



Blackwork Journey Blog

April 2014

***Save the Stitches
Questions and answers***

***New designs in blackwork
and pulled work***

Anna's story

Teaching in Spain 2015



May 10 – 16th 2015 I will be teaching a Blackwork Embroidery course in Spain, the home of this wonderful technique.

If you would like to join me on this adventure all the details of the week can be found on the website and by contacting the e-mail addresses below.

Your week

Craft Workshops Spain

Sunday

Arrive Alicante airport and meet our exclusive trip adviser Jane Bolsover, followed by transfer to hotel. Free time to settle in, explore San Pedro del Pinata.

7.00pm welcome get-together and drink.

Monday

9.30am pick up from hotel by Jane, for trip to the local market where you will soak up the atmosphere and colours of Spain - don't forget your camera.

Transfer to studio to meet tutor and discuss the week's course, followed by a traditional Spanish lunch. After lunch the fun begins in the studio.

5.30pm transfer back to hotel for an evening of free time.

Tuesday and Wednesday

9.30am pick up, transfer to studio, for a full day's session on your chosen project. A light lunch will be served at the studio.

5.30pm transfer back to hotel for an evening of free time.

Thursday

9.30am pick up for a morning session in the studio. At around **12.30pm** transfer to Murcia city for a traditional tapas lunch, followed by a sightseeing tour and free time to explore the city. Transfer back to hotel late evening.

Friday

9.30am pick up from hotel, transfer to studio, for your final day and completion of your projects. A light lunch will be served at the studio.

5.30pm transfer back to hotel for an evening of free time.

Saturday

9.30am pick up from hotel. Transfer to Alicante airport for return flight.

Our exclusive trip adviser, Jane Bolsover, will be on hand throughout the week with round the clock support, in the studios and on the excursions, to ensure that you have a comfortable and enjoyable time.

This is an extract from the 2014 programme. Visit the website for more details.

Get in touch

Craft making activities

For more information on any of our courses or prices, please do not hesitate to get in touch; we are always here and happy to help as best we can.

TEL : 01527 69100

EMAIL : info@castaneacraftcourses.com

*There are 10 places per course.
Details about the course content can be obtained
from: lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk*

Thinking outside the box!

I recently received a very special gift from my friend Mary in the United States which prompted me to look further into machine embroidery.



Mary's mats – machine embroidery

Mary is very interested in machine embroidery. She has made two small mats with contrasting blue motifs. The same design worked in two different blue colours make an impact. The pale blue is very delicate and subtle whereas the bolder blue makes a 'statement'.

Urban Threads

I love the modern images created by Urban Threads. Their web site is well worth exploring as it stirs the imagination and provides a range of unusual designs which can be interpreted in a variety of ways.

Blackwork Journey Blog - April 2014

Urban Threads operate as part of a larger team at Embroidery Library, a company of just over 20 people outside Minneapolis, MN.

They offer both machine and hand embroidery designs not normally found on mainstream web sites. The charts are clear and easy to download and in a number of formats, so people from all crafting backgrounds can join in the fun. I have downloaded some of their designs as shown below.

One thing that also sets Urban Threads apart is their licensing policy which allows you to sell the items you make with their designs.

