



Blackwork Journey Blog

August 2014

'Save the Stitches' e-book extended



'Save the Stitches' extended - additional designs, project ideas and information!

Oriental rugs - a source of inspiration!

Women in needlework

New charts and designs

Craft holidays in Spain

Create a unique blackwork sampler containing 134+ designs, full instructions, photographs, and charts



Blackwork Journey Blog – August 2014

The month of July was warm and wonderful! Our new grandson, baby James is getting stronger every day and I would like to thank everyone who sent messages and prayers for him. They have provided us with comfort and support during a very difficult period.

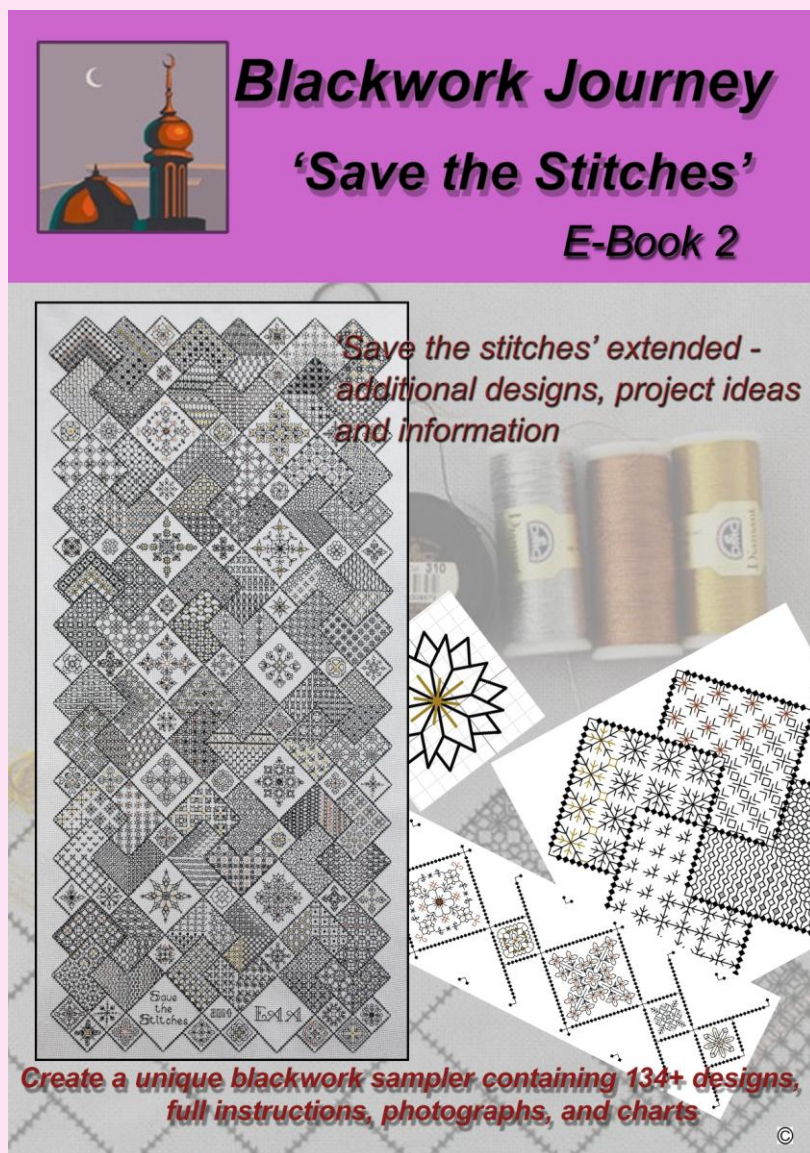
Blackwork Journey is now part of a worldwide family where we can help and support each other, although it does lead to some unusual requests on occasions, for example;

'Liz, I was in the garden with my embroidery when I killed a red spider and got blood on my work. How do you remove spider's blood?'

I know that your own saliva will help to remove your blood, but spider's blood?

EB0002 'Save the Stitches' e-book

I have been inundated with requests for the remaining charts for the project and asked if I could compile the information as an e-book.



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68 pages of ideas and information!

I had intended to do this at the end of the project in January 2015, but have brought it forward to this month so that those of you who are up-to-date can continue.

