



A new year by Anna McDowell

What is in a number? The old year fades into the past, and suddenly it's the new year. But what does this number mean? It indicates a division of when the new year takes over from the old year. It is a time for reflection. A time to contemplate on all that has happened over the last twelve months. The successes and the failures, new people who have influenced and helped, friends old and new. Families become closer. 2022 was a year I will never forget as it was filled with the highs of the support you gave us for the Dorset Button 2022 celebrations and the lows of losing my husband in March.

But what I am so very humbled by is the support I received throughout the year from buttoners from across the world. Your messages of

can say is please bear with me as I slowly begin to deal with the loss and get back into my Dorset Button creating.



My studio with three projects on the go!

This year is going to be one where I step back and spend time in my studio working on Dorset Button designs for exhibiting at art shows and galleries. I will also organise a few workshops as I enjoy meeting you face to face and on-line so I will continue to organise a selected number during the winter and spring months. This year, 2023, is going to be one of renewing, moving forward to rediscover myself as a single person and a textile artist.

support were a great comfort. I know many of you have been through losing a loved one and understand the ups and downs of the grieving process. All I

Social Media and Dorset Buttons by Anna McDowell

I just love some of the Dorset Buttons that are posted on Instagram. This month I have chosen this Dorset Button posted by **roro_hiromi**. It definitely caught my eye, a brooch with a 5.5 cm diameter full of beads.

Click [here](#) to see this button on Instagram.



Henry's Buttons

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Who remembers Jack Hargreaves? by Anna McDowell

Jack Hargreaves OBE (1911–1994) was an English television presenter of the weekly magazine programme *Out of Town*, first broadcast in 1960. His country TV programmes continued even after the demise of Southern television company with *Old Country* for Channel 4.



Jack was and still is remembered for his television programmes

about country ways and crafts.

One of the many programmes that Jack produced was about the Dorset Buttons industry and featured Elizabeth Gilbert, who was instrumental in helping to save this cottage industry through the workshops she designed and ran in 1979. Thanks to Dave Knowles, a filmmaker who worked on Jack's productions, many of his programmes are now saved and can be viewed on YouTube.

You can view Jack's programme

on Dorset Buttons by clicking this link, [Jack Hargreaves on Dorset Buttons](#). This programme comes from the *Old Country Series 2 Programme 15* and was originally broadcast on Channel 4 in 1984. It is interesting to see how new research into the Dorset Button industry since the making of this programme has given us a new perspective on the industry.

I hope you enjoy the film clip. If you want to hear more about Elizabeth, I write about her in the April 2016 edition of my [Dorset Button eNewsletter](#).

The 'Tudor Rose' Dorset Button by Anna McDowell



Not only was Elizabeth featured in Jack Hargreaves' programme on Dorset Buttons, but she was instrumental in the designing of a number of contemporary

buttons based on the original way of working a Dorset Button. Each was given a name and you can find samples of these in the collection at Gillingham Museum, Gillingham, Dorset.

One such design, and one of my personal favourites, she called 'Tudor Rose'. This button is worked in a single spital in the centre and uses, what looks, like

tatting around the inside of the button. Elizabeth never published instructions for her Dorset Buttons so, with her permission, I hope to use this particular one from her collection as a base to design a button to celebrate King Charles III coronation on Saturday 6th May.

Christmas by Anna McDowell

I know that Christmas 2022 is like a distant memory but the build-up to the festive holiday is always fun. This year, I designed three different festive Dorset Button projects. Two featured Christmas trees and one for beginners using a white hare bead. It is always fun using sparkly threads, beads and



anything else to decorate and incorporate into a festive button.

But what else can you do? The workshops were finished, and I have a bit of time, so I set too and made myself a Christmas wreath. You may have seen it on Instagram and received 79 likes and some of you kindly shared it. I didn't have time to finish it so will be adding to it

before I use it again for Christmas 2023.

