



Blackwork Journey Blog

July 2016

New E-Book

Blackwork Journey
Pandora's Box
E-Book 6

Project in Nine Parts

Threads Charts



Evenweave
Techniques



Blackwork Journey
Techniques

TQ0003

Needles



New Challenges!

The Working Environment by Liz Almond

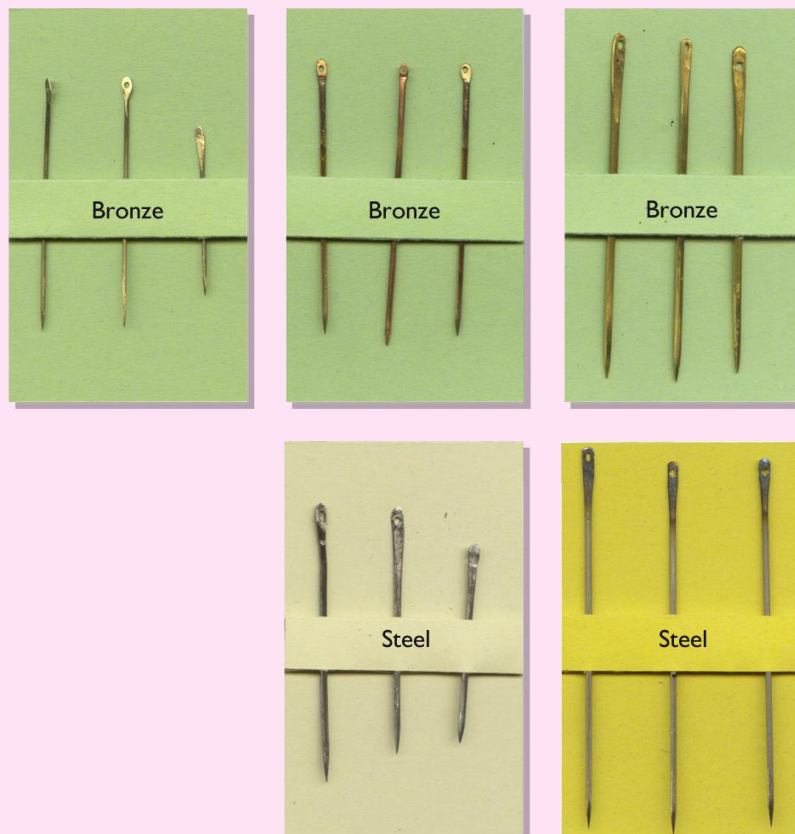
Blackwork Journey Blog, July 2016

June has been a difficult month. After thirty years we decided to have a new kitchen fitted and as you will all be aware the kitchen is the heart of family life. A microwave and a kettle are no substitute for a gas hob and an oven. Floor tiles up, walls stripped and two weeks later we are still in the throes of decorating and loading up the cupboards. The cry "Where is the marmalade?" or "Where did you put the coffee?" will strike a chord with many of you I am sure!

In the middle of the chaos normal routines have to carry on with just a few extra challenges thrown in. For example, I received an e-mail on a Friday in June from a film studio in Bristol, England asking if I could design and stitch five pieces of Tudor style blackwork for a 10 part TV series called "The White Princess."

Feeling intrigued, I followed up the e-mail and agreed to design and stitch the required pieces for the ladies of the court. I then asked when filming would be starting? "Next Friday and we would really like the pieces as soon as possible! The ladies of the court need to be seen stitching their embroideries".

No pressure then!!!! I designed the five pieces, e-mailed them off for approval and got a reply the same day asking me to go ahead.



Handmade needles for "The White Princess"

Finding a suitable fabric sent me rooting through the workroom to find some antique white Cashel linen. Cashel linen is not the easiest fabric to work. I prefer a smoother, regular fabric, but it was appropriate for the style of stitching involved. I also managed to find a piece of hemp coloured linen for one of the pieces which provided a good contrast. Given more time, I would have worked some free style blackwork designs which were associated with the period, but settled for designs which could be stitched quickly.



