



## “Hiding not Lost” a picture in the making by Anna McDowell

As many of you may already have gathered I love working in the round on a large scale. My current project is no exception, although the ring size is 20cm smaller than some of my very large pieces. My challenge is how to interpret Spring based on a tree shape using all three of the Dorset Button designs worked on a ring.

To start with, I used linen thread for the outline of the tree and to work the trunk and branches. The linen thread is from Airedale Yarns who has the most wonderful selection of colours. Most of the linen is a 4ply weight and for this project I worked with four strands. I had great fun measuring out four times 12metres then wrapping it around a makeshift shuttle before working the button. I had to do this four times!

When I look out of my studio window, the lovely primroses are a joy so they too will have to be incorporated into my work. I have decided to use what I call

the ‘Cartwheel’ button as it looks so like a cartwheel for the flower.

For the leaves of the tree, I’m working Singleton buttons using a stretch mainly green multi-coloured lace fabric over cotton fabric. By using this method, I have managed to give my tree the spring look of when you can see the sky through the leaves which are not quite open.

However, where to put the Blandford button which I call a Crosswheel as the thread is wound across the ring many times? I’m thinking that I may use them as blossom on my tree.

This project is still in the making and the images are for information only.



By the way, I have decided to give the finished work a humorous twist as the finished piece is going to be called “Hiding not lost” and you may be able to see the reason for the title in one of the images. The finished work will be on display in my Studio as part of the Wylye Valley Art Trail.

## A spot of colour fun by Caroline O'Brien

I thought you might like to see my latest idea with the Dorset Buttons. It is made on wooden curtain rings and embroidery wools. Of course can be made any length. Hope that you like it, I’m sure not an original idea, but I have not seen one. I used smallest



wooden rings you can get and it does not matter which colour you choose obviously. Very therapeutic.

*Thank you Caroline for sharing this with us. I love the idea of using different colours. Anna*

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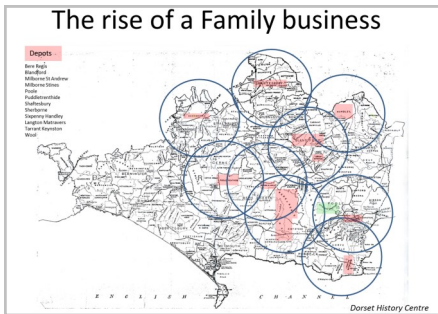
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# I hope you enjoy your visit to Dorset by Anna McDowell

Now that my new studio is up and running, I spend many happy hours making buttons and contemplating the ever changing view from my



windows. I live in the area called the Blackmoor Vale, described by that eminent literary genius and a Dorset man, Thomas Hardy, as the

'Vale of Little Dairies'. The view from my window certainly endorses this.

My local town is Shaftesbury where the Dorset Button industry is said to have started. Thomas Hardy was fascinated by Shaftesbury, calling it 'the city of dreams' because of its history and 'one of the queerest and quaintest spots in

England . . . breezy and whimsical'. I wonder if this is true?

Why am I deviating from Dorset Buttons you may ask, as this Newsletter is supposed to be about this heritage craft? My reason is simple; over the last few months I have received a number of emails from buttoners who are planning to visit Dorset. The reasons for their visits are varied, some to trace their family, others to catch up with family and friends or they may just want to holiday in the area. But whatever the reason the constant question I'm always asked is where to view original Dorset Buttons. I know of three museums that have an excellent display of Dorset Buttons — the [Dorset Country Museum](#) (currently closed for major redevelopment work) in Dorchester, the [Blandford Fashion Museum](#) and the [Gold Hill Museum](#) in Shaftesbury.

