



# *Blackwork* *Journey Blog*

January 2020



**Which needle should I use?**



(<https://www.freepik.com/free-photos-vectors>)

*Wishing all the members of the Blackwork Journey family  
a Happy and Peaceful 2020*

Looking forward to a new year is always a mixed blessing. It means being another year older, the middle of an English rather wet winter and a number of projects started but not yet finished and many new projects, challenges and ideas to explore.

2020 will entail a lot of day schools, talks and residential courses on a wide range of subjects which in turn means designing, printing and packaging hundreds of kits. It will also bring the opportunity to work with new groups and old friends from previous courses and to travel to several new countries including Uzbekistan to visit part of the Silk Road that I have not yet explored and to see mosques in Tashkent and Bukhara that I have dreamed about for so long.

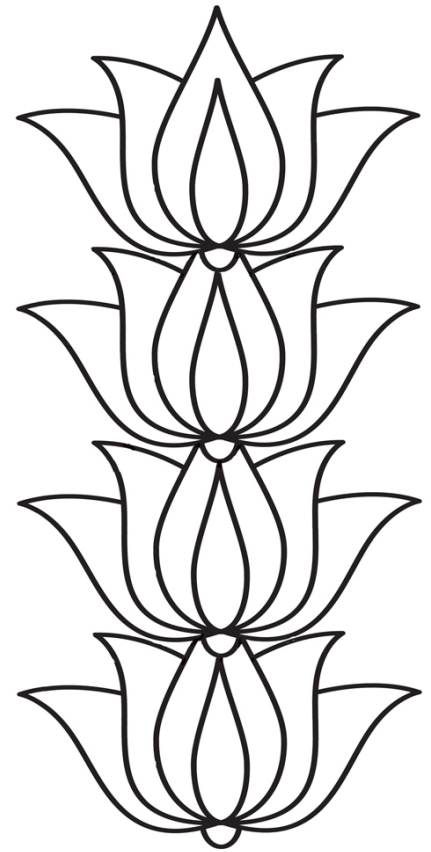
Islamic architecture and patterns have always been a major influence on my designing and plant motifs and patterns were used to decorate architecture and objects from the earliest Islamic period. Plants appear in many different forms in Islamic art, ranging from single motifs to extended patterns, and natural depictions of flowers to plant forms which are complicated and heavily stylised.

Vietnam and Cambodia in 2019 filled me with many ideas for future projects and last month I introduced you to PR0055 Angkor Lily which is a combination of pulled thread work and blackwork



*PR0055 Angkor Lily*

I am working on a panel at the moment which uses the same motif but in a different arrangements and also a single motif as a pulled thread work design to make a set of embroideries.



*Four lily motifs combined for a blackwork panel, and a single motif for pulled thread work embroidery will keep me occupied for a while.*

*I really like the shapes, and to use different techniques and threads is challenging.*

## **Embroidery in Vietnam**

When I travel to the Far East I am always interested in how the culture deals with disability and whether there are any initiatives in place to train or provide employment so I was delighted when we stopped at a tourist centre to see an embroidery initiative for young men and women who were disadvantaged or disabled.