“The White Princess”

Work in progress - five blackwork patterns for 'The White Princess'

I rose to the challenge and stitched solidly for 48 hours, posted them on the Monday by express mail to be received by the studio on the Tuesday ready for filming later in the week. They were delighted with the

results, but I was even more delighted when I found they had hand beaten needles made so that the ladies would be working with authentic looking needles of the period.

I am used to working to tight deadlines, but I think that is one of the shortest and certainly the most demanding. So ladies, when the series is shown in 2017, please look to see if you can spot the blackwork!

History of Needles

If you would like to learn a little more about the fascinating history of needles and about the correct ones to use for your needlework there is a thirteen page PDF in "Techniques" in Blackwork Journey on the subject called "Needles - The Working Environment."

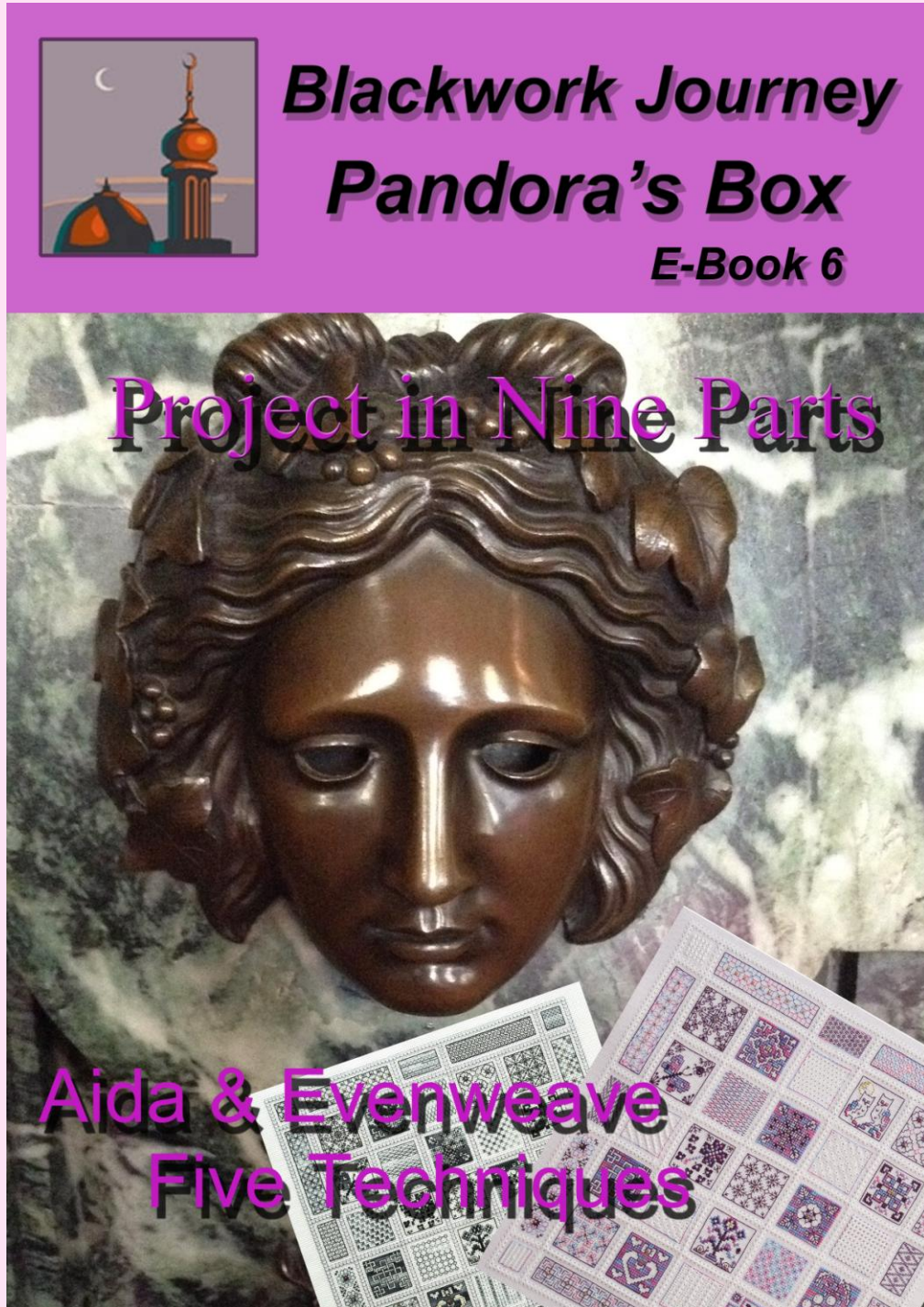
The image shows the cover of a book titled "Blackwork Journey Techniques" with the subtitle "Needles". The cover is primarily purple and grey. At the top left, there is a small illustration of a mosque with a crescent moon. The title "Blackwork Journey Techniques" is written in a large, stylized font. Below the title, the code "TQ0003" is visible. The word "Needles" is prominently displayed in the center. Below this, there is a photograph of a brick building, identified as the "Forge Mill Needle Museum". To the right of the museum photo is a close-up of several needles in a pink case. At the bottom, there is a photograph of various types of needles, including a yellow one labeled "Curved Quilting Needles". The author's name, "The Working Environment by Liz Almond", is printed at the bottom of the cover.

