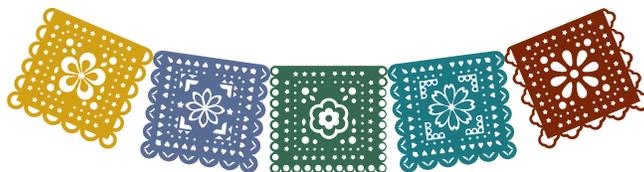


Pockets

FIONA DOUBLEDAY



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Introduction

Pockets are a complete fascination for me. I always want to know what is in them. This fascination stems from spending time with my grandmother. Each morning she would pop on her apron for the day. She had a big front pocket in which she kept all sorts of interesting things. She had a wee pocket within the large pocket with a small sewing kit in it so she could 'just do a quick repair.' She also had a wee notebook and pencil for jotting down important things, a hankie, paper clips (always useful in her world) and a little 'poke of sweets.' A poke of sweets is a wee paper bag of sweets. She was partial to mint gems. With her apron on and her pocket full of useful things she was ready for her day.



Through history women, in particular, have had a strong connection to pockets. From the later 17th century onwards women used to wear pockets under their clothes. These pockets were detachable and could be hidden away in drawers when not in use. These pockets have offered historians great insights into how women lived through history. One significant aspect in this social history trail is that women liked to squirrel away small things that could easily be placed in their pockets. The other interesting thing is that pockets were, largely, classless. The aristocracy and the servants both wore pockets. They were different in design and adornment but they were of equal use. I like the idea that pockets are a social leveller. Pockets are personal and they carry meaning. I wonder what your pockets say about you?

Pockets of Moments

My pockets capture moments. They take me back to a previous day, week, month or year. I create them with intention. Each pocket I make has a defined purpose but all of them keep precious things safe. As a meditation teacher I work with pockets all the time. In our minds we have lots of pockets. Some are very accessible to us while others are less so. Deep in our subconscious minds and even in our unconscious minds rest the most interesting pockets of all. Some are best left alone to keep their moments safe but others are wonderful to explore and celebrate. We all have pocket memories from or childhood that our minds open from time before popping the contents away again. Memories become more precious with age. In my meditation classes we regularly seek out a pocket that we love and carefully take out the contents so that we might remember with an enhanced sense of clarity. We celebrate these beautiful pockets of memories before putting them all back safely in their pocket.



A small pocket meditation

Take deep breaths in for a count of 4 and exhale slowly for a count of 4. Repeat 4 times and slowly close your eyes. Using your 3rd eye (mind's eye) remember a single moment in your childhood when you had fun. Find the pocket that holds that memory. Open the pocket to see who was with you. Take some moments to appreciate who was with you. What were you doing that was so much fun? Watch yourself having fun. Did you giggle and smile? See your wee face light up with laughter. Let the sound of fun and laughter slowly and gently fade into the distance. Pop your precious memories back in their pocket. Prepare to come out of meditation. Open your eyes and smile.