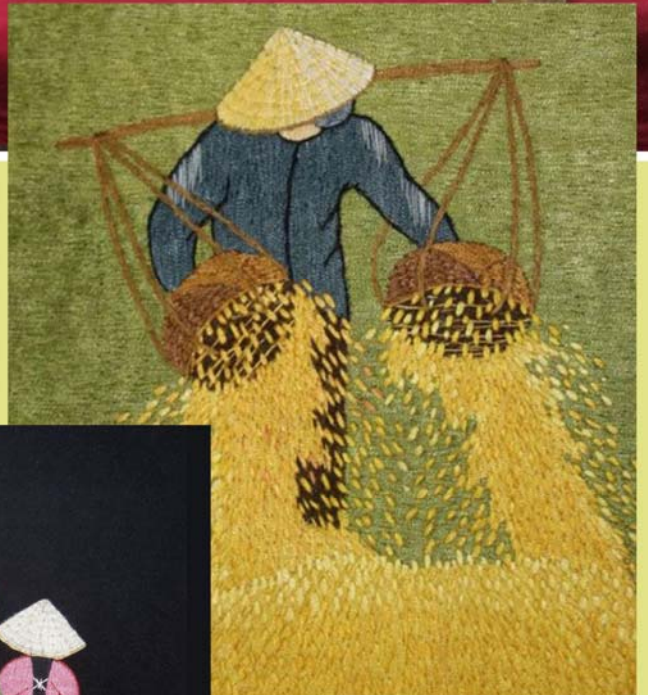
The workshop was in the centre of the complex and tourists were free to wander round, talk to the students and look at the embroideries. Not only does the scheme provide training but it is a source of income and the embroideries are sold through Vietnam.

The embroideries were being worked from colour photographs onto a pre marked canvas and the young workers were very skilled at long and short stitch. The colours were vibrant and the scenes mostly of Vietnamese life. There are many motifs to choose from: animals and still life, landscapes and Vietnamese countryside, portraits and flowers.



Tx. Chi Linh, Vietnam





**Scenes from local life depicted in embroidery**

Keeping skills alive!



*Travelsphere supports this community in Cambodia Keeping traditional skills alive in rural communities. From brush making to winnowing rice these skills are passed down through families and communities though many of the young people leave to find work in the cities.*

## Blackwork Journey Blog, January 2020

Foreign firms are encouraged to support local industries and communities and many tourist firms have their own projects which they sponsor. In Cambodia the travel firm sponsored this community aiming to keep their traditions alive and providing extra income.

Both Vietnam and Cambodia have troubled recent histories which has made a significant impact on both countries. Their movement away from the past is slow but significant, but they have a long way to go. Sometimes we need to remind ourselves that in many parts of the world the things that we take for granted, such as running water, health care and schooling are the exception and not the norm!

### **Traditional costume of Vietnam**

It was a pleasure to see so many women in Vietnam in their áo dài which is Vietnam's traditional dress worn by both sexes but now more commonly worn by women. It consists of a tight-fitting silk tunic worn over trousers

Vietnamese wear áo dài for formal occasions, at school or for work. The male counterpart to the áo dài is called an áo gam. The áo dài is found in every part of Vietnam, and in overseas Vietnamese communities

A modern áo dài has two parts, a high collared long dress, and pants that stop at the ankles. Costume and evening-gown áo dài may have colourful designs with flowers, birds, and pictures.





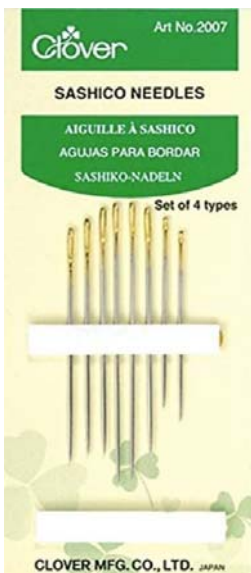
## New Design for 2020

### PR0057 Japanese Spring

Combine the technique of Sashiko with the Japanese crane to create this symbolic design.

In Japan, the crane is a mystical creature and is believed to live for a thousand years. As a result, in the Japanese, Chinese and Korean culture, the crane represents good fortune and longevity. The Japanese refer to the crane as the “bird of happiness”.

Sashiko literally means "little stabs" or "little pierce" and is a form of decorative functional embroidery from Japan that started out of practical need during the Edo era (1615-1868). Traditionally it was used to reinforce or repair worn places or tears with patches, making the piece ultimately stronger and warmer.



Nowadays this running stitch technique is used for purely decorative purposes in quilting and embroidery and the geometric patterns in straight or curved lines are easily recognised. The white cotton thread on the traditional indigo blue cloth gives sashiko its distinctive appearance, though decorative items sometimes use red thread. It is more well-known than Japanese kogin embroidery which also uses running stitch.

