



Blackwork Journey Blog

May 2020



**Blackwork Journey
Islamic Inspiration**

E - Book 15



**Blackwork Journey
Islamic Inspiration**
Sheik Zayid



**Blackwork Journey
Tanya's Chessboard**
E - Book 16



Think Positive and stitch!



The months are slipping by and life is far from normal. Earlier in the week on the Facebook groups I said that I wanted to turn this time into something positive and complete some of the work I have been preparing for my Blackwork Journey website for later in the year.

During the pandemic lockdown I have been adding free projects to the Facebook groups to encourage members to try something new and different to try. I have also finished a second sashiko table centre, a square one this time and been designing and stitching a large sashiko hanging with 16 plus patterns, including many of my own designs which has been particularly enjoyable.

I had a square yard of blue fabric just longing to be used and this seemed the ideal project. I am finding the sashiko a contrast to the more complex blackwork and kogin pieces I am working on and most of all, I need to keep my mind occupied and not dwell on the current situation. I will add this to my e-books later in the year.

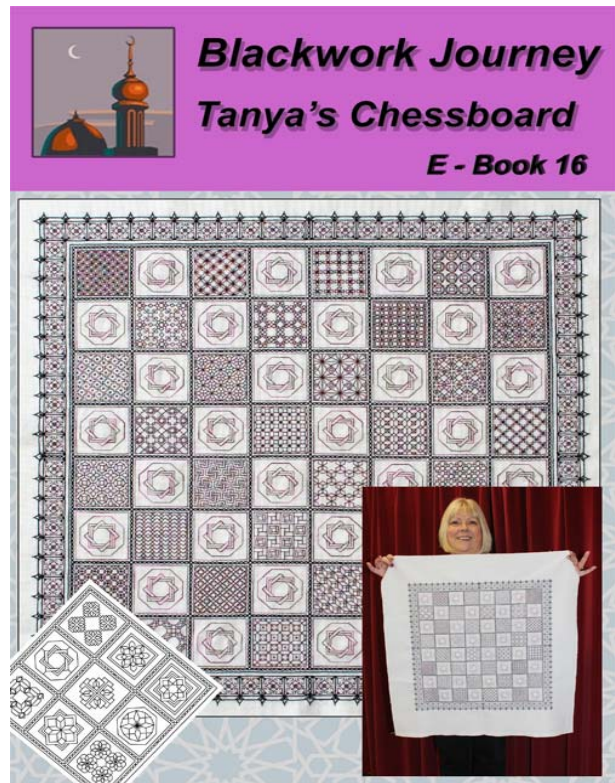
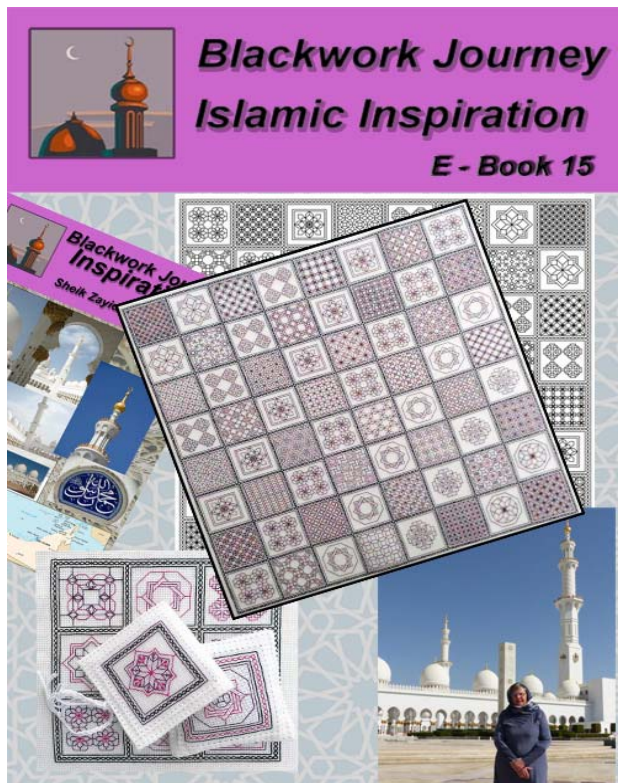
I know that many readers are finding lockdown equally frustrating and stressful and it brings into focus our need for regular human contact. However, if we cannot reach out and touch our family and friends then the telephone, internet, Facetime, and Zoom have helped to make it more bearable. Like so many people, I am missing contact with my family and friends and sometimes it can be hard to keep smiling and keep going. However, we are all in this together and we will come out at the end stronger and kinder and hopefully, with some finished projects to show for it!