Sewing Kit Pocket

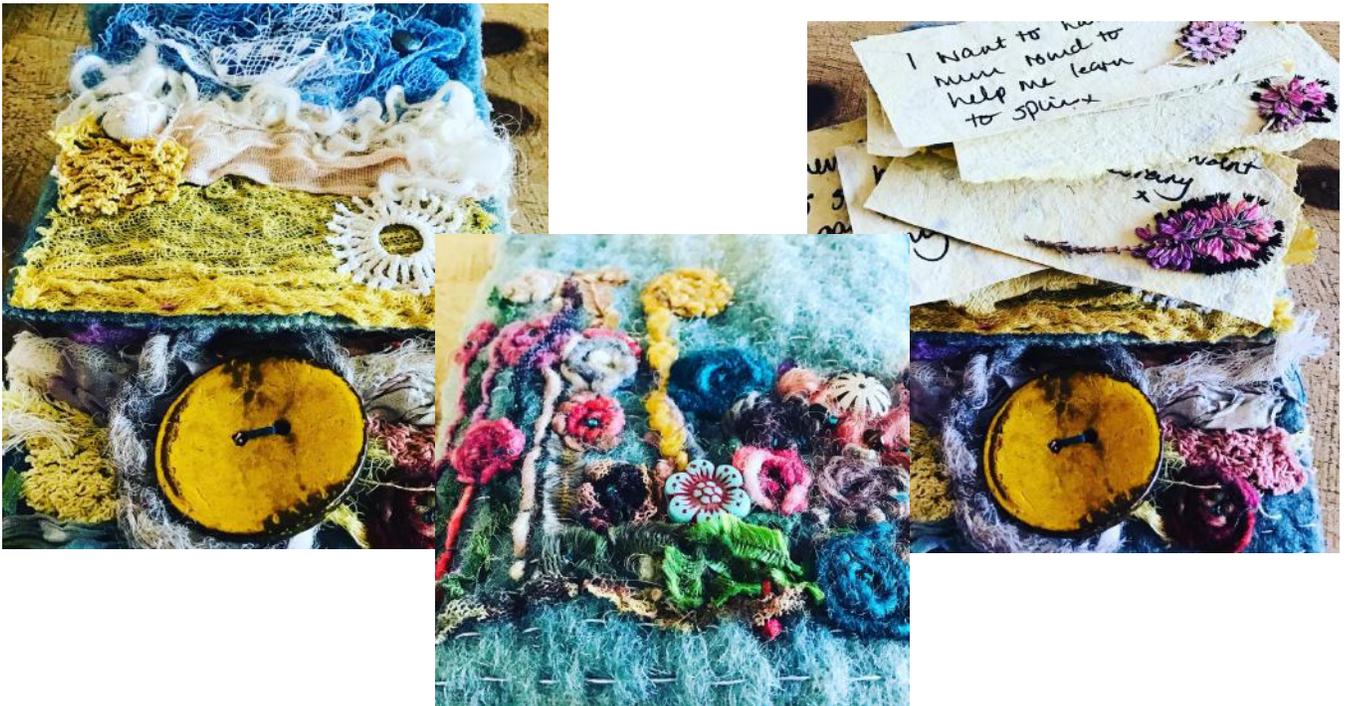
My sewing kit pocket is very battered possibly from overuse but it lives in my pocket. I am always ready for that quick repair so my Grandmother would be pleased. I have a small pair of scissors, different types of thread, a needle threader and a couple of pins. The pocket is made from an old piece of wool fabric but has been decorated with some vintage liberty fabric which I have gently stitched. It is all tied up with a ribbon.



Affirmation Pocket

This was a pocket that came together very quickly in response to a challenging Christmas in 2020 when some of us learnt, very late, that loved ones couldn't join us. I have four children and just one couldn't get here and I was heartbroken. In *Stitched Stories & Wellbeing* I knew others felt the same. So we developed a little pocket project to give us something positive to focus on. The idea was that we would create a pocket and fill it with wee notes. These notes would act like affirmations. They would remind us what we would do when the pandemic was over and our freedom returned. I loved this project and I even made my own handmade paper to write my notes with. I also stuck on a piece of pressed heather on each piece that I had gathered from the Highlands. That is where my daughter spent her Christmas.

The pocket is made from a piece of hand dyed wool from [Hope Jacare Designs](#). I took a sea theme on the front and a garden one on the back. All the pieces of fabric were hand dyed and I was determined to get yellow on the front of my pocket. Yellow is the most uplifting colour we have and important when we are feeling low. I even found a yellow button that I had purchased from Charlotte ([Ribble Recycled](#)). On the back I used bits of left over yarn, beads and buttons to make my 'garden.' The whole piece of wool was first stitched with [Kantha embroidery](#) and that, in itself, helped to settle me. This pocket turned out to be one of the most important I have ever created.