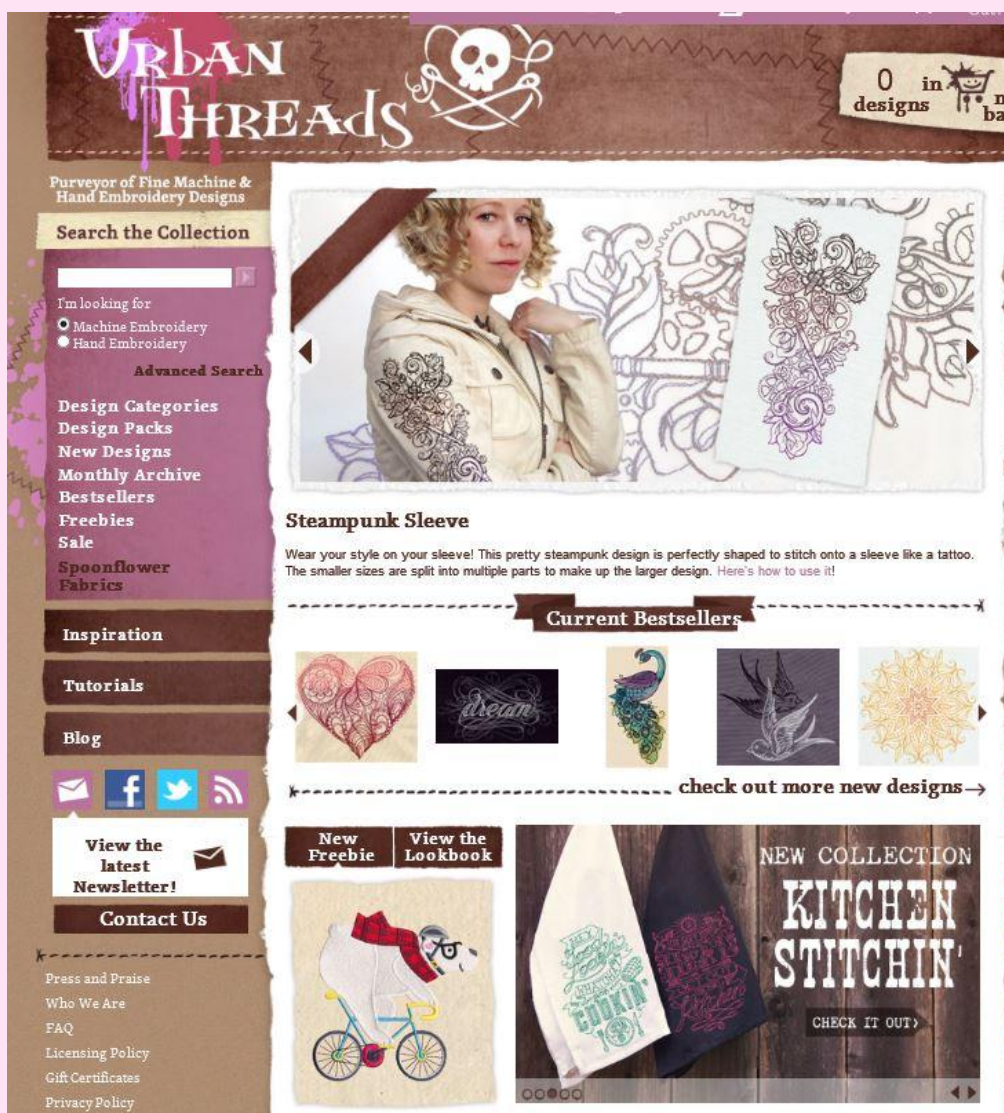
Traditional hand embroidery has fallen by the wayside over the past few years and this could be a very interesting way of reviving it, as not everyone is an artist and it is wonderful to find a source of different modern designs.

So why not investigate their designs and see where they lead you?

<http://www.urbanthreads.com>



Examples of the hand embroidery charts and some of the categories.



Urban Threads website is very inspiring and is updated every month!

Selecting extracts from patterns

It is not always necessary to stitch a complete embroidery chart, often sections can be used for specific purposes.

Josette sent me two pictures where she selected parts to create lavender bags. These are quick to embroider and make very special gifts.

Blackwork, with its geometric structure is especially suitable to this approach and can be used on work requiring just that little extra touch!



Embroideries by Josette

It is very easy to get stuck in a rut, so I have become a member of a progressive craft group. I have been colouring, distressing, painting, distorting etc – all the things that are well outside my comfort zone, so I will let you know how I get on over the coming months!

