

# Bear in Mind

An electronic newsletter from Bear Threads Ltd.

Volume 8 – Issue 4 April 2016

## From The Editor –

I know all of you are breathing a sigh of relief that the Easter rush is over. I wish there were room in the newsletter for pictures of all the darling creations that graced the pews on Easter Sunday. And as I pen this letter, I am quite certain that many of those creations had a dusting of pollen on them from the egg hunt. Alas, with some mild soap and a warm iron, pollen, and chocolate as well, can be removed!

Our Liquidation sale continues. While we are out of a few items, others are still well stocked. But this will not last forever, so as you rest your weary fingers from needle and thread, please review the four (4) E-Blasts that were sent this winter. Many items have been added such as Bearissima and Bearissima II in certain colors. As well, all 5 Inch and wider Swiss embroideries are now 50% off! If you need these e-mails resent or have any questions, please call.

Finally, I am doing a 'first' this month. I am repeating some articles from two issues of 6 and 7 years ago. Many of you know I am a stickler for backs of children's' clothing. Children don't stand still and are seen as much from the back as the front. So I have always liked to put some cute and fancy details to the back of garments. Buttons are an obvious starting place and we are sharing some ideas here. I love the ring of lace idea, and it is a perfect way to use the tiniest bit of lace edging! (See adjacent picture.)

We have included pictures of our lovely button collection and we remind you that most are now 40% off! What perfect timing!

Enjoy your Spring, find time to sew something fun for yourself, and as always – Happy Stitching,

Dreaming of spring, and Happy Stitching....

*Sheila*



For more details see page 14.

## MOTHER OF PEARL BUTTONS

Are they Pearl Buttons or Mother of Pearl Buttons? To understand Mother-of-Pearl let's begin by learning the definition of a couple of important words.

**Mollusk, Mollusc** – The group of invertebrate animals having soft, unsegmented bodies usually covered with a hard shell of two or more layers such as snails, mussels, oysters, clams, and abalone.

**Nacre** – A composite material produced by some mollusks as an inner shell layer. Pearls and the inside layer of the pearl oyster and freshwater pearl mussel shells are made of nacre. But the inner layer of the great majority of mollusk shells is porcellaneous, not nacreous.

*Mother-of-pearl is the designation commonly given to the pearly inner layer of some mollusks. This layer, typically relatively thin, occurs in the shells of some but not all mollusks. This is the nacre and is secreted by the epithelial cells of the mantle tissue of various mollusks. The nacre is continuously deposited onto the inner surface of the shell, the iridescent nacreous layer, commonly known as mother-of-pearl. The nacre is what makes up pearls. It is very strong, resilient, and iridescent.*

*Mother of pearl is frequently referred to by the name of the mollusk shell from which it is derived, such as abalone or paua. The designation mother-of-pearl apparently came into English early in the 16<sup>th</sup> century via a translation of the Middle Latin mater perlarum.*

*The nacre or mother-of-pearl is used for jewelry, buttons and widely used to inlay furniture, object's d'art and musical instruments. The outer layers of the shells are removed to get to and then 'harvest' the nacreous mother-of-pearl. Once recovered, the mother-of-pearl is either used as such – which is true of most of that from paua shells – or, in the case of some of the less colorful shells, dyed. Mother-of-pearl is rather easily dyed, typically only tinting so the iridescence is not masked.*

*After harvesting, the nacre or mother-of-pearl layer, when used for buttons, will have 'blanks' cut from it. These are the buttons we see today after they have been further processed and polished. Pearl buttons are cooler than plastic, and not just because they bring a tiny gleam to the dresses and shirts onto which they are stitched. If you put your pearl button up to your cheek and then do the same with a plastic one, you will notice an actual difference in temperature.*

*Pearls are harvested from the Western Cape region of South Africa, throughout the South Pacific, Asia, the Philippines and Australia. Many are not aware that during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, mussels dug from tributaries of the Mississippi – the Fox, Illinois and Ohio rivers – were the basis of a mother-of-pearl industry that was centered near the Mississippi River along the Illinois-Iowa border. These clams provided the raw material. Blanks were cut in several towns within the region, and most of the marketed buttons were finished in Muscatine, Iowa.*