Capturing Summer Pocket

In 2021 pockets have continued to pop up in *Stitched Stories & Wellbeing*. In early summer we created a summer pocket which was much bigger and designed to tie round the waste. We made kits up and some members bought the kits and stitched their pockets. The print on the front was an Indian wooden block design of a summer meadow. In my own version I used a failed print so as not to use up the better prints which went out to members. I didn't even have time to embroider it but, over the summer, I grew to love my reject pocket! We used our pockets to get outside and collect natural finds to use in our creative work. We also had wee books to make sketches with and press flowers. It was a joyful project, so up lifting. I loved my summer project and it is carefully stored away waiting for summer next year.



Capturing the Quiet Months Pocket

As we moved into autumn it was clearly time for a new pocket. This time I used fabric that I had buried earlier in the year. We have a free tutorial on why and how we do this [HERE](#). My buried fabric is a long time in the making so very precious. It became the small pocket on the front of the larger pocket. I know, two pockets!!

The larger one was made from another failed print from my autumn collection.

Beautiful vintage lace almost finished the pocket. Of course, the perennial issue with pockets is how to close them. This is, by far, my favourite closure. I found an old scarf pin someone gave me and just clipped it on. One of those satisfying making moments when you have to hand just what you need for the job. In the small pocket I store small pieces of paper that I dyed with daffodil dye back in the spring. Again, using yellow at a time when the days start to shorten is a very useful thing to do. Inside the large pocket is another handmade book for recording my adventures during the quieter months of the year. Joyful.



Creative Aspirations Pocket

I began this pocket in a stitch meditation online class. The exercise was to let a piece of string or ribbon fall to the fabric below and then couch it down. This sort of exercise teaches our creative mind to let go a wee bit and loosen unnecessary control. Control has a habit of blocking our creative mind so it is a super wee exercise to do. Once the class had finished I found myself in such a calm and peaceful place I just kept stitching adding some spirals (also very powerful meditation tool), some tiny seed stitches and some Kantha embroidery. I decided to dedicate this most peaceful of times to another pocket and just blanket stitched three edges together to make the pocket. Originally I thought I would store some of my pressed flower gift cards in it but it quickly changed to creative aspiration cards. Each card contains something creative that I can do when I select a card at random. This is more in keeping with the original stitching exercise.

Introducing a degree of randomness into our lives is a healthy thing to do. It frees our minds up. I use my cards a great deal and would highly recommend this exercise.

Samples of my cards include -

Set about finishing a work-in-progress piece

Create a stitched collage

Update lunar diary (I work with the moon as my principal time piece)

Sketch in the garden

Dye some cloth

Repair something

Create waves

Learn a new stitch.

You can create your own cards. I painted the background with watercolour. If we love the pockets and their contents we make we are more likely to use them.





Smudge Stick & Candle Pocket

As part of our capturing the quiet months class I made some smudge sticks and beeswax candles. Both have excellent anti-bacterial properties and so are perfect for the colder months. Of course, they needed a pocket. I thought they would make a lovely wee gift so I created a small pocket from some of my buried fabric and, on the front, I stitched a smaller piece of cotton fabric and a handmade copper womb charm. The pocket is designed to be hung somewhere accessible so you have your 'gifts from nature' near you when you need them. The hanging was made by braiding the string I used to bind my buried bundle. I always believe that cloth has the capacity to tell stories so it was important, in this instance, that all the fabric and string came from the same story.



Recently, I set up a small corner of my studio as a wee curiosity store. I love small makes. I find them charming and think they make great gifts. So I thought my curiosity store could pop up from time to time on my Facebook page, [FionaDArtist](#) to see if anyone wanted to give a small curiosity a new home.