It has been expanded with many extra designs, pictures and ideas for smaller projects to help you to create your own designs.

The remaining charts will continue to be placed in my Freebies section as normal and will stay there indefinitely.

‘Save the Stitches’ has been a challenge for me as well as for my readers and I have been overwhelmed by the positive response from around the world and by the number of people who have never attempted blackwork, but have participated in the project. It has taken a lot of courage to launch into something so large with no experience and the results have been inspiring!

Russia, Japan, France, Canada and the USA are just a few of countries who have people taking part, however, I would like to share one rather nice e-mail with you from Mary-Lou in Ontario, Canada who is working on the project with a small group of fellow embroiderers.

‘Time does fly! I am current with the designs. I am doing the whole thing, but for many the women in the group feel it too much to undertake so we have a variety of things happening: 2 of them are doing the block separately and are going to use them for a quilt. 4 are making pillows by working a square. They will choose just the patterns they like.

I have decided to make a runner by doing some at each end and a single line along the sides.

There are several who will do the whole piece and still others who have yet to decide! It will be interesting to see the finished pieces. I will send you photos.’ Mary Lou

This is right way to approach the project. Picking out individual parts to suit the individual or creating the whole piece means that each person chooses what is ‘right’ for them and presents it in a manner that suits their requirements. At the end of the day, it is their heirloom for the future, whether it is a small extract or a large design.

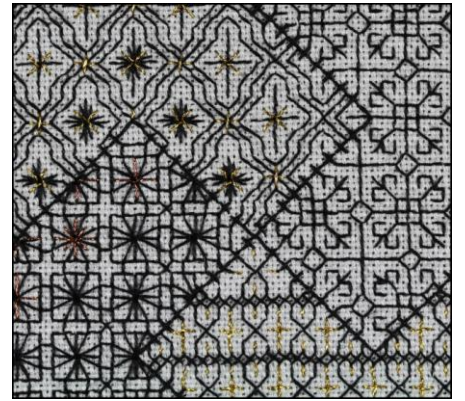
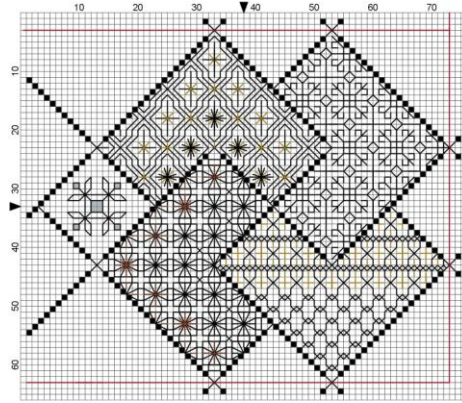
As embroiderers we frequently undervalue the work that we do and underplay the time and effort that goes into creating it. Think back to the embroiderers of the past and remember that you are following in their footsteps and creating your own pieces of history!



SAVE THE STITCHES

Blackwork Journey - Designs by Elizabeth Almond

Block 14 Patterns 70 - 74



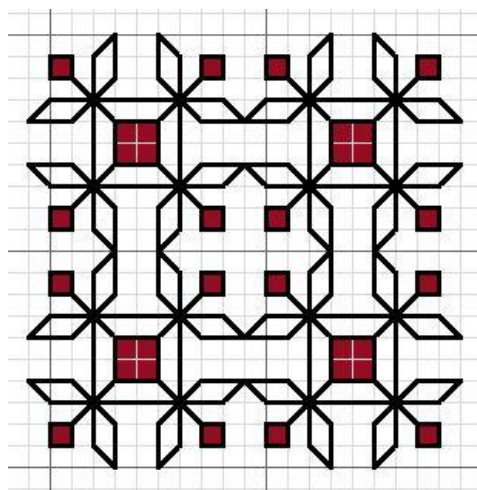
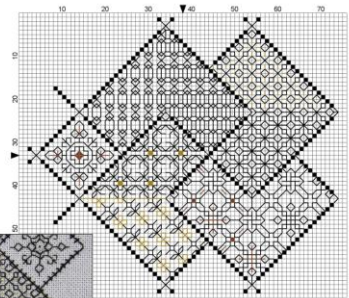
*Extract from Block 14
Using cross stitch helps to define
and separate the areas to be
filled.*

