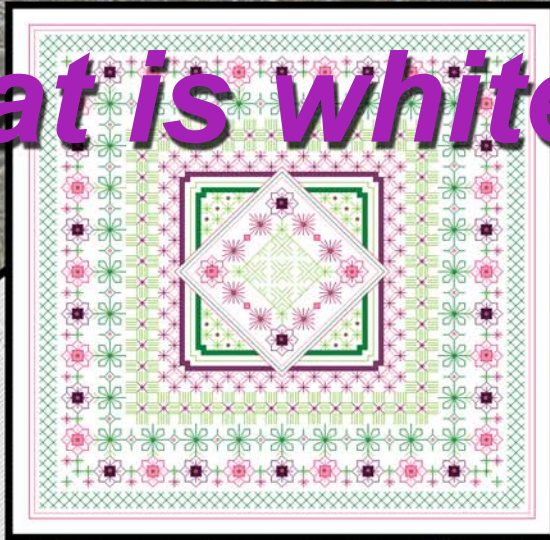




# *Blackwork Journey Blog*

March 2013

*What is white?*



*Petite Treasure &  
Celtic braids*



*Whitework lavender  
design*



# Blackwork Journey Blog - March 2013

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## *What is White?*

I found this quote on the internet and it started me thinking about a colour I use daily and think little about.

"White can be cold like the driven snow. White is looked upon as moral purity, as in a bride wearing a white wedding dress. White can be as simple as a T-shirt, or a scoop of ice cream!"

The artist Vasily Kandinsky (1866-1944) referred to white as "a great silence that shrouds its life from our understanding...not a dead silence, but one pregnant with possibilities." Kandinsky saw it as pure untainted nothingness that was the world before the birth of anything.

We still think of white as that "pure nothingness" using it as a foundation for painting, drawing, writing and embroidery!

White embroidery i.e. white embroidery on white fabric can be found in almost every country in the world and has documented historical roots. It allows the embroiderer free range as there are no other colours to distract and the emphasis has to be on the quality of the stitching. It can be worked on any kind of fabric, ranging from fine muslin to heavy cottons and linens, using a wide range of techniques specific to whitework, some of which I will touch on in the coming months.

I have stitched white on white for many years and it has never failed to satisfy and enthrall me, so in developing my whitework theme further this month, I have worked a small piece of embroidery in coton á broder and thought I would share my results with you.

I used coton á broder for the embroidery because it is a durable, colour fast, matt thread which is easy to work with and ideal for creating texture. I stitched the lavender spray below, totally in this thread using a crewel needle No.20 which has an eye large enough to take the thread easily. (Too small a needle makes the thread fray and knot.) I worked with a length of about 18 inches.

Facts: Coton á Broder is:

Made from 100% long staple cotton. It is a 3 ply mercerised and lustrous embroidery thread which is tightly twisted for use as a general embroidery thread, especially popular for Blackwork and Whitework. Size 16 is the most popular thickness and is available in a range of colours, the other thicknesses being confined to black, white and off white.

Thickness: 3 ply.

Length/Weight:

Size 12 = 30m skein

Size 16 = 30m skein

Size 20 = 30m skein

Size 25 = 30m skein

Size 30 = 30m skein

Size 40 = 30m skein

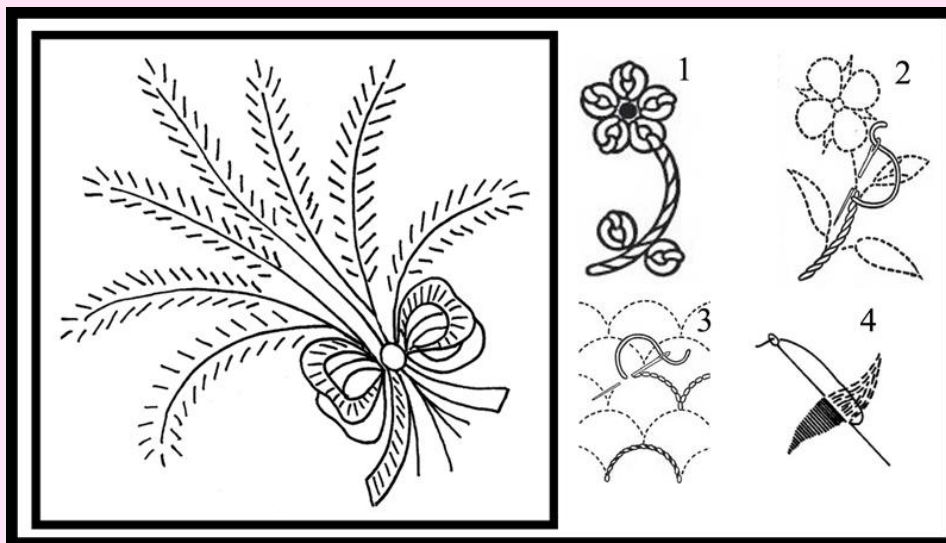
DMC also make a similar range of thicknesses and colours and both Anchor and DMC are widely available.