One of the messages I received was from someone who wanted some instructions so they could make their own. I have decided to spend the first three months of 2023 writing instructions which I will put on my website to download free. I used a number of crafting techniques so it will take time to work out! Watch this space!

The end of a Celebration by Anna McDowell

Dorset Buttons 2022

I always find a sense of loss when a celebration comes to an end. As we slip into 2023 we leave behind a year of events, workshops, demonstrations, talks and exhibitions all centred around Dorset Buttons. Our celebration started in January with a Dorset Button Mass Button-a-Long, a social event organised by Jen Best of Beaker Buttons. This was followed by several events organised by individuals and groups from all over

the world.

My thanks to all of you for helping to raise the profile of Dorset Buttons and the industry's importance in helping to support families in Dorset for 200 years since its foundation in 1622.

Unlike the Zwirnknöpf button, the original Dorset Buttons were simple in their construction. In a newspaper from the 1840s there is an article that describes a young girl who was making Dorset buttons whose target for the week was a gross (144). The buttons also had to be of a certain standard as they were sorted into

three categories before being carded ready for sale.

Today we can take this simple way of construction and make it our own as we can work without the pressure of mass production. It has been a joy to receive your emails and photos showing your own twist on these buttons and how you have made use of them.

Thank you all for your help and support in making 2022 such a memorable Dorset Button year and for spreading the word about this heritage craft.

Dorset Buttons 2022

A Dorset button doll is part of 14 sculptures by Anna McDowell

It is always gratifying to hear from textile artists who have decided to use Dorset Buttons as a small part of a much larger project. When Helen Jones contacted me, I was very excited to hear about her take on these simple but lovely buttons, a Dorset button doll which is part of 14 Sculptures. Helen made this sculpture as part of an application to Outside In Art National Open Call 2022 on the subject of "Humanity".

What a wonderful way to close our Dorset Buttons 2022 celebrations. These lovely discreet buttons will be on display in one of London's premier private galleries. 'Humanity' will be the sixth Outside In National Open exhibition and the first to tour venues across the UK. Showcasing artworks by 80 Outside In artists, the exhibition will highlight the vast variety and quality of works produced by artists facing barriers to the art world.

'Humanity' will be on view at Sotheby's in London between the 9th and 27th of January 2023 before heading to Project Ability in Glasgow in the summer and then Brighton and Hove Museums in winter.

I have attached a copy of Helen's story on how she became interested in Dorset Buttons and her sculpture.



A Dorset Button workshop thank you from Kathleen Czarnecki, Senior Library Assistant/Adult Programming Coordinator.



Kathleen writes,

"I work at the Kenilworth Public Library, Kenilworth NJ USA. You generously allowed me to use your

worksheets to teach Dorset button making to my fibre arts group.

We had an amazing evening! We learned a bit about the history of the Dorset button, and then we went to work, learning how to create the buttons. Everyone helped one another, and a wonderful time was had by all. We are definitely going to have

another session in the future.

Our programs are free, so the use of your worksheets helped us to be able to run this program within our small budget. We also have a copy of your lovely, informative book, this helped us also."

Thank you, Kathleen, for your very kind comments.

Workshops and Events 2023

Saturday 7th January 2023 Slade Gallery Exhibition - last day

I have a couple of pictures and my kits in this Christmas exhibition featuring multimedia artists

Venue: The Slade Centre, The Square, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 4AY

Time: 10.30am – 5.00pm

Details: 07775 431652

Wednesday 11th January 2023

Dorset Button Talk Dinton WI

Venue: [Dinton Village Hall, SP3 5EB](#)

Time: 10.00am

Details:

Saturday 4th March 2023 Dorset Button workshop for beginners

This half day workshop will take place in my studio amongst all my ongoing Dorset Button work. The morning is designed for beginners and those who wish to refresh their skills. Participants will also receive a Dorset Button goodies bag.