The traditional sashiko design used is the Shippo tsunagi, also known as linked Seven Treasures. This is an easy pattern to create and has been included with the chart.

*Sashiko needles are long and sharp and more than one stitch is on the needle at any one time.*



### 'Beyond the Surface' Marian Jazmik

<https://marianjazmik.co.uk/portfolio/moving-on/>

Textile Artist Marian Jazmik recently held an exhibition as part of the Harrogate Knitting and Stitching Show in the UK. I have the pleasure of knowing Marion. I find her work inspiring and with her permission I would like to share some of her work with you.

Marion lives in Bolton in Lancashire which is on the edge of the West Pennine Moors in England and much of her inspiration comes from her surroundings and nature.

She doesn't use a sketch book but instead, she manipulates the digital photographs of hidden surface textures, particularly of fungi and lichen to create microscopic and macro images. These are used to drive experimentation and to inspire the creative journey and outcomes.

She has been producing mixed media pieces of textile work, both wall art and 3D 'vessels' since 2013. The manipulation, construction and deconstruction of materials, principally by heat are usually combined with free machine embroidery. Her work is very tactile, subtle in colour and very detailed.

She has a series of projects on her website which show very detailed photographs of her work and the inspiration behind it:

- Lichen
- Vessels
- Photography/embroidery
- Texture embroidery
- Sculpture
- Rust landscapes



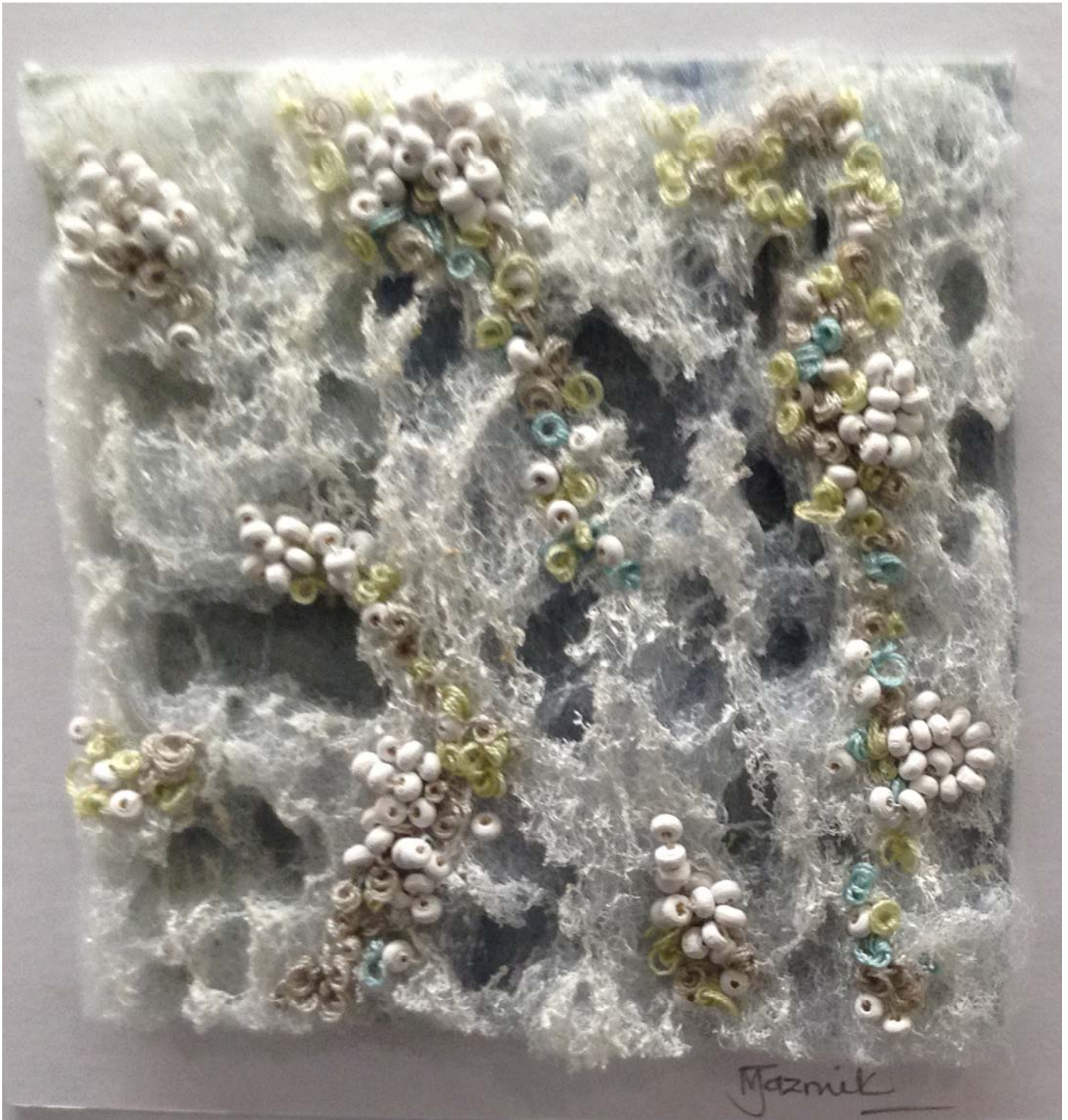
No words can describe her work adequately. It has to be seen and savoured! Please explore her site and enjoy seeing how she works and develops her ideas. I have included details of her website above.