Amulet Pocket

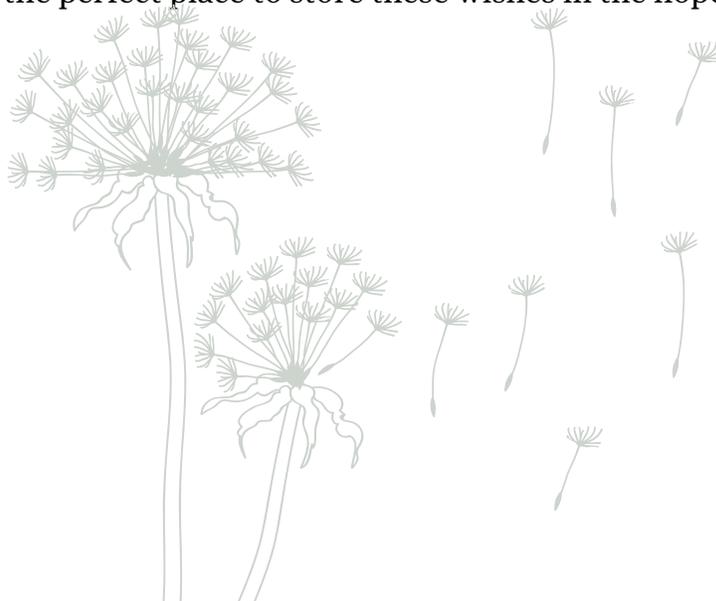
Amulets have been used for many moons. They are traditionally worn to offer protection. Over the years I have made lots in different designs. However, the pocket one is always the most popular. Folk can store wee crystals, shells, pieces of paper etc in their amulet making them even more precious. This wee amulet was made with the same buried fabric bundle and accented with a piece of cotton from the most successful part of the bundle. It has glorious marks on it. A vintage button and a piece of string from the bundle completes it. Inside is a piece of botanically printed paper ready for some precious writing to inhabit it. I have strung the amulet on a copper chain. They are designed to be worn long. Another wee curiosity for my corner.



Fol Art 'Make a Wish' Pocket



I have designed this wishing pocket as a place to store my wishes. My grandmother used to say that if I whispered my wishes quietly there was more chance they would come true. So, in her memory, I have created a wee pocket that I have made in quiet times. In those quiet stitching moments I have remembered all her wise words. I have made wishes since I was a child. Now I, very much, make wishes for other people so this pocket will be the perfect place to store these wishes in the hope that they will, one day, come true.



Folk Art is an individual and cultural aesthetic. It has an aesthetic and utilitarian purpose. Bearing this in mind, I have created a pocket inspired by a life long love of Folk Art and a belief that wishes can come true. This pocket is made with a piece of backing fabric that is vintage barkcloth. Barkcloth originates from countries in Africa where bark was stripped from trees and beaten to soften in order to become cloth. In the 1920s a heavy cotton weave mixed with rayon became the more modern equivalent as it has a similar feel to the original barkcloth. Soft furnishings in the 1940s and 1960s were often made from Barkcloth. This, now vintage, cloth is quite collectable. I found this piece badly damaged and in a charity shop for a few pennies. It has a fabulous folk art design so is perfect for this project. To complete this project you will need -

A piece of heavier fabric for the base - mine measures approximately 9x6 inches. I have left my edges raw but you can hem if you prefer.

A contrasting piece of heavier fabric - I have used burlap/hessian.

Some smaller piece of lighter fabric for decoration on the front panel

Some lace and/or ribbons

Some buttons or beads

Optional

Rubber stamp of your choice.

Cut your second contrasting piece of fabric two inches shorter than your base cloth.

Draw a line diagonally across from the top right towards the bottom left - 4 inches or so from the bottom. Cut along that line. Using the small pieces of fabric decorate that cut piece of fabric how you like. I have used a rubber stamp on a piece of plain linen and backed that with a piece on pinstripe fabric. Stitch that wee section onto your fabric cut at an angle. Attach some buttons or beads but only stitching through the top fabric. I then stitched on the lace and ribbon. As burlap/hessian frays I folded over the edges and stitched them to the back but you could fold them in and stitch. My pocket is designed to rest in a drawer so I am not fussed about the back. On the next page you will find the 'make a wish' cards that you can print out and write on before placing them in your pocket. This pocket would be a lovely gift.

