



Looking forward to the New Year by Anna McDowell

Each year I set myself small challenges to improve my Dorset Buttony skills. In August I was lucky to have won the Dorset Shield at the Dorset Arts and Crafts Annual exhibition which was a great boost to my morale. The Shield was for six buttons worked in the Dorset Cartwheel design on 19mm hollow brass rings using Turkish Polyester thread. I also included the daisy stitch. But what to do next, and in which area should I now concentrate on practicing my skills?

In the August edition of this eNewsletter, I opened with an article on the buttons thought to be the first in the Dorset Button range, High Tops. I have since developed worksheets and taken workshops for these lovely buttons. But I became fascinated on where and how Abraham Case first thought of developing a cone shaped

button? It was whilst searching for an image of an



*Metropolitan Museum, NY. Doublet.
Dimensions: Length at CB: 22 3/4 in. (57.8 cm)
Accession Number: 1978.128.
Catherine Breyer Van Bomel Foundation Fund,
1978*

early man's doublet that I discovered this image from

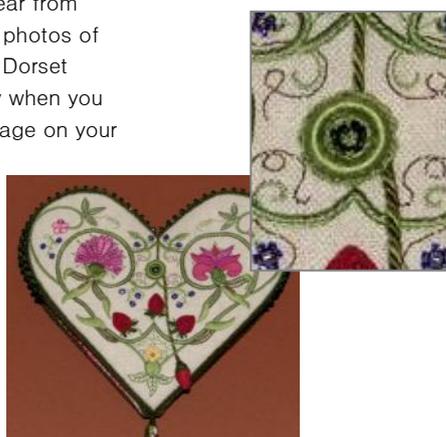
the Metropolitan Museum in New York. This doublet is dated 1580 and the country of origin is European and made from silk, metallic thread and brass. What struck me at once were the buttons. On closer inspection, it appears that the buttons are made from a wood cone shape covered in fabric and then embroidered around. The potential of these exquisite buttons worked in gold thread may well have been seen by Abraham and hence the similarity between the High Tops and these early examples.

In the August edition of the eNewsletter I asked if anyone was interested in developing a High Top button using contemporary threads. The offer is still open.

I wish you every success in 2016 and look forward to hearing about your own Dorset Button Projects.

Samples of your buttony

I always love to hear from you and receiving photos of how you use your Dorset Buttons especially when you also send a message on your buttons. I received this photo of made a Dorset button Alessandra Thor made for her sewing necessaire.



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Dorset Buttons and how I got started by Sarah Marks

I've been making Dorset Buttons occasionally for many years since my mother gave me a Dorset Button whilst she was attending an embroidery course. I visited Shaftesbury Museum during a button demonstration, subscribed to Anna's newsletter and purchased Marion's book on making buttons, which led to some experimentation with different threads and designs.

As I had been making so many buttons and accumulated them, I selected some that I felt were of a saleable standard and booked into a craft fair at the local village hall. I chatted to other crafters there and joined the local craft

group which meets on Monday evenings, as some of them would like to have a go at



button making. I was booked to

demonstrate at the local Day Centre, which went very well as four ladies attempted to make a button each and although they didn't complete their buttons, made a start on the rounding within an hour or



so. I've been asked back as some of the Day Centre volunteers also want to have a go!

I attended two other craft fairs and was very pleased with the number of sales and heard some lovely stories of ladies who had made buttons when they were young. One lady remembered making buttons of different colours for a necklace for her mother – and wasn't sure that the colours went together very well!

So in the past two months, I have had a few sales, but more importantly, I have met some lovely people and wonder where these little buttons will take me next!

Cara Killer creates a retro stand with her Dorset Buttons

When I saw this photo on her Facebook page, I couldn't help but share it with you. Cara, a very talented theatrical costume designer, created a wonderful feeling of vintage for her stand featuring Dorset Buttons at the Church Hall fair at Blandford Forum, Dorset.

Cara volunteers at the Blandford Fashion Museum and designed and made the child's corset and crinoline for young visitors to try

on. I have seen much hilarity when they discover the restrictions these garments made on movement.

Congratulations, Cara, and please continue with your lovely buttons.



Austrian Zwirnknöpfe Buttons by Anna McDowell



Earlier in the year, I received an email from Irmi Flecker who makes the Austrian version of Dorset Buttons. In Austria they are called

"Zwirnknöpfe buttons". She sent me this image of some of her buttons and wrote to say they are similar to the Dorset Blandford Crosswheel button but made differently, as the first stage is the spokes.

In her book "Buttons a passementerie workshop manual" Gina Barrett gives instructions on several continental buttons including the Continental Crosswheel which is exactly like our Blandford Crosswheel.

A 'Shirt Tale' found on the web

When researching original clothing with Dorset Buttons attached I came across this man's shirt with the following description:

"No single garment has bridged so many generations, social classes and continents, so comprehensively as the ubiquitous linen shirt; boy to man, convict to settler, and pauper to prince, all wore the same shirt.

