



Feedback from online workshops by Anna McDowell

I started my online workshops again in September, so have been busy with making all the preparations — kits to prepare and send to participants, worksheets to be checked, Zoom meeting to be booked, emails to be sent with joining details together with worksheets, my studio to be tidied and finally I am ready. So, when I receive such lovely emails from participants it is a joy. Their comments make all the time on preparing for a workshop worth while.

The images of the completed Dorset Buttons participants have worked after the workshops are lovely. I'm particularly encouraged as the

images show that distant learning can work.

But I must go one further, Pauline, who attended my last online workshop, sent me an email with a poster attached for an exhibition to be held in the museum at the beautiful city of Wells, Somerset. This lovely lady joined a few of my online workshops to learn the art of Dorset Buttony she then took this one step further. Pauline is a member of an independent stitch group who

meet at Ashcott Village Hall which is between Street and Bridgwater in Somerset. Her contribution to this exhibition was to mount a selection of the different designs of Dorset Buttons she had learnt in my workshops. I'm very disappointed as I will miss this



Poster can be found at the back of this eNewsletter

exhibition as I will be away. But for those of you who are in the area, or would like an excuse to visit Wells, the exhibition is open from 10.00am to 4.00pm on Saturday 14th to Saturday 21st October. If you have a chance to visit I would love to receive photos.

I'm planning to offer a new workshop in the New Year on a Dorset Button which is based on a design by Elizabeth Gilbert. Elizabeth is a weaver and expert Dorset Buttoner with connections with the English Lace School in Devon before it sadly closed. In 1979, she ran a series of workshops for the school on Dorset Buttons. This is one of the designs from this series. I can't wait to put down on paper the instructions for this challenging but beautiful button. I will be listing this new workshop on my website in early January 2024.

Thank you all for subscribing to my eNewsletter and I look forward to receiving your Dorset Button stories.

Social Media and Dorset Buttons by Anna McDowell

It was such a surprise to see a post on Instagram showing Rossella Lavarini launching her new book on Dorset Buttons. I remember Rossella, who lives in Verona, Italy, as she attended several of my online Dorset Button workshops. She used the Birdseye buttons to completely change the look of a beautiful lightweight cardigan. You can

find out more about this talented lady from her website <https://manufactura.it/>

Thank you, [Rossella](#), for helping to spread the word of Dorset Buttons in Italy.



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Dorset Buttons Used to Jazz up a Garment



Shortly after sending my last eNewsletter I received this lovely email from Linda Perry, from Maine in the USA.

I am a new fan of yours and your Dorset buttons. I have been making the Cartwheel style buttons like crazy. I love making them- they are very soothing and satisfying to make. I made so many of them I had to sell them, which was no problem! I use Jamieson yarn, so I have a nice collection of colors. I would like to share with you (and your viewers) a basic

black vest that I designed and knit and used the buttons to jazz it up. Keep the button craze going!!

I thought Linda's black vest looked sunning and I hope you agree with me. The simplicity of the garment worked in black certainly shows off the Dorset Buttons which Linda has turned into a design feature for this garment.

Thank you, Linda, for sharing your lovely garment and I look forward to seeing more images of your garments featuring Dorset Buttons.



Time goes so quickly by Anna McDowell



We are now in September, and I'm sorry to say this, with only three months to go before Christmas. So now is the time to start to plan for the Christmas season.

Last year I developed a Christmas workshop aimed at anyone who knew how to make a Dorset Cartwheel Button. I started to design this project this time last year and it took a while to figure out how to teach this button in a short time span. I only had three hours. But we

managed. I called this project my Four Dorset Button Christmas Tree. The tree was made up of four separate Dorset Buttons. The first two were standard Cartwheel buttons and the two largest rings I worked with beads.

Now all I must do is think of something for this year. I'm planning to offer both online and face to face workshops. Both will take place from my studio. But thinking about what to do, I may well offer this lovely tree

button this Christmas. The two top buttons are ideal for a beginner and all four can be worked and assembled after the workshop. Now I come to think about it, this happened last Christmas. What I did enjoy was to see images of their finished trees.

Another idea is to make a sparkly 6cm button using threads and ribbon from participants own 'stash' and turn it into a brooch. These Dorset Buttons would make lovely presents.

Mother and Daughter Join to make Dorset Buttons in Lancashire, England



There is a book by Tracy Chevalier called *Burning Bright*, which has a short description of a mother and daughter chatting whilst making Dorset Buttons. When I received this email the image, described by Tracy in her book, immediately came to mind.

Well since investing in your book and joining

your newsletter, I have shown my mum how to create these buttons and she has really enjoyed them, and I've done a couple myself, but mostly in the jewellery section, so mum suggested that we send you a couple of photos of what we have been up to, so here they are, mum has created a collection and made them into box frames and I've made a pendant and earrings in a finer

twine.... just like to say thank you from Tracy and Margaret Calderbank.. P.S mum is 82 years young.... never too old to learn new things.

Thank you, Tracy, for sharing the images of your work. It just goes to show your never at the age when you can't take up buttony. I hope this encourages others to have a go.