‘Save the Stitches’ Readers Questions

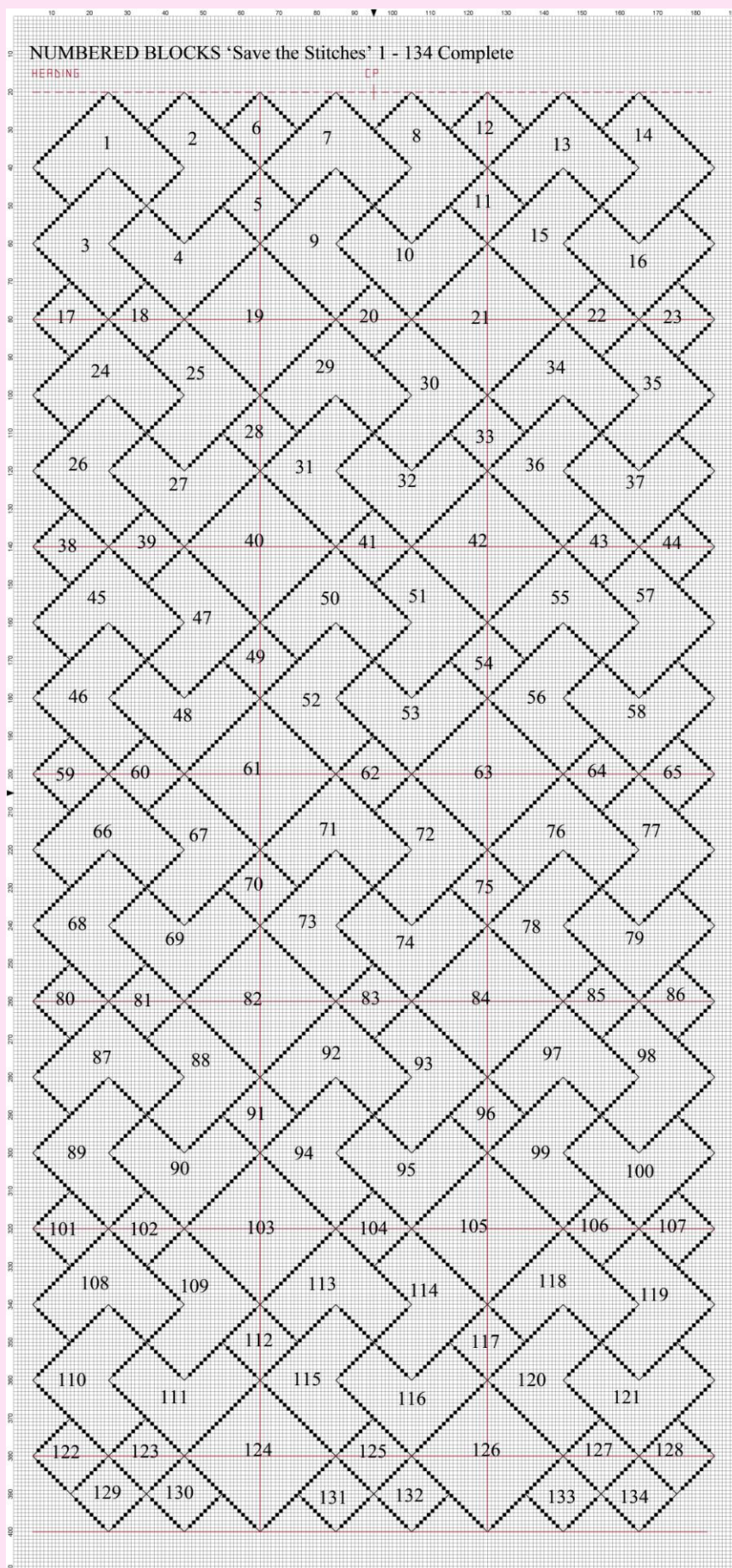
‘Could you add the Master chart with all the numbers on please as I am beginning to get confused and keep turning it round the wrong way?’

Blocks 6 and 7 have been added this month along with the complete numbered Master Card which has been added to Block 6. This will enable you to mark your progress and position the blocks correctly. I did not want to add it before the first few blocks had been completed!

(I always write ‘Top’ and ‘Bottom’ on my material to make it less likely that it will be the wrong way round and its makes sure that my cross stitches always face in the same direction.)

‘In the instructions it mentions DMC Garnet. I can’t find garnet anywhere?’

