



High Tops by Anna McDowell

High Tops are considered to be the first buttons made by Abraham Case when he stated the Dorset Button industry in the 1620s. We do not know if this is accurate information as there is no recorded information to endorse this claim. What we do know is that the High Top is made from Fabric, a small disc from the horn of a sheep, a flour and water paste and thread. They are, I think, one of the most difficult of the Dorset Button range as they are fiddly as well as messy.

I have received several commissions for these buttons and have spent many happy hours getting myself covered in flour and water paste whilst dipping the fabric into the paste before winding it

around the top of my 'High Top tool' and holding it in place by



Top: original High Top Buttons on black card. Left: Buttons from a re-enactors jacket. Right: a button worked by Anna McDowell

wrapping thread around the fabric.

After the forms are made comes the easy bit. Using a

fine thread, the forms are then embroidered around with the standard blanket stitch used on the Dorset thread Buttons. Whilst I sit and sew, my mind starts to wonder as to how I can incorporate contemporary threads into finishing these lovely buttons.

Then I remember a re-enactors jacket that was displayed at the exhibition of Dorset Buttons in the Gold Hill Museum. These buttons

were finished in silver thread and looked amazing. This led me to set myself a challenge – to develop a High

Top button using contemporary threads. Would anyone like to join me this project?

A well dressed doll by Anna McDowell

It is quite incredible how information about Dorset Buttons is passed around. A lady in Holland emailed me about Dorset Buttons and mentioned a website that made Dorset Buttons. When I visited the site, I found this lovely image of a doll with the following caption "Even colonial dolls like fashionable Singleton buttons on a jacket!". You can get a closer look at the buttons at



www.bluecatsbuttonworks.com

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Larmer Tree Festival celebrates 25 years by Anna McDowell

The [Larmer Tree Festival](#) is a wonderful festival in one of the most beautiful gardens in the UK, the Victorian pleasure gardens developed by General Pitt Rivers in the 1880s. This festival welcomes everyone and is extremely family friendly. This year, the Festival celebrated its 25th Anniversary. For five days in July, the gardens were transformed with street acts, music, comedy, and children's shows. Lanterns lit the garden at night and Saturday was the dress in silver day.



For the last three years, I have been asked by the organisers to

organise a Dorset Button workshop in the Adults Workshop tent. The theme was to be something



worked in silver, so instead of the usual Dorset Crosswheel Button, we developed this silver medallion

button.

This is a daylong workshop where at 10.00am, the tent flaps are opened and participants are given an hour to make a Dorset Button. When they leave their chair, another person can sit down to have-a-



go. As you can imagine, we very soon get into the position where each of the fifteen

people around the table are all at different stages of making their buttons. I'm not alone, my niece, Harriet Page, helps and, I'm pleased to say, a very accomplished buttoner.

You can download a copy of the worksheet for this Celebration Button from my website.

Australian craft group challenge by Barbara Schey

In Australia and New Zealand the 25th April is a very important date on our calendar as it is the date in World War I when the ANZACS (Australian and New Zealand Army Corp), landed at Gallipoli during World War I, with appalling loss of life.

The day is a public holiday and veterans

including nurses and other support staff, march in their cities, towns and suburbs, remembering those people we lost not only in World War 1 but every war since. Children and widows march in place of their deceased relatives, wearing their medals on the right hand side. This year was particularly poignant as it was the 100th anniversary of the original ANZAC landing and Prince Harry and Prince Charles both

attended the memorial service held at Anzac Cove in Turkey.

For some reason, the Flanders poppy has been adopted as a symbol of Anzac Day as many of the surviving soldiers went on to fight in France. My craft group had a challenge to fill two glass cabinets with textile poppies. This is Barbara's contribution to this challenge made with Crosswheel and Singleton buttons.



New Dorset Button kit in the making by Anna McDowell

I am always looking for ideas as to how to make Dorset Buttons using the traditional methods but using contemporary materials.

Over the last few weeks, I have had such fun developing a new Dorset Button kit. These kits are

worked on a large ring (70mm) with knitting yarn and ribbon. I love the different effects that the different types of yarn make when combined.

These kits will be on sale at my stall at the Sturminster Cheese



Festival later this month. I hope they prove to be a success.

A surprise visitor at the Sturminster Newton Cheese Festival

Maureen Edwards visited my Dorset Button stand in the craft tent at the Sturminster Newton Cheese Festival wearing Dorset Buttons she had worked herself. We got chatting and I found out that she was a very keen Dorset buttoner with many years' experience of making Dorset Buttons.

For over nineteen years Maureen was a member of the Dorset Buttons Morris. This ladies Morris Dancing group was formed in 1978 and known for their colourful outfits featuring Dorset Buttons made by themselves, friends and partners.