*This sculptured piece 'Lichen 4' was on display and on her website is the photograph she took as inspiration for this piece.*

The large sculptured seeds heads just called out to be touched, but her sculptures were so detailed that I kept coming back for another look.

*Detail from one of the seed heads*





Small items  
on display!



*'Trapped' by Marian Jazmik*

I hope you have enjoyed the first Blog of 2020 and the work of Marian Jazmik. I look forward to sharing many new ideas with you over the coming months.

If you have any queries please contact:  
[lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk](mailto:lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk)

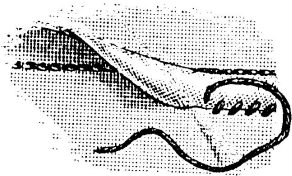
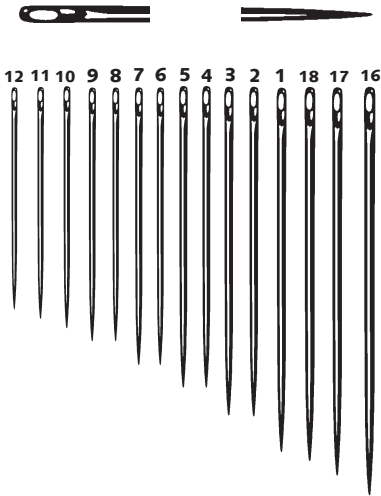
Happy stitching,

*Liz*



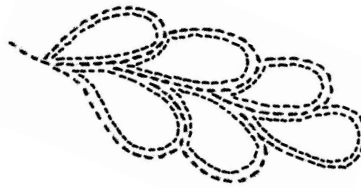
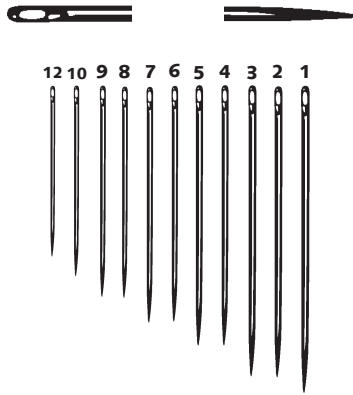
**Sharps**

These are general purpose sewing needles used by dressmakers around the world. Size 16, 17 and 18 are known as Carpet Sharps and, as their name suggests, are most commonly used in the design and manufacture of carpets and rugs.