What's new for May?

Two new blackwork e-books are coming out today. The designs are based on Islamic patterns and will give you lots of different motifs to explore. Many different projects can be worked from them, both large and small and whilst I have designed them to be used as chessboards they make wonderful pictures and wall hangings. Runners and table linen are also easily adapted from the motifs.

I have really enjoyed designing these books and they represent so many of the patterns I have seen on mosques and buildings throughout the Middle and Far East from India to Abu Dhabi and Turkey. The

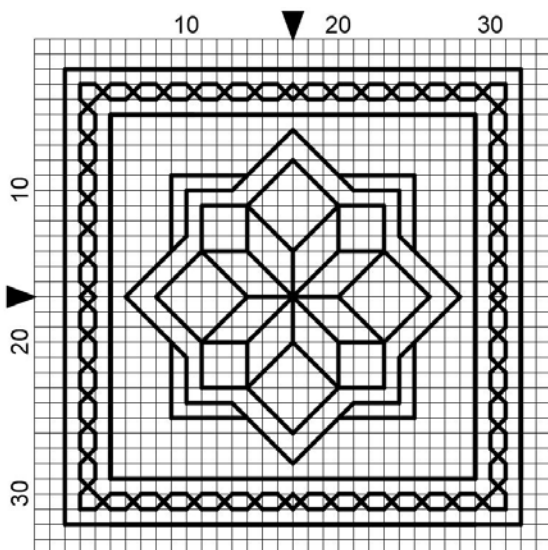
geometry of Islamic design lends itself to blackwork. If you study each motif carefully you will see how the pattern develops. Once you understand the construction then stitching the design is straightforward.



EB0015 Islamic Inspiration and EB0016 Tanya's Chessboard

E-Book EB001515 Islamic Inspiration

Islamic Inspiration is 38 pages of inspiration with 64 squares and a simple blackwork border. 32 of the squares have different blackwork filler patterns. The remaining 32 have Islamic motifs to highlight the designs. This unique project can be worked in alternative colours, but it is suggested that the frame is always worked in a dark colour for effect.



Single motif from EB0015 Islamic Inspiration. This can be used to make a scissor keeper.

Materials for EB0015 Chessboard:

Zweigart 28 count evenweave, or 14 count Aida, 22 x 22 inches

Threads: DMC stranded cottons:

DMC 310 Black, four skeins (Alternative colours or variegated threads can be used)

Framework: Cotton P rle No.12 - one ball, or two strands of floss

Islamic Motifs small projects:

Picture or box top: Zweigart 28 count evenweave or 14 count Aida, 9 x 9 inches
Needlecase: Zweigart 28 count evenweave or 14 count Aida, 8 x 5 inches
Pin cushion: Zweigart 28 count evenweave or 14 count Aida, 5 x 5 inches
Four motif coaster: Zweigart 28 count evenweave, or 14 count Aida, 5 x 5 inches

Stitches used:

Back stitch, one strand
Cross stitch, half cross stitch, two strands
Eyelet stitch, one strand
Four-sided stitch

EB0016 Tanya's Chessboard

Tanya asked me to design the chessboard with a simple border so this design was for her with love! This is a different layout from EB0015, so look carefully to see which one you prefer.