*This not only makes it easier to
fill, but emphasises the different
patterns.*

SAVE THE STITCHES

Blackwork Journey - Designs by Elizabeth Almond

Block 15 Patterns 75 - 78



Extract from EB0002

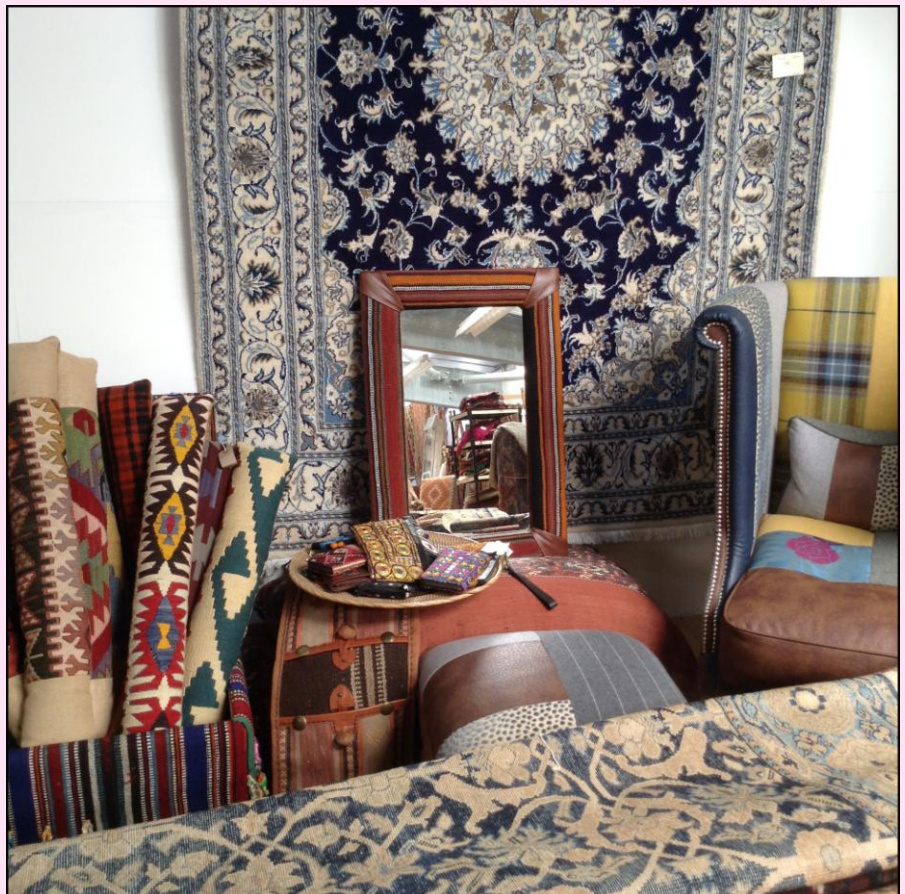


Oriental Rugs of Bath – a source of inspiration.

With such good weather in July, we took the opportunity to explore a part of England that we didn't know very well and travelled to the County of Somerset, which is in the south west of England. This is an area of great contrasts with Exmoor in the north, dramatic coastlines, seaside resorts and rolling countryside and whilst we were there we found a store called Oriental Rugs of Bath which is run by two very knowledgeable ladies who delighted in showing us their beautiful and varied products.

They sell rugs, kilims, furniture, boots, bags and associated items, most of which come from the East, from Turkey to China. They clean and restore items as well as selling new items.

Their rugs are all hand-made, using techniques, many of which are over 2,000 years old or more. The extraordinary and distinctive use of colour and complex designs are only possible through the skilled hand work and craftsmanship that go into them and the rugs and carpets are a real source of inspiration for the embroiderer. The colours and patterns could be translated into hand embroidery and if choosing colour is a weak point, then looking at the rugs closely could generate some positive reactions.



Whilst I don't know a great deal about oriental rugs and kilims, I did do some research when I came home to determine the differences?

What is the difference between a kilim rug and a carpet?