TQ0003 Needles The Working Environment

A new E-Book EB0006 Pandora's Box

102 pages of charts, designs and information have been combined to create this new E-Book. The project includes five different embroidery techniques Assisi, Blackwork, Pattern darning, Pulled thread work and Cross Stitch and instructions for both evenweave and Aida fabrics.

The book also includes photographs from some of my readers work in progress and their colour choices and I would like to thank them for their contributions.

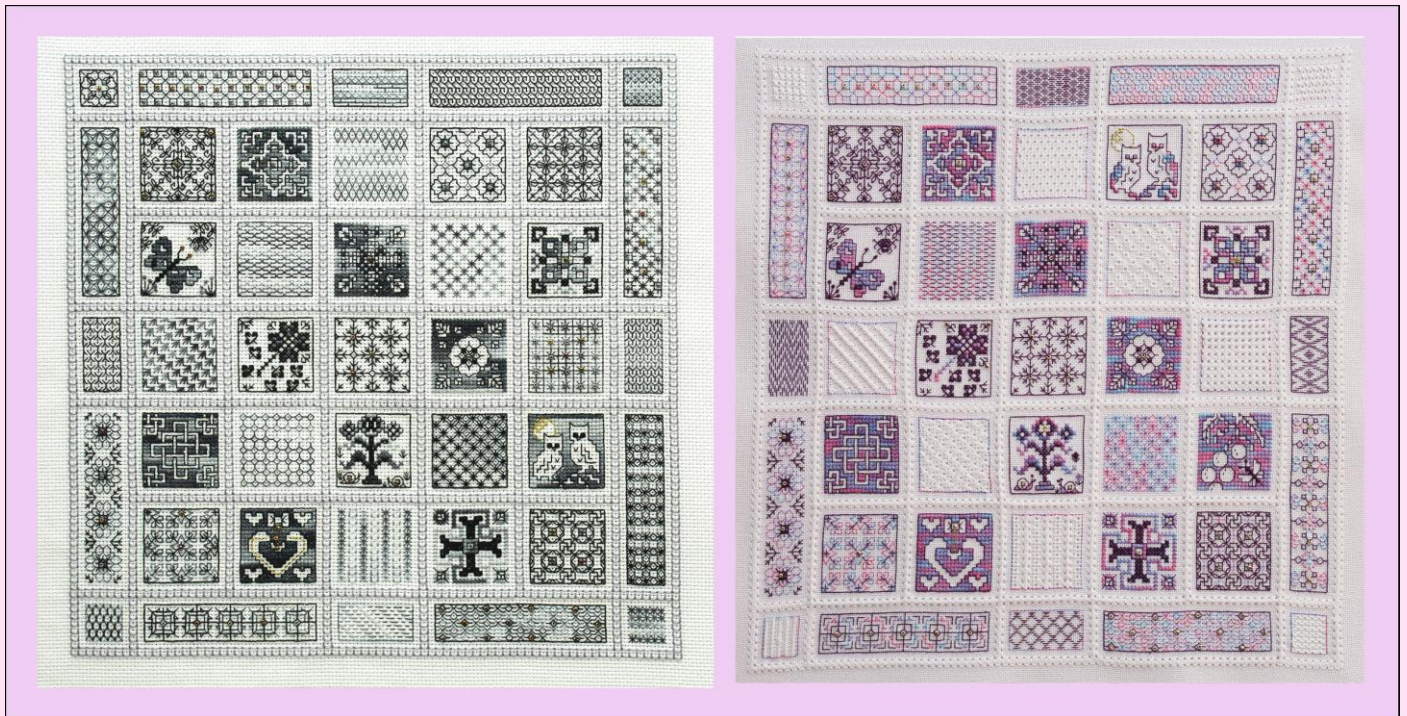


EB0006 Pandora's Box

The Conclusion of Pandora's Box

The last blocks for "Pandora's Box" went online in June and within two days, photographs of the completed work were being sent to Blackwork Journey. The work has been outstanding and has given me great satisfaction to see how people have interpreted the design and the different colour schemes they have used.

I worked two versions of Pandora, one on evenweave and the other on Aida so that everyone could choose a fabric with which they were comfortable. The threads used were easily accessible worldwide, mainly DMC and Anchor threads and DMC Diamant metallic threads



'Pandora's Box' worked on 14 count Aida and 25 count Lugana

I set up a closed Facebook group for the project so that people could post pictures of their work in progress and see what everyone else was doing. It was also used as a teaching site for the pulled thread work stitches and to answer any questions about the project directly. I worked in this way with "Save the Stitches" and "Box of Delights" which proved to be very successful.

Pandora's Box - Elizabeth Almond Designs

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/425352680984872>

Seeing how other people interpret a design has been very valuable to me. I have seen new threads used and colour variations I would never have considered being worked with enthusiasm and presented with great pride.

I have added a small selection of the threads used below and some of the finished designs will be added in August but to view many more contributions please go to:

<https://uk.pinterest.com/Ashbourne1/pandoras-box/>



*Corinne -
fine linen & mixed
threads*



Rachel LH DMC & Aida



Miriam D



Helen J

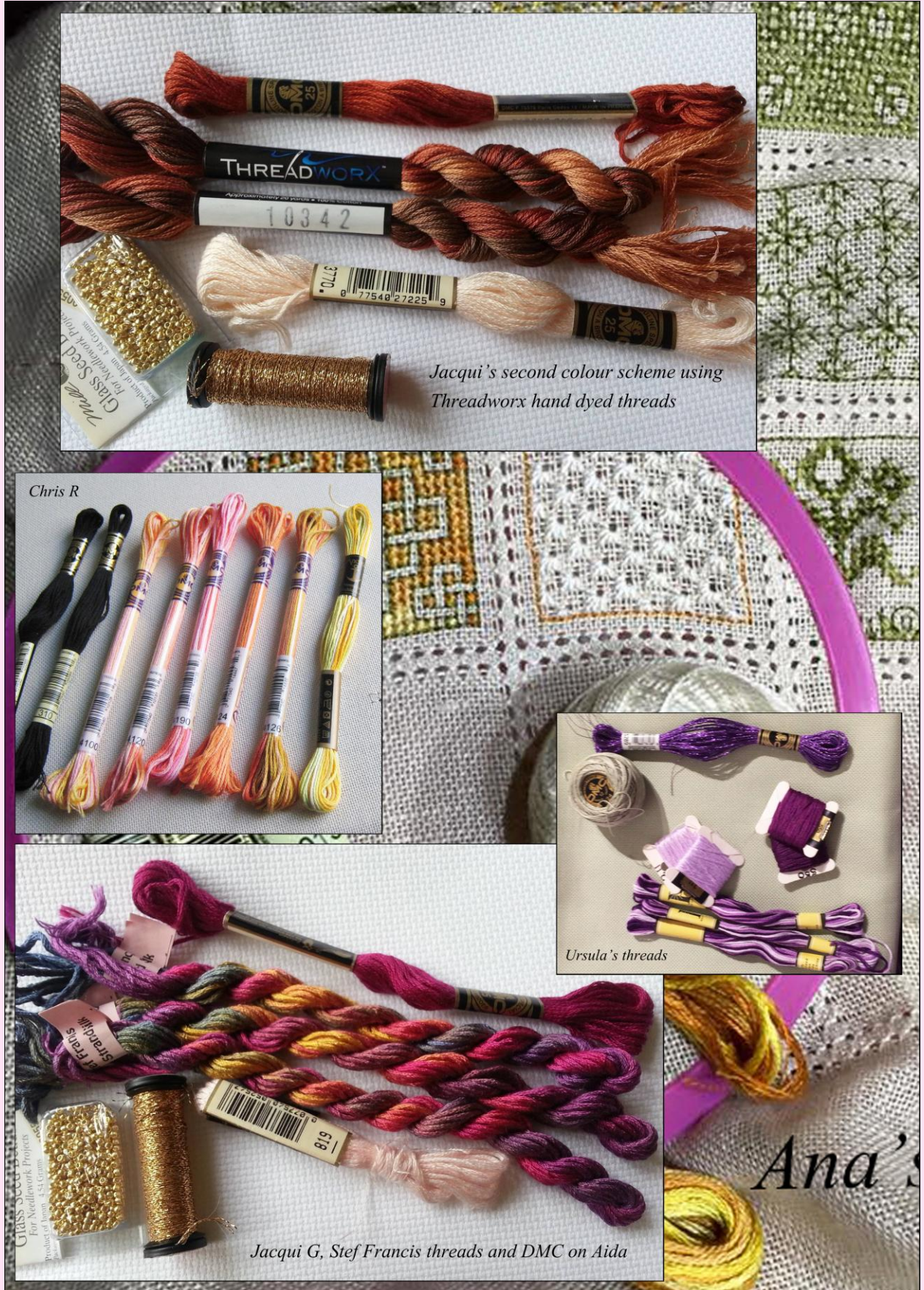


*Cathy S
Threadworz*



Inspirational colours!

Some of the colour schemes readers have used to create their "Pandora's Box"



Jacqui's second colour scheme using Threadworx hand dyed threads

Chris R

Ursula's threads

Jacqui G, Stef Francis threads and DMC on Aida

Ana's

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Whilst the project has come to an end, like the previous projects, new members are joining the Facebook groups daily and there are now over 2,500 members participating and learning from each other. This is where social media can be of real value. Being able to share pictures and information and receive answers to queries has drawn the groups closer together. If I am unable to answer a query, there is always a member of the group who can share their knowledge. This very encouraging for readers new to blackwork who are thinking of starting the projects, but need a little reassurance.

All three projects will remain in Freebies in Blackwork Journey, but they are also available as E-Books for downloading and keeping on the computer for future reference.

Buttons and Bows

"A western ranch is just a branch of Nowhere Junction to me. Give me the city where living's pretty and the gals wear finery. East is east and west is west And the wrong one I have chose Let's go where I'll keep on wearin' Those frills and flowers and buttons and bows Rings and things and buttons and bows"