Tanya's Chessboard is a detailed project of 64 squares and a simple blackwork border. Thirty two of the squares have different blackwork filler patterns. The remaining thirty two squares have a single repeated Islamic motif to highlight the designs.

A pattern sheets with alternative motifs is also included and accessories is also included.

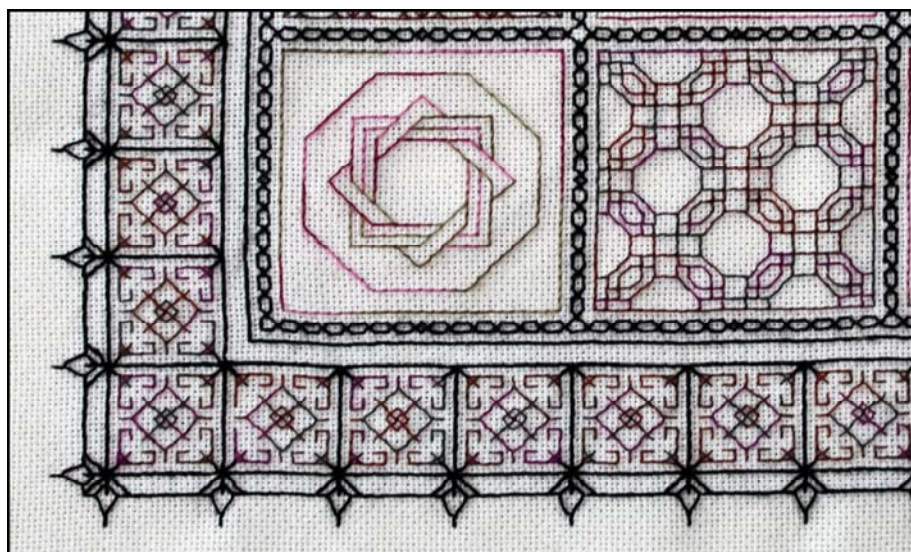
Materials for EB0016 Tanya's chessboard:

Zweigart 28 count evenweave or 14 count Aida, 22 x 22 inches

Note: If the block border is added the fabric needed will be: 26 x 26 to allow for mounting and framing.

Islamic Motifs small projects:

Picture or box top: Zweigart 28 count evenweave or 14 count Aida, 9 x 9 inches
Needlecase: Zweigart 28 count evenweave or 14 count Aida, 8 x 5 inches
Pin cushion: Zweigart 28 count evenweave or 14 count Aida, 5 x 5 inches
Four motif coaster: Zweigart 28 count evenweave, or 14 count Aida, 5 x 5 inches



Extract showing the border from Tanya's Chessboard

Stitched by Tanya



Two more design have been added to 'Projects'

PR0061 Interlace which is a pulled thread work and embroidery free style design worked on Zweigart 28 count evenweave, and **PR0062 Sashiko Surprise**