The garnet lines are used to mark the position of the blocks and help you to ‘place’ the pattern correctly. They are there for information and are not stitched. My software will not allow a colour with no name to be printed.

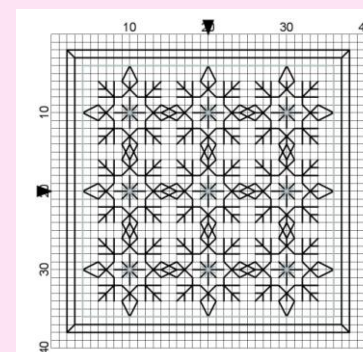


Master Chart – Numbered Patterns 1 – 134

This chart is also attached to Block 6



Bernadette has embroidered one of the small motifs in P rl  to make the motif 'stand out'. This should only be used in small areas as it can unbalance the design. The material has also been tacked to make counting more accurate. Basic preparation can save time and errors.

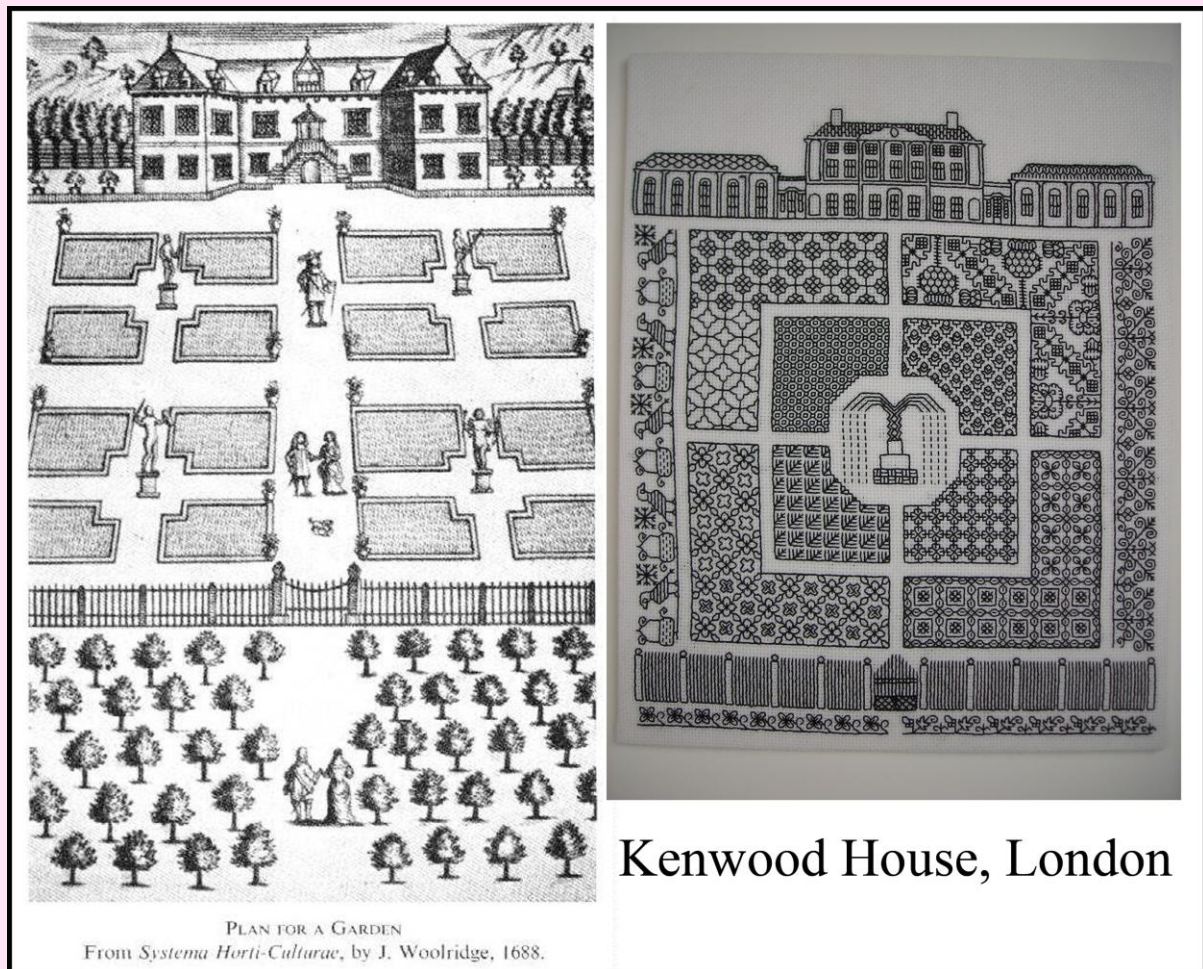


Mini Motif composed of patterns selected from Block 6

Anna's Embroidery

When readers contact me with stories about their work and photographs they can be inspirational. Anna from Italy sent me a picture of her first blackwork embroidery which she based on her happy childhood memories of Kenwood House in London, which demonstrates how taking an idea and translating it into embroidery can be both successful and unique!

She has agreed to let me share her story:



Kenwood House, London stitched by Anna

“That was actually the first piece of blackwork I did and only my second piece of embroidery apart from a sampler I did over 30 years earlier. Having discovered blackwork on the Internet, I wanted to do a sampler of filling stitches and instead of the classic chessboard, I had the idea of putting them into a formal garden. I based the basic design on the picture I have attached. I felt the design should in some way reflect my own