



Blackwork Journey Blog

July 2015

New Designs

Block 5 'Box of Delights'

Ecclesiastical Embroidery

New Facebook Group

BOX OF DELIGHTS
Blackwork Journey - Designs by Elizabeth Almond
Block 5 Patterns 25 - 30



**Embroidery
Exhibition
2015**

**St Agatha's
Church
Portsmouth**





Our Grandson

To all the people who have been asking about baby James, born at 27 weeks, no heavier than a bag of sugar, I am pleased to say he was one year old last week and as you can see is growing steadily and has a smile to melt chocolate!

Thank you for all your kind thoughts and prayers.

James Benedict

June has been a very busy month with some unexpected results.

I now have a second Facebook group called ‘Blackwork Journey - Elizabeth Almond Designs’

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/blackworkjourneydesigns/>

I wanted to be able to work directly with readers, answer their questions and talk about their work and my designs in a way that is not possible in the Blog. It is a closed group which means that only the members of the group can see the posts, each other’s work and interact with one another. We can learn a lot by sharing information and what one person doesn’t know, there will be someone who does!

The group aims to work alongside the Pinterest boards for Elizabeth Almond ‘Save the Stitches’ and Elizabeth Almond ‘Box of Delights’ and to enable readers to move on to other groups when they have finished their SAL.

If you would like to join me in the Facebook group, I would be delighted to welcome you. To the existing members, thank you for supporting me on another new challenge!



***Ecclesiastical Embroidery from the Private Collection of
Father John Maunder
of St Agatha's Church, Portsmouth, England***

I was privileged to visit this exhibition of some of Father John's private collection on display in his church. It consisted of embroidery from the 17th century onwards and was of the finest quality and range imaginable.

I would like to share some of collection with you and hope you enjoy the craftsmanship as much as I did. The future of the collection is uncertain, but the hope is that it can be preserved in a museum within the church for future generations to enjoy!

A detailed PDF can be found in Inspirations SP0007





Just a taste of the embroidery and goldwork displayed in the exhibition!

Earlier in the month I visited the Tudor Gallery at the National Portrait Gallery, London and discovered a picture of Mary, Queen of Scots 1542-1587 that I hadn't seen before.



It was the blackwork collar that drew my attention to the picture, with its freestyle repeating floral motifs. It could easily be replicated in a modern blackwork embroidery.

This canvas work floral slip embroidered by Mary would have been appliquéd to a woven background fabric such as velvet or damask.

Mary was a prolific needlewoman and blackwork was an important technique in that era, especially under the Sumptuary Laws when the wearing of lace was restricted and blackwork became the ‘poor man’s lace.’

Sumptuary Laws and Blackwork

A sumptuary law is one that restricts extravagance in certain items, such as food and clothing. The laws were often justified on religious or moral grounds, but more often conveyed the impression of trying to keep those from the lower classes in their place.

English monarchs had a history of trying to regulate who could buy and wear what. The first recorded sumptuary laws in England date back to London in the late 13th century and were expanded throughout the following three hundred years.

Historically, blackwork was used on shirts and chemises or smocks in England from the time of Henry VI¹¹. The common name "Spanish work" was based on the belief that Catherine of Aragon brought many blackwork garments with from Spain, and portraits of the later 15th and early 16th centuries show black embroidery or other trim on Spanish chemises.

Black embroidery was known in England before 1500. Geoffrey Chaucer in the ‘Canterbury Tales’ describes the clothing of the miller's wife, Alison: "Of white, too, was the dainty smock she wore, embroidered at the collar all about with coal-black silk, alike within and out."

Blackwork in silk on linen was the most common domestic embroidery technique for clothing (shirts, smocks, sleeves, ruffs, and caps) and for household items such as cushion covers throughout the reign of Elizabeth 1st, but it lost its popularity by the 17th century.