The Dorset Button industry affected most

of the villages and towns in east Dorset and Wimborne Minster falls within this area. Maureen currently volunteers at the Priests House Museum in Wimborne Minster and has turned her range of skills from costume to making buttons and kits for sale in the museum shop. She also takes



Above: a Morris dancers hat covered in Dorset Buttons. Right: Maureen Edwards with her earrings and button badge.

workshops and makes Dorset Button badges for volunteers in colours depicting the number of years the wearer has spent with the museum – turquoise depicting five years and maroon 10 years. On one of my visits to the



museum, I hope to find a volunteer wearing a silver badge! Thank you, Maureen for visiting my stand and for sharing your story.

Anna McDowell

Dorset Buttons raise funds for charity by Anna McDowell



On one of my trails through Ebay, I came across these lovely Dorset buttons made for Christmas decorations. They are worked on a wooden ring with Spanish yarn and knotted on every turn to create this

stunning effect. The hand assembled centre angel is approximately 25mm in height. The ring is 58mm in diameter with a hanging cord. These buttons are made by a dementia sufferer, in support of Alzheimers Society, 10% of sales went to the charity.

A close relative suffered with this

dreadful disease and I know the devastating effect it can have on families. In the UK alone, around 225,000 people develop dementia every year – that's the equivalent to one person every three minutes. This is a lovely idea, to support this charity with Dorset Buttons

www.alzheimers.org.uk

Dorset Pin Workshop at CQMagOnline

Making Dorset Tree Buttons or something like this image of a bouquet of flowers is growing in popularity. But how do you make them.

For all of you who are interested in having a go I have found this link to a website with reasonably clear instructions which shows you how to make

a button similar to the one in this image.

This is one where I will start to work on to prepare straightforward instructions which you can download from my website. In the meantime you can find details about this workshop at [Dorset Pin Workshop](#)



Events for 2015



Friday 25th September 2015 Workshop – Weddings and Dorset Buttons with Anna McDowell

This workshop is designed to teach participants how to make a Dorset Button using a wire ring and thread. You can then turn your button into your own love token and feature it in a corsage as a memento of your wedding.

Venue: Lace is More, Tamworth Studios, Ginger Piggery, Boyton, Wiltshire BA12 0SS
Time: 10.30am – 3.30pm
Entry and details: Contact Lace is More Tel: 01225 768260 or Mobile: 07804 023498

Sunday 11th October 2015 Workshop – Dorset Buttons for Beginners with Anna McDowell

This course is designed to teach participants how to make two types of the most used of the Dorset Button range – the Cartwheel and Blandford Crosswheel. Participants will either work a button on a fine .08 wire ring, similar in size

to the original rings, or experiment with how different threads can be used to bring these lovely buttons into contemporary use. The aim of the day is for each participant to leave after working on at least three different Dorset Buttons.

Venue: Walford Mill Crafts, Stone Lane, Wimborne Minster, Dorset BH21 1NL

Time: 10.30am – 4.00pm

Cost: £50.00 plus materials approx. £1.50 payable to the tutor on the day.

Details: Walford Mill 01202 841400

Saturday 14th November 2015 SERO Christmas Fair

The Exchange, Sturminster Newton

The perfect opportunity to get into the Christmas spirit and for eager shoppers to snap up some beautiful, unique presents including Dorset Buttons by Anna McDowell of Henry's Buttons.

This event is organised by SERO in aid of the Dorset children's hospice Julia's House.

Venue: The Exchange, Old Market Hill, Sturminster Newton, Dorset, DT10 1FH,

Time: 9.30am – 3.30pm

Entry: Free

Tuesday 17th November 2015 Workshop – Fun with threads – Dorset Button Workshop with Anna McDowell

Learn how to make Dorset Buttons or refresh your skills

then go that one step further with your Dorset Buttons and have fun with different threads.

Venue: Hardy's Birthplace Visitor Centre, Higher Bockhampton, near Dorchester, Dorset, DT2 8QJ

Time: 10.00am – 12.30pm

Entry: £12.00

Details: Tel: 07900 137882

Nov 28th Saturday Workshop – Dorset Buttons – High Tops with Anna McDowell

Like many cottage industry crafts and skills, the exact method of making High Top buttons has been lost in time.

Dedicated researchers have discovered from dismantling an original button how they were assembled and the materials used. Using this information and the results of her own research and experiments, Anna McDowell is leading an afternoon workshop on these intricate thread buttons designed to show how they were made and used. It will also to give you the opportunity to try your hand at making these buttons using contemporary materials.

Venue: Artisan Community Art Studio, 1005 Wimborne Road, Bournemouth, Dorset BH9 2BS

Time: 2.00pm – 4.00pm

Cost: £15.00

Details:

artisanstudio1@gmail.com or phone Pauline 07729 829 209

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 henrysbuttons@aol.com.