



# *Blackwork Journey Blog*

November 2012

## ***Rochdale Town Hall - English heritage Free designs***



ROCHDALE TOWN HALL



# Blackwork Journey Blog – November 2012

---

## *November 2012*

Our senses are constantly stimulated by our surrounds and as designers and embroiderers, we should try to analyse what we see, hear or feel.

Whilst people do not necessarily see everything in the same way, there is often a need to delve deeper into our reactions to find out why something has made an impact and to see if it can be used in our creations.

A quotation about quilting recently caught my attention, as it made some very relevant observations about creativity;

"LEARNING TO SEE  
DESIGN  
depends on where you  
LOOK!  
What do you  
SEE?  
Can you  
IDENTIFY  
The  
ELEMENTS  
of design and then  
SELECT  
and  
ORGANISE  
them to suit your purpose?"

By developing a keen eye for patterns and designs in everyday life, you can very quickly identify potential designs that could be turned into a good embroidery and this brings me to the topic of this month.....

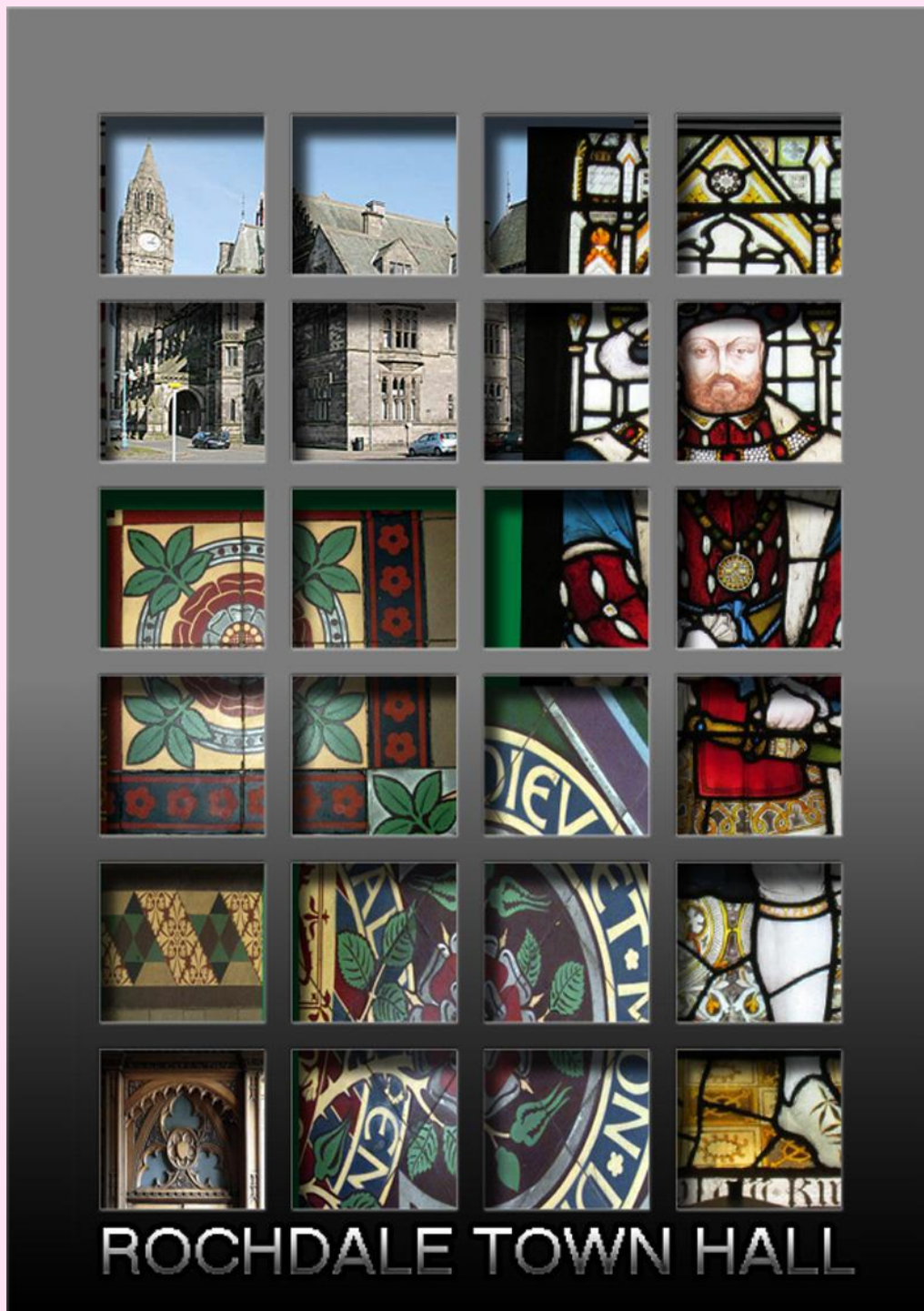
Northern England where I live, was once the heart of the Industrial Revolution, which transformed the United Kingdom into a power house of industry, spreading its influence to the four corners of the earth. Trade and manufacturing from cotton, wool and the heavy industries of coal, iron, steel and engineering created vibrant towns and outstanding public buildings, as money poured into the region.

