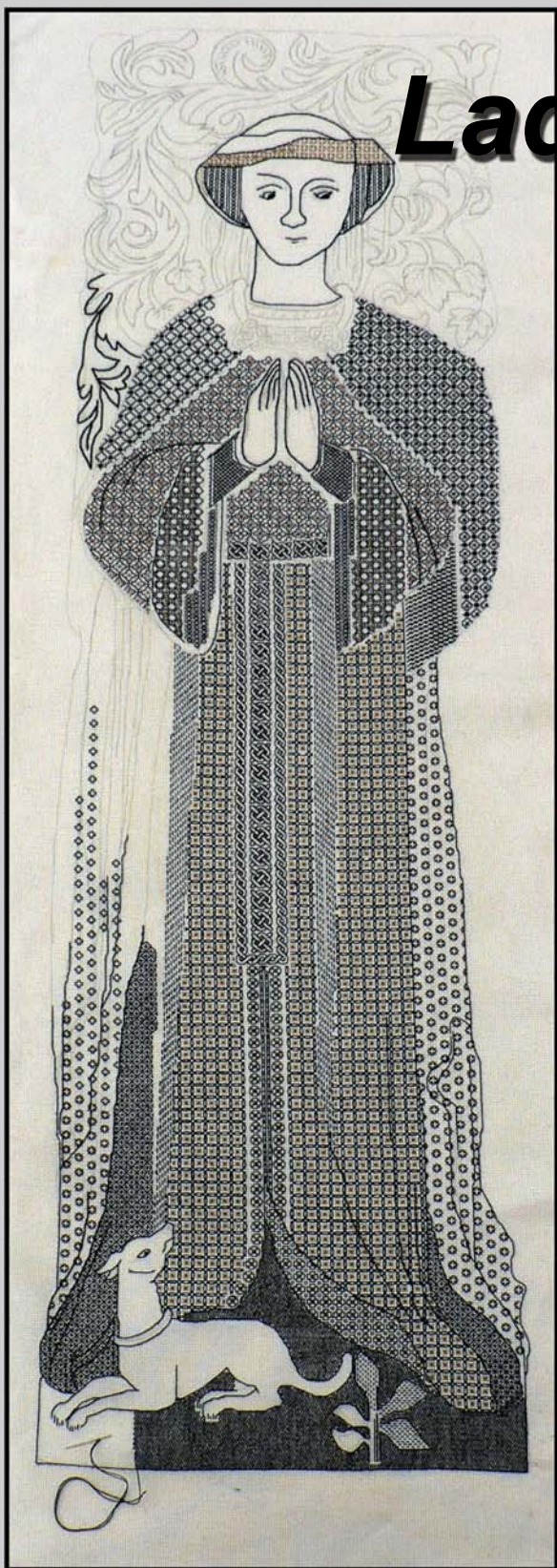




Blackwork Journey Blog

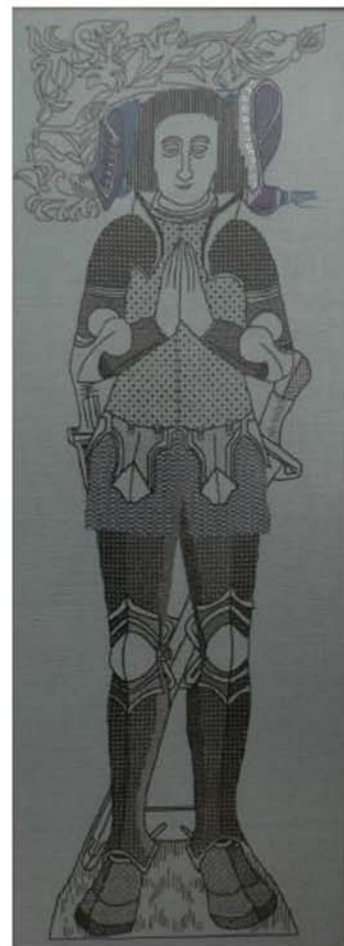
October 2012

Lady Margaret Antique libraries



SIR HUGH STARKEY, GENTLEMAN USHER TO HENRY
V111

MY FIRST PIECE OF BLACKWORK CREATED IN 1986



Blackwork Journey Blog – October 2012

October 2012

This month has been an interesting one with a number of needlework shows to visit and new ideas to develop. I enjoy looking at all the new books on display and deciding which ones have a place in my ever expanding library. Whilst I have a Kindle and an i-Pad they cannot replace the joy of actually handling a book and savouring the contents. A few quiet minutes with a new book will never be replaced by electronic methods for me personally.