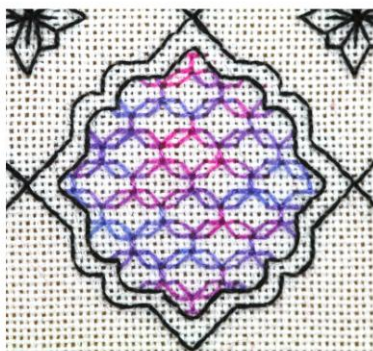
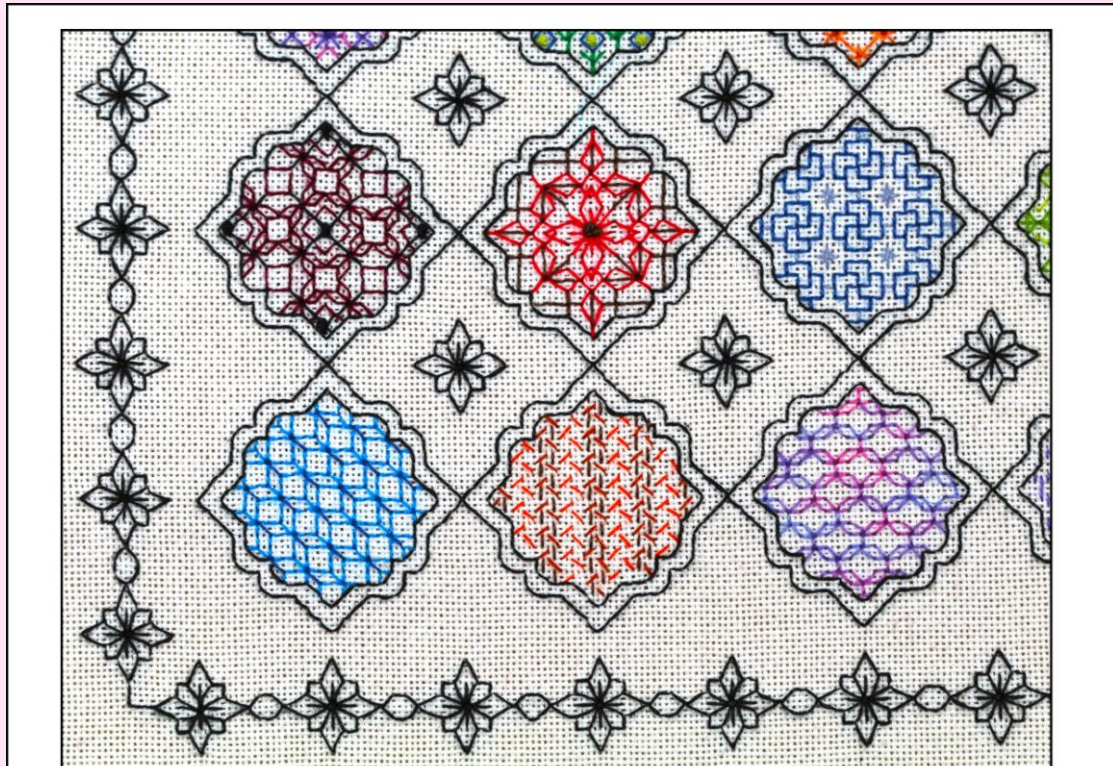
Following a traditional technique such as blackwork with a documented history is one of the aspects that I find most satisfying. I can visualise women from generations long gone, stitching exactly as we do today and probably having the same problems with eyesight and knotting threads!

*Detail of a scarletwork cuff,
Bess of Hardwick,
Countess of Shrewsbury, 1560*



Box of Delights Part 5

Extract a single chocolate from any block in the design and use it to create a Christmas ornament, gift or card. Mount the embroidery over a card circle and back it with a Christmas fabric or use a small gilt frame.



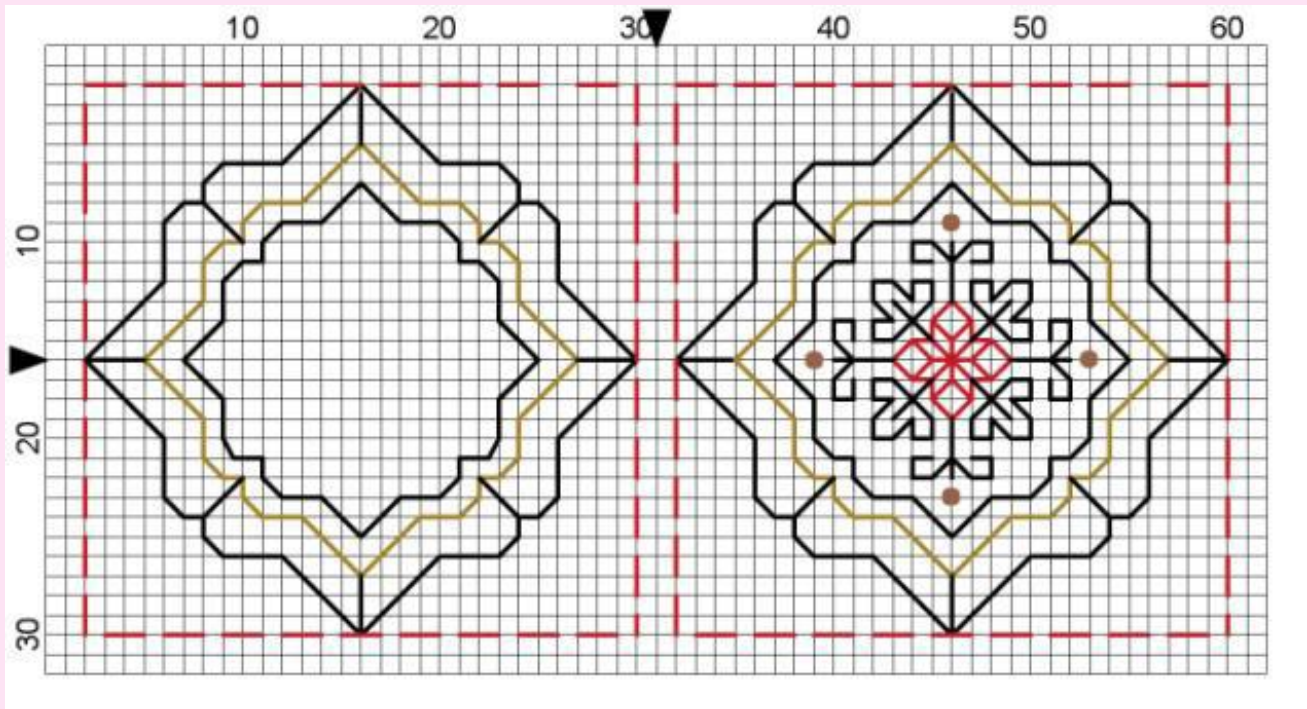
What can you do with one sweet?



