



## Thoughts on how to use Dorset Buttons by Anna McDowell

The constant challenge I have with my Dorset Buttons is to think up new ideas for how to use these lovely, simple, thread buttons. I use a number of different sources for inspiration including flicking through Gina Barrett's book "Buttons a passementerie workshop manual".

It is incredible the number of different thread buttons Gina lists in her book. Some are medieval whilst other are relatively new. Some are wrapped in thread, whilst others are crocheted or woven. Many have unusual names such as 'Death Head', 'High Top' and 'Longberg'. The number of different patterns seems endless.

In my opinion, there is nothing more beautiful than a well worked Dorset Button from one of the four ranges. Dorset Buttons makers were paid by the number made so in their very construction they were

simple, and a good button maker could make 144 a week. Dorset Buttons can be categorised on how they are constructed:

Those made from sheep's horn, fabric and thread (High Tops and Dorset Knobs)

Fabric and thread only (Birds Eyes and some Dorset Mites)



Wire, fabric and thread (Singletons)

Wire and thread (Dorset Cartwheels and Blandford Crosswheels)

So were to go next? Once the techniques of making these lovely buttons is mastered how can they be used? The obvious

use is as a fastener but what other uses do they have? I've turned my buttons into earrings, brooches, shoe clips, decorations on gift tags, as a decoration on that special greeting card, necklaces, wall art, coasters, fridge magnets and Christmas decorations. The range seems to be endless as I always have ideas buzzing around in my head.

Another source of inspiration is textile artists that work in the round like myself, and in this eNewsletter I have mentioned a couple of textile

artists that are not Dorset Buttoners although I love their work and colours.

Finally, I must mention a commission that I'm currently working on — 40 plus Dorset Knobs all of which will be worked in black. I'll let you know more in my next eNewsletter.

## Zoom Dorset Button Workshops

During the lockdown I have discovered the joy of Zoom and how you can organize, relatively easily, one-to-one chats or group meetings.

I'm now looking at possibly organizing online workshops which can be designed to cover your own interest. You may be a beginner and want to learn how to make a Dorset thread button or already know how to make Dorset Buttons but want to extend your skills. Why not try your hand at making other

traditional buttons such as High Tops, Dorset Knobs, Birdseyes or Singleton buttons. You can extend your skills to contemporary patterns such as the daisy and spiral patterns or bouquet and tree buttons as well as the using beads in buttons.

I can also organize a session for anyone who has reached that point where they need help.

If would like to join me for a test run please contact me using this link [Zoom Workshops](#). I can take up to six people

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Henry's Buttons

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## An idea for a Dorset Button fastening by Carol Pauline Rauss

Your little gem of a booklet, The Dorset Button Industry arrived yesterday. What a delight it is.

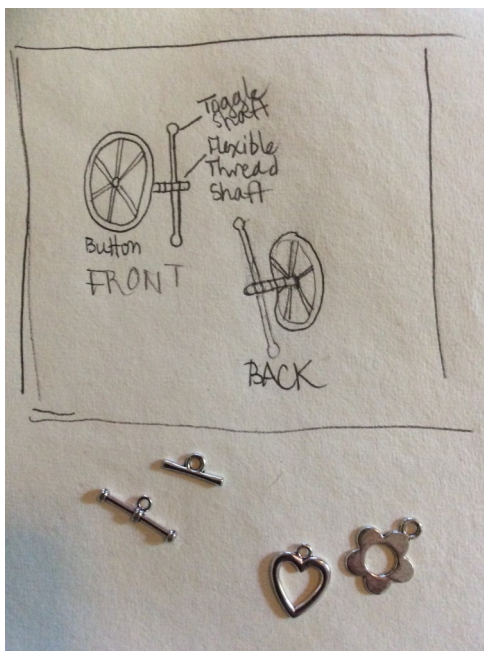
I am quite fascinated with past home industries, though I've never pursued the study of any of them, as you have. I am a novice spinner and novice

Rigid Heddle Weaver (with hopes of one day owning a 4-Shaft Loom!). I am most interested in weaving garments, and closures are essential, unless one styles only open garments, wrap garments and pullover garments etc. The Dorset Button seems to me to be the natural closure for handweavers.

Indeed, even a single brooch-sized button would be a stunning closure for shawls and capes. I came to learn of the Dorset button when it was mentioned in passing on one of the many Face Book Weaving and Spinning Groups, I am a member of. I look forward to calling more attention to your booklet on those FB groups. This morning, I mailed a friend to ask if she was familiar with Dorset

Buttons. She has been weaving, spinning, knitting, etc. since the early 80s, and she had just completed a knitted jacket with yarn that her husband had spun for her. She told me that she had heard of them and that she would look at your site, because she is searching for the "perfect buttons" to embellish her stunning, woollen jacket.

