



Dorset Buttons with a bit of sparkle by Anna McDowell

Three months before Christmas I have to start planning for my Dorset Button Christmas Workshops. Christmas is a time for sparkle and a bit of fun and each year I try to make something different based on the Dorset Cartwheel design. This year was no exception. I had an idea of a lovely button worked in a pale metallic thread with a droplet to match the thread. So the research began. My first step was to find something that would look good when hung from a Dorset Button

and the right size and weight. After several weeks of searching on the web and in local antique and collectors

shops, I found a collection of lovely chandelier glass droplets. Just what I was looking for.

Now for the thread, I had a small amount of thread that was of just the right colour but, as sometimes happens, the label had vanished. So I had no idea who made it or where I got it from. Eventually I found something very similar at Airedale Yarns. They stock a lovely 4ply metallic yarn called Glitter and when matched with an organza ribbon, I had the look I wanted for Christmas 2017.

Thank you to all who participated in my Christmas 2017 Workshop and for your very kind comments, it made all the effort worthwhile and I

look forward to next year's challenge.

Wishing you all a Happy New Year.



Birthday Cake with a twist? Received from Susan Lendon



“Chocolate birthday cake decorated by my daughter Bronwen for my 70th birthday lunch. Stunning, handmade Dorset Button on a chocolate cake. Yum”

Happy birthday Susan. Susan is an experienced buttoner from Australia.

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A Forget-me-Not Button helps raise funds by Anna McDowell

Two years ago, I designed this Dorset Button to symbolize the Dementia Friends symbol, the Forget-Me-Not flower. It was used as a symbol for participants in my local town, Shaftesbury in Dorset, as a commitment to make the town dementia friendly.

Being a Dementia Friend is about having an understanding of dementia and the small things we can all do that can make a difference to people living with dementia. As part of the National Dementia Friendly Community initiative, Cedars Castle Hill, in partnership with The Westminster Memorial Hospital in Shaftesbury, worked towards becoming a dementia-friendly

community to help people living with dementia feel included, understood, respected, supported and confident they can contribute to community life.

Earlier this year, I was approached by Jan Kelsey who asked if I would give permission for my buttons to be made to raise funds. Jan is one of the organisers of a monthly fair selling handmade goods



in Westgate and Birchington in Kent to raise funds for three units, including the Dementia Unit, at the Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital in Margate.

This request got me thinking that

perhaps there may be other Dorset Buttoners who might like to make these buttons to sell to raise funds for Dementia sufferers. To help you, I have put together an instruction sheet that you will be able to download from my website from Monday 15th January 2018. All I ask is you contribute what you can to the Alzheimer's Society, your contribution will go towards making sure people affected by dementia get the support they need today – and helping find a cure for tomorrow. Just click on this link to go to the [Alzheimer's Society](#) donations page. I suggest a donation of no less than £2.00.

This is just one small way that Dorset Buttoners can help to raise funds for this horrid disease that causes progressive neurological disorders.

Fun with beads, yarns, ribbon and lace by Anna McDowell



My autumn series of workshops started with something a bit unusual, a challenge. I had great fun preparing for this workshop designed for experienced buttoners who wanted to test their skills with a new challenge.

As to which button to base this challenge on was my first decision. So of the four ranges of Dorset Buttons,

I opted for the ever popular Dorset 'Cartwheel' Button. I wanted participants to experiment with different yarns and threads, including ribbons and lace, each of which has differing properties and effects when worked on a ring. I also asked them to use beads. For most of the participants, this was the first time they had moved into experimenting with different yarns and beadwork. Sourcing yarns and trying them out

myself before I was satisfied they would 'past the test' for their suitability for this workshop was great fun. What I found most interesting was the choices of yarns and the colour mix each participant decided on, all so different. Thank you to all of you who joined me on the lovely morning at the Hardy's Visitor Centre, I enjoyed myself and I thank you for your lovely comments.

A bit of Christmas Cheer by Anna McDowell



As some of you may know, I have a small unit in the Cygnet Gallery, Shaftesbury, for artists and artisans. Many of the

unit holders make wonderful one-off items for sale at Christmas time. So, not to be left out, I made Dorset Button Christmas tree baubles and decorated my unit. My theme for this year was stars and I had great fun

making 35mm and 6cm buttons all with a star.