For those of you who are interested in exploring the hidden Dorset, why not do a trail with connections to the Dorset Button industry. This is a lovely way to explore our towns and villages. As mentioned the Dorset Button industry started in Shaftesbury by Abraham Case, and from this market town in north Dorset depots opened in Bere Regis, Milborne St. Andrew and Blandford. Depots were also established in Sherborne, Poole, Langton Matravers and Tarrant Keynston. One source mentions that at the Milborne Stileham Agency, set up by Peter Case junior in 1803, buttons were accepted every Friday and the place was like a fair-ground as the crowds were so great. If you were to ask a native of East Dorset what his work was the answer would most probably be "I do Buttony"! *Enjoy your visit*

## “I’m a new Dorset Buttoner” by Julia Clay



*Dorset 'Tree' Button is based on a vintage button dated c.1920/30s and worked by Anna McDowell. The vintage button is part of my own collection.*

Nothing to show you yet but this year three matching Dorset Buttons are an option to make for the Flint-Denbigh show in north Wales on Thursday 15th August and I just thought I would share my thinking with you. Having investigated “Dorset Buttons”, as I had not heard of them before, I have decided to embark upon the challenge. The theme this year for the W.I. is Trees so I will have a go at three tree buttons. I have a distorted vision so this will be an

interesting four months until August.

As long as something is entered and whether it wins or not a point is gained for Clwyd Flint Federation. This is very important as each year competition is fierce between us and the Clwyd Denbigh Federation. Fierce but friendly.

I am a mere infant addition to the Northop W.I. when compared to Ladies who have been members for 30 plus years. One of the members, Joan, is a founder member of 67 years and she has just turned 90.

Another motivation for me is that my Dad's paternal family are from Dorset going way back to the 1600s so there is a double incentive.

Anyway, wish me luck as a complete novice and thank you very much for a very interesting newsletter. I am greatly looking forward to the next one. Perhaps one day I will get to one of your workshops as well as visiting the towns and villages involved with my family history hunt.

*Wishing you every success. Anna*

## Dorset Button eNewsletter almost ten years old! by Anna McDowell



It's almost ten years since I started producing my Dorset Button Newsletter and I feel that I'm building up to a ten year celebration. The first newsletter was distributed in January 2010 and posted by Royal Mail to around 70 subscribers. The stories were about the first workshops a friend and I organised with Joan Nicholls, one

of the most talented buttoners I have had the honour to meet. There was also a piece about a lady who contacted me about a wedding dress that featured Dorset Buttons and future workshops. All this took up two pages of A4 paper.

Today my eNewsletter is distributed by email to over 860 subscribers from all over

the world and has grown from two to four pages. I have received many very kind comments and I know you enjoy reading about other peoples Dorset Button projects.

But how to celebrate ten years of my Dorset Button eNewsletter in January 2020? Do you have any suggestions? [Please email me](#)

## Discovering Centuries of Fashion by Phoebe Gale



I'm currently studying Costume and Performance Design at Arts University Bournemouth. Over the past few months I have been collaborating with Salisbury Museum as part of their Look Again: Discovering Centuries of Fashion project funded by a grant from the Museums Association Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund. The project aims to reinterpret and redisplay the museums costume collection, working with young people and creating links between the generations. I've been working to recreate a dress from their archive, which will be used as a teaching resource, enabling students to try on the garment, and look at it in detail. The dress is a 1830s day dress, made from fine cotton. It has

huge gigot, or leg of lamb sleeves that were very typical of the period. I collaborated with a friend, who is a graphic designer, to recreate the intricate floral print on the dress; this was then digitally printed to get an exact replica of the original fabric. It is fastened up the center back with Blandford crosswheel buttons. They measure 1cm in diameter and are extremely delicate. It's likely they've been worked in a fine linen or cotton. I have used 1cm, metal button rings, and a single strand of embroidery floss. I used Anna's book to help me create the crosswheel button design. You can follow the project on Instagram [@lookagaintsm](https://www.instagram.com/lookagaintsm) and my progress and work [@phoebegale\\_costume](https://www.instagram.com/phoebegale_costume)



## Getting creative by Anna McDowell



I always enjoy sharing my knowledge of Dorset Buttons with those who attend my workshops, and it is particularly gratifying when someone has used the basic skills and experimented.

One of my students contacted me after attending my Christmas workshops at the Thomas Hardy Visitor Centre where we spent a happy morning making Christmas decorations using the cartwheel design. Janet Self was so inspired she went on to make a lot of Christmas decorations for friends. Then, on learning that the Dorset-born son of a friend and colleague was due to be married on 31 December, she decided to make a



special framed gift. See above for Janet's Christmas decorations and her picture on the left.