coton á broder

### *Lavender design*

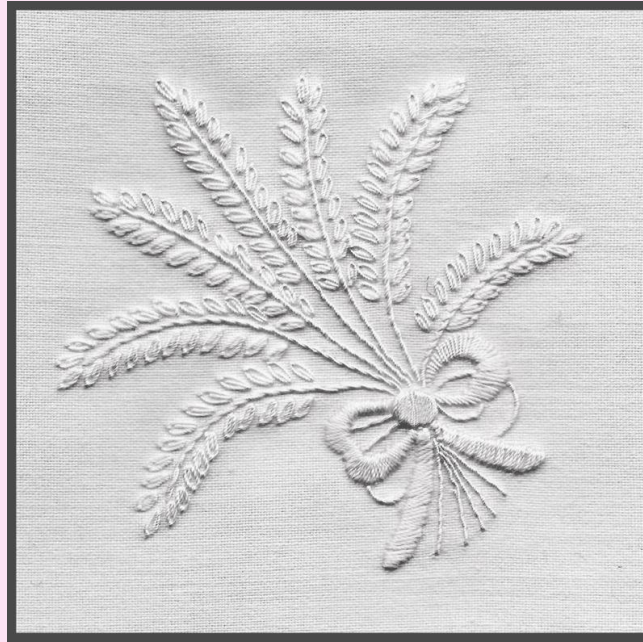
The design was drawn onto medium weight cotton with a water soluble pen. Rather than trying to draw each petal, I drew a straight line to indicate where each stitch would go, aiming to keep the sketch as simple as possible. The lavender petals were worked as individual chain stitches with a straight stitch inside each chain. The stems were worked in stem stitch and the bow was worked in padded satin stitch and whipped back stitch, all in coton á Broder.



*Sketch of Lavender Spray - trace and enlarge to desired size.*

### *Stitches used:*

1. Detached chain for petals
2. Sketch of Lavender Spray - trace and enlarge to desired size. Stem stitch
3. Back stitch and back stitch whipped Sketch of Lavender Spray - trace and enlarge to desired size.

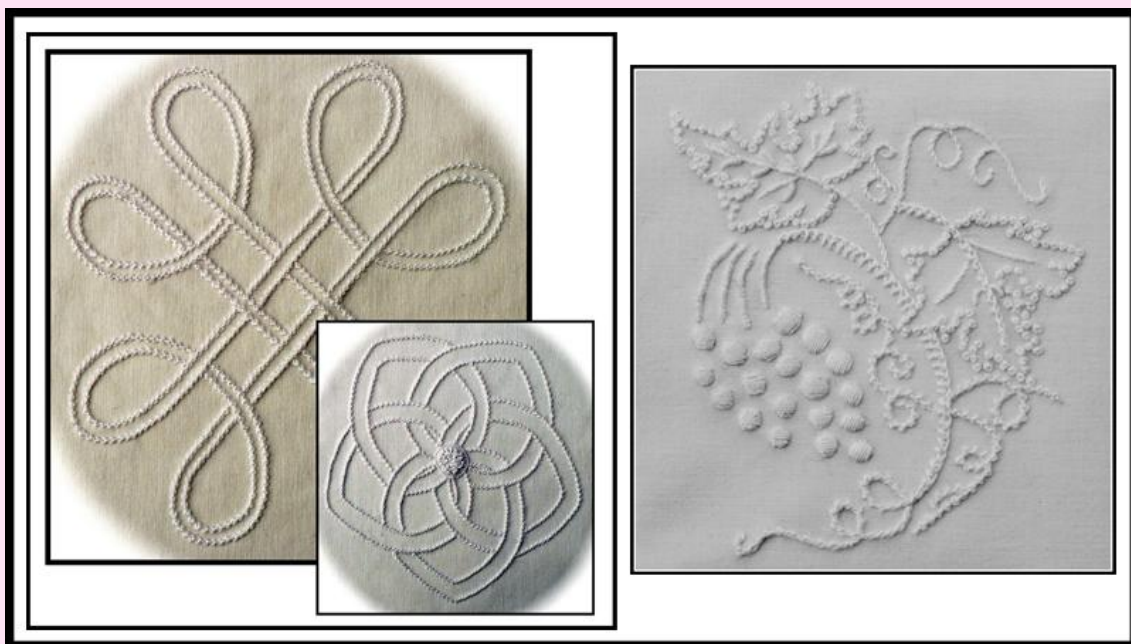


*Lavender embroidered in coton á broder on medium weight cotton*

Designs do not have to be complicated to be effective. This embroidery uses four basic stitches and one colour to create an interesting design which can be used in a variety of ways. A plain linen blouse would benefit from a lavender spray, a wedding cushion can be personalised, a horseshoe with an embroidered spray for a Scottish guest, to name but a few.

Two new whitework designs have been added to "Projects".

PR0015 Celtic Braids is stitched in double knot stitch and PR0016 Grape Vine use a variety of whitework and Mountmellick stitches to create textured whitework embroidery.



*PR0015 Celtic Braids and PR0016 Grape Vine*

Working with white threads can create eyesight problems for some people because of the glare. If that is the case, working on cream fabric with cream threads will mitigate this problem whilst still retaining the beauty and simplicity of whitework. A magnifying lens and daylight simulation bulb will also reduce the 'glare' factor.



*Ann's Needle case*

I love old needlework tools and was delighted to receive a picture of an old needle case from Ann in America, especially as I had just designed one for Blackwork Journey along with a scissor keeper for my small gold scissors which I am always losing! I always wonder about the owner of items such as these and what their lives were like.





*CH0304 Petite Treasures - Front and Back  
A modern scissor keeper and pin keeper!*

I hope you enjoy this month's Blog. If you have any questions please contact:

[lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk](mailto:lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk)

I am always pleased to help and am delighted to receive photographs to post in Reader's Gallery

Happy stitching!

*Liz*