'Buttons And Bows' from 'Annie get your gun'
Lyrics Artist: Dinah Shore

When I was a little girl one of the highlights of visiting Grandma was exploring her button box. It was a treasure trove of pearl and jet buttons of all shapes and sizes and over the years I have collected quite a few myself, but knowing what to do with them was always a problem.

Making some embroidered buttons for the Japanese Kogin work gave me an idea and I designed eleven small projects where I could display some of my collection. I am sure we all have the odd button or two lying around, so this is a simple way to use them. I hope you enjoy exploring this PDF and can find a use for your buttons, bows and beads!

The little rabbit and the butterfly from the PDF are both Assisi designs. Assisi embroidery is a variation of cross stitch embroidery. The background is embroidered but the pattern is left plain with just an outline, as an intaglio.



What is the difference between an intaglio and a cameo?

An intaglio is carved into the stone whereas a cameo is raised.

Intaglio © Marie-Lan Nguyen and a modern cameo



Traditionally, two different stitches were used for Assisi work. Holbein stitch for the outline and cross stitch for the background. I have used variations of eyelet stitch to form the background to the rabbit and the butterfly embroideries.



Add a collar of small pearl buttons to the rabbit's neck or a row of buttons and beads to the butterfly's body. Use your imagination to embellish the designs

CH0343 Buttons And Bows

Eleven different designs can all be used for small gifts or special cards.



