



## Henry's Buttons

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## Why am I always late? By Anna McDowell

As the years pass and my hair gradually changes from a very dark brown to grey, I seem to have also had a change in character. When I was younger timekeeping was very important to me and I had even been known to arrive early for appointments. But now, as I settle into retirement, time keeping has completely passed me by. Yes, I have exhibitions that I work frantically to produce work for and I have orders from my Etsy shop to mail out on time. But I can spend many happy hours in my studio with my



two dogs and the day will just pass me by. If it wasn't for the Monty, the greedier of my two fur babies, who very wisely reminds me that its his dinner time I think I would remain in the studio all day and night. Thank goodness for deadline dates.

My time keeping is not the only late occurrence. Last Christmas deliveries were very hap-hazard with many arriving well beyond the expected delivery date. But this can be an advantage. I was expecting a delivery of vintage linen threads which never seemed to arrive and so I'd resigned myself to its loss and expected I would never see it.

Much to my surprise the parcel arrived! It was just like Christmas all over again. I lifted box after box of vintage linen threads, including W & K Knox linen lace thread and gimp lace linen thread; Barbour's linen thread size 60;

linen crochet thread and a selection of thread with no makers name attached. All in very good condition.

But it wasn't until I reached the bottom of the parcel that I came across a surprise. Skeins of silk embroidery threads all in vivid colours. A few were



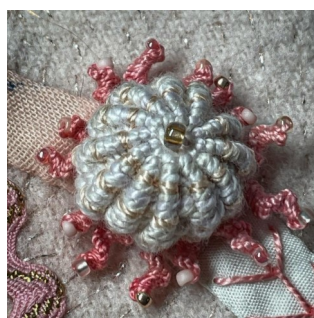
wrapped in a page taken from The Queen magazine and dated 5<sup>th</sup> October 1895. Some of the skeins were stranded and some twisted. But joy of joys many were from Liberty's. Sometimes it is worth waiting for those late commers!

To see a collection of this wonderful find click [here](#).

## Social Media and Dorset Buttons by Anna McDowell

Whilst browsing Instagram to see your lovely Dorset Buttons, I came across this post by Ardelle Kerr, a quilter, wool felt appliqué artist, beginner weaver, and amateur photographer from Camrose, Alberta, Canada. She has designed a mixed textile piece with a thread button that looks just like the Dorset Button known as a Grindle. If you

click [here](#) you should be taken directly to her post.



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# The 'Tudor Rose' Dorset Button by Anna McDowell



In the December edition of my eNewsletter I set myself a challenge to work out how master buttonery, Elizabeth Gilbert, designed a button she called 'Tudor Rose'. Once I had mastered the technique, I wanted to work on another button based on this design to celebrate Charles III Coronation. The

button had to incorporate three colours — red, white and blue.

The official circular logo for the Coronation is a white background with blue lettering around the



outside. There is a blue crown in the centre and a mix of the national flowers of each of the countries that make up the United Kingdom.

My first task was to work out how this button was constructed and then decide where to place the colours. Using a 21mm white lingerie ring and Lizbeth size 40 thread, I worked the casting and laying in blue and the rounding in red and blue. The swathes on the inside of the ring I worked in white.

Both buttons still need refining.



Top left: My version of Tudor Rose button.

Bottom left: Elizabeth Gilbert's original button.

Above: My coronation button based on the Tudor Rose



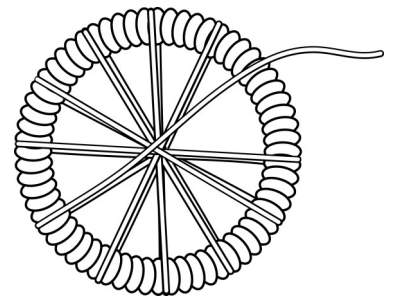
# How I keep my centre, centre by Anna McDowell

When I first started to make Dorset Buttons the biggest challenge I found was keeping the centre of the button in the centre. Over the years I have worked out a technique for working my buttons, so the centres are in the centre. There is nothing worse that when you have spent time of completing your button only to find that the centre is no where near where it should be.

During the pandemic lockdown, I sent Dorset Button kits to my nephew and nieces as a little something for their children to try. It was when my nephew contacted me to ask how to work the spokes that I decided to make a quick video to demonstrate. If the spokes are in the centre, then the rest will only need tweaking when working the rounding stage.

I uploaded my video onto

YouTube and if you would like to view it just click [here](#). I hope you find it of helpful.



# Wylve Vally Art Trail 2023 by Anna McDowell

Every two years I join other artists in this award-winning biannual festival of visual arts and crafts in southwest Wiltshire. Over the last few years I have entered the trail as a single artist exhibition from my studio. This year I joined a group of friends, and we took over the medieval church for our exhibition which was in the



next-door village, Donhead St Andrew.

There are seven of us and we called our group The Salon Group of Artists. A diverse collaboration of artists producing textiles, ceramics, painting and sculpture.

The trail ran from Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> April to Monday the 8<sup>th</sup> May, closing on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May for the Coronation. Over nine days over 600 people visited us. This

was a staggering number when compared with other venues.