Retaining its fundamental shape and simple style, it altered little between the

sixteenth and nineteenth-centuries.



In her book "Cut My Cote" Dorothy K. Burnham illustrates a sixteenth-century Italian shirt, made from a single, 27" (69 cm) wide, length of linen, folded across the middle and slashed at the neck, with a plain collar,

tapering sleeves and long underarm gores.

Bath's Fashion Museum houses a late sixteenth-

century linen shirt that is similarly constructed but the body is a more generous 38" (96.5 cm) wide. The sleeves are simple rectangles gathered into cuffs at the wrist.

An early nineteenth-century linen shirt at the National Maritime Museum is an example of a non-regulation garment worn by ratings beneath their heavy uniforms and exhibits virtually the same basic design and cut as the aforementioned specimens.

The shirt has three Dorset Buttons in the Blandford Crosswheel design. It's interesting to see how these buttons have stood the test of time.

You can find out more about from [Peg and 'Tails](#) website.

Spirals, rings within rings and zippy bags



During October, I was contacted by Lyn Millies who mentioned that she had worked Dorset Buttons at her Embroiderers' Guild meeting in September. The challenge was to work a Dorset Button to hang within a ring already covered. This challenge re-kindled her interest in making Dorset Buttons and she was now

ready to attempt the spiral designs.

We managed to sort this out by email and Lyn soon became adept at working the couple of spiral patterns she hadn't been able to work out.



Here is a photo of Lyn's latest buttons attached to a Zippy Z Bag. I think she should be really pleased with the result. The photo shows the bag flat and then with the zips done up.

More about Dorset Nosegay Buttons by Anna McDowell



Samples of Barbara's work

In response to my short article in the August edition on Nosegay buttons, it was lovely to hear from two buttoners, both from Australia.

Barbara Schey wrote "I was interested in your article on Nosegay buttons, that is where I first started 30 years ago. I admired a friend's small

"flower brooch". She allowed me to examine this but it was not until a year or two later I discovered the Nosegay Brooch was actually derived from a Dorset button. This was long before the internet was available, but with the help of a few friends, I managed to find the addresses of two "buttoners" in England and my journey

began. During 1987, I made 140 of these little brooches, embroidered with handspun silk.

It was a lovely surprise when I opened a letter from Australia from Susan Lendon who kindly posted a nosegay kit from her early days of buttony. She used a lot of silk ribbon for the knots and was very rewarding.

There will be more from Barbara in April's eNewsletter.

Events for 2016

Monday 1st February 2016 Workshop – Bright as a Button – Dorset Button Workshop with Anna McDowell

Learn a traditional Dorset craft in the lovely woodland setting which inspired the writer Thomas Hardy. This workshop will be run by Anna McDowell (from Henrys Buttons) who will share her creative flare with attendees to create their own traditional Dorset Button, with a modern twist of colour and different threads. Venue: Hardy's Birthplace Visitor Centre, Higher Bockhampton, near Dorchester, Dorset, DT2 8QJ Time: 10.00am – 12.30pm

Entry: £13.00 to include morning coffee plus £1:00 for materials direct to Anna
Details: Tel: 07900 137882

Friday 19th and Saturday 20th February 2016

Two Workshop – Celebrating the Snowdrop with Dorset Buttons with Anna McDowell Gold Hill Museum, Shaftesbury

This half day workshop is designed to celebrate the

Snowdrop with Dorset Buttons. Participants will leave with their own Dorset Singleton Button featuring Snowdrops or a Dorset 'Cartwheel' Button in Snowdrop colours. Venue: Gold Hill Museum, Gold Hill, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 8JW Time: 10.30am – 1.00pm Cost: £10.00 per workshop Details: [Henry's Buttons](#)



Monday 18th April 2016 Workshop – Bright as a Button – 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: £13.00 to include morning coffee plus £1:00 for materials direct to Anna
Details: Tel: 07900 137882

Saturday 23rd – Sunday 24th April 2016 Brockenhurst Needlework FIESTA

Join hundreds of visitors from Hampshire, Dorset and beyond at this exciting event in the beautiful New Forest village of Brockenhurst. Stalls and exhibits range from the traditional to the contemporary and include embroidery and embellishment, dressmaking and much more. Dorset

Buttons at Henry's Buttons will join local and national traders are on hand to share their infectious enthusiasm, invaluable knowledge and experience and to supply you with all the specialist books, tools and materials you could possibly need. Venue: Brockenhurst Village Hall, Highwood Road, Brockenhurst, SO42 7RY Time: Saturday 10.00am – 5.00pm, Sunday 10.00am – 3.30pm Cost: TBA Details: [BrockenhurstFIESTA](#)



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

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

[Henry's Buttons](#)