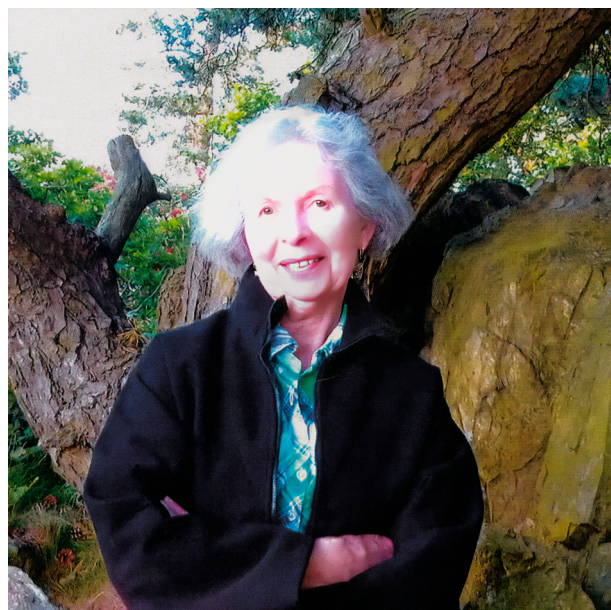


IN MEMORIAM - HAZEL PAGE

HAZEL PAGE - 1934 TO 2024

Collector, researcher, and author; Hazel loved to investigate.



Hazel studied fine art at Loughborough College of Art and Design in the 1950s. She then began her career, initially working as a 'Fashion Artist' at the Marshall & Snelgrove department store in Leicester; a talent she later made use of when illustrating her books on buttons and early plastics. After marriage and children she moved on to teaching as an art specialist.

In the 1980s, Hazel began to amass a collection of buttons of many different types but she had a particular interest in natural materials such as horn and so-called vegetable ivory. Hazel made a detailed study of these materials, asking button manufacturers and suppliers about the sources of raw materials and their production processes.

In the course of this research she built up a formidable array of contacts throughout the industry.

Gathering and accumulating knowledge led Hazel to specialise in buttons made to emulate these natural materials, such as

horn, palm nut, and tortoiseshell, but made industrially from the earliest forms of plastic, for example : Casein, Celluloid, and Shellac compositions.

Hazel was just as diligent in her investigation of these new 'plastics' as she had been with the 'natural materials' and these became her 'specialist subject'. She self-published two books under the general heading 'A Collector's Notebook'; one on Casein buttons, the other on Celluloid.

In 1999 Hazel curated an exhibition of her button collection to celebrate the centenary of Casein.

Subsequently she included Keratin-based products - hair, hoof and horn - in her schedule of interests and published the third volume of her series, the comprehensively entitled 'A Button Collectors Notebook : HOOF, HORN, American moulded Buffalo Horn, Hoofmeal and Blood Compositions'.

Typical of Hazel, she delved deeply into all the detail surrounding the various patents and the industrial processes used for making hoof- and horn-based buttons and learned how to summarise the processes in diagrams and to compare them with simpler, more familiar processes such as mixing and cooking.

Hazel was charming, strong-spirited, occasionally a little eccentric, and always determined to pursue her goals. She looked to her own well-being with a rigorous diet and was still able to bend and touch her toes at 89 ! She was also known to be severe with those who did not appreciate the role of hoof as well as that of horn in button-making.

Despite reaching her 90th birthday in March 2024, Hazel's fourth book covering Shellac and related compositions was in preparation and I had begun taking photographs to illustrate the text but Hazel's health declined and the project could not be completed before Hazel's death in the summer of 2024.

On reflection, I am glad that Hazel had already completed her books on Casein and Celluloid, as these are probably the most relevant to the majority of button collectors, but I deeply regret the failure to publish her final book and believe that it would have completed Hazel's legacy to the world of buttons and early plastics.

Hazel's daughter Ruth organised a fine farewell and touching send-off for the funeral; each member of the wider family at the graveside scattering buttons over the coffin to commemorate Hazel's special interest.

She was a woman, take her for all in all, I shall not look upon her like again.

*Hamlet, Act I, Scene II : William Shakespeare
(Needham's transcript)*