Each sweet can be used to create a Christmas ornament!

Select any of the chocolates from previous blocks and create your own Christmas gifts

CH0335 12 Christmas Ornaments



Christmas Ornament - Front and Back

Design Area: 2 x 2 inches

28 x 28 stitches for a single side

Two squares of fabric 4 x 4 inches

For small circular ornaments:

Two card circles 2 inches in diameter, thin wadding

FRONT: Stitch the design on the first piece of fabric working out from the centre using ONE strand for the back stitch, TWO strands for cross stitch and two strands for colonial knots.

BACK: Stitch the frame. Add an initial if desired or cover a card circle with Christmas fabric.

To complete ALL small, round ornaments:

Lightly stitch the wadding to the two card circles and trim.

Draw a circle 3.50 inches in diameter on the fabric and cut out the circle. Repeat for both pieces. Work a running stitch near the edge in button thread.

Place a card circle onto the fabric and draw the threads up tightly. Tie off and repeat.

Fold the chosen length of ribbon or cord and stitch into place for the hanger.

Place the two circles together and ladder stitch.

Stitch egg decoration or beads round the edge if desired!

*Extract from new Christmas chart
CH0335 Twelve Christmas Ornaments*



Freestyle Embroidery using traditional stitches

Alliums, also known as ornamental onions, are grown for their showy flower heads, which come in wide range of sizes and shades of blue, purple, white and yellow. Even when the plants die, the dried flower heads look attractive in the garden, or can be cut for an indoor display.

Alliums have always appealed to me with their dramatic balls of flower, so I decided to recreate my own Allium The head makes a wonderful embroidery design worked in simple stitches, colonial knots and beads to add texture and interest. The model is worked in DMC Cotton P rle No.12

Design area: 8.25 x 8.25 inches





Whilst I have embroidered my design in white they come in a wonderful range of colours so you could choose to create your own bouquet!



The raised effect is created by the Colonial knots and the beads!

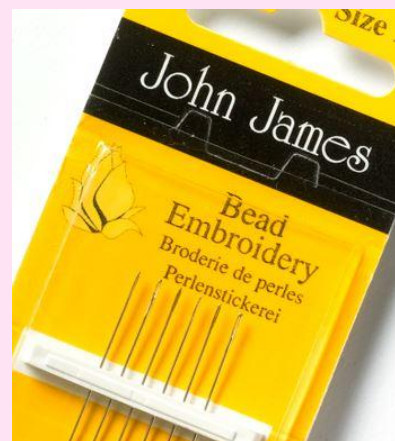
PR0029 Allium



When working freestyle embroidery choose a firm fabric which will take the weight of any textured stitches and embellishments such as beads or sequins. Change needles to suit the thickness of the threads. I keep several different size needles handy when working a project such as Allium to accommodate the thicker threads. To add beads I use a small ‘betweens’ needle No.11 or 12 rather than a beading needle which I find difficult to thread. However, it is now possible to buy packs of shorter beading needles which are easier to handle.

‘Betweens’ needles are very short and fine needles with a round eye. The diameter of the needle is the same as a sharp needle, however they are much shorter in length. I find them much easier to thread than a beading needle and they can be used to attach Mill Hill beads to my designs.