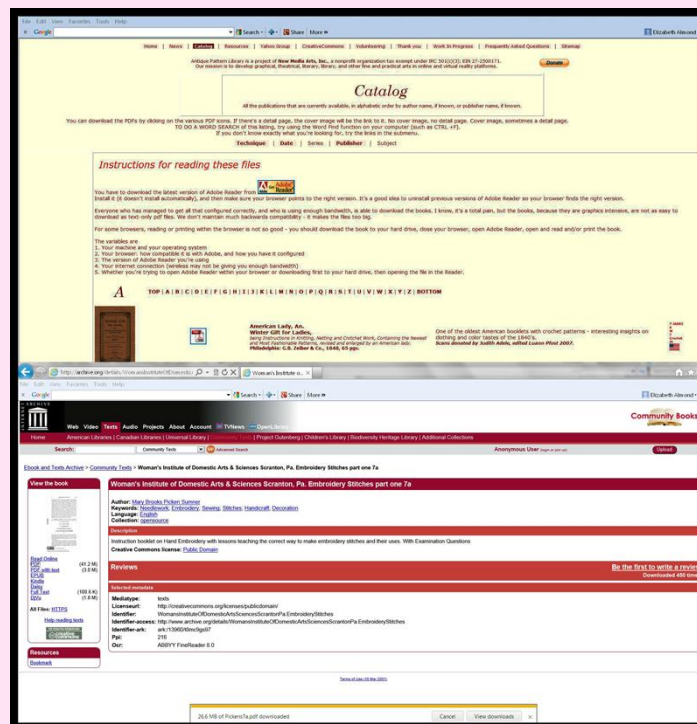
Many of my books go back over 30 years and are now out of print, but they still inspire me and I find myself going back to the older ones time and time again just to enjoy the language they are written in.

However, there are a number of on-line sites where old needlework books can be downloaded for free or read on-line. Two of the most interesting are the antique pattern library and archive.org.

Antique pattern library (<http://www.antiquepatternlibrary.org>)

This project is an effort to scan needlework pattern books that are in the public domain, to preserve them and to keep the needlework heritage in our hands. The scans have been photo edited to make them more useful for needle workers and to reduce file sizes. They are available for free to anyone who wants them for educational, personal, artistic and other creative uses.

They cover a wide range of topics, such as crochet, knitting, tatting, netting, embroidery, needle lace, beading and other needlework patterns and the site is constantly being updated and developed.

