



The first four months of 2022 by Anna McDowell

I don't know how to write about the first four months of this year. I'm usually a creative person and immerse myself in my studio, creating new interpretations for my Dorset Buttons. Last year I started planning new projects to be worked on a 60cm ring. I had put to one side four trays filled with textiles, ribbons, yarns, vintage buttons and beads. I also started a slow stitching project which I designed to incorporate the whole range of Dorset Buttons. All these were ready for me to work on at the start of the new year and all would be ready for displaying at the opening of my studio as part of the Dorset Art Weeks which runs from Saturday 14th May to Sunday 29th May.

But not this year. When someone close to you falls ill all you can do is concentrate

on that person. The emotions you feel completely overtake any creative feelings you may have. The immediate situation takes priority. This was my life from February to April. My husband, Patrick, who was such a support to me and to my Dorset Buttony, had a few



My studio opened for visitors on Sunday 15th May for the Dorset Arts Weeks

health problems then fell seriously ill and was taken into hospital at the beginning of March, where he died later that month. The support I have received from family and

friends has sustained me over the last few weeks. I have also been very lucky with the support I have received from many of Dorset Buttons friends.

I'm now back in my studio and I have discovered how time spent in my studio can act as a healing process to grief. I now know what is meant when doing something creative as part of the process of going through a bereavement is a very powerful way to come to terms with your emotions and understand them better.

I'm at the early stages of my bereavement and using my creativity to start the healing process had to come first and my other commitments, such as putting together this eNewsletter, were postponed. Therefore, I hope you will understand why this eNewsletter is late.

Found on Instagram by Anna McDowell

I follow [@dorsetbuttons2022](#) on Instagram and particularly enjoy the posts for Dorset Buttons made by Claire. It is well worth following [@dorsetbuttons2022](#) and Claire's journey through Dorset Buttony. Her descriptions of the buttons she makes are described with humour.

Here is the description for one of her posts "So the big problem with not doing my regular weekly button is I just stop creating and honestly this is a big thing for me I seem to be going through long periods of not doing the fun

stuff. So I thought I do an upcycled button using the plastic ring that came off a squash bottle. As you can see from the photos these things aren't rigid and the biggest problem is keeping them round. I countered this



by adding a strip of torn fabric at the end this I think hides the irregularity a bit and also I would have needed to join on a new piece of thread so solving two problems at once. What unusual things can you think of to make buttons out of?"

Inside this issue:

Celebration year arrives	2
Auction of Dorset Buttons	2
Dorset Button hat	2
Crafter v textile artist	3
My Dorset Dutton journey	3
Workshops and Events 2022	4

Henry's Buttons

dorsetbuttons@henrysbuttons.co.uk

www.henrysbuttons.co.uk

   Follow me on:

Dorset Buttons 2022

Our celebration year by Anna McDowell

We are now three weeks into our celebration year and it's exciting to see how many of you are celebrating this momentous year in the history of the Dorset Button industry. You continue to send me information about your workshops, demonstrations and other events to celebrate the 400 years from the birth of this cottage industry. You can check out the programme of events on our website [Dorset Buttons 2022 events](#).

In addition to our calendar of events we have set up a page

which is dedicated to images of your buttons, many of them made at the events and from across the world. You can find this gallery if you go to [Dorset Buttons Gallery](#) or access it directly by clicking on this [link](#).

Would you like to contribute your work to this Dorset Buttons 2022 celebration global online gallery? We would love to see the Dorset Buttons you've made either by yourself, as a group or as part of an event. All you have to do is to send us your photos taken in jpeg format and add a

Word document with details of your event, your name and where you are located. We look forward to seeing and celebrating your Dorset Button work.

With your help we can make this Gallery a celebration of Dorset Buttons - made buttons from across the world. It will also act as a gallery to see the different styles, colours and interpretations you have put into making these buttons your own special creations.