Take a Fresh Look!

Every month I am going to take a fresh look at the stitches we use daily in our embroidery. There are many different ways these stitches can be used to change the appearance of embroidery. The changes may be small, but they can make a real impact.

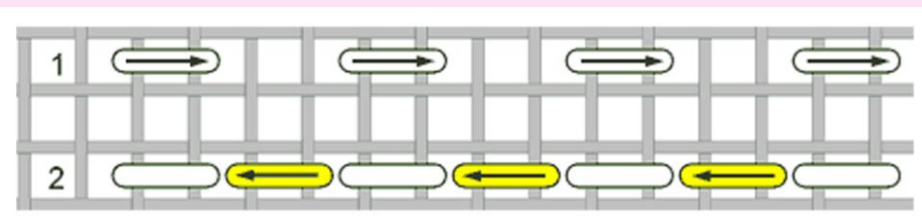
Holbein Stitch is July's 'Stitch of the month'

Holbein stitch is a simple, reversible line embroidery stitch most commonly used in Blackwork embroidery and Assisi embroidery. The stitch is named after Hans Holbein the Younger (1497-1543), a 16th-century portrait painter best known for his paintings of King Henry VIII of England and his children, almost all of whom are depicted wearing clothing decorated with blackwork embroidery.

Holbein stitch is also known as double running stitch, line stitch, Spanish stitch, Chiara stitch and two-sided line stitch.

Although superficially similar to Back Stitch, the Holbein stitch produces a smoother line and a pattern that is identical on both sides of the fabric. It can be worked in straight lines, diagonally, or in a stepped fashion to make a zigzag line and is suitable for creating outlines or intricate filling patterns.

Holbein stitch is usually worked on an evenweave fabric where the threads can be counted to ensure perfect regularity and is worked in two stages. Firstly, a row of evenly spaced running stitches is worked along the line to be covered. Then the return journey is completed, filling in the spaces between stitches made on the first journey and sharing the same holes:

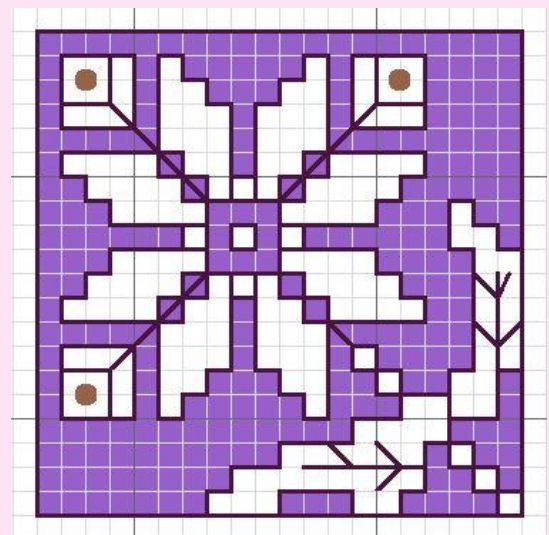


Row 1. Work from left to right
Row 2. Work from right to left
filling in the spaces



Blackwork embroidery in Holbein stitch. Detail of portrait of Jane Seymour by Holbein, 1537.

Assisi extract from Pandora's Box



"Sublime Stitches" - the next free project

Work is well underway with the next new project which hopefully, will begin in November.

It is very different to anything that has gone before and it has taken many attempts to get it exactly as I want it. I have had various copies pinned up all round the house which I have been studying and refining. I think I am almost at the stage of choosing material and threads. There will be 150 different designs, embroidery stitches, techniques and challenges to be presented over a number of months, plus some smaller variations designed to create a unique heirloom for the future.



The future for Blackwork Journey

Blackwork Journey will be having a facelift over the next few months. The format has stayed the same since the site was started in 2008 and I think it is beginning to look a little dated.

Since there are many different sections and over 400 charts this will not be an easy task, but a little housekeeping is called for and John, my webmaster and myself will be looking to introduce a fresh new site for you to explore.

Please bear with us if there are the odd hiccups and please let me know if you find any broken links. I can always be reached by e-mail or through the Facebooks groups and will endeavour to put things right as soon as possible.

Happy stitching!

Liz