

Dorset Buttons

To make a button you will need:

A curtain ring about 2.5 cm in diameter
some wool in two or more colours
a short wool needle

1. "Casting"

Prepare a needleful of long thread (about 2 yards) enough to blanket stitch all round the ring and also "lay" the spokes of the wheel. Tie the thread to the ring and work blanket stitch all round working the first half dozen blanket stitches over the loose end. Keep them even and fairly tight and close together so that the ring does not show through. Slip your needle through the first stitch so that the join does not show.

2. "Slicking"

All the stitches are now turned inwards, leaving the outside of the ring completely smooth.

3. "Laying"

With your thread at the back of the ring bring it down to the bottom of the ring and then up in front in the exact centre. Turn the ring slightly and continue to wind the thread over and over until all the spokes are evenly spaced. (You may have to do this several times until you are satisfied.)

Now make a firm cross stitch in the exact centre. The first stitch running from East to West the second from North to South. The stitches should have caught in all the loose spokes and form the hub of a wheel.

4. "Rounding"

Still using your original thread work around the hub using backstitch, turning the wheel as you go. After a few roundings and when you have completed an exact full circle you can, if you wish, end at the back and change to another colour.

You can fill the whole wheel or just do a few roundings. Buttons finished off after only a few roundings were called "Blandford Cartwheels".

During rounding, all ends and beginnings are made in the centre back and carried up or down invisibly through one of the spokes. They form a useful hump or neck to the button and one or two threads can be left for sewing on the garment afterwards. By arranging the spokes differently a variety of designs can be made.