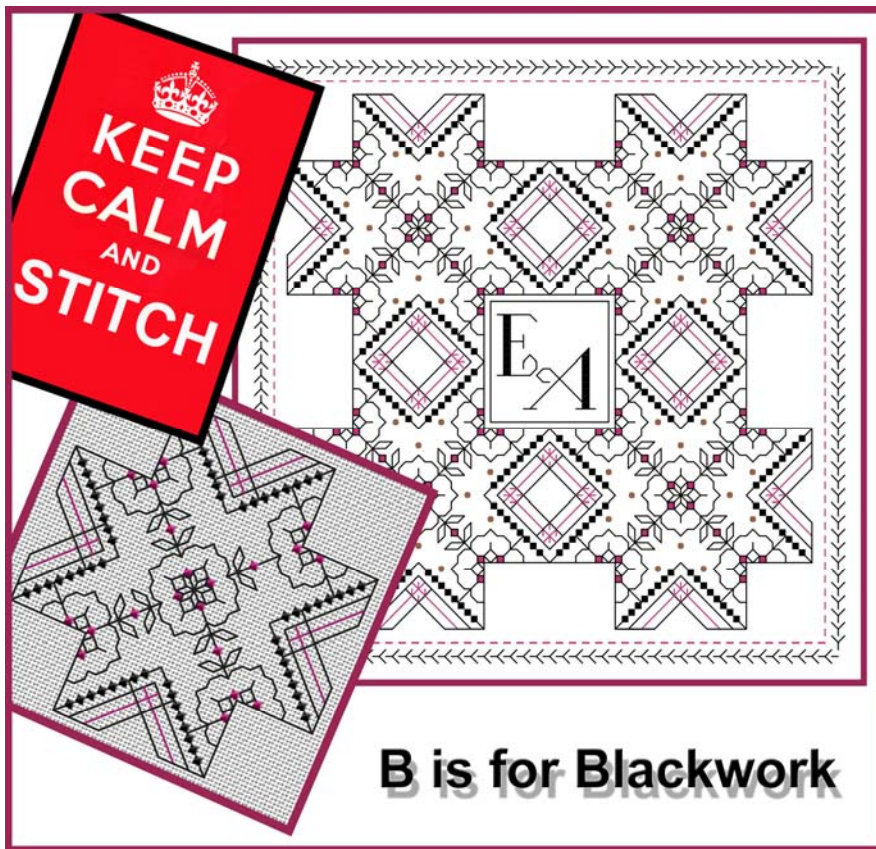


'Sashiko Surprise' consists of two pieces of Japanese sashiko embroidery worked as the front and back of a cushion. The floral motif could be used to create a picture, or embroidered on a jacket or waistcoat. The Nowaki grasses pattern makes perfect borders on table linen. Both patterns are included in the chart. 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 garment ultimately stronger and warmer. Nowadays, this running stitch technique is used for purely decorative purposes in quilting and embroidery.

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.

Free Patterns for May:



I have been adding free patterns to the Facebook groups to help people through this very difficult time. I have also added the charts to the Freebies section of Blackwork Journey for all of you to enjoy.

FR0178 Mini Project 2

This is a small blackwork design worked on 28 count evenweave or 14 count Aida



FR0179 Sashiko Dove

This is a free style sashiko design drawn onto the fabric using an HB pencil or a water-soluble pen. The Japanese Ganzeshagi pattern is worked in sashiko running stitch where the stitches are longer than the space between.

The design is one of the blocks from a sashiko quilt that I am designing. I have great respect for the Japanese traditions of sashiko and kogin embroidery and their long history. It has been very interesting to explore and develop new designs whilst adhering as far as possible to its roots.

Finding gold!

It is very rare that I come across good examples of Japanese kogin and sashiko clothing that I can study in detail. It is usually in museums or in out of the way places like the Amori province in northern Japan, or in the occasional touring exhibition. Imagine my excitement then when I came across a website selling antique textiles and featuring some wonderful examples of traditional folk art.

<https://www.trocadero.com>



Japanese vintage Aomori Kogin-Sashiko stitch jacket Hemp Cotton Rare – front

“This is hand Kogin-sashiko jacket rare exceptionally from Japan Aomori. It do sashiko with a thread of white cotton in hemp of the indigo dyeing (background). The white cotton thread was beautiful and was given glory with a unique geometric pattern. Probably, by the woman of the farmer between the winter of the agriculture off-season, the beautiful pattern was the embroidered masterpiece which there was by one stitch. And Kogin was achieved in a level of the art by an expert for the Showa period (1926 ~ 1989). This basic hemp cloth is spun by hand. In this Kogin, a cotton thread is performed sashiko of by hand.”

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This is considered with the item which is in the first half of the Showa era. However, as a whole, it is in a very good state. You can also enjoy wearing it! Size: Length 85cm (33.4inch) sleeve to sleeve 117cm (46.0inch) width of the shoulders 60cm (23.6inch)”



*Coat back and
Neckline*





Pattern details, thick threads are used on coarse fabric to create this heavy garment. By looking at the patterns in great detail it would be possible to graph them for a future kogin design. Watch this space!