life, i.e. have some significance for me and that gave me the idea that the house should be Kenwood, which I have visited regularly with my family since I was a teenager. I based my blackwork outline on this photo: <http://www.hampsteadheath.org.uk/kenwood/kenwood.htm>. In fact the original Kenwood doesn't have a formal garden, but an 18th century landscape garden.”

Blackwork Journey Blog - April 2014

Now that I take another look at it, I see I should have shaped the spray from the fountain so that it fitted better into the central shape, but it didn't occur to me at the time that I could do that!

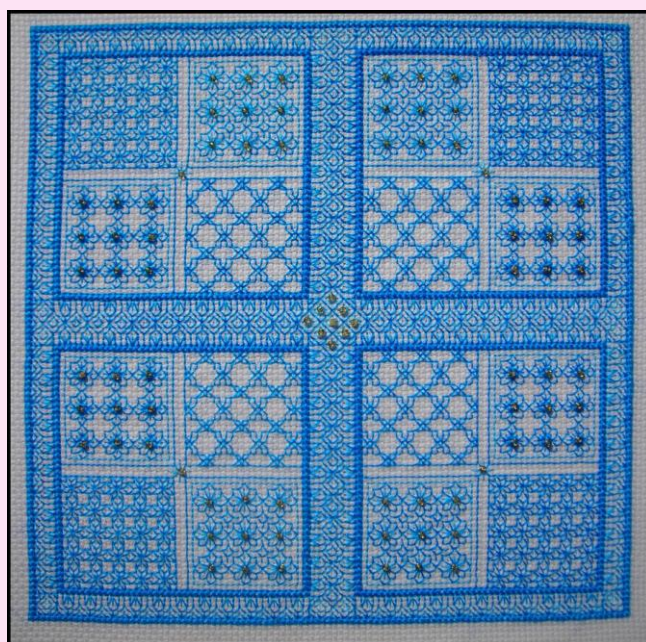
What I like about blackwork is that you get amazing, intricate designs, but at the same time it's very quick and easy to do. Since it's repetitive, you can watch television or chat to someone at the same time, unlike cross stitch pictures, which involve a lot of concentration and counting, otherwise it's easy to make a mistake. I usually watch videos in YouTube while I'm doing it"

Anna's story represents the attitude of many embroiderers towards their needlework. Time is scarce and stitching has to be fitted in round other tasks. I have little piles of work all over the house (much to my husband's annoyance) but when I have a few minutes I can pick them up and add a few stitches. It seems to work for me!

Do you have any stitching stories you can share? Please keep sending me your photographs and the questions. I am always delighted to see them and will always try to help.

Happy stitching!

Liz



*'New Itznik' stitched by Anna – a Freebie from
Blackwork Journey*