



Looking forward to 2021 by Anna McDowell

We are all confined to our homes for the third time and while it's not the start to the year we all hoped for, it is a necessity as with this new more virulent form of Coronavirus it is essential that we all keep safe and do not put any undue pressure on our overworked Nation Health Service.

Whilst we are confined to our homes, this is an ideal time to try a new hobby or find all those unfinished projects that are now scrambling to get out from the bottom of your work baskets. I have three projects underway which I'm slowly either putting the final touches to or have just managed to start. The project I'm most enthusiastic about is

my tray of yarns for one of my large 60cm buttons which has been crying out to me to let them finally show how much they want to be worked into a Dorset Button!

As you may know, I also take commissions and it is always lovely to see how my buttons are used. In my last eNewsletter I showed images of the buttons. Here is the final suit of clothing with most of the forty Dorset Knob Buttons I worked in black. I remembered Marion Howitt telling me that she had taken an original black button apart and it had been dyed.



Marion, now retired, is an authority on Dorset Buttons so

what she said I take note of. So rather than go blind working these buttons in black, I worked them on white and then into the dyed bath they went.

Over the last few months, I have received several requests for online Dorset Button workshops. As you can imagine, there is a lot of close-up work with working a Dorset Button so the current restriction of keeping a distance will not work in this instance. That is why I'm starting to offer online workshops using Zoom. The first is for the basic Cartwheel button and you can download a description of my workshop from my [website](#). Another project now complete.

Remember, I'm always interested to hear from you and to see the projects you are working on. So please keep sending them to me. As well as projects you would like to share with others.

Wishing you a very happy and creative New Year.

A Socially Distant Workshop by Sheila Higgins

After your kindness last month with sending me those eight starter packs, I thought you might like to see how our WI Craft Club got on with their first attempts at Dorset Button making with me guiding them.

I split them into two groups of four, as per government guidelines at the time. Attached are photos of the first group



and of their finished buttons.



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Henry's Buttons

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2022 marks the 400th anniversary of the Dorset Button. Be part of the international celebrations.

2022 sees 400 years since the birth of the Dorset Button cottage industry, on the South Coast of England. It is planned to promote and hold a series of Dorset Button

Dorset Buttons 2022

events throughout the whole year, across the globe, and this is your opportunity to get involved.

The Dorset Button 2022 project headed up by Anna McDowell of Henry's Buttons, alongside a team of volunteers, aims to

encourage individuals, groups, guilds, societies, museums and businesses, internationally, to celebrate this occasion throughout

2022 with a variety of Dorset Button themed events.

Records indicate the Dorset Button industry started in 1622 in Shaftesbury, set up by Abraham Case, a professional soldier who had recently returned from Europe. Buttons were initially made with sheep's horn as the base and later wire rings along with fabric and thread. From High Tops and Dorset Knobs to Birds Eyes, Singletons and Dorset Cartwheels there were many designs. Today traditional techniques inform contemporary designs.

Members of the project team will be running a series of events starting off the year with a Mass-Dorset-Button-Along. Through other interactive events such as workshops, talks, articles, fashion

shows, museum displays and art exhibitions, it would be fantastic to get as many people as possible around the world to come together to make, share knowledge, and continue to keep this heritage craft alive. This is where you come in.

What event or activity could you organise as part of the 2022 celebrations?

The dedicated 400 years celebration website provides a platform to enable you to promote your calendar of events giving extensive visibility while adding to a bank of activities for people across the world to take part in. The Dorset Button 2022 project team would love to hear your ideas.

www.dorsetbuttons2022.co.uk

@dorsetbuttons2022

A Lockdown Project by Avalon Eastman



A friend of mine, Liz, had received two cardigans

from a friend who had died. The cardigans were found in the lady's possessions and sent to Liz, but neither had any buttons, and one had been made without buttonholes. Liz asked me if I could finish the cardis off for her. However when I looked at them I could see that the buttonholes on one were far too small for the size of buttons required to suit the cardi so I was somewhat stumped as I couldn't see my way forward without taking the cardigans

apart. Then I thought of Dorset Buttons (of course!). I forgot all about buttonholes, sewed up the fronts together, made various coloured buttons and just sewed them to the front so the garments are now actually Jumpers and the button are just decoration. I gave them back to my friend Liz who was delighted with the result. She is also asked questions whenever she wears them. I think the result is quite fancy and used up some Lockdown time.

Makedo and mend by Ros Atkins



After completing a commission for Dorset cross wheel buttons to be used on some film costumes, I decided to catch up with one of my household chores, namely darning.

I had found some small holes in the sleeves of a couple of T-

shirts which were probably caused by my enthusiastic Dalmatian! As I set about mending them I suppose it was only natural that I should use a button making technique.

I worked equal length straight stitches centred across the hole, 4 for the smaller holes and 6 for the largest one, and then started

rounding until these 'spokes' were fully covered. The finished result was a pleasing motif that totally covered the hole and looked neat and intentional.

This also works at places where a bit of reinforcement is necessary, for example the corner of pockets.

Dorset Buttons and a charity bike ride by Trudi Hodges



The Distinguished Gentleman's Ride 2020 is a worldwide event sponsored Triumph motorcycles



supporting The Movember Charity for men's mental health and prostate cancer. It's to promote the issues of the worrying high percentage of young male suicide.