This jacket shows in great detail the dense stitching and the intricate pattern that was used across the whole of this garment. It would have taken many hours to complete and the conditions it was produced in would not have been ideal. I am in awe of the needlewoman who created it.

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It is the design of Ryuo Shikai. The figure that protects sea fishes from evil is represented by dragons and anchors. This is a very rare firefighter Sashiko jacket. And it has a very large size. The condition of the painting is in very good condition, as it is rarely used. In this item, the anchor is drawn large in the center to calm the anger, and the octopus and fish at the gate of Ryuo are very attractive. In Japan, anger and anchor are expressed with the same pronunciation, so the expr...

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There is also a detailed section on antique boro and sashiko garments to explore. If you are interested in antique textiles this site is one of the best I have encountered and the attention to detail is outstanding. I would like to convey my thanks to trocadero.com for the information about the kogin jacket.

Readers work

When I receive photographs of reader's work in progress, or finished it really makes me happy to think that people want to stitch Blackwork Journey designs and get pleasure from doing so. It doesn't matter if the piece is very small and a first attempt or large and complicated. They are all important to the person who has made them and confidence grows from those small steps. Thank you ladies!





A thoughtful gift and a delightful group of ladies.

In the middle of lockdown I received a package from Maureen in Canada with some embroidery and photographs, these I will explore with you at a later date. Maureen has been working with a group of ladies in Montreal and they have been working on variations of **PR0021 Flight**. They are finishing their work and I thought you would like to see a preview of two of the pieces. Each one is different and my thanks go to Maureen for being such a wonderful teacher!



Work by Roxanne and Joanne

Make do and mend

I received a request for help from a reader about her broken printer. Could I help? I don't repair printers, but there are ways of using your gadgets to help with you charts and I have attached a PDF to the end of this Blog which shows you what to do.

I hope you have found the Blog this month interesting. If you do wish to join the closed Facebook groups I have attached the details here. Just paste the details into your browser bar or go to the home page on the Blackwork Journey website and click the button.

Facebook groups set up for projects:

Blackwork Journey - Elizabeth Almond

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

Pandora's Box - Elizabeth Almond Designs

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

Box of Delights Stitch-A-Long. Designs by Elizabeth Almond

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

Sublime Stitches - Elizabeth Almond Designs

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1695785137378480/#>

Happy stitching and stay safe, *Liz*

Help! My Printer is broken and I need to see my charts. Can you help Liz?