## Rug Hooking and Dorset Buttons

I received Dec newsletter and enjoy each and every one I get. I have made Dorset buttons for many projects and my latest can be seen in the image. I am a rug hooker and decorated the hair of the "pillow girl" with some Dorset buttons left over. I was in Yorkshire in October

2018 to attend the TIGHR-The International Guild of Hooked Rugs.

*Thank you Cath for your kind email and for sharing your image of your work with Dorset Buttons.*



# Events for 2019

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May – Monday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

**Wylve Valley Art Trail**

**Venue 52**

My work is varied and inspired by the heritage craft of Dorset Buttons. This exhibition will feature large wall art pieces to small items of jewellery using a variety of fabrics, yarn, lace and ribbons including many vintage pieces. Why not stop and enjoy the view whilst enjoying a tea or coffee which I will be



serving throughout the day  
*Venue: Undercliffe Cottage, Donhead St Mary, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 9DG*  
*Time: 10.00am – 5.00pm*  
*Entry and Details: Entry is free. [For full details on opening times and location](#)*

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May - Monday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

**Wylve Valley Art Trail Demonstrations and have a go at Venue 52**

During the Art Trail I'll be demonstrating how to make Dorset Buttons and organising 'have a go' sessions outside if weather permitting. The 'have a go' sessions are daily from 11.00am - 12.30pm and 2.30pm to 4.00pm and there is a small fee of £3 for materials. If you have not completed

your button during the time allowed you are welcome to take it away with you to finish at your leisure.

*Venue: Undercliffe Cottage, Donhead St Mary, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 9DG [For full details on opening times and location](#)*

*Details and bookings: To book your session to avoid disappointment contact [Have a Go sessions](#)*

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2019**

**Poole Lace Day**

This is a new venture for me. The Poole Bobbin Lace Circle has asked me to join them as a supplier to sell Dorset Buttons craft supplies and small gifts. To find me just look out for Henry's Buttons

*Venue: St George's Church Hall, Poole BH15 3EU*

*Time: 10.30am to 4.00pm*

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2019**

**Sherborne WI**

**Talk on the History of the Dorset Button industry by Anna McDowell**

*Venue: Catholic Church Hall, St Antony's Square, Westbury, Sherborne DT9 3RA*

*Time: 2.30pm*

*Entry: Contact the Sherborne WI*

**Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> – Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> August 2019**

**Arts and Crafts Association Annual Exhibition**

The Dorset Arts and Crafts Association was founded in 1907 and is one of the oldest in the country. The Association is dedicated to the promotion of traditional and modern arts and crafts and organise an exhibition with twenty-four different craft sections including one for Dorset Buttons under the section for Traditional Dorset Crafts. This is an opportunity to help keep the heritage craft of Dorset Buttony alive by exhibiting your work.

Hoe to enter look for the Traditional Dorset Crafts Section.

*Venue: The Purbeck School, Worgret Road, Wareham, BH20 4PF*

*Time: Friday to Monday 10.00am - 5.00pm. Tuesday 10am - 4pm*

*Cost: Adults £5.00, Senior citizens £4.00, Children aged 6-16 £3.00, Children under 6 free, Families (2 + 3) £12.00, Pre-booked coach parties £3.50. Free for Members of the Association.*

*Details: [Dorset Arts and Crafts Association](#)*

**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> August – Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> August 2019**

**The Studio, First-View Gallery at Stourhead**

Three artists who regularly exhibit together have invite me to join them this year at their summer exhibition in the Studio at Stourhead. This is a first for me and will enable me to show my larger one-off pieces of work all with a Dorset Button theme.

*Venue: The Studio, First-View Gallery, Spread Eagle Courtyard, Stourhead, Stourton, Wiltshire BA12 6QE*

*Time: 11.00am – 5.00pm*

*Details: To find out more about the gallery click on [First-View Gallery](#)*

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

**Dorset Artisans Craft Marquee Dorset County Show**

Dorset County show Dorset Artisans Craft marquee featuring handmade quality arts and crafts from Dorset, including Henry's Buttons Dorset Buttons.

*Venue: Dorchester Showground, DT2 7SD*  
*Details: for full details go you the [Dorset County Show website](#)*

## Share your news, views and projects

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

[Henry's Buttons](#)

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)