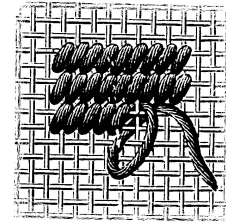
**Quilting / Betweens**

Specifically designed for quilters, the short length of these needles allows you to stitch far quicker than when using an ordinary sewing needle.



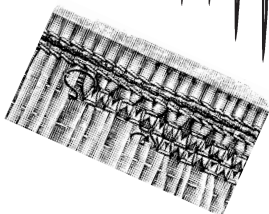
**Tapestry / Cross Stitch**

These large eye needles allow the user to thread tapestry wool or six-stranded cotton easily. The blunt tapestry point enables the needle to pass through canvas without tearing or splitting its fibres.



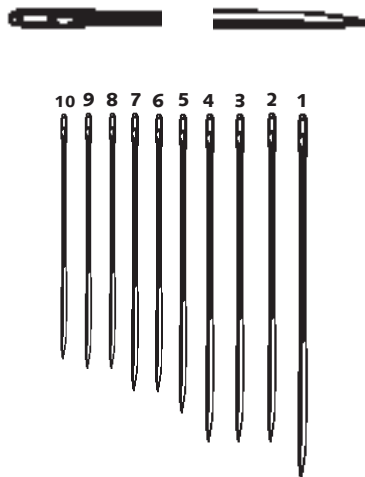
**Milliners' / Straws**

Although traditionally used in the Millinery trade, these needles are now more commonly used for pleating, fancy decorative stitching or even some types of beadwork. They are similar to an ordinary Sharps needle but longer.



**Leather / Glovers**

These needles have unusual triangulated (cutting) points to enable them to pass through tough materials without causing unnecessary abrasion. While, as their name suggests, they were originally intended for use when leather working, they are also ideal when working with other media such as suede and soft plastics.



**Chenille**

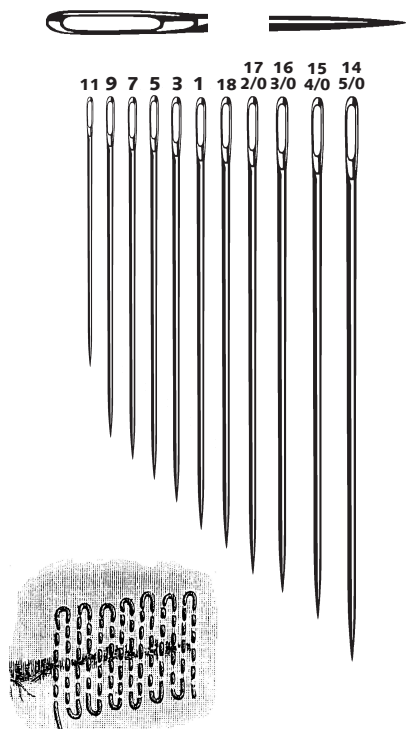
Chenille needles are identical to Tapestry/ Cross Stitch needles in length and diameter but the Chenille point is sharp, enabling the needle to pass through the coarsest of fabrics.





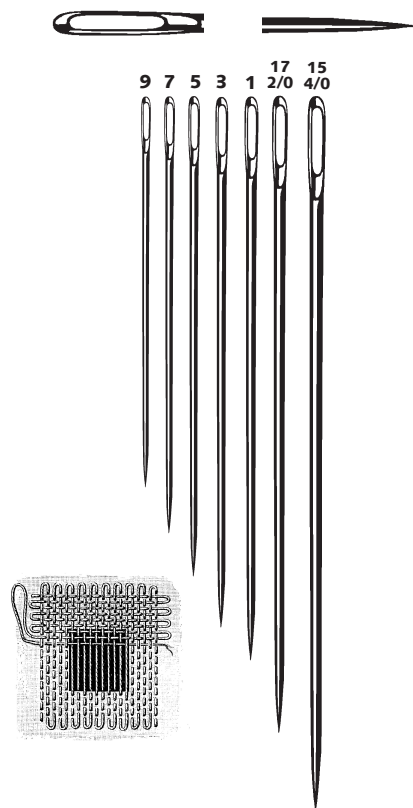
**Darners**

Long and sharp with elongated eyes, as their name suggests, these needles are used for darning or mending work. Sizes 14 to 18 are commonly known as Yarn or Wool Darners.



