

The months have flown by since my last Newsletter and much has happened. Since the Gold Hill Museum, Shaftesbury, opened in July 2011, I have had more time to dedicate to Dorset Buttons, including research into the industry and organising and taking workshops. Our monthly Button and Banter evenings are still going strong and are now hosted in turn by those who take part.

It always surprises me how widespread the interest in buttony is as I am now in correspondence with buttoners from America and Australia. I was away for the whole of December visiting Australia, taking my button making bag with me so as not to lose the opportunity to show anyone interested what I was up to!

I have tried to include as many diverse uses of Dorset Buttons as I can to demonstrate how these buttons can be used other than as a fastening.

Buttony is also featured in modern fiction. *Burning Bright* by Tracy Chevalier is about a family from Dorset who move to London. Her description of a mother and daughter working at buttony is very emotive.

I hope you find it of interest and, could perhaps, help me with the next issue by emailing stories, images and any anecdotes that I can include in my next issue.

Anna McDowell

Jan Garside, hand woven textile artist, uses Dorset Buttons in her most current work of art.

"Made in the Middle", a Craftspace touring exhibition, 2012-13 A partnership between Craftspace and mac birmingham in collaboration with The National Centre for Craft & Design

Jan Garside has produced a new body of work for the Made in the Middle exhibition entitled, "Trace". The work draws inspiration from the rituals associated with Maidens' Garlands or Virgins' Crowns, first dated in 1680. The Crowns or Cants were funerary mementos thought to have been made for young virginal women who were betrothed but died before they were married. Paper rosettes, ribbons, paper gloves inscribed with personal information of the deceased adorned the crowns which were carried during the funeral and later came to hang in a prominent church position. Many Garlands or Crowns have been lost, destroyed or fragile over time leaving an air of anonymity surrounding the custom. This piece references some of the physical and symbolic properties associated with this tradition to reflect on the absence and presence of loss.

The first two Touring Venues will be at the mac Birmingham 11 February to 15 April . It then moves to The National Centre for Craft & Design, Sleaford opening again on the 28 April to the 1 July. Further details of more touring venues listed at later: <http://www.macarts.co.uk/events/Visual%20Arts>



Images of Jan Garside's work of art 'Trace'



26 & 7 Bones Arts Project *Contributed by Sue Palmer*

Dorset Buttons feature in an arts project about hands and feet, people and place, along the Jurassic Coast as part of Earth Festival 2012

Our hands and feet (27 and 26 bones respectively) are our primary points of contact with the world. With this in mind, artists Sue Palmer and Sally Watkins are investigating how a range of people, working along the Jurassic seaboard, use their hands and/or feet to engage or connect with their immediate surroundings and the broader landscape. These include: a blacksmith, herbalist, coastguard, archaeologist, free-diver, foot surgeon, sculptor, embroiderer and runner. From the information they gather, Sue and Sally are creating an 'assemblage' of artwork involving objects, texts, maps, still and moving image work and performance.

As part of the project, Sue and Sally have been doing wider research into some distinctive aspects of Dorset, and they have been investigating the Dorset Button, both as a handmade object and its extraordinary economic story. Sue has met and interviewed Betty Tett, an embroiderer and needle worker, and member of the Dorset Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers. Betty has been making Dorset Buttons all her life, particularly to go with her handmade knitwear - and she made some buttons especially for the project. You can read more here: <http://26and7bones.wordpress.com/research-2/dorset-buttons/>

'26 and 7 Bones' is part of The Earth Festival 2012, and Creative Coast 2012, and culminates in an event at the Salt House in West Bay on the weekend of the 26th and 27th May 2012.

If you're interested, go to their site for further information: <http://26and7bones.wordpress.com>

Events and Workshops

Sunday 29th April – Dorset Day at Clayesmore Season

Henry's Buttons will again be demonstrating how to make Dorset Buttons and have buttons for sale at this showcase of the best of Dorset past and present for all the family to enjoy.

Venue and time: Clayesmore School, Iwerne Minster, Blandford, Dorset. 11.00am – 4.00pm

Admission: £2 per adult, £1 per child (16 or under), £5 family ticket (max 2 adults and 3 children)

Thursday 19th July - Have a go at High Top Buttons

An opportunity to see how the first Dorset Buttons, High Tops, were made, and have go at making your own High Tops using contemporary materials.

Venue and time: Gold Hill Museum, Shaftesbury. 2.00 – 4.30pm

Cost: £15.00 (bring your own sewing equipment)

For details and to book a place: Anna McDowell Tel: 01747 829010 or email henrysbUTTONS@aol.com.

Tuesday 11th September - Workshop—Use your Dorset Buttons to create something special for that special occasion or for someone special.

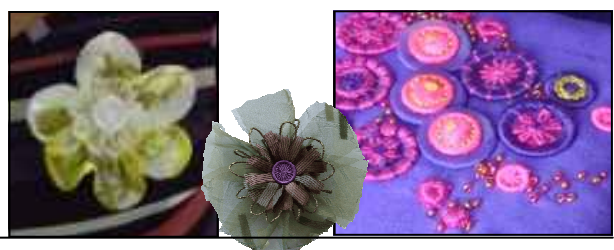
A workshop taken by Kate Pickard, an experienced trainer and an enthusiastic quilter. Kate is a member of the Quilters Guild of the British Isles. She belongs to a post-City & Guilds Course group, "Pieces of Eight", and is Chairman of North Dorset Quilters.

Venue and time: Gold Hill Museum, Shaftesbury. 2.00 – 4.30pm

Cost: £15.00 (bring your own sewing equipment)

For details and to book a place: Anna McDowell Tel: 01747 829010 or email henrysbUTTONS@aol.com.

Samples of buttons from left: Yellow button brooch worked by a workshop participant, button brooch worked by Anna McDowell and a collection of buttons used to decorate a box by Barbara Schey.



Supported by



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