The joy of the Dorset 'Singleton' Button

Dorset Buttons fall into four categories. The first two, High Tops and Dorset Knobs, thought to be the first Dorset Buttons and made with sheep's horn, fabric and thread. These were followed by Birdseye and Mites which used just fabric and thread. Wire rings were introduced in the 1730s and two further types of buttons were added to the range, the thread buttons known as Dorset Cartwheels and Blandford



A photograph of Lady Lees sitting in the front of the workers and staff. Standing next to Lady Lees is a woman holding her son, Nick Singleton."



Original Singleton button

Crosswheels which were worked used wire rings and thread. Finally, the Singleton buttons which used wire rings, fabric and thread.

I can't understand why the Singleton button is not as well known as the thread buttons. They are versatile and I have used them on many projects. They are simple to make and the original buttons featured a few

simple embroidery stitches on the top.

I have been unable to discover when these buttons first came under the Dorset Button range but I have seen them on original items of clothing dating back to the early 1800s. Another thought is that they were named after the family who started to make them, the Singleton family, who lived in and around Lytchett Minster. In the early 1900s, when Lady Florence Lees started her mission in the village a photograph of her sitting in the front of the workers and staff. Standing next to Lady Lees is a woman holding her son, Nick Singleton.

^ Note to the above: Just as I'm unsure as to the history or context of this, I'm not entirely sure how to structure it. It seems like the first half should be part of the prior sentence and then the remaining a caption for an image? i.e. "Another thought is that they were named after the family who started to make them, the Singleton family, who lived in and around Lytchett Minster in the early 1900s, when Lady Florence

Lees started her mission in the village.

As I have mentioned, I have used these buttons for a number of projects. The way they are constructed can be adapted in a variety of ways. The simple embroidery in the centre of the button lends itself to ornate embellishment; the fabric covering the button can be printed using your own design on prepared fabric using a home printer and can also be doubled up using lace as an over lay. But whichever method, I always stay close to the way the original buttons were constructed.

I hope I have encouraged you to experiment making these buttons and I look forward to receiving your images. If you are interested in learning how to make these buttons, I am running an online course in November. Details can be found on the back page of this eNewsletter.



Contemporary Singleton Buttons

"So much to do and so little time to do it" by Anna McDowell

I wonder how many of you have a mound of unfinished projects that need urgent attention? How do you decide which will take priority over the others? Once you do, there is then the challenge of making the time to start on the chosen work.

Whilst writing I'm in the decision-making process. I have two pieces that need to be completed by tomorrow. Yes, it is achievable, but which to start on



One of the many projects that I need to complete!

first? Do I prepare the order for our local museum at the top of Gold Hill in Shaftesbury or restock my Etsy shop with metal rings as I see I've run out of many of the sizes I have on offer? Both must be completed by tomorrow.

I must frame a piece of work I finished in August. Then make twelve 40cm buttons with black and white beads for the centre of my poppy broches for this year.

Waiting in the corner of my studio there is that 30cm button I started earlier in the year which I'm working in vintage silks just waiting to be finished. Oh yes, I forgot to mention that I want to experiment with foiling to use as a background for one of my 30cm button completed earlier in the year.

The list seems to be endless. What are your Dorset Button projects? I expect many of you also have this problem!

Workshops and Events 2023

**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](#)*

**Saturday 28th October
2023**

**Nadder Valley Art
Exhibition**

I have decided to exhibit a couple of my pieces in this exhibition of local artists.

*Venue: The Old Vic, Tisbury
Time: 10.30am – 5.00pm
Details: 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
Details: Please contact the textile

group for information

**Friday 24th – Monday
27th November 2023
Donhead Art Exhibition**

Donhead St Andrew Village
Church
I'm lucky to have been invited to take part at this exhibition to help raise funds the Trussell Trust and the church. The medieval church of Donhead St Andrew underwent an extensive refurbishment to enable the building be used for a place of worship and as a cultural space for productions, concerts, exhibitions and classes.
Venue: Donhead St Andrew Church, St Bartholomew St, Donhead St Andrew, Shaftesbury, SP7 9EB

*Time: To be advised
Details: To be advised*

**Saturday 25th November
2022**

**Dorset Button
Demonstration**

Blandford Fashion Museum
Pop in for a chat whilst I demonstrate the heritage craft of Dorset Buttery. I will also have my kits, instruction booklet and other gifts featuring Dorset Buttons ideal for Christmas presents.

Venue: Lime Tree House, The Plocks, Blandford Forum, DT11 7AA

*Time: 10.00am – 4.00pm
Entry: Contact the [Museum](#) for details*

**Wednesday 29th
November 2023**

Christmas Dorset Button

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

**Wednesday 6th
December 2023
Christmas Dorset
Button**

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



*A four Dorset Buttons Christmas Tree.
Keep an eye on my website for details.*

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

“out and about”

**A free exhibition of contemporary
and traditional stitched textile art
by Avalon Stitchers**

**Sat 14th October – Sat 21st October*
10.00am – 4.00pm**



**Wells Museum
8 Cathedral Green , Wells, Somerset
BA5 2UE**

www.avalonstitchers.org

*** Closed Sunday 15th & Monday 16th October**