A new workshop 'Looking at Texture' using ethically sourced yarns by Anna McDowell

For all of you who have followed me on Instagram and/or Facebook know how much I enjoy working with textiles and different yarns. Just before Christmas last year one of my favourite suppliers, Yarn Yarn, was offering boxes of small balls of their ethically sourced yarn. I couldn't resist this offer so purchased five boxes. Yarn Yarn is one of my favourite supplies as they provide handmade ethical

yarns and all their yarns are produced in remote villages in northern India.

I wanted to share my passion for texture and for textiles and designed a workshop around these boxes. Each participant received their own unopened box of different yarns and a 30cm wooden ring. The day was then spent deciding which yarn to use for Casting around the ring, the Laying stage when making the

spokes and the use of colour and texture at the rounding stage when completing the inside of the ring.

There is nothing more exciting than opening a box filled with lovely yarn and ribbons and I particularly like the idea of Dorset Buttons, a cottage industry which supported families for 200 years, now offering support to families today from across the world. In this case north India.



Top: Box filled with yarn from Yarn Yarn. Completed button worked by Jenny.

A Chairman's Challenge by Barbara Sadler

I am a member of a local sewing group here in North Cornwall and every year we have a Chairman's challenge. With the disruption of covid we have only now displayed our 2020 challenge the subject being "One Colour" and as you will see I am very keen on purple.

I was at that time the programme organiser for our West Country Embroiderers Wadebridge Group, and I had set the members a little project.

The group voted last year to leave

the West Country Embroiderers organisation and on the 1st January we set up an independent stitching group called "Stitch Together". All the original members joined up and I remain as the programme organiser.

The materials I used for my purple was mostly Perle cotton #12 and #16, some were two strands of DMC cotton. I bought some plastic covered wire to make the frame to which I attached the buttons with a stitch. The whole

frame was then attached to a piece of purple silk fabric. My local framer made me the surrounding frame.



‘Shank or No Shank’ and other observations by Anna McDowell

Here is a question for all of you who run workshops and/or demonstrate how to make Dorset Buttons. Do you get asked how Dorset Buttons were fastened onto clothing? Did original Dorset Buttons have shanks on the back? Here is my answer to these



questions. Over the years I have made an extensive survey of items of original clothing held in museum collections, fastened with Dorset Buttons. From my research I have managed to discern that as far as I can see shanks were not in general use.

The Dorset Cartwheel Button was fastened to items of clothing in the same way as a four-hole button. To demonstrate this please see the image left which shows how a Dorset Button was fastened onto an original item of clothing dated 1730s. This example, in the collection held at the Museum of London, is taken from a man's linen waistcoat worked in whitework and fastened at the front with fifteen Dorset Buttons.

The other interesting thing about these buttons is the way they were worked. The rounding is loosely worked, as can be seen in the image of an original cartwheel button. You can just see how many times the person who worked this button went round the spokes. I have come across this method a number of times when examining original buttons - especially on items of clothing dated around the mid-1700s. The question I kept asking myself is why these buttons

are so loosely worked and I came up with the following answer. Workers had to complete a gross (144) buttons a week, so the design was up to the buttoner. However, all the buttons were graded before mounting on card, so the deciding factor was that the buttons were made to comply with the quality demanded by the agents and those who were responsible for grading the buttons. The button in the image was fastened to a high-status item of clothing so the agents must have accepted this method of working this particular method.



Dorset Button Worksheets for downloading from my website by Anna McDowell

With the lockdown restrictions being lifted many of you are beginning to get back to meeting in person. This has been evident in the number of requests I have received over the months for the use of my worksheet that can be downloaded from my website. This is one request I received from a former Embroiderers Guild group in Cornwall. After the decision of the Embroiderers Guild not to support



local groups, I'm always encouraged to hear from groups who have reinvented their groups.