### ***Rochdale Town Hall***

I recently visited Rochdale Town Hall in Greater Manchester, about twelve miles from where I live and was so impressed by what I saw, I thought I would share my thoughts with you.

Rochdale Town Hall is a Victorian Grade 1 listed building that was built in the Gothic style in 1871 at a cost of £160,000. (£11.5 million today) It is still used as a Town Hall, but as a designer it provides a wealth of detail that stimulates and inspires.



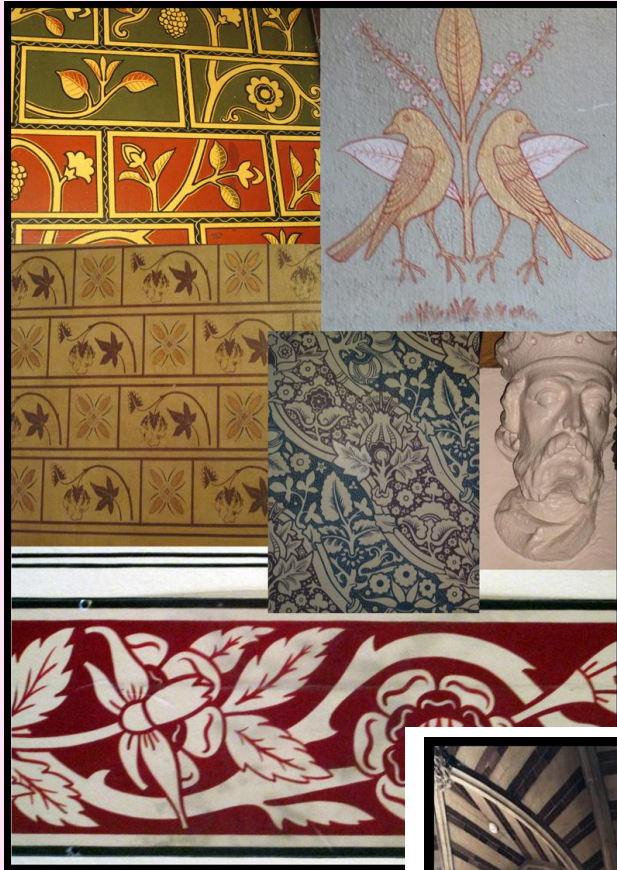


*The external walls hide a treasure within!*

The richly decorated main entrance is called the Exchange and its original purpose was for traders to exchange wool, cotton and other merchandise. It has a floor made of multi coloured Minton tiles divided into squares depicting the Royal Coat of Arms, those of the country and of the Borough. The columns are made of red and grey granite with a high vaulted ceiling. It leads to a sweeping stone staircase which in turn, leads to the Great Hall.