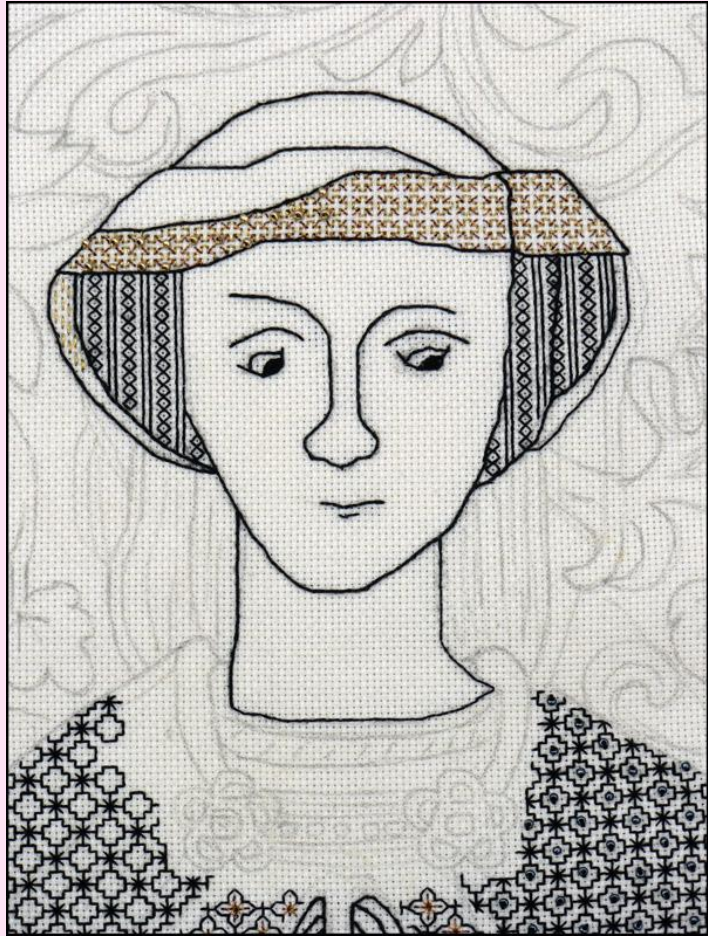


Screen grab of antiquepatternlibrary.org

The other site which has access to many international libraries is archive.org (<http://archive.org>). This site links to a wide range of unusual embroidery books and papers, many of which can be downloaded as PDFs or read on-line.

Work in progress

Several months ago I talked about the stitching of Sir Hugh Starkey, gentleman usher to Henry V111th. (Blog June 2012) I decided that Sir Hugh needed a companion since he had lived in solitary state in my house for over thirty years. Now Sir Hugh was rather a large project, so to create a companion she would have to be equally large, hence "Lady Margaret". As she is a "work in progress" I thought I would explain the stages I went through to create her and the methods and materials I am using.

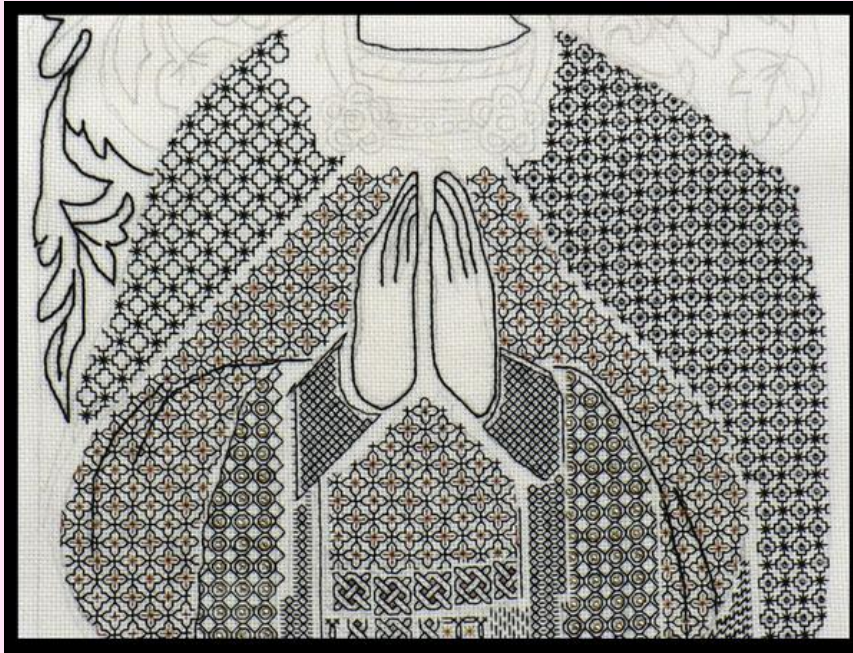


Firstly, Lady Margaret is being stitched on cream 16 count blockweave Aida as distinct from Sir Hugh who was stitched on 28 count evenweave linen. The material is 17" wide by 42" long, so when she is completed she will match Sir Hugh in size. She was a brass rubbing I did many years ago although I cannot actually remember where I rubbed her or what she was called.