**Long Darners**

Another form of darning needle, the extra length and larger eyes of the Long Darners make them even more suitable for mending with wool or other thick and coarse threads.



**Beading**

Beading needles are made from the finest steel wire, enabling their use with beads, sequins and pearls. Each size of John James' Beading needles is made from a different diameter of wire which is particularly unusual.

**Short Beading / Bead Embroidery**

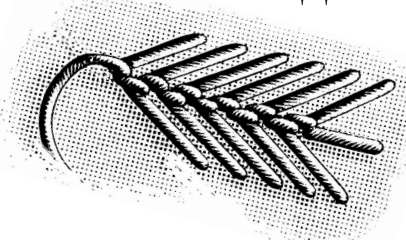
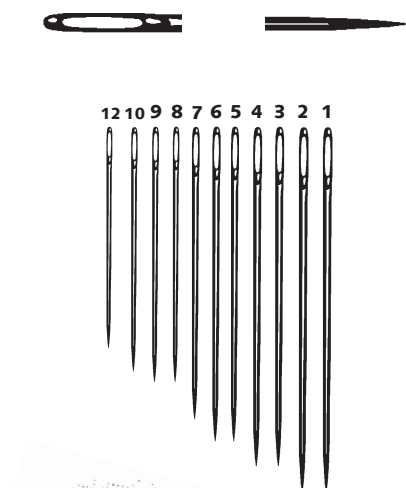
These are specially created Beading needles whose diameters match those of the regular Beading needles, yet in very short lengths. They are ideal for embellishing garments with both beads or sequins and sections of hand embroidery.

**Tapestry Pointed Short Beading / Ball Point Bead Embroidery**

As with the Short Beading needles described those of regular Beading needles, yet in very short lengths. As an additional feature, these needles have a specially rounded Tapestry-style point enabling the user to embellish pieces of cross stitch or tapestry with beads, sequins or pearls without splitting the fibres of the base canvas.

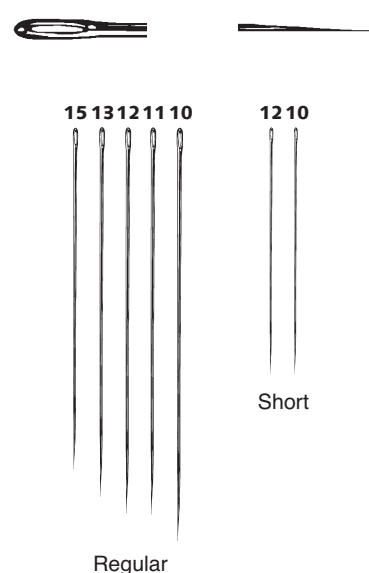
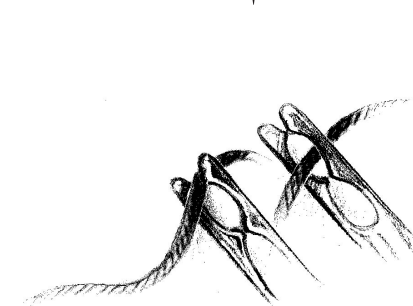
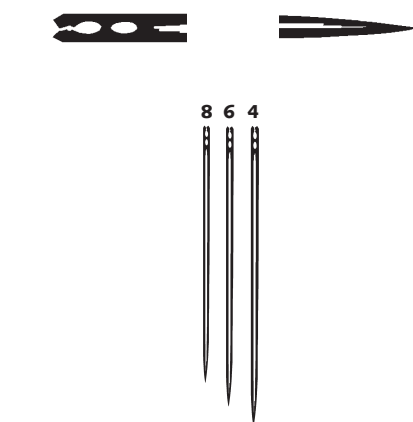
**Embroidery / Crewel**

Embroidery needles have a longer eye than a standard Sharps needle, making them more suitable for threading stranded cotton. Apart from this, their length, diameter and point profile is akin to that of a Sharps needle.