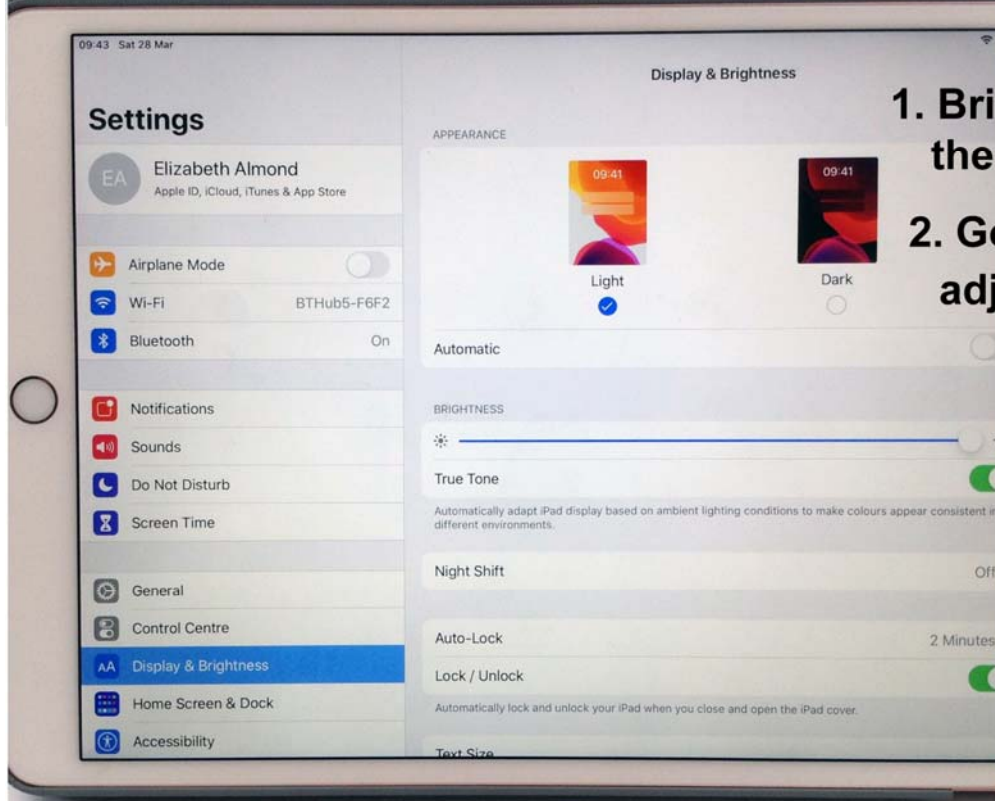
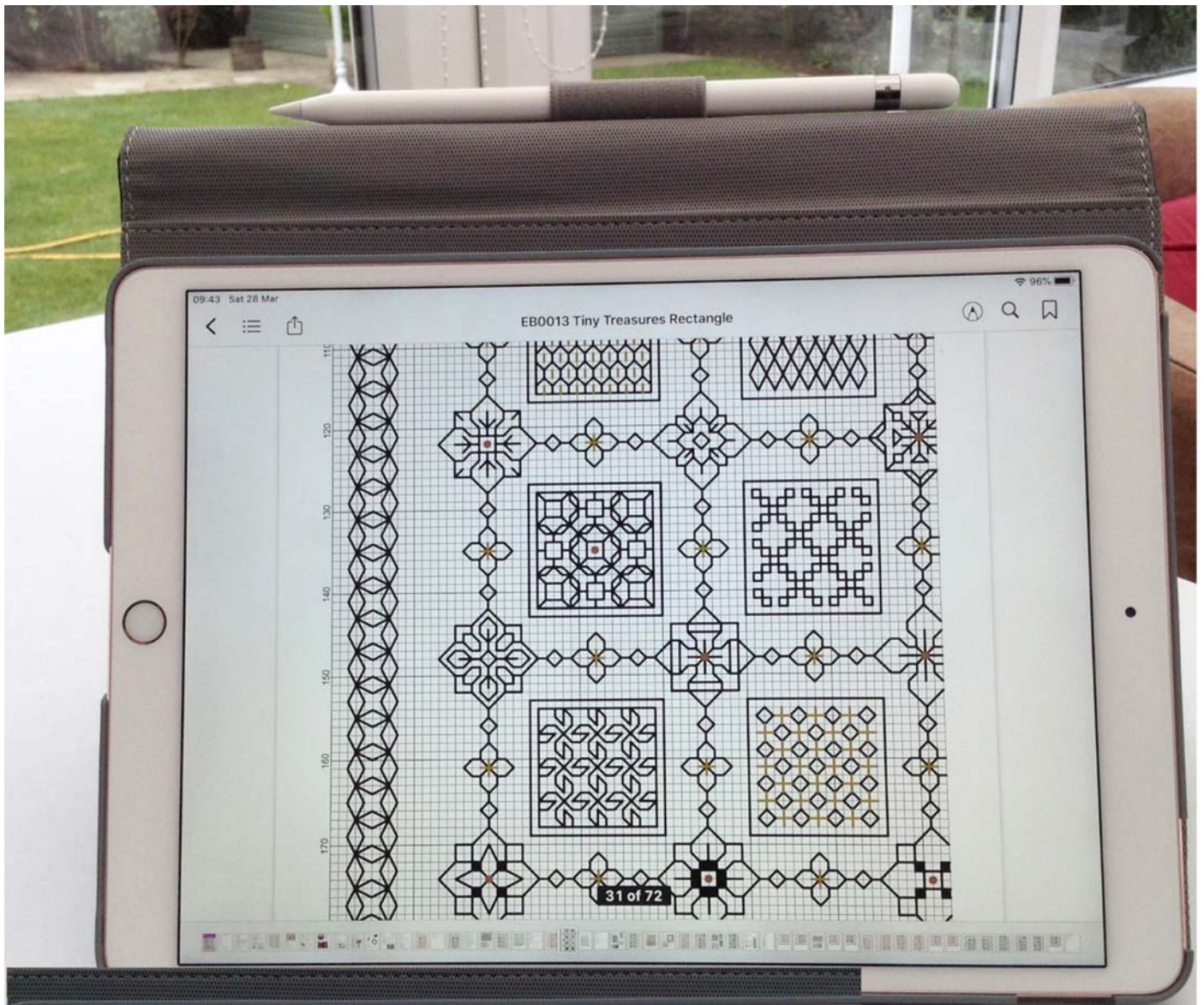
If you own a computer, i-pad or a smart phone all is not lost!