I made a tracing from the main lines of the rubbing and drew the design onto the fabric using an HB pencil. The embroidery will have to be washed on completion and although the pencil lines will have been covered by embroidery, any traces will wash out.

Like Sir Hugh, she has a pillow behind her head made of leaves and scrolls. This will be stitched in back stitch in two strands of DMC 310 and whipped with two strands to create a cord effect. I use a tapestry needle No.24 and a beading needle.

However, before I created any of the background or the body, I stitched the head reasoning that if her face was correct, especially her eyes, she had a personality which would influence the colours and patterns I used for the rest of her clothing.



I then began to work down her body using different fillers and in some cases, adding the beads as I stitched. This is not a good idea since the threads get caught round the beads, but I wanted to see how the beaded area compared with the none-beaded area. The shoulder on the left has not yet been beaded with jet beads and does not have the depth that I wanted. The

space between her head and her body will be worked in goldwork to contrast with the DMC310 black stranded cotton which I am using throughout. Two fleur de lis embellishments will be added at this stage. I am also using metallic gold and copper threads and Mill Hill 557 gold beads to add a touch of sparkle.

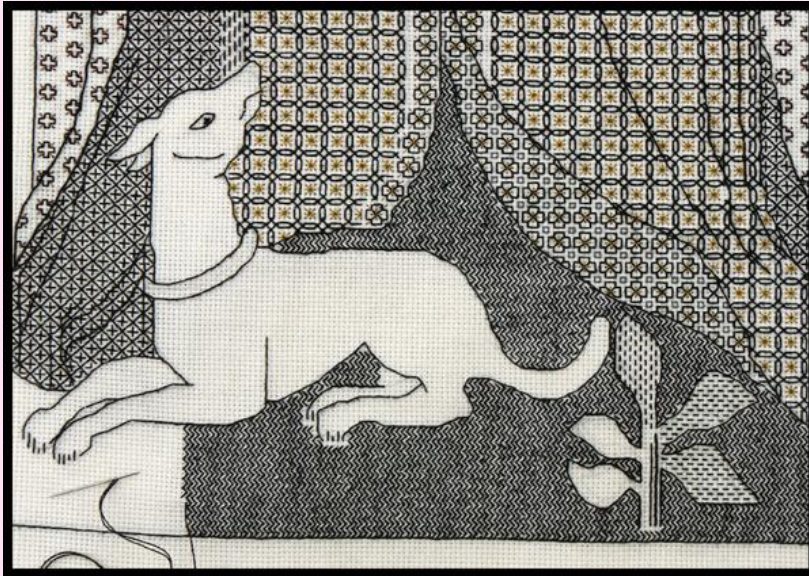
Once the shoulders had been stitched, I worked down the centre of the body outlining the hands and sleeves using a variety of fillers to create depth to the embroidery. Again, I added the metallic threads as the work progressed which I would not normally do, but by using short lengths and working the piece in my hands, rather than a frame because of the size of the project, the metallic threads did not rub.

Selecting the right fillers to use was done by deciding where the areas of depth in the pattern would be and trying different stitches on a spare piece of Aida to see if they produced the desired effect. One strand of thread was used for the fillers and two strands for the outline.



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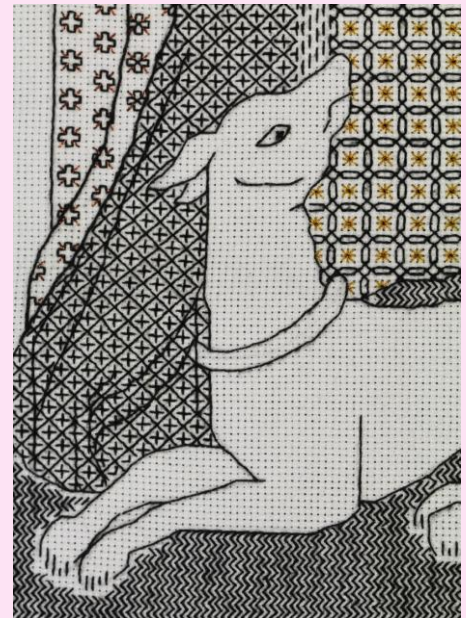
Selecting the right fillers to use was done by deciding where the areas of depth in the pattern



would be and working different stitches on a spare piece of Aida to see if they produced the desired effect. One strand of thread was used for the fillers throughout. Two strands were used for the outline. To see how this works most effectively, examine the stitching behind the dog at Lady Margaret's feet. The zigzag stitches are worked

in one strand, but because they are closer together the pattern appears to be very heavy.