This year I concentrated on designing more textile jewellery items featuring Dorset Buttons with beads, many using semi-precious stones. I find the effect of a mix of textile and beads combine to make stunning statement pieces. Here are some of the pieces I had on display. To see a very short video of my exhibition please [click here](#).

# I Love Dorset Buttons

Over the last few months, I have received several emails from buttoners who have just discovered this very addictive craft or who have rediscovered Dorset Buttons learnt many years in the past. It is always interesting to hear your stories and I have got permission to share three of these stories with you.

## **Christine Tutt from Canberra, Australia**

The first photo shows the first Dorset Button I made many years ago in the 1980's. I rediscovered the craft a few years ago and now make the buttons along with all the other craft work I do - patchwork, knitting, EPP, quilting, sewing, embroidery, the list goes on and on. Keeps me happy and busy. I love Dorset. It is my favourite county alongside North Yorkshire, but as my husband says all of the UK is beautiful. I have been lucky enough to visit a few times as my ancestry is totally of the British Isles, and I have family there as well.



## **Suzanne Munroe from Rhode Island, USA**

I love Dorset Buttons and am a beginner at making them but love them in my art work. Here are three pieces, that I made using my own handmade Dorset Buttons! Your newsletters keep

me inspired to learn more and keep making them!

## **Liz Kerr from Australia**

Thank you for that blast from the past which was your article about Jack Hargraves (December 2022). My family must have watched that programme for a while as the theme song comes to mind even now and at odd times. My family migrated from Dorset to Australia in 1964 when I was fourteen and I can remember stitching a Dorset feather stitch apron at school as part of the Domestic Science class. Unfortunately, it didn't survive the packing when we migrated. I have started making Dorset Buttons inspired by a book given to me by my youngest sister and I enjoy reading the articles in your newsletter.



# My Jacket by Jenny Lang



It was lovely to meet you and admire your wonderful buttons at the Wylde Valley Art Trail, thank you for sharing and for taking an interest in my jacket!

The jacket is hand spun from ready prepared, washed, carded and dyed fibre, all of it wool from a variety of breeds including Merino. The colours were selected and sorted prior to spinning then spun randomly so that the yarn changes colour as you use it. It is

chain-plied in order to keep the colours distinct (a normal two-ply yarn would mix the colours). It is crocheted all in one piece with no seams and finished with matching Dorset buttons.



# Workshops and Events 2023

**Friday 4th August - Tues 8th August**

**[Dorset Arts & Crafts Association Annual Exhibition](#)**

Showcase 2023

Venue: Purbeck School, Wareham BH20 4PF

Time: 10am – 5pm, Tuesday 10am to 4pm

Entry and details: Adults £5.00, Seniors (age 66 and over) £4.00, Age 18 and under Free, DACA members Free.

Details: For full details click [here](#)

**Sunday 6th August 2023**

**Dorset Button Workshop: Tradition Meets Modernity Dorset Arts & Crafts Showcase 2023 Recycled Dorset Buttons: Tradition Meets Modernity**

Dorset Buttons made with 'T' shirt yarn.

Venue: Purbeck School, Wareham BH20 4PF

Time: 1.30pm – 3.30pm

Entry and details: This is a workshop for children, adults can join if there is space. Contact the [organisers](#) for full details.

**Tuesday 5th September 2023**

**Dorset Button Talk Cranborne Local History Society**

Venue: Cranborne Village Hall 6 Water Street BH21 5QB

Time: 7.30pm

**Saturday 9th September 2023**

**Dorset Button Talk Somerset Creative Textiles group**

Venue: Horton Village Hall, Nr Ilminster, Somerset, TA19 9QR  
Time: 7.00pm

**Sunday 10th September 2023**

**Dorset Museum Open Day**  
TBC

**Thursday 21st September 2023**

**Online Dorset Button Workshop**  
For beginners and those who want to refresh their skills.  
Time: 4.00pm till 6.30pm  
Details: For full details on this workshop and how to book please click [here](#).

**Thursday 28th September 2023**

**Online Dorset Button Workshop Basket Weave and Spirals**  
Time: 4.00pm till 6.30pm  
Details: For full details on this

workshop and how to book please click [here](#)

**Thursday 26th October 2023 Online Dorset Button Workshop**

**Beads and Dorset Buttons**  
Time: 4.00pm till 6.30pm

Details: For full details on this workshop and how to book please click [here](#)

**Tuesday 7th November 2023 Online Dorset Button Workshop**

**Birdseyes and Singletons**  
Time: 4.00pm till 6.30pm  
Details: For full details on this workshop and how to book please click [here](#)



**Saturday 11th November 2023**

**Dorset Button Half Day Workshop**

Textile Group New Milton, Hampshire

Venue:

Time: 7.00pm

For full details of all events please visit the Events Page on my website

[Henry's Buttons](#)



## Share your news, views and projects

I'm always interested to hear your news, views and especially any projects you may be involved in featuring Dorset Buttons. From the emails I have received in the past, I know there are many talented buttoners amongst you. If you would be willing to share your Dorset Button news with other like-minded people, I would welcome contributions to this eNewsletter. Please email your information preferably with an image to Anna McDowell at

[dorsetbuttons@henrysbUTTONS.co.uk](mailto:dorsetbuttons@henrysbUTTONS.co.uk)