The difference between a kilim rug and a carpet, or a pile rug is that whereas the design visible on the kilim is made by interweaving the various coloured wefts and warps, thus creating what is known as a flatweave, in a pile rug individual short strands of different colour, usually of wool, are knotted onto the warps and held together by pressing the wefts tightly against each other. In this case, the whole design is made by separately knotted strands which form the pile and the patterns become clearly visible after any excessive lengths of the knotted materials are trimmed off to create a level surface.

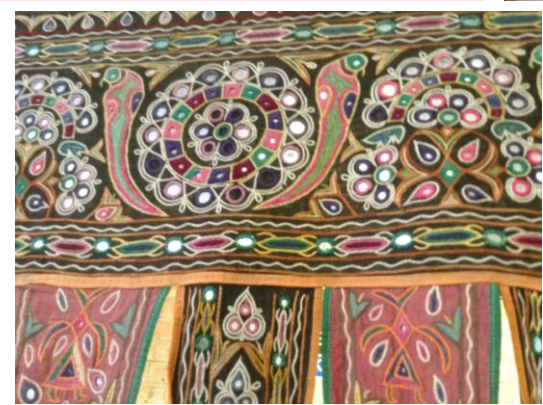


Colours and patterns together complement each other!

Oriental Rugs of Bath have an interesting website which includes an article on 'The centuries-old crafts of hand-making rugs' <http://www.orientalrugsofbath.com>



When considering the layout of a design, look at how the different elements interact with each other. Each item has something different to offer the embroiderer from the stitching on the bag to the lustre of the copper coffee pot. The paper lantern in its wrought iron stand compliments the colours of the woven tablecloth.



Shisha mirrors decorate a wall hanging! Chain stitch could equally be used on a cushion to create dense areas of pattern.

Looking at textiles from the point of view of the embroiderer can open up new ways of thinking and endless possibilities. Patterns in one medium can frequently be translated into another and I came away from my visit with many new ideas.

Needlewomen in Art

There are many paintings which depict needlewomen or embroidery on costume. We can relate to them and learn from them.



The Needlewoman (Spanish: *La costurera*) is an oil-on-canvas painting by Diego Velázquez, painted between 1635 and 1643. It is housed in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.



Bess of Hardwick – Artist unknown

One of the most famous needlewomen in England was Elizabeth Talbot, Countess of Shrewsbury (c.1521 – 13 February 1608), known as Bess of Hardwick, a notable figure of 16th century Elizabethan English society.

By a series of well-made marriages, she rose to the highest levels of English nobility and became enormously wealthy. She was married four times, firstly to Robert Barlow, who died in his teens in December 1535, secondly to the courtier Sir William Cavendish, thirdly to Sir William St Loe and lastly to George Talbot, 6th Earl of Shrewsbury, sometime keeper to the

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captive Mary, Queen of Scots. An accomplished needlewoman, Bess joined her husband's captive charge, Queen Mary Stuart, at Chatsworth House for extended periods in 1569, 1570, and 1571, during which time they worked together on the Oxburgh Hangings.

In 1601, Bess ordered an inventory of the household furnishings including textiles at her three properties at Chatsworth, Hardwick and Chelsea, which survives and in her Will she bequeathed these items to her heirs to be preserved in perpetuity.

The 400-year-old collection, now known as the Hardwick Hall textiles, is the largest collection of tapestry, embroidery, canvaswork and other textiles to have been preserved by a single private family.

Bess is also well known for her building projects, the most famous of which are: Chatsworth, now the seat of the Dukes of Devonshire (whose family name is still "Cavendish", because they are descended from the children of her second marriage) and Hardwick Hall, which inspired the rhyme, "Hardwick Hall, more glass than wall", because of the number and size of its windows.

Her relationship with Mary, Queen of Scots is revealed in great detail by George Wingfield Digby in his book 'Elizabethan Embroidery' Faber and Faber Ltd 1963



In an era where powerful women were uncommon, Bess of Hardwick held great influence and many of her embroideries are still on display at Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire as an inspiration for the needlewomen of today!



Follow the link on Facebook for the 2015 Craft Courses in Spain

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Castanea-Crafts-in-Spain/323248034373306>



Book now for a place on one of our exclusive textile holidays – we guarantee a maximum of 10 people per class.