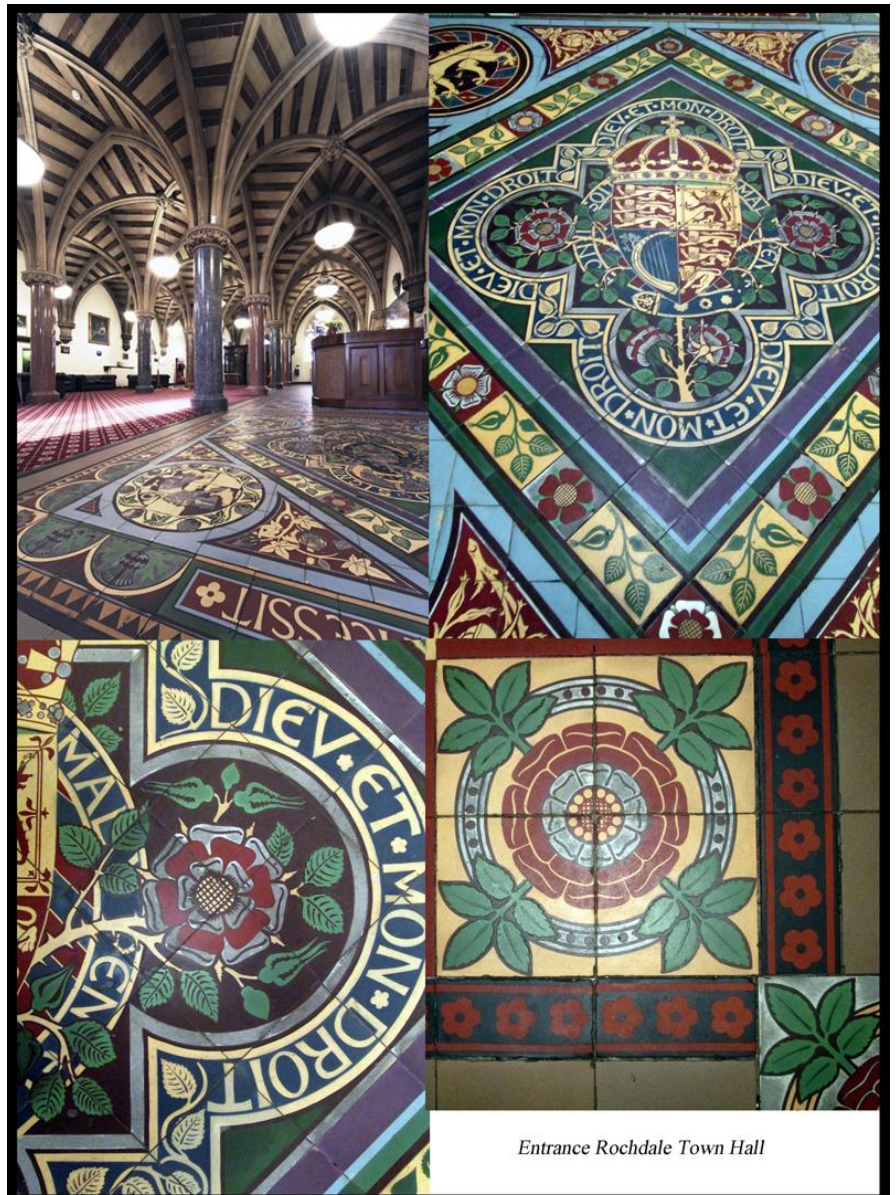


## Blackwork Journey Blog – November 2012



From hand painted friezes to hand painted rooms, the building is a feast of pattern and colour reflecting the town's heritage and the Victorian love of design.

Progress up the grand stone staircase, with its high columns, vaulted ceilings and stained glass windows into the Great Hall and you are confronted with a high wooden painted ceiling where angels and lions stand guard over the occupants below. Kings and Queens from British history are depicted in the magnificent stained glass windows.



Entrance Rochdale Town Hall



## Blackwork Journey Blog – November 2012

Minton's Ltd, was a major ceramics manufacturing company, originated with Thomas Minton(1765-1836) who established his pottery factory in Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, England in 1793. The colours are still as vibrant today as when the floor was originally laid in 1871.



A Minton floor can also be seen in the Capitol building in Washington, USA!

Rich colours and fine detail are revealed as the sun streams into the dark interior of the hall. The painted ceiling has been coated with brown varnish which masks the rich creams and vibrant colours underneath.

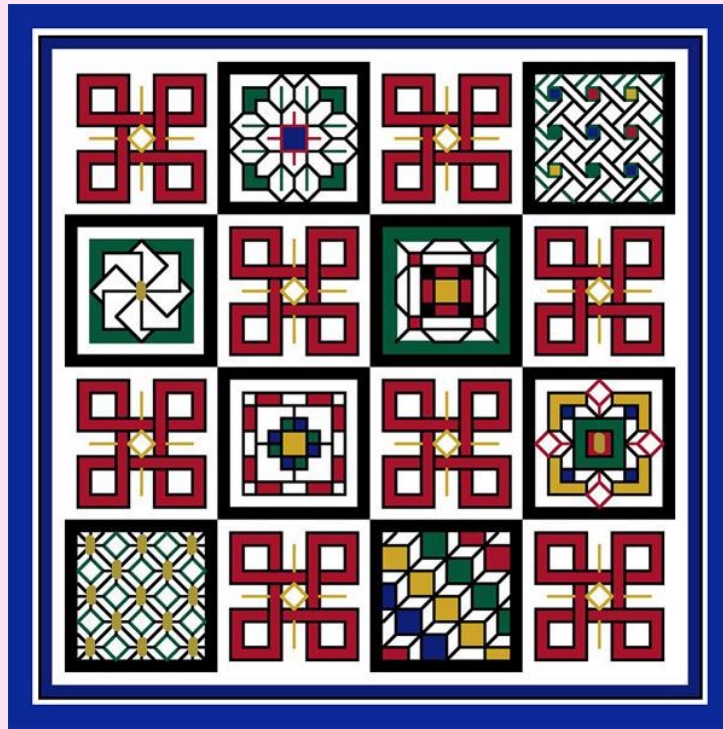
Restoration will be a slow and costly process, but one day the ceiling will be revealed in all its splendour.

With its fine silver, intricate carved wood and stone, stained glass windows, detailed floor tiles and hand

painted walls and murals; Rochdale Town Hall stirs the imagination and leaves me with a sense of awe for the architect and craftsmen who created a lasting image of a bygone era for present and future generations to enjoy.

These buildings are part of our heritage and are being carefully preserved by local authorities, government grants, charitable institutions and organisations such as English Heritage and the National Trust. Without their input, many of these buildings could not be maintained and we owe a debt of gratitude to all the organisations who work together to protect our history!

Just one of the inspirations I obtained during my visit to the Town Hall, has resulted in this simple stained glass sampler which can be found in my "Freebies" section. The mini motifs can be worked as colourful gift tags or as groups of four motifs for Christmas cards.



*Stained glass*

The weather is turning colder. The leaves are falling like rain from the trees and Christmas is just round the corner! Perhaps it is time to look for new projects for the winter months until spring arrives. Enjoy looking through the site and see if you can find something to tempt you...

Happy stitching!

*Liz*