Venue: Donhead St Mary, Shaftesbury, Dorset (full details will be sent when booked)

Time: 10.00am – 12.30pm

Details: Visit my website [Henry's Buttons](#)



My Studio prepared for a workshop

Saturday 1st April 2023 Dorset Button All Day Workshop

Sherborne West Country Embroiderers Group

*Venue: Leweston School,
Sherborne DT9 6EN, UK*

Time: 10.00am

Details:

Saturday 29th April – 8th May 2023

Closed Saturday 6th May for the King's Coronation

Wylve Valley Arts Trail

I'm exhibiting with seven other artists in a Medieval Church.

*Venue: St Andrew's Church,
Donhead St Andrew, Shaftesbury
SP7 9EB*

Time: 10.30am – 5.30pm

Details:

Thursday 11th May 2023 Dorset Button Talk Fovant Independent Ladies

Venue:

Time: 7.00pm

Details:



Donhead St Andrew Church

Saturday 17th June 2023

'Looking at Texture' Studio Workshop

After the success of this workshop held last year I have decided to repeat it. Participants use ethically sourced yarn supplied by Yarn Yarn whose mission is to provide handmade ethical yarns and craft supplies to creative communities worldwide. All their yarns are produced in remote villages in northern India. Each participant will receive their own box of different yarns specially prepared by Yarn Yarn.

*Venue: Donhead St Mary,
Shaftesbury, Dorset (full details
will be sent when booked)*

Time: 10.00am – 4.00pm

Details: Visit my website [Henry's Buttons](#)

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

Outside In Art National Open call 2022 on the subject of "Humanity" by Helen Jones



The Dorset Button doll was inspired by a button found in my mother-in-law possessions that I found after she had passed away in 2022. I started to look at the websites about the Dorset Button and found Henry's Buttons. After reading the info and history section I was inspired to make my doll. It was not easy to find pictorial references of the type of clothes workers may have worn, but eventually I found some information. The history of the female makers in the 1700s and clothing is not well recorded, as they were not important powerful members of the community and poor people often wore cast off clothing. The Dorset button industry employed thousands of the rural poor making buttons as piece workers. By the 1800s the industrial revolution caused a decline of the industry, as machines making cheaper alternatives were built. This led to very high unemployment and rural poverty. Many families were encouraged to take part in assisted emigration schemes by local individuals and charities to start a new life with better prospects.

The Dorset button doll is part of 14 sculptures I made as part of an application to Outside In Art National Open call 2022 on the subject of "Humanity". I am pleased to say that the group of sculptures were accepted, and the work will be exhibited at Sotheby's of London, Bond Street, in 2023 and then go on tour to Glasgow and Brighton Pavilion.

The piece is called "The Crowd" it is a body of work with each person having a story to tell about the aspects of humanity found in a random crowd of human beings and their basic rights to experience, kindness, dignity, compassion, freedom, education, health care, nourishment and a existence without violent acts in their daily life. These include the following, The Dorset Button Maker, Nnenna Kalu, Ozzle Box / The Bear, The Bus Station Eccentric, The E-Bay Seller, The Man of The Hole, Violeta Parra, Margeurite Sivins, The Lady In the Red Coat of Irpin, Maria Franz -The First Song, The Librarian of Kabul, Anoma Paranathala - Gardener, Community Kitchen of Lima, and Fulfulde Script-Ibrahima Barry.

The work is based around the narrative of unsung hero's and heroines of past and present that explore actions and ideas of humanity and inhumanity. It was inspired by the toppling of the Colston statue in Bristol and the principles of iconoclasm. Iconoclasm being defined as

the action of attacking or assertively rejecting cherished beliefs and institutions or established values and practices.

I have designed each sculpture from my own pattern that serves as a basic shape for the figure, it is iconic of my work. They are then mounted on a canvas to form "The Crowd". I then research each figure for their history and visual identity, then draw a simple sketch of my sculptural idea. Then I search my collection of second hand fabrics, saved clothes, buttons and found objects to create my forms considering, colour, pattern and scale to tell a story about each individual.