I am sending you another idea for attaching removable buttons-- indeed, it could also be used as a closure on knits and open weaves, and it would not require button holes. All the best, and thank you for your inspiring booklet! Cordially, Karil (Carol Pauline Rauss, France)



## Textile artist Natalie Ciccoricco



If you are a follower of Instagram I wonder if you came across this image posted by [Selvedge Magazine](#). I find her work inspirational and I hope you do too. Artist Natalie Ciccoricco's embroideries breathe new life into vintage scenes. She uses found images and photographs, picking out their

featured colours to create stitched radial circles that act as colour swatches. The coloured threads that are stitched into the images perfectly match their tones and each circle contains many different hues. Deserts, mountains, houses, streets - Natalie likes to use a variety of vintage scenes featuring natural and built landscapes. She also draws inspiration from her

dreams, nature, arts, literature and her travels. Having moved to the United States in 2012, Natalie is now based in California and is represented by Zukowski Collective. It was her move to America that first inspired Natalie to start making mixed media collages and illustrations, as she was living in a new and unfamiliar environment...to read more visit the [#selvedgeblog](#)

## My Dorset Button Starter Kit gets a buttoner hooked! by Anna McDowell



"Hi thanks for my kit which arrived today. I have already made 2 buttons. I have masses of DMC 6 strand threads. If I used 2 would that be equal to the 'coton a broder'?"  
Thank you Helen



## World's largest button made by Wool Women's Institute form the BBC News website

Members of a Dorset Women's Institute (WI) group have set a world record for the largest button.

Six members of Wool WI decided to create the outsized Dorset Button after their craft day was cancelled in February due to Covid-19 restrictions.

It took eight weeks to make with the group working in a gazebo one at a time to comply with social distancing.

Their 2.202 m (7 ft 2in) creation has been verified as the largest button (fastener) by Guinness World Records.

The group were set a base size of 2m for the button by the world's

authority on record-breaking achievements.

Isabell van Millingen from the group said: "We thought we're the WI - we can do anything."

"We created a large frame for



the button out of plastic piping, hung it in an open gazebo and came down one at a time to work on it. We had to climb a ladder to get to the top edge.

"We had hardly any cost involved as one of the ladies supplied the wool from her stash in her attic."

The women said they decided to attempt the record to show that "we still value local traditions, as The Dorset Button was a traditional Dorset craft".

The six button creators, whose average age is 71, were Tess Burt, Kath Burt, Sandra Housego, Virginia McDermid, Sarah Gardiner and Isabell van Millingen.

The button has been put on display in The Kids of Wool building, a venue for children's groups in Wool.

[See BBC One South Today](#) at about 7.40mins into the programme or read the article on line at [BBC News](#)

## Tammy Kanat, textile artist. Weaving creates a mood



I am always seeking inspiration. I have already mentioned on artist that I find inspirational but here is another that has helped me develop my ideas.

I first discovered Tammy Kanat's work on Instagram.

Innovation is at the heart of Tammy creations. After 12 years as a jewellery designer, Tammy has diverted her artistic talents to textiles. The weaving journey began in 2011, when she enrolled into the highly reputed Australian Tapestry Workshop to learn and refine the complex skill of tapestry weaving.

Tammy has gained international recognition through social media

for her vibrant uplifting work and has since produced commissions for local and international clients. She believes weaving is an ever evolving and timeless art form and an enchanting way to share the impact of her surroundings.

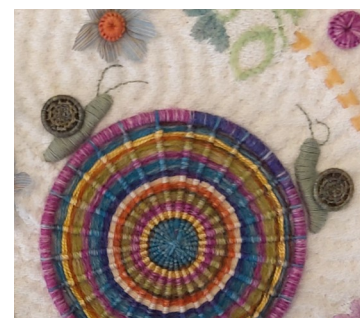
[Go to her website to find out more.](#)

## A bit of fun during lockdown by Anna McDowell



I spent many happy hours during lockdown working on my 'one ball of yarn' project that I mentioned in my last eNewsletter. One of the pieces I worked on I called 'The Antimacassar Garden'. I used an old and very

worn antimacassar which was heading for the dustbin. The original wool, and very worn, embroidery beckoned me and using the slow-stitching technique, I came up this design. From talking to friends there seemed to be an unusual number of snails in their gardens this year so I added a couple for good measure.



## Celebrating 2022

# Dorset Buttons 2022

**2022 is the second bicentenary of Dorset Buttons and we are planning to celebrate this event.**

With your help we hope to celebrate with a number of events throughout 2022 from across the world.

Ideas and events planned include:

- . I have booked two exhibition spaces to exhibit contemporary works of art inspired by Dorset Buttons. Can you add to this list?
- . Interactive events such as online button-a-longs organised by Jen Best of Beaker Buttons.
- . What about a series of Dorset Button celebration online workshops?
- . The Dorset Buttons 2022

website will have a gallery page to show off your Dorset Buttons created by friends around the world

- . Pop up exhibitions of original textile pieces in a variety of museums is also a possibility.
- . Collaboration to create a ground-breaking fashion show using Dorset Buttons in a contemporary way.
- . Launch of a new book on the history of the Dorset Button.

We need your input so wherever you are in the world please chat with your friends and family; groups and organisations; schools and collages; in fact talk to everyone to see if you can organise, however simple or complicated, an event to celebrate Dorset Buttons 2022. Send me details and we can list it on the website diary. This way we can all see how buttoners across the world can join together.

For further details please go to our website at

[www.dorsetbuttons2022.co.uk](http://www.dorsetbuttons2022.co.uk)

And follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)

There is a small core team of volunteers who have join together to get this celebration of the ground. My thanks go to:

Jen Best of [Beaker Buttons](#)

Julia Carter who will help with administration

Julia Clay

Tania Ashton Jones of [T.J.Frog](#)

I look forward to hearing from you

Best wishes

AnnaMcDowell

Email: [DorsetButtons2022](mailto:DorsetButtons2022)



*One of the pieces I was going to exhibit during the Dorset Arts Weeks at the end of May. I worked this button on a 45cm wooden ring.*

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

[Henry's Buttons](#)  
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## 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](mailto:dorsetbuttons@henrysbuttons.co.uk)