*Historical photographs provide insight into a town in which one half of the work force, including many children, contributed to the button industry. Men and women worked along the banks of the rivers in camps heating the water used to open the shells. Hundreds of men worked in cutting shops cutting blanks – the basic shape of the button – from the inner surface of the shells. Others operated machinery that carved designs on the blanks and drilled holes. Leftover shells were used for street surfacing, fertilizer, stucco and gravel for fishbowls!*

*Muscatine was once known as the 'Pearl Button Capital of the World', and Ronald Regan chose the Pearl Button Queen one year. The industry apparently prospered until the late 1940's when plastic buttons and zippers took over the market.*

*In last month's article, I mentioned that the designation mother-of-pearl came into English early in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, via a translation of the Middle Latin mater perlarum. It is also interesting to note that the English word pearl originated (via French perle) from the Latin word perla. The English name Margaret originated from the Greek word for pearl, Mapyapitapi pronounced mar-gar-ee-tace.*

**Pearl** – By Webster a pearl is defined as a smooth, rounded nacreous body formed around an irritant, usually produced by oysters and valued as a gem.

*The key word here is 'irritant'. Here is the difference: A pearl is a hard object produced within the soft tissue (specifically the mantle) of a living shelled mollusk. Let's say oyster. Just like the shell of a mollusk, (remember this is where the 'mother-of-pearl' comes from), a pearl is made up of calcium carbonate in minute crystalline form, which has been deposited in concentric layers. Pearls are formed inside the shell of certain mollusks as a defense mechanism to a potentially threatening irritant such as a parasite inside its shell, or an attack from outside, injuring the mantle tissue. . The mollusk creates a pearl sac to seal off the irritation, and this is where the deposits of calcium carbonate begin layering to form the pearl.*

*Manmade pearls, or cultured pearls, occur when humans provide the irritant or intervention, allowing the mollusk to form the sac where the calcium carbonate will begin layering to form a pearl.*

*I hope I have solved some mysteries you might have had regarding Pearls and Mother-Of-Pearl from these articles. If you are looking to add something new and unique to your shop, consider that Grace Kelly, Princess of Monaco, had real pearls for buttons on her wedding dress! It is on display in the Philadelphia Museum of Art.*

*Sheila T. Nicol*

**A BUTTON POEM**  
BY  
ANDREA DIETRICH

Buttons for game pieces, buttons on totes,  
Buttons on toys, shoes, sweaters and coats.  
Buttons that open and buttons that close.  
On pockets and purses and edges of clothes.  
Buttons that decorate; buttons that don't.  
Buttons I'm sure to lose; buttons I won't.  
Buttons for filler for bean bags and such.  
Buttons collected are not used so much!  
Buttons on greeting cards and on jewelry!  
Thousands of buttons adorning a tree!  
Buttons to reset, to turn on a light.  
There's 'Cute as a button' and also as "bright"!  
Button up (but not down); push them "hot"(but not cold);  
Button your lip" and do as you're told!  
Though buttons may vanish one day from earth,  
We'll wear on our bellies – buttons since birth!



Antique Button Counter (circa 1920)

Reminder –

These are the Buttons that are on sale for 40% off:

2-Hole Flat – 1/4", 5/16", 1/2", 9/16" and 1"

4-Hole Flat – 1/2", Fancy Filigree 3/8"

Ball Shank – 5/16"

Shank – 1/4", 5/16", 3/8", 1/2"

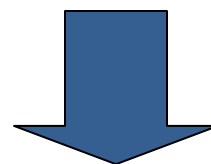
and 3/8" Fancy Cut

Heart – 1/2"

Ribbed – 1/2"

Shank Square – 5/8"

Note that the buttons on sale are a minimum of 6 dz. That is a 1/2 Gross. OK, for those who do not know 1 Gross is 12 Dozen!!! (144 buttons)