**Easy Threading / Calyx Eye**

Perfect for those who find it difficult to thread regular needles, these are standard sewing needles with a cut made in the top of the eye to allow thread to pass through it from above, as illustrated.





Article No	Size	Length mm	Diameter thousand of an inch	Diameter mm
<b>SHARPS</b>				
	1	48.5	0.040	1.02
	2	44	0.034	0.86
	3	44	0.034	0.86
	4	40	0.030	0.76
	5	40	0.030	0.76
	6	37	0.027	0.69
	7	37	0.027	0.69
	8	34	0.024	0.61
	9	34	0.024	0.61
	10	32.5	0.021	0.53
	11	31	0.018	0.46
	12	29.5	0.016	0.41
<b>CARPET SHARPS</b>				
	16	54.5	0.064	1.63
	17	52	0.056	1.42
	18	50	0.043	1.09
<b>BALL POINT SHARPS</b>				
	1	48.5	0.040	1.02
	2	44	0.034	0.86
	3	44	0.034	0.86
	4	40	0.030	0.76
	5	40	0.030	0.76
	6	37	0.027	0.69
	7	37	0.027	0.69
	8	34	0.024	0.61
	9	34	0.024	0.61
	10	32.5	0.021	0.53
	11	31	0.018	0.46
	12	29.5	0.016	0.41
<b>QUILTING/BETWEENS</b>				
	1	41	0.040	1.02
	2	39	0.034	0.86
	3	39	0.034	0.86
	4	35	0.030	0.76
	5	35	0.030	0.76
	6	31.5	0.027	0.69
	7	31.5	0.027	0.69
	8	28.5	0.024	0.61
	9	28.5	0.024	0.61
	10	25.5	0.021	0.53
	11	22.5	0.021	0.53
	12	22.5	0.016	0.41
<b>BIG EYE QUILTING</b>				
	10	25.5	0.021	0.53
	11	22.5	0.021	0.53



**NEEDLE LENGTHS AND DIAMETERS**

Article No	Size	Length mm	Diameter thousand of an inch	Diameter mm
<b>GLOVERS/LEATHER</b>				
	1	48.5	0.040	1.02
	2	44	0.034	0.86
	3	44	0.034	0.86
	5	40	0.030	0.76
	6	37	0.027	0.69
	7	37	0.027	0.69
	8	34	0.024	0.61
	9	34	0.024	0.61
	10	32.5	0.021	0.53
<b>EASY THREADING/CALYX EYE</b>				
	4	40	0.030	0.76
	6	37	0.030	0.76
	8	34	0.030	0.76
<b>EMBROIDERY/CREWEL</b>				
	1	48.5	0.040	1.02
	2	48.5	0.040	1.02
	3	45	0.034	0.86
	4	45	0.034	0.86
	5	41.5	0.030	0.76
	6	38.5	0.027	0.69
	7	38.5	0.027	0.69
	8	34	0.024	0.61
	9	34	0.024	0.61
	10	32.5	0.021	0.53
	12	29.5	0.016	0.41
<b>STRAWS/MILLINERS</b>				
	1	59	0.040	1.02
	3	56	0.034	0.86
	4	51	0.030	0.76
	5	51	0.030	0.76
	6	48	0.027	0.69
	7	48	0.027	0.69
	8	42.5	0.024	0.61
	9	42.5	0.024	0.61
	10	40.5	0.021	0.53
	18	62.5	0.043	1.09
	15	69	0.072	1.83
<b>COTTON/SHORT DARNERS</b>				
	11	36	0.018	0.46
	9	45	0.024	0.61
	7	47	0.027	0.69
	5	49	0.030	0.76
	3	51	0.034	0.86
	1	57.5	0.040	1.02