If you are anywhere near Shaftesbury, the [Cygnet Gallery](#) is well worth a visit. Not just for my Dorset Buttons.

Looking forward to 2018 by Anna McDowell

For anyone who takes up heritage craft of Dorset Buttons we are all helping to keep this craft alive.



Top: Blandford Crosswheel buttons. Above: Singleton Buttons. In both images the underside of the button is on the right.

Images taken of Dorset Buttons in my own collection. Anna McDowell

Earlier in the year I commented on a report the Heritage Crafts Association, a charity which promotes and supports traditional

crafts, which published The Radcliffe Red List of Endangered

Crafts. The report listed a number of crafts and wrote that Dorset Button making "..... was found to be affected

by the following issues: lack of awareness about the craft, market issues (the impossibility of earning a living from making buttons alone), loss of craft skills (most people only learn how to make one type of Dorset button, and don't necessarily learn the traditional methods), and training issues (a lack of standards for button making). "

To this end, I have spent many happy hours examining original buttons and a number of museums around the country. Buttons are still carded on their original pink, black and yellow cards, which denoted their quality, and items of clothing with original Dorset Buttons as fasteners. I have found that although High Tops, Dorset Knobs and Birdseyes are all featured on items of original clothing, the most popular of buttons are the Blandford Crosswheels and Singleton Buttons.

Occasionally, I have come across an item of clothing with Dorset Cartwheels, the popular button we all know today.

Taking this information further, I now work my Dorset Cartwheel Buttons in the traditional way even though they are substantially larger than the original buttons. My inspiration comes from using the original methods to work my Dorset Buttons with contemporary materials. I also try out new designs and ways to use the skills of this heritage craft. To help keep this heritage craft alive, I try to contribute and ensure the traditional methods are passed onto anyone who attends my workshops.

My resolution for 2018. I have taken heed of the Heritage Crafts Association comments and will pass on the traditional skills of making the full range of Dorset Buttons during the year.

Welcome to Wakefield Artwalk



I received a very encouraging email from Dorset Buttoner Krissy Wallace.

"I watched you on YouTube yesterday ..it was lovely to put a face to your name. I thought you would like to see the buttons I have just made. I shall be showing them (and some more) at



the Wakefield Art Walk in November Wakefield Cathedral Crafts group has been asked to represent the Cathedral. Another opportunity to tell people about Dorset Buttons!!"

Every other month, venues across Wakefield come alive with a variety of visual arts and crafts,

live music, and performances. All are welcome, so slip on some comfy shoes and come and enjoy the art on offer whilst exploring the city!



The Old Button Shop in Dorset



The Cygnet Gallery is not the only place that you can visit when in Dorset. Thelma

Jones is the proprietor of the Dorset Button shop in Lytchett Minster. Established over 40 years ago this family based antique shop near Poole in Dorset sells china, furniture buttons and jewellery. They also have a very fine collection of original Dorset Buttons.

Thelma is one of the authorities on Dorset Buttons. Under the assistance of Florence, Lady Lees, the Lytchett

Minster Christian Mission opened the Button Shop in 1908 and goods made by the Mission and its outworkers were offered for sale. Dorset Buttons were amongst the items for sale and included Parliamentary buttons, Pale blue for the South Dorset Conservatives and purple for the East Dorset Conservatives. Follow this link for information about the [Button Shop](#)

Events for 2018

Monday 15th January 2018 Dorset Button Workshop for beginners 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

Anna McDowell

Dorset thread Buttons
Extend your skills of Dorset Buttons with new designs such as the spiral and daisy.

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.

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

Time: 10.00am – 12.30pm

Entry and Details: Tel: 01305

251228, Hardy's Birthplace on

Facebook or

hardysbirthplace@dorsetcc.gov.uk



Skill level: Advanced.

Knowledge on how to make a Dorset 'cartwheel' Button essential.

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Monday 5th February 2018 Dorset Button Workshop for Advanced buttoners with

Monday 26th February 2018 Dorset Button Workshop for beginners

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

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creative flare with attendees to create their own traditional Dorset Button, with a modern twist of colour and different threads.

Skill level: Advanced. Knowledge on how to make a Dorset

'cartwheel' Button essential.

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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

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

[Henry's Buttons](#)