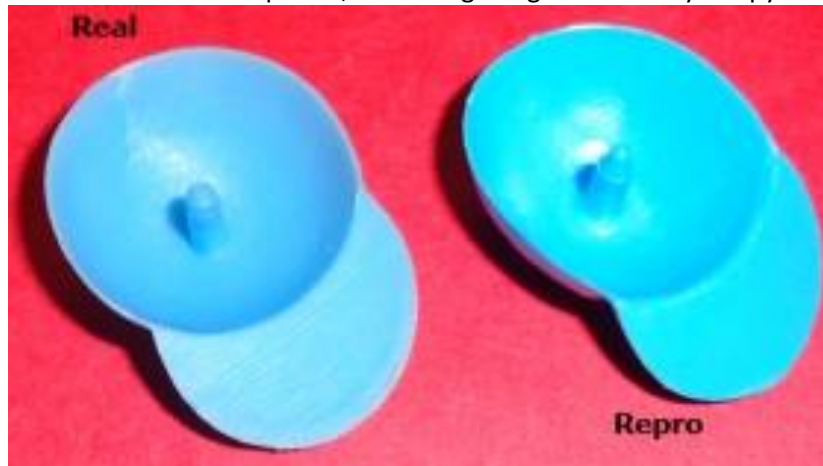
With a bit of filing, sanding and polishing, even the repro can look pretty good!



Real caps can be a semitranslucent or opaque plastic, but they always have smooth edges and a pointed tip to the post.
 Reproduction hats have rough, bumpy edges and the posts are messy.



Boys Caps were reproduced with a less flexible plastic, have rough edges and a very lumpy bumpy feel to the dome.



The underside of the real hat has very fine lines running from side to side on the bill that can be felt with a fingernail.
 The Repro is lumpy and bumpy. The post of the repro is pointed while a real post tip is rounded.



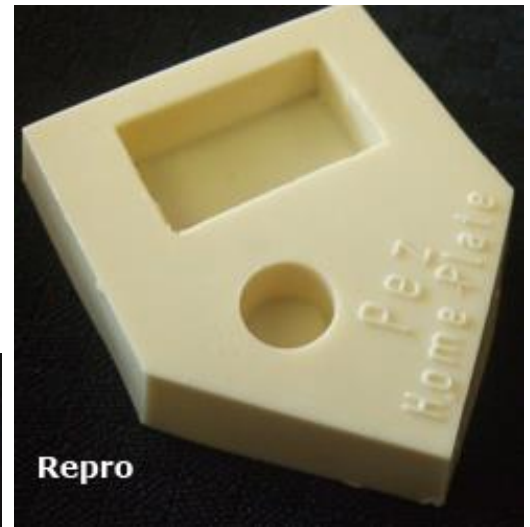
A real Batman Cape is flexible enough that you can pinch the bottom corners of the cape together. The reproduction capes are much less flexible. The real cape has a number on the inside, in the pleat to the left of center, about a half an inch up from the bottom. Real capes are thinner than reproductions and when held up to the light, a bit of light will shine through in some places. Black capes were never produced by Pez Co. and a legitimate batman pez that might come with a cape will have a copyright Sign Nat'l Periodicals Pub's, Inc.



Repro Maha Jewel has rough edges and is made of soft plastic, while the real jewel is made of a hard polystyrene like the stems.



The repro Sheriff Star is rough and uneven. It should be smooth with very even edges.



The Repro bat and home plate are being sold now on eBay, and they are clearly advertised as Reproduction parts. The baseball glove stem will not fit into the home plate, which does have rough edges. With some work, the edges could be sanded and the hole widened for the glove to fit.



This Reproduction copy of Uncle Sam's Hatband was being sold on eBay January 23, 2016. The seller advertises it as a reproduction and notes that it has a true vintage look.

There are also several other items which are often reproduced – the stripe for a football player, the white sticker with a red dot on Paul Revere's cap and stickers for the Psych Eye stems are among the items to watch out for.

Special thanks to Rob Yarak and Dale Pike for their collaboration and allowing me to use photos from their websites

- Rob Pezmorized Yarak's website - <http://www.pezcandydispenser.com/repro.html>
- Dale Pike's Collecting Pez website - <http://www.collectingpez.com/comparison/index.html>

along with my own photos and observations. Also a special thanks to the Yahoo PezHeads list for keeping the group and the archives available. It provides a tremendous resource for the rich history of pez and pez collectors! Happy Pezzing!