**NEEDLE LENGTHS AND DIAMETERS**

Article No	Size	Length mm	Diameter thousand of an inch	Diameter mm
<b>COTTON/SHORT DARNERS</b>				
	14 (5/0)	75	0.080	2.03
	15 (4/0)	69	0.072	1.83
	16 (3/0)	66	0.064	1.63
	17 (2/0)	63	0.056	1.42
	18 (1/0)	60	0.050	1.27
<b>LONG DARNERS</b>				
	9	52	0.024	0.61
	7	58	0.027	0.69
	5	64	0.030	0.76
	3	70	0.034	0.86
	1	75	0.040	1.02
	17 (2/0)	85	0.056	1.42
	15 (4/0)	95	0.072	1.83
<b>TAPESTRY/CROSS STITCH</b>				
	13	69	0.092	2.34
	14	58	0.080	2.03
	16	52.5	0.064	1.63
	18	48.5	0.050	1.27
	20	44	0.043	1.09
	22	40.5	0.037	0.94
	24	37	0.030	0.76
	26	34	0.024	0.61
	28	32.5	0.021	0.53
<b>CHENILLE</b>				
	13	69	0.092	2.34
	14	58	0.080	2.03
	16	52.5	0.064	1.63
	18	48.5	0.050	1.27
	20	44	0.043	1.09
	22	40.5	0.037	0.94
	24	37	0.030	0.76
	26	34	0.024	0.61
<b>BEADING</b>				
	10	55	0.018	0.46
	11	51	0.016	0.41
	12	51	0.014	0.36
	13	49	0.012	0.30
	15	45	0.010	0.25
<b>SHORT BEADING/BEAD EMBROIDERY</b>				
SHARP POINT	10	32.5	0.018	0.46
	12	32.5	0.014	0.36





**NEEDLE LENGTHS AND DIAMETERS**

Article No	Size	Length mm	Diameter thousand of an inch	Diameter mm
<b>BALL POINT BEAD EMBROIDERY</b>				
TAPESTRY POINT	10	32.5	0.018	0.46
	12	32.5	0.014	0.36
<b>LONG BEADING</b>				
	12	76	0.014	0.36
<b>DOLL/SOFT SCULPTURE</b>				
	3½"	89	0.043	1.09
	5"	127	0.043	1.09
	7"	178	0.043	1.09
<b>BODKINS</b>				
FLAT BODKINS				
ROUND BODKINS	17	59.5	0.056	1.42
<b>PRIMARY</b>				
	1	33	0.046	1.16
	3	33	0.040	1.02
	5	33.5	0.034	0.86
<b>SADDLERS HARNESS</b>				
	1	54	0.040	1.02
	2	54	0.040	1.02
	3	54	0.040	1.02
	4	48	0.034	0.86
	18 (1/0)	57.5	0.043	1.09
	17 (2/0)	59.5	0.056	1.42
	16 (3/0)	61.5	0.064	1.63
<b>SADDLERS/BETWEENS</b>				
L3911	1	41	0.040	1.02
	2	39	0.034	0.86
	3	39	0.034	0.86
	4	35	0.030	0.76
	5	35	0.030	0.76
	6	31.5	0.027	0.69
	7	31.5	0.027	0.69
	8	28.5	0.024	0.61
<b>BOOKBINDERS/STRAW</b>				
	15	69	0.072	1.83
	18	62.5	0.043	1.09
<b>YARN DARNERS</b>				
	14 (5/0)	75	0.080	2.03
	15 (4/0)	69	0.072	1.83
	16 (3/0)	66	0.064	1.63
	17 (2/0)	63	0.056	1.42
	18 (1/0)	60	0.050	1.27