



Henry's Buttons



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Newsletter

July 2011

Dorset Buttons

At the beginning of the year I outlined a few aims that I wanted to achieve during the year. With your help we have moved forward on a number of fronts.

One of the aims was to bring the Dorset Button making industry back to Shaftesbury, and what better way than to have a dedicated exhibition in our local museum, which will help to create better understanding of the Dorset Button industry. The exhibition includes a dress dated 1800s with original Singleton buttons kindly on loan by a museum volunteer. I think this exhibition is one of the most comprehensive I have seen in any museum.

With the help of Kathy Deakin and Judy Adams, we have also mounted an exhibition in the Blandford Tourist Information Centre from 27th May to 17 June and attended various events demonstrating and selling buttons.

Creating a social enterprise and the sale of goods and services

Another aim was to develop the opportunity for a social enterprise based on the local heritage of the Dorset Button industry and create an opportunity through which people can collectively provide goods and services around the industry.

Henry's Buttons received a commission from the Shaftesbury Town Twinning Association for a picture of Shaftesbury featuring Dorset Buttons to be presented to their twinned town of Lindlar in Germany. The Twinning group wanted the buttons in the colours of the Dorset flag and images of Shaftesbury and a brief history of the industry. Judy Adams liaised with the Twinning Association and took the brief and she together with Kathy Deakin made the buttons. I was commissioned to arrange for a print of Shaftesbury on lined fabric. The picture was presented at the twinning Associations last evening of their trip to Lindlar. The secretary of the Shaftesbury Twinning Association reported that "The hosts were delighted with such a beautiful and unusual gift."

I continue to receive orders from the Henry's Buttons website from this country as well as Australia and the United States. This is very encouraging as there seems to be an active interest world wide.

Developing a social enterprise now consists of three active people, however there are a number of others who continue to take an interest for their own personal reasons including making buttons for historical



Top: Exhibition of Dorset Buttons at Gold Hill Museum.

Above: exhibition of Dorset Buttons at Blandford TIC.



Supported by



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re-enactment costumes. I have now identified four outlets for the sale of our goods under the 'Henry's Buttons' banner. Two of these outlets already stock our goods. However, we are limited to the number of items and the quality that we can produce. Three of us are currently discussing 'quality control' of the buttons as well as the finishing off of the goods we sell through the 'Henry's Buttons' label.

If anyone is interested in receiving further information please contact me.

Events

The season started in the beginning of May with a very successful event at the Dorset Day at Clayesmore School in Iwerne Minster, where we generated a lot of interest and picked up a couple of commissions including a training session for a mother, her daughter and the daughters partner to make Dorset Buttons for wedding gifts. These buttons will be put onto cards with the guests' table names and have a brief history of the industry especially as it started as a love story (Abraham Case fell in love with a local girl and settled in Shaftesbury).

Next came the a Celebration of Arts, Crafts and Flowers at the Blandford Parish Centre at the end of May. This was another successful event which generated interest and sale of goods.

This was followed by the Charlton Dog Show and Craft Fair at Charlton, Ludwell. Unfortunately, it rained all day and attendance was low.

With the help of Peter Jameson I have tried to arrange for a stand at the Stock Gaylard Oak Fair at the end of August but unfortunately, I received a reply saying they only take wood related crafts but may reconsider next year.



Top: Goods for sale at the Dorset Day at Clayesmore School.
Above: Kathy Deakin demonstrating at the Blandford parish Centre

Future plans

Two further workshops for beginners have been planned for the 13th October and 10 November.

The cost is £35.00 and includes materials, refreshments and a light lunch. Details are on the website www.henrysbuttons.co.uk or just phone me on 01747 829010.

Henry's Buttons website continues to attract around 600 visits a month and I propose to increase the number of items for sale on the Shop page to include brooches and other goods made from buttons.

I am also looking at two other workshops for the beginning of next year. One is with Kate Pickard, Chairman of the North Dorset Quilters on 'Working with buttons' with ideas on how to use the buttons once you have made them. The other workshop will be more of an idea swap on how to make High Tops and Dorset Knobs, an opportunity to get together and have a go on making these, the first, intricate buttons. If you are interested in either of these workshops please let me know.

I'm going to move the Button and Banter evenings to a different venue. If you would like to join us at our next evening on Thursday 20th October can you please let me know by the end of September so know what size room to look for! Thank you.