It is held on the last Sunday of September every year throughout the world, all motorcyclist welcome, but retro or classic and vintage bikes preferred. www.gentlemansride.com My husband has been involved locally riding and also as a sponsored marshal for a well established ride in Bournemouth and Poole, Dorset for several years. Every year we dress 'dapper' and this year he chose two of my Dorset buttons for the bike and a Shaftesbury cartwheel for himself. Because of COVID-19 restrictions this year it was a solo ride with no start, destiny or end, but local sponsors offering 'drop in' points. Therefore we (me as pillion although I have my own motorbike, pictured behind

the button photo) set off from a motorbike cafe in Poole to Wimborne, Cranborne Chase to a cafe motorbike wear n tear shop near Ringwood, through the New Forest to Mudeford Quay then home, on a chilly blustery sunny day! We saw others on the road, heading in one direction or another, giving each other a wave. We have lost a family member to suicide and have several friends struggling with prostate cancer and cancers attributed to the disease. It's a very worthy cause. [Not our original bike, but this is actually the same model and colour Kawasaki (1978) we had when we were first dating and subsequently got married with.] The image shows Mark on his return, slightly windswept.

Kirstie Allsopp Trophy for Dorset Buttons by Anna McDowell



In December, Dorset Button featured on Kirstie Allsopp's popular programme 'Handmade Christmas'. I know many of you saw this programme as I sold out of all my kits and booklets as orders came flooding in for

Christmas. One of the features of this programme is each episode has a competition where four crafters compete for Kirstie's Trophy.

So who was the Dorset Buttoner? None other than Gini (Louise Armitage) who I can best describe as a lady from West Yorkshire who is a thread button enthusiast. A lady from Dorset taught her the art

of Dorset Buttons. But what is most gratifying is that Gini came first in her competition and was awarded the trophy. Gini's contribution was based on the seasons and featured four contemporary Dorset Tree Buttons mounted on a larger button.

Many congratulations Gini. You have certainly helped to spread the word about Dorset Buttons.

A play with yarn by textile artist Linda Kiddell



I am a multi media artist with a passion for teaching different skills and techniques to anyone who seeks inspiration and creativity. During both lockdowns I have been enjoying looking at new skills and researching the origins to hopefully teach to my

community workshops when permitted. I was so pleased to come across the craft of Dorset Buttons and its heritage and look forward to sharing and passing this craft onto my groups.

As an artist, I like to push the boundaries and experiment with different materials and as I have odd

balls of wool in my resources I thought I would see how that works. This is one I made using mohair wool and though it was quite challenging when I was applying the threads for the trunk and weaving, I am extremely happy with the end results.

I hope you like my button images of their buttons too.

Workshops and Events 2021

Events and workshops in 2021 are still a moveable feast. But here are a few of the events and workshops I'm planning for this year.

However, please keep an eye on my website for any updates due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Tuesday 12th January Zoom Dorset Button Workshop – Trial

Thank you to the four of you who volunteered to help me with my first full Dorset Button Workshop using Zoom. After careful planning and saucing the right equipment to include close up demonstrations this will be the first of what I plan will be many workshops I will offer online.



I will notify all of you who contributed to receiving information on my workshops after the 12th January with dates.

Saturday, 23 January Romford Embroiderers Guild Zoom Dorset Button workshop.

I've been asked to make a 10 minute guest appearance at this workshop to talk about myself and the Dorset Button 2022 event.

January/February – Dates to be confirmed Museum of East Dorset

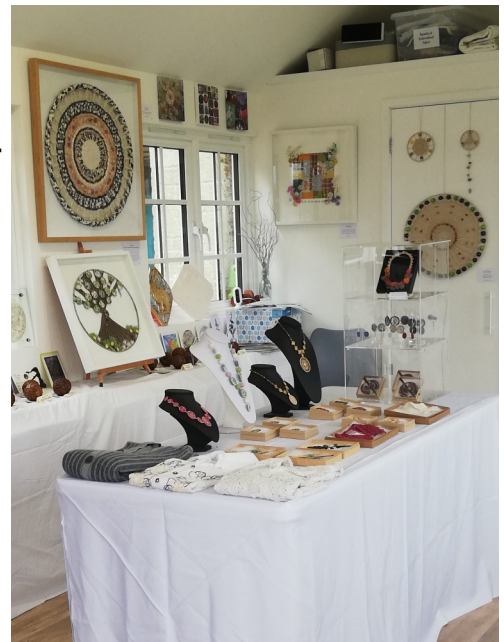
Zoom Dorset Button workshop. Tutor Anna McDowell

Details have still to be sorted and I will update my website when finalised.

[https://
museumofeastdorset.co.uk](https://museumofeastdorset.co.uk)

Saturday 1st May – Sunday 9th May Wylve Valley Arts Trail

Plans for how this can go-ahead are still being finalised, but participation venues may well have presentations online in the form of videos, slideshow and/or gallery pages, rather than a physical event as part of this year's Art Trail.



Saturday 22nd May – Sunday 6th June Dorset Arts Weeks

Dorset Arts Weeks is one of the largest Open Studio Events in the country. It brings artists and visitors together in ways that are often remarkable and profoundly different from entering a public gallery. DAW is fundamentally as much about engagement between people as about people and art. At almost all venues the artists, designers or makers will be on-hand to help you engage with the work, keen to talk to you about the extraordinary range of materials, skills and traditions that inform their work.

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

[Henry's Buttons](https://henrysbuttons.co.uk)
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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