



# *Blackwork Journey Blog*

January 2022





*To all the members of the Blackwork Journey family  
may I wish you a happy, healthy and peaceful 2022.*

Looking back over the past two years, life has been full of challenges from lockdowns to vaccinations, from cancelled holidays to missing loved ones. The end of 2021 proved to be just as challenging. My son and his family were due to come to England from San Francisco, but because of the latest Covid19 variant this was cancelled at the last minute and it will be over two years since we saw them last. Instead, Christmas was spent in the heart of the Yorkshire Dales with our daughter and family where despite the weather, we walked the Dales and enjoyed the stunning scenery and wonderful company.

The tree in the card above is a reminder that there are always good times ahead, Spring will come and one day all this will hopefully be a distant memory. The tree is battered by the winter storms, but clings on to the heather covered hillside and I think many of us have done just that over the last months!

In 2020 I wrote “Last year was a year like no other, but hopefully 2021 will bring light at the end of the tunnel with the Covid19 vaccine being steadily rolled out and by late Spring or early Summer we will be able to see our way forward and pick up some semblance of normal life”.

I used the words readers submitted to create some designs to celebrate the end of 2020 and our hopes for 2021 to create CH0408 Hopes and Dreams. However, let us hope that 2022 will bring these wishes to fruition.



CH0408 Hopes and Dreams 2022?

Blackwork Journey design in February 2022 - *Just CrossStitch*



Every year I design charts for various magazines, books and calendars. Special events such as Valentine's Day, Halloween and Easter are planned well in advance and it still seems very unusual to be designing a year in advance or stitching winter designs in the middle of a heat wave.

However, the thrill of seeing a chart in a magazine or book is always special and in *Just CrossStitch* February 2022 is my design called 'Heartfelt' which sums up the values of the last two years.

## New designs for January 2022

I have a number of new designs and e-books in the pipeline, but my resolution for 2022 is to complete some of the unfinished pieces of work that have been around for far too long. This is not always a bad thing because when I look at a piece with fresh eyes I often change elements of the design, add or remove sections or sometimes discard them completely knowing that it will not work the way I want it to.

Tastes change and over the years the way I design and what inspires me has also changed. This helps to keep work fresh and avoid falling into the same routine. It is so easy to stay in a comfort zone doing the same thing, but adding new techniques, stitches and ideas challenges and stimulates.

I have used the lockdown period to explore Japanese Sashiko and Boro to create quilts, panels and clothing and to take some of the ideas into embroidery.

This month, I have added three charts that are inspired by the Japanese traditional techniques of Sashiko and Kogin embroidery.

## CH0423 Redwork Ishiguruma and CH0424 Blue Ishiguruma



*These designs can be found in 'Charts' on the Blackwork Journey website*

I have taken the unusual step of presenting this design in two colours to make it easier to create. These embroidery patterns are based on a complex Japanese redwork and blackwork pinwheel design where interlocking leaves overlap.

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If you are new to blackwork embroidery, the small design included is 6.00 x 6.00 inches which is a good introduction to this technique. The small design consists of 8 interlocking patterns and the larger design consists of 16 interlocking leaves. Gold beads and metallic threads add sparkle and texture.



The designs can be worked in different colours such as blue, black and gold or your chosen floss.

**Material:**

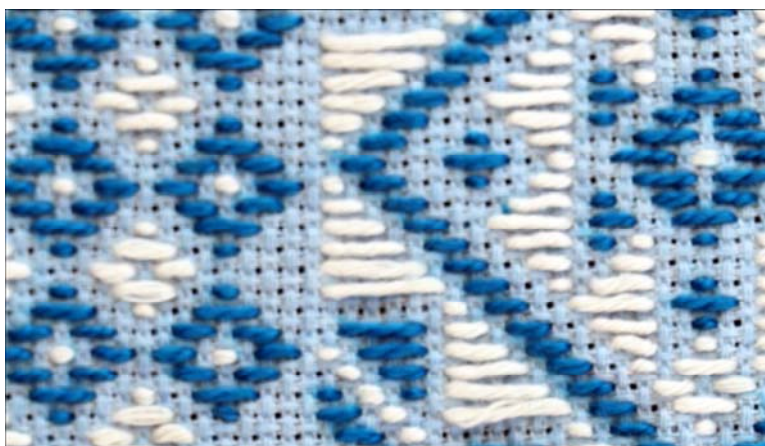
Zweigart 28 count evenweave, 16 x 16 inch Zweigart 14 count Aida can be used but there are some part stitches.



**CH0425 Tsugaru – Japanese Kogin embroidery. Learn a new technique in 2022**

The table centre or cushion is a Japanese Kogin style pattern worked in two colours on Zweigart pale blue 16 count Aida in white and electric blue thread, or on Zweigart 28 count evenweave. It is a satisfying technique to learn. The stitches are worked in rows across the fabric from right to left. Once the foundation row has been worked the pattern grows quickly.

*CH0425 Tsugaru*



Kogin cards and sachets have been extracted from the main pattern. They are simple to make and are very practical.

All the sachets have been worked on Zweigart 28 count evenweave fabric in a mixture of Cotton P erle No 8, sashiko threads and embroidery floss.

### What do we do with all the needlework we stitch?

Speaking to various groups recently, the constant in many of their lives has been their love of needlework and the support that they have gained from it, but there are only so many friends and family you can give needlework to and only so many cushions and pictures we can use in our homes. Many hours are spent lovingly stitching projects and they need to go to people who will appreciate the work and the love that has gone into the making, or to an outlet where they can be used and appreciated.

It makes me very sad when I find beautifully stitched needlework in a charity shop or just thrown away and where possible I rescue it and decide where it can be used again. For example, old lace and crochet can be recycled into household textiles such as decorative quilts and smaller pieces can be used in cards and calendars.



Handmade cards are always appreciated and will make use of the scraps of fabric and threads we all accumulate.

However, when I went to a craft show in Harrogate, UK at the end of last year I met an artist called Maria Thomas who creates contemporary patchwork garments and artefacts which she exhibits. The way in which she uses her materials really appeal to me!

Maria also runs an independent embroidered textile course and tutors and lectures throughout the UK. She was thrilled to have recently been invited to exhibit at the Knitting and Stitching Show in 2021.

*Maria Thomas - an inspirational textile artist*

I hope you enjoy her work as much as I did. Her work made me smile and I think that is something we all appreciate at the present moment.

### **'Relative' – Part of the exhibition by Maria Thomas from the UK Knitting and Stitching Show**

Maria's 'Relative' is a series of works that explore her family history and sense of belonging. She shares a personal response to her family ties and cherished relationships, evolving from her position as a female amongst them. A mother, daughter, sister, auntie, niece and granddaughter; Maria concerns herself with her role, making textiles as a acknowledgement to the ones she loves, her family.

The family traditions of shared recipes, letter writing and sewing are blended together. Subtle memories of once upon a time are used to create an atmosphere and a backdrop for a few of her pieces. Redundant objects and daily ephemera, some referencing domestic chores are gathered up and used as memory keepers. Papers for wrapping and clothes for covering are also included in her varied patchwork items. Whilst some pieces come together as whole garments, others simply remain as parts made repeatedly and displayed as symbols of love.

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Selected papers are layered with cloth and glue and remain amongst the patchwork and though usually removed Maria prefers to keep them in, creating a framework that supports her story. The cloth is then worked with many traditional patchwork and quilting methods, an opportunity to stitch by hand, slow up the process and allow the work to evolve.

The work she makes is the silver lining to her hard work, existing easily between household chores and family interruption. There's a lot of reflection and unpicking involved, but like family life, patience is the key.

If you would like to know about Maria's textile journey there is a very interesting article on the internet which outlines her route to becoming a textile artist. I found her down to earth approach very satisfying and encouraging.

<https://www.textileartist.org/maria-thomas-keepsakes-in-stitch/>

**The 'Housecoat' Series (motherhood jackets), 2014, reclaimed paper ephemera, recycled tablecloth & hand quilted patchwork**



Meals on Wheels





Detail from jackets

Free range egg & custard tart



All inclusive





2 for £8



No.1 Crumpet



Hyacinths



Forest bathing



### Coming in February

The 'Sublime Stitches' project being worked by members of the Spanish group '**Bordados con el Alma**' is coming to an end and members are sending me photographs of their work. For readers who are not members of the Facebook groups, I will post some of the wonderful pictures I have received during the course of this project. The e-book EB0009 Sublime Stitches Evenweave and EB0010 Sublime Stitches Aida is available in full in e-books on the website if you wish to work the design. It is also in parts in 'Freebies'.

Working with Manu and Elisa has been a joy and I hope to work with them again in the future. Thank for being part of the Blackwork Journey family in 2021.

### 'Sacred Geometry'

I will also be taking closer a look at 'Sacred Geometry' in the coming months. I have been teaching this subject as one of my day schools, but the more I research the subject the more interesting it becomes. I have been very fortunate to have travelled widely and have come to appreciate how much mathematic and geometry influence the art, architecture and thinking of many different cultures.

It opens up new areas of embroidery to explore and translate into future projects for Blackwork Journey. I enjoy the research behind designs and where possible, I add in extra information into the charts to place them in context.

### The power of a symbol Reduce, Reuse, Recycle



When you print the e-books or charts, save paper and ink by keeping the main pdf on the computer and just print off the charts!



Just to finish off this month's Blog a little stitching project is attached to the end of this pdf. The designs can be enlarged or reduced as required and are quick to complete.

I hope you have enjoyed this month's Blog.

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

Happy stitching

*Liz*

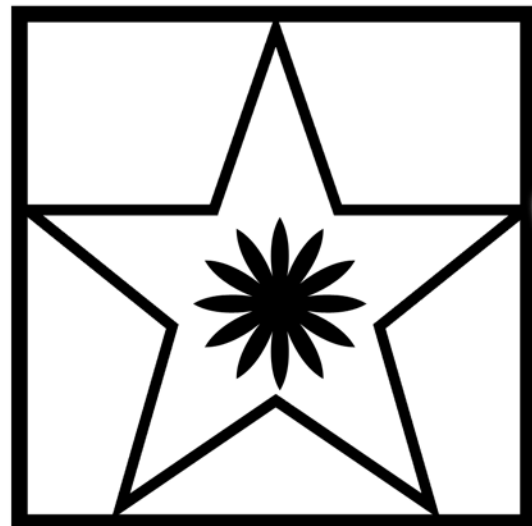
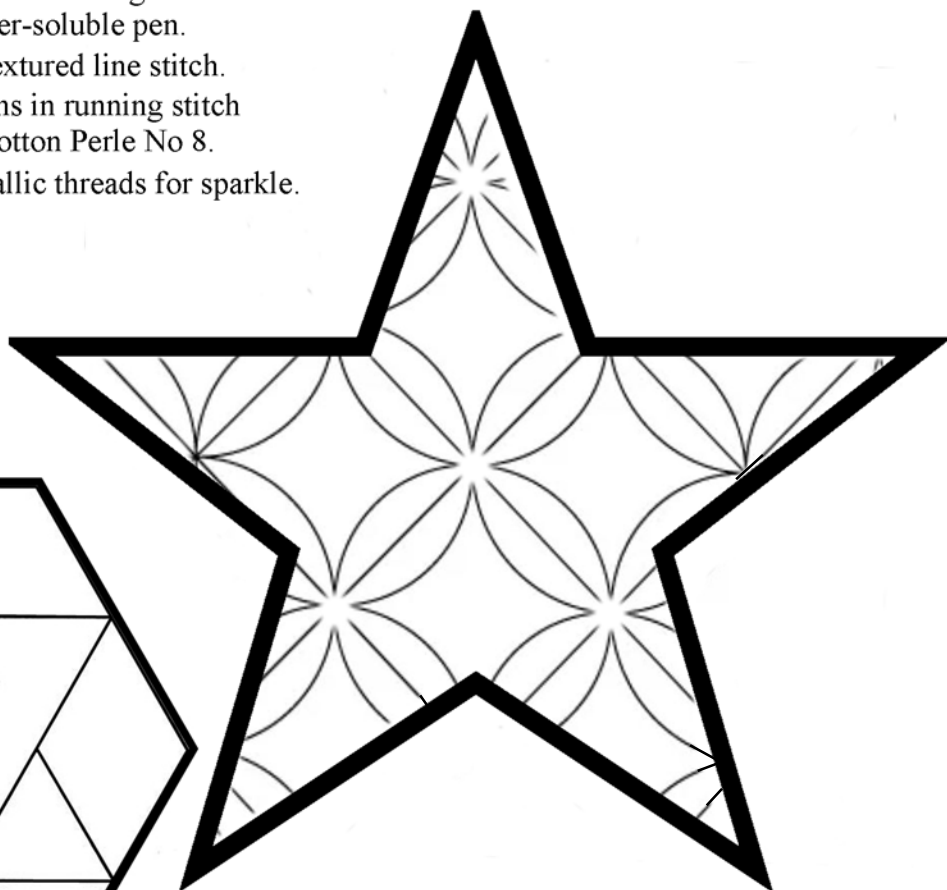
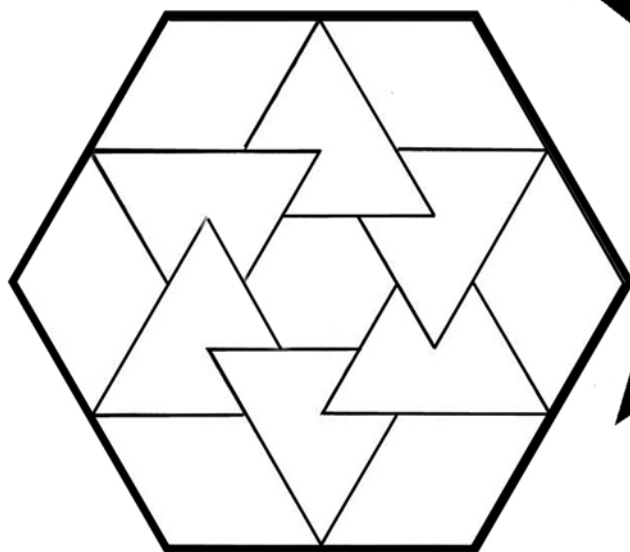
## Sashiko Christmas

Trace the ornaments onto medium weight cotton fabric using an HB pencil or a water-soluble pen.