The project is progressing slowly and steadily. At the end of every session it is rolled up and placed in a plastic bag along with the threads and beads. There is no frame to dismantle, no tissue paper to wrap it in and no special storage methods and whilst there is still a great deal of stitching to do, she is providing me with a sense of satisfaction and enjoyment which is what embroidery should be about.

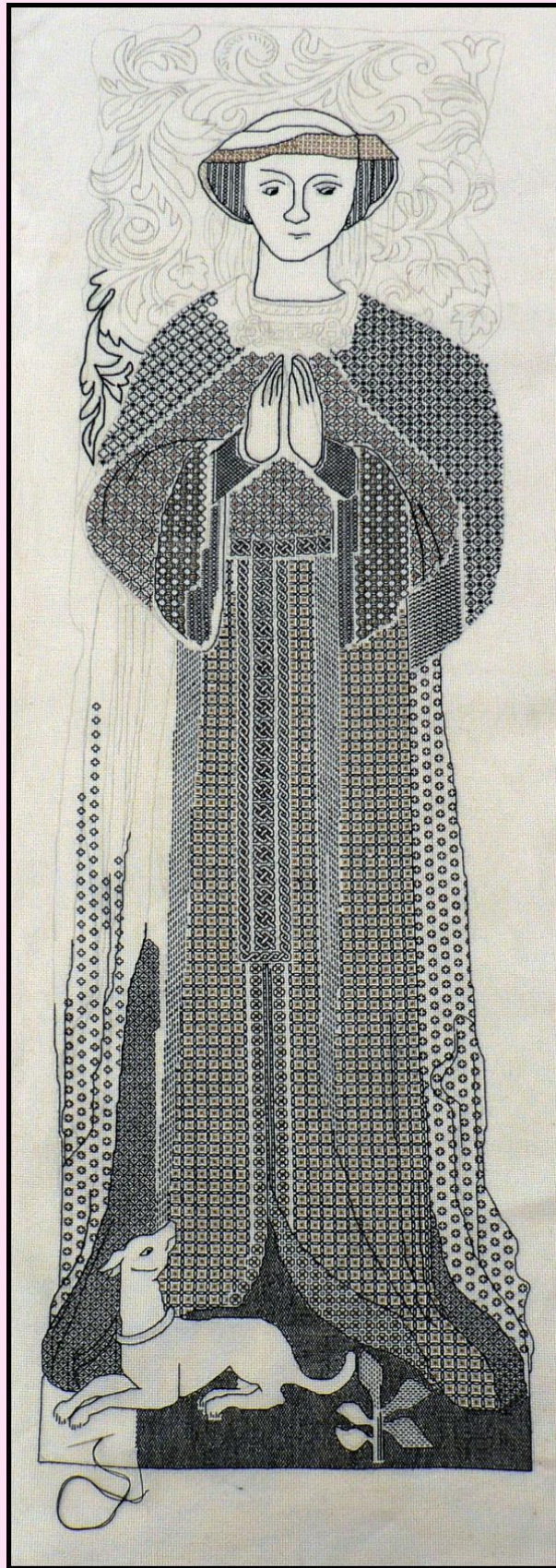


I will keep you informed on her progress and tell you how I have decided to frame her at a later date.

If you are working on a major project and would like to share it with my readers please e-mail me with the details. I would be delighted to hear from you.

Happy stitching!

Liz



Lady Margaret Bellingham, daughter of Sir Roger Bellingham and his wife Elizabeth, 1544