We have two studios located in the village of Canadas de San Pedro, situated only 18 kilometres from the ancient city of Murcia, and close to the beautiful Mar Menor coast; all within easy reach of Alicante airport.



YOUR HOTEL

Accommodation is based at the family run Best Western: Hotel Neptune, situated right opposite La Puntica beach, near to good bars and restaurants. Staff all really helpful and friendly. The rooms are typically Spanish; simple and clean, with doors opening onto balconies, with splendid views of the Mar Menor; equipped with a safe for valuables, Wi-Fi and a mini-bar.

Textile Holidays 2015



Sue Rangley Fabulous Flora
19th – 25th April 2015

Embroidery inspired by the botanical beauties of the Mediterranean. Create vibrant patterns in machine-embroidered lace, enhanced with stitched sparkle, appliqué, and beads. A basic knowledge of machine embroidery required.





Wendy Dolan Memorable Places and Journeys
10th – 16th May 2015

Join Wendy for an exciting week of creativity, using maps and transfer printing techniques, combined with free machine embroidery, layering and three-dimensional textural effects to create unique designs. Suitable for all abilities.





Liz Almond Blackwork Embroidery inspired by its birthplace of Spain
10th – 16th May 2015

From Catherine of Aragon and Islamic influences through to 21st century design, enjoy the opportunity to explore the beauty of 'Blackwork'. Develop new techniques and enhance your existing skills. For beginners to experienced embroiderers.





Lindy Zubairy A Taste of Tunisian
17th – 23rd May 2015

This hybrid craft, between knitting and crochet, is full of creative potential. A rewarding knitwear technique, that is amazingly simple to learn and great fun to do. Suitable for beginners to experienced stitchers.



Textile Holidays 2015 continued



Pat Archibald Celtic Connections
4th – 10th October 2015

During this week you will take inspiration from Pat's award winning Celtic quilts, interlaced with designs and symbolism, to design your own piece, that can be abstract or pictorial, but uniquely yours.





Pauline Verrinder Book of Treasures
11th – 17th October 2015

Designing and making your own book is the main thrust of this workshop. Creating your own cover while exploring various mixed media techniques and filling pages with experimental embroidery. Suitable for all levels of ability.





Pat Archibald Indian Inspirations
15th – 21st November 2015

Repeated due to popular demand! Pat's love of Indian design comes through in many of her quilts. Join her for a week of creativity based on Indian stitching, quilting and design techniques.





Jennie Rayment Magic Manipulations for Fantastic Fabric Fiddling!
15th – 21st November 2015

Jennie will guide you through all manner of unusual and intricate ways to nip, tuck, twiddle and fiddle. Featuring amazing techniques to create surface texture by folding and rolling into intricate shapes.



What you've said about us ...

- Week went by too fast, wanted to prolong the stitching practice, food and company... have not laughed so much in years!
So much fun!
– Clare, Devon
- This holiday has surpassed my expectations, everything has been absolutely perfect: organisation, food, trips, teaching – superb. Am coming back next year
– Corinne, Scotland
- A totally amazing week; tuition was fantastic and hospitality was second to none. Can't wait to do another course. Thank you for a magical holiday
– Irene, Lancashire
- Began the week with a little trepidation, ended the week full of confidence! Really enjoyed the teaching, food and trips, a thoroughly fantastic time
– Sally, West Midlands

Liz Almond - 'Blackwork embroidery inspired in its birthplace of Spain'

10th - 16th May 2015

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From Catherine of Aragon and Islamic influences through to 21st century design, enjoy the opportunity to explore the beauty of ‘Blackwork’ and develop new techniques and your existing skills during a week of exciting stitching with a friendly and experienced teacher.

This course is for beginners through to experienced embroiderers. For more information contact: lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk

www.blackworkjourney.co.uk

I hope you have enjoyed reading my Blog this month. Thank you to all the readers who have contacted me and shared their stories and photographs. I really do enjoy hearing from you.

Hot off the Press:

Nicola Parkman had another ‘Best in Show’ award using a Blackwork Journey design. Many congratulations!!

Happy stitching!

Liz