Short beading needles have the same diameters of a regular beading sewing needle, but are shorter in length and are specially created for beading. This makes the art of attaching beads and embellishing fabrics and garments with additional embroidery much quicker and allows the sewing needle to pass through the very finest of beads, bugle beads and sequins and then into the fabric with ease. Size 10 in 6 needle pack and Size 12 in 4 needle pack.

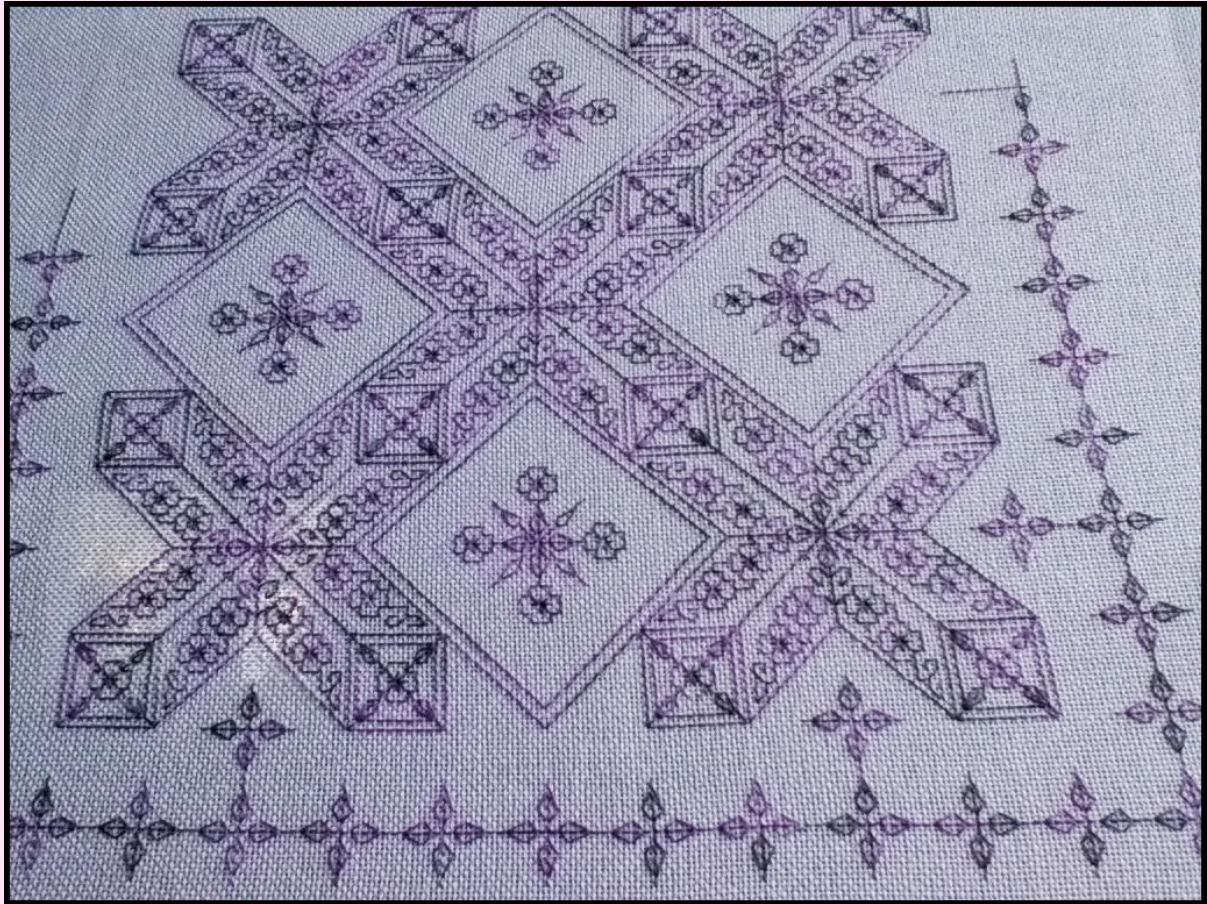


Quilting and beading needles!

Experiment with different needles to find the one most suitable for you and one you can thread easily!

For more information about needles on go to ‘Techniques’ TQ0003 Needles





CH0001 Arabesque worked by Nora

This was the first chart I ever posted in Blackwork Journey in 2008 and it bought back so many memories. Little did I realise when I started the site just over six years ago how popular blackwork would become and how Blackwork Journey would expand far beyond my wildest imagination. I never thought in my early days that I would work with magazines on a regular basis or write articles and run Facebook groups and Pinterest boards. My knowledge of computers was limited and my photography experience nil!

I went back to college to learn new skills and how to implement them and whilst I still have a lot to learn, Blackwork Journey has opened up a new world which I am delighted to share with you.

Thank you for being there with me, I hope I can be there for you in the same way.

Happy stitching!

Liz