**BMP-40F**  
*1"*



**BMP-4F30**  
*3/4"*



**BMP-8F**  
*1/8"*



**BP-18FD**  
*7/16"*



**BP-16FD**  
*3/8"*



**BMP-20SP**



**BMP-30FOV**  
*3/4"*



**BPS-30**  
*3/4"*



**BPS-24**  
*5/8"*



**BP-20SH**  
*1/2"*



**BP-24SCL**  
*5/8"*



**BMP-22SHEX**  
*9/16"*



**BMP-21SW**  
*9/16"*



**BMP-21SOW**  
*9/16"*



**BMP-20SRB**  
*1/2"*



**BP-20SF**  
*1/2"*



**BMP-16SFC**  
*3/8"*



**BMP-36S**  
*15/16"*



**BP-20SD**  
*1/2"*



**BMP-24SSQ**  
*3/5"*



**BMP-14SSQ**  
*1/3"*



**BMP-10F**  
*3/16"*



**BMP-10S**  
*3/16"*



**BMP-12S**  
*1/4"*





**BMP-14F**  
*5/16"*



**BMP-16S**  
*3/8"*



**BMP-20F**  
*1/2"*



**BMP-21SOW**  
*9/16"*



**BMP-21SW**  
*9/16"*



**BMP-22F**  
*9/16"*



**BMP-34F**  
*7/8"*



**BMP-4F20**  
*1/2"*



**BMP-4FF16**  
*3/8"*



**BMP-14BS**  
*5/16"*



**BMP-14SSQ**  
*5/16"*



**BMP-20H**  
*1/2"*



**Natural**



**Mint**



**Pink**



**Seafoam**



**Appenzell Pink**



**Triesen Rose**



**Aqua**



**4-Hole Flat**  
*5/16", 3/8", 1/2", 5/8"*



**4-Hole Flat Filigree**  
*3/8"*



**1-Hole Flat**  
*3/8"*



**2-Hole Flat Rope Edge**  
*3/8"*



**2-Hole Sequin**  
*3/16", 9/16"*



**Antique Shank**  
*5/16"*



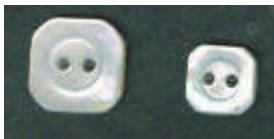
**Diamond**  
*9/16"*



**Half Moon**  
*9/16"*



**Oval Flat**  
*3/8", 1/2", 5/8"*



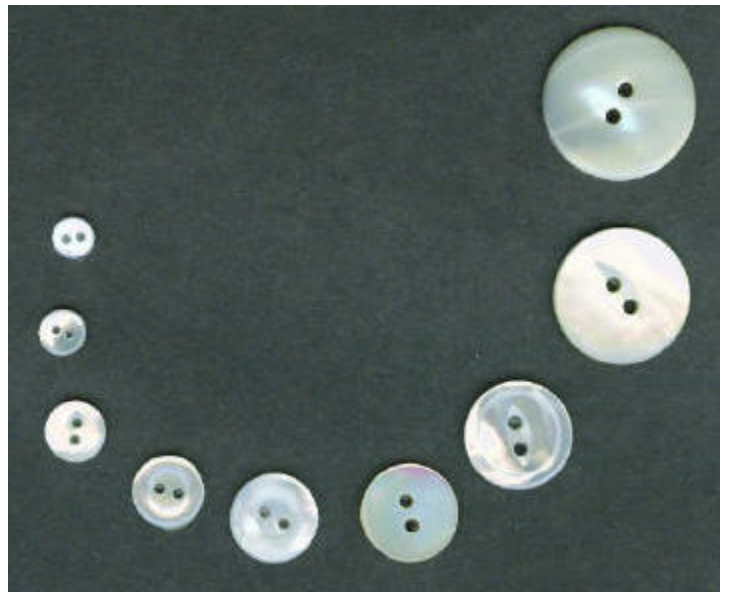
**SQUARE FLAT**  
*3/8", 9/16"*



**Tinted Flat**  
*9/16"*



**Shank**  
*3/16", 1/4", 5/16", 3/8", 1/2", 9/16", 5/8", 3/4", 7/8"*



**2-Hole Flat**  
*3/16", 1/4", 5/16", 3/8", 1/2", 9/16", 5/8", 3/4", 7/8", 1"*



## Bullion Button Bud

### Inner Petal:

1. Thread small crewel needle with 4 strands of embroidery floss or one length of 2 mm silk ribbon.

2. Position button on the garment so that the 4 holes form a diamond shape.

3. Secure the button with one vertical stitch from the top hole of the diamond to the



bottom hole.