Download the chart as normal to your computer or other devices.

Follow the advice below and that should help until you can get your printer repaired.

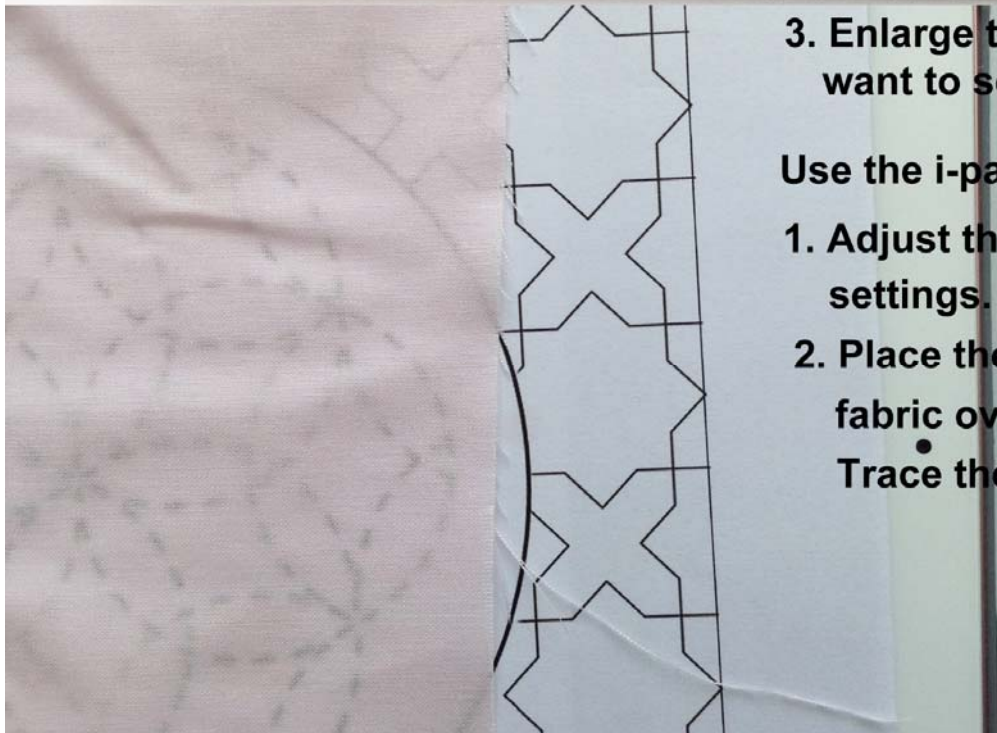
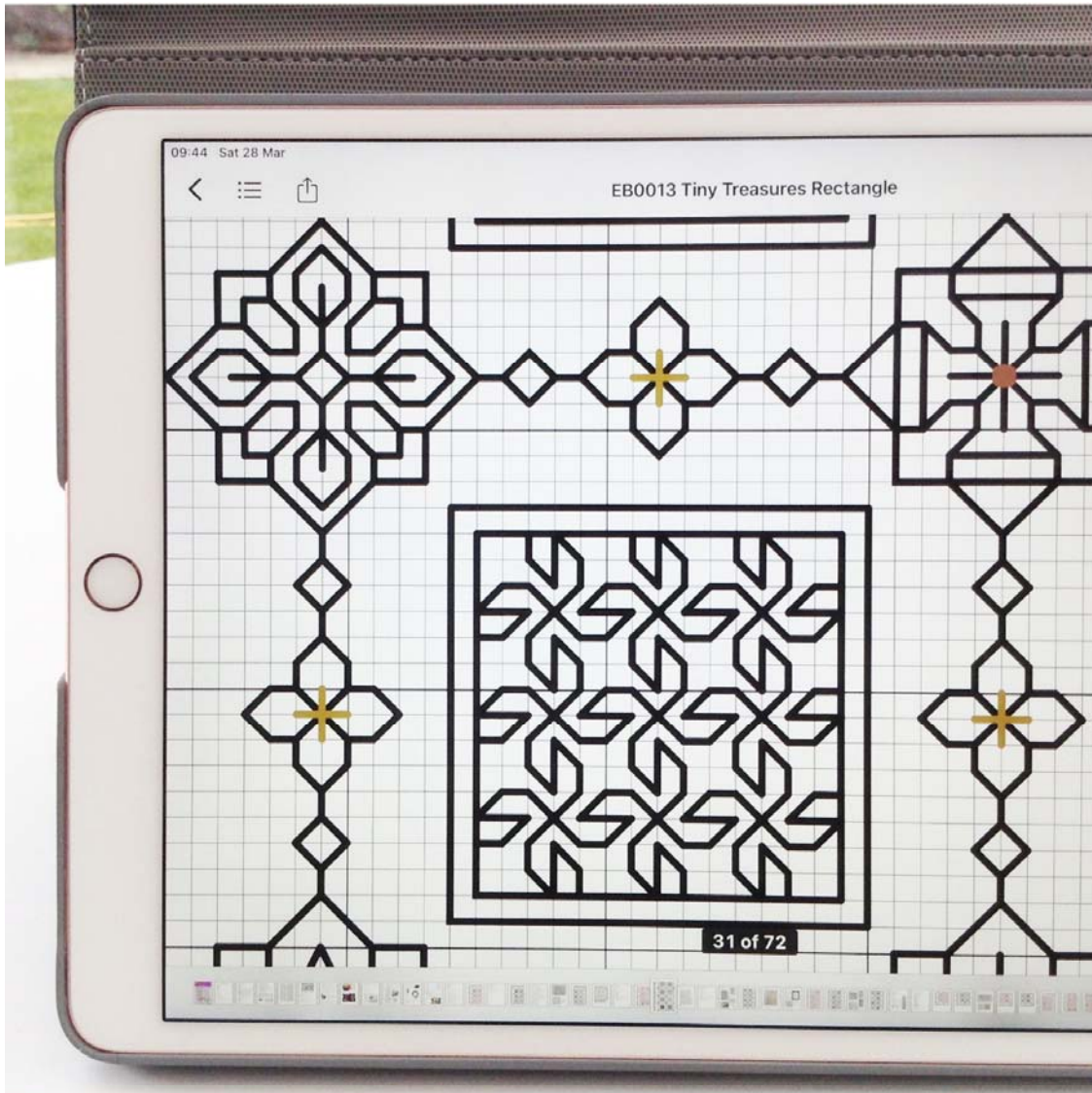
Liz





1. Bring the chart up on the i-pad

2. Go to Settings and adjust the brightness



3. Enlarge the section you want to see on the screen

Use the i-pad as a lightbox

1. Adjust the brightness in settings.

2. Place the pattern and fabric over the screen.

Trace the design lightly.

The i-pad can be used as a light box, just remember not to press too hard!