Sheelagh Barker, secretary of Alnwick Creative Stitchers, emailed asking for permission to use my worksheets. "We are planning a workshop on Dorset buttons in November, at the request of members, and although some of us have made them before most members haven't. Your downloadable leaflet is brilliant, and I am aware I could just print off copies but do not want to do this without your permission. The leaflet

would be used as a help guide by our members on the day, not to make buttons to sell. May I have your permission to use this guide with the group of about twenty of our members."

Of course I said they could and, in reply, Sheelagh emailed "Thank you for the use of your instruction leaflet, it was a great help. The ladies of 'Alnwick Creative Stitchers' had a lovely afternoon in November making Dorset Buttons. We used to be a branch of the Embroiderers' Guild until they decided not to support branches anymore."

Workshops and Events 2022

Sunday 15th May - Sunday 29th May 2022

Dorset Art Weeks

Venue 58

I'm opening my Dorset Button Open Studio for Dorset Art weeks. If you are anywhere near Shaftesbury in Dorset I would like to invite you to view my work in my Dorset Button Studio at Undercliffe Cottage. I will also be working on current projects inspired by Dorset Buttons.

Venue: Dorset Button Studio, Undercliffe Cottage, Donhead St Mary, Shaftesbury, Dorset, SP7 9DG

Time: 10.00am – 5.00pm. Closed Wednesdays and Fridays

Saturday 18th June 2022

Dorset Button Talk and Workshop

Dorset Museum

Talk - Dorset Buttons - The rise and fall of a cottage industry.

My talk follows the history of this local cottage industry started by Abraham Case in the 1600s to its demise two hundred years later. I show images of how these buttons were used on original items of clothing. I end my talk with an idea on what is happening now to help keep this heritage craft vibrant.

Dorset Button Workshop

How best to spend a morning/afternoon than to learn how to make Dorset Buttons. For those who already know the craft of buttony there will be the challenge to work a button in two colours similar to one the buttons made for Carey Mulligan's outfits in *Far From the Madding Crowd*. This workshop is designed for all levels and a chance to meet and chat whilst working on this heritage craft.

Venue: Dorset Museum, High West Street, Dorchester DT1 1XA

Time, Entry and details: Contact the [Dorset Museum](#)

Thursday 23rd June 2022

Dorset Buttons 2022 Recycled Dorset Buttons: Tradition Meets Modernity Workshop

2022 is the second bicentenary of the Dorset Button industry. To mark this important anniversary, Textile Artist and Button Maker, Anna McDowell will be joining us for a relaxed workshop and showing us how to turn an old T shirt in to yarn, and using it to make a large Dorset Button Hanging decoration. There is a wonderful juxtaposition in using ancient techniques that have been used by Dorset communities through the ages, and upcycling modern materials to create a unique piece of art. Please bring along an old T shirt and some fabric scissors. We will provide the bamboo hoop frames and any additional thread. Suitable for ages 12 and upward. Children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

Venue: Museum of East Dorset, 23-29 High Street, Wimborne Minster, Dorset BH21 1HR

Time: 6.00pm – 8.00pm

Entry: £5.00 per person

Details: To book a place and further details contact the [Museum of East Dorset](#)

Friday 5th August - Tuesday 9th August

Dorset Buttons 2022 Dorset Arts & Crafts Showcase 2022 Exhibition celebrating 400 years of the Dorset Button Industry

There will be a special exhibition to celebrate 400 years of the Dorset Buttons Industry. Details are a close secret and will be revealed on Friday 5th August. My thanks go to Tania Ashton Jones from [TJFrog](#), Julia Clay, Jen Best from [Beaker Buttons](#) and Julia Carter for mounting this special exhibition

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: Click [Dorset Buttons 2022](#) for details of this celebration year

Tuesday 9th August 2022

Recycled Dorset Buttons: Tradition Meets Modernity

Dorset Buttons made with 'T' shirt yarn.

Venue: Purbeck School, Wareham BH20 4PF

Time: 2.00pm – 4.00pm

Entry and details: Cost £2.00. This is a workshop for children, adults can join if there is space. Contact the [organisers](#) 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