4. Bring the needle and thread back through the top hole of the diamond.



5. Stitch a loose loop by going back through the lower diamond hole. Do not pull the thread taught--leave a loose loop.



6. Bring the needle back up into the top hole of the diamond but do not pull the needle completely through the button.



7. Beginning with the section of the thread loop closest to the needle, wrap the thread loop around the needle in a clockwise direction. (See chart for proper number of wraps per stitch in the bud.) Take care to keep the wraps smooth. Allow the wraps to stack up on the needle touching each other but not overlapping each other. Pull any excess thread loop located at the point side of the needle to the back of the fabric.



8. Hold the wraps securely with the thumb and carefully pull the needle through the button and the wraps toward the bottom hole in the button. Adjust the wraps to keep them smooth and touching. (not pictured.)

	Floss	2 MM Silk Ribbon
Inner (center) Petal	4 Wraps	3 Wraps
Outer 2 Petals	5 Wraps	4 Wraps
Leaves	4 Wraps	3 Wraps

*Chart is for size 18 (7/16") 4-hole buttons. The number of wraps will need to be adjusted for a smaller/larger button.*

9. Take the needle to the back through the bottom hole in the button and tie off.



**Outer Petals:**

10. Rethread the needle with a second color for the rosebud. Knot thread and emerge at the top hole of the diamond slightly to the right of the finished first bullion inner petal.



11. Finish the second petal as the first (inner) petal was stitched, ending on the right side of the first petal.



12. Stitch third petal as the second only to the left of the original (inner) petal. Knot and cut thread.



**Leaves:**

13. Change the thread color and stitch the leaves on either side of the bud using the two outer, unused holes in the button and the same bottom hole as used when stitching the petals.



This is a beautiful touch of Spring for any garment.



**Deb Gardner**

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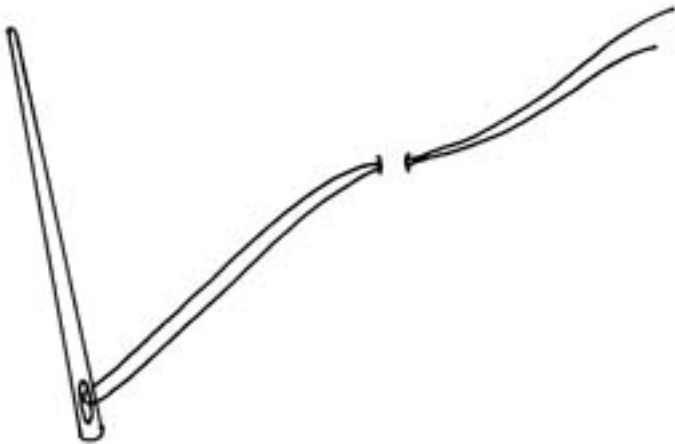
[www.theribbongardner.com](http://www.theribbongardner.com)

## No-Knot Buttons by Trudy Horne

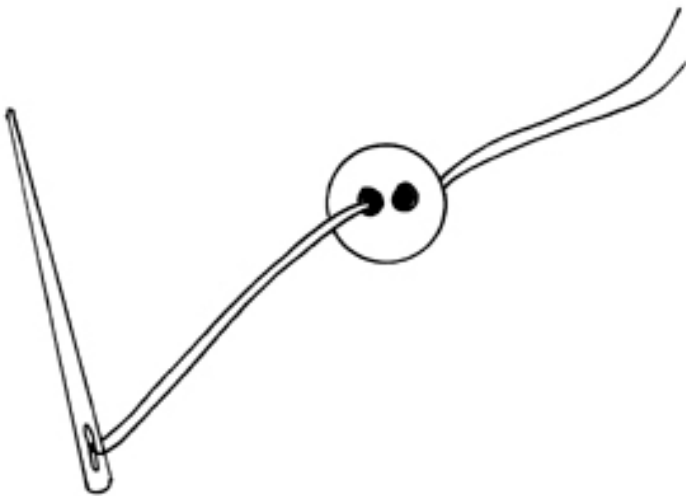
This method for sewing on a button is fast, secure and attractive, leaving no knot on the underside of the fabric. Although a couture detail that complements the materials and special treatments found in fine children's wear, this technique it is not relegated to heirloom clothing alone, and can be used whenever sewing a button.

### Instructions

Mark button placement on the right side of the fabric. Thread one strand of thread or floss and double over. Pick up a small amount of fabric at the mark, leaving a 2 1/2" tail. ILLUS. 1. If desired, another small stitch can be taken to secure the thread.

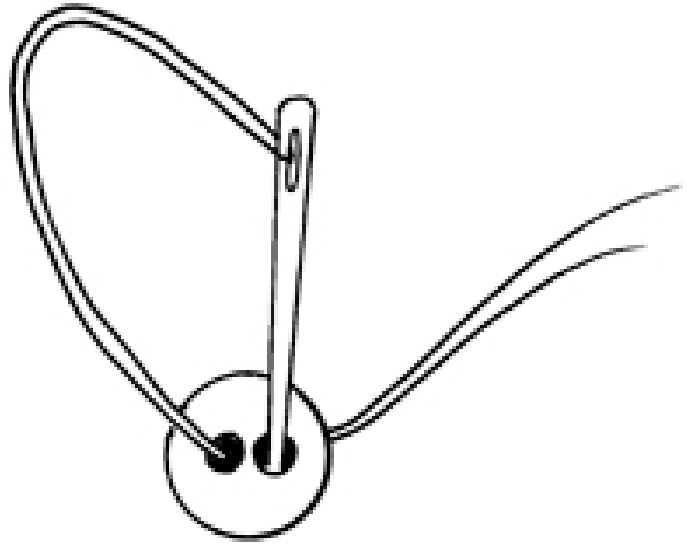


Slide button over needle and thread. ILLUS. 2.

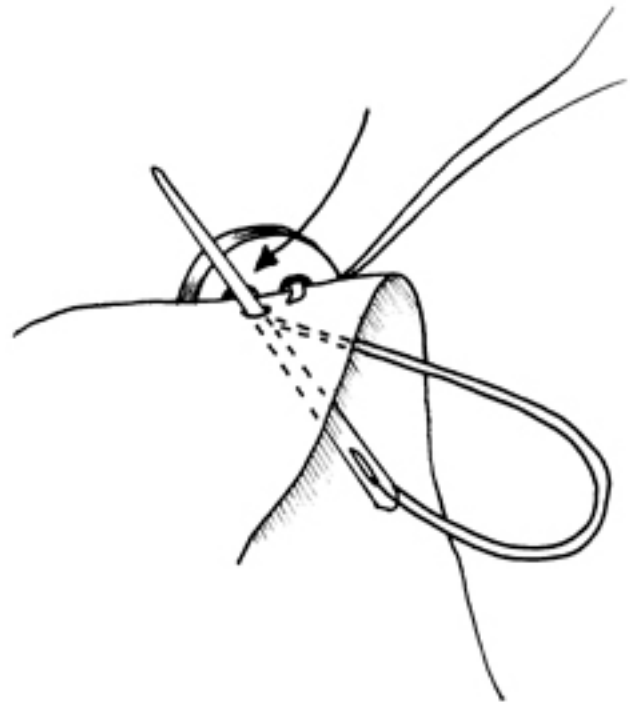


Sink needle in other buttonhole. ILLUS. 3. Come up from the wrong side in the first hole and go down again in second hole. Repeat as many times as desired. If using a four-hole button, take the

same number of stitches in the other two holes. End with needle going down to the wrong side

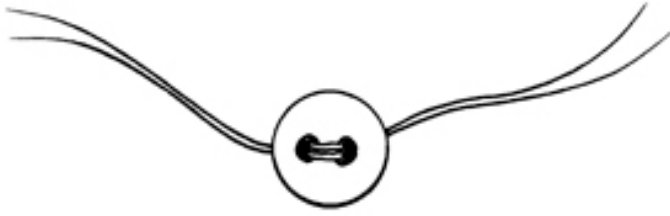


Come up from the wrong side under the button, close to the point where the tail thread emerges from fabric. Arrow indicates underside of button. ILLUS. 4.

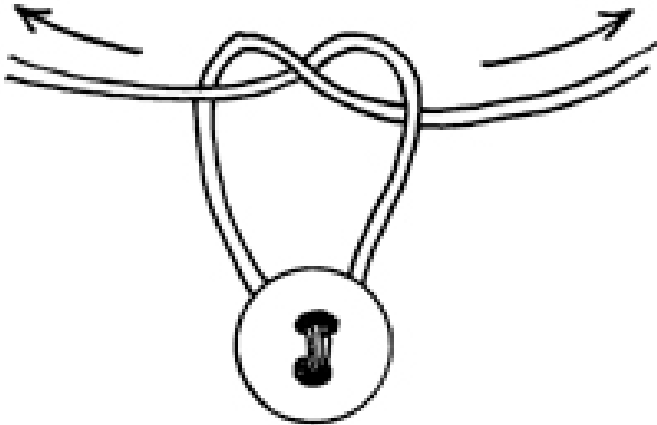




Clip working thread to 2 ½". There are now two tail threads. ILLUS. 5.



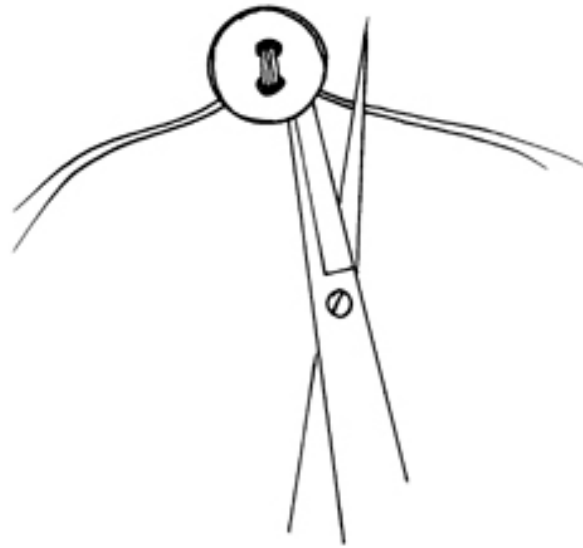
Tie a knot on one side of button, pulling ends tightly in the direction of the arrows, so that the knot fits snugly under the button. ILLUS. 6.



Bring thread tails down to the opposite side of the button and tie another knot in the same manner as first knot. ILLUS. 7.



Carefully clip thread ends underneath button, close enough so they don't show. ILLUS. 8.



Editor's Note: Trudy Horne was a longtime columnist for Creative Needle Magazine and is the owner of Collars, Etc. Pattern Company. See more of Trudy's designs, instruction and inspiration at [www.collarsetc.com](http://www.collarsetc.com)

#### LACE WREATHS FOR SHANK BUTTON

Simply pull the gathering thread from each raw end of a 5-7" scrap of lace edging. The length of the lace is dependent on the size of the button and the width of the lace edging. Seam the raw ends together and finish by whipping over the raw seam. Pull each gathering thread tight around the button which has already been sewn to your garment. Tie the gathering threads together in a tight knot and snip the loose ends. Finally, run a couple of stitches catching the lace and through the button shank and VIOLA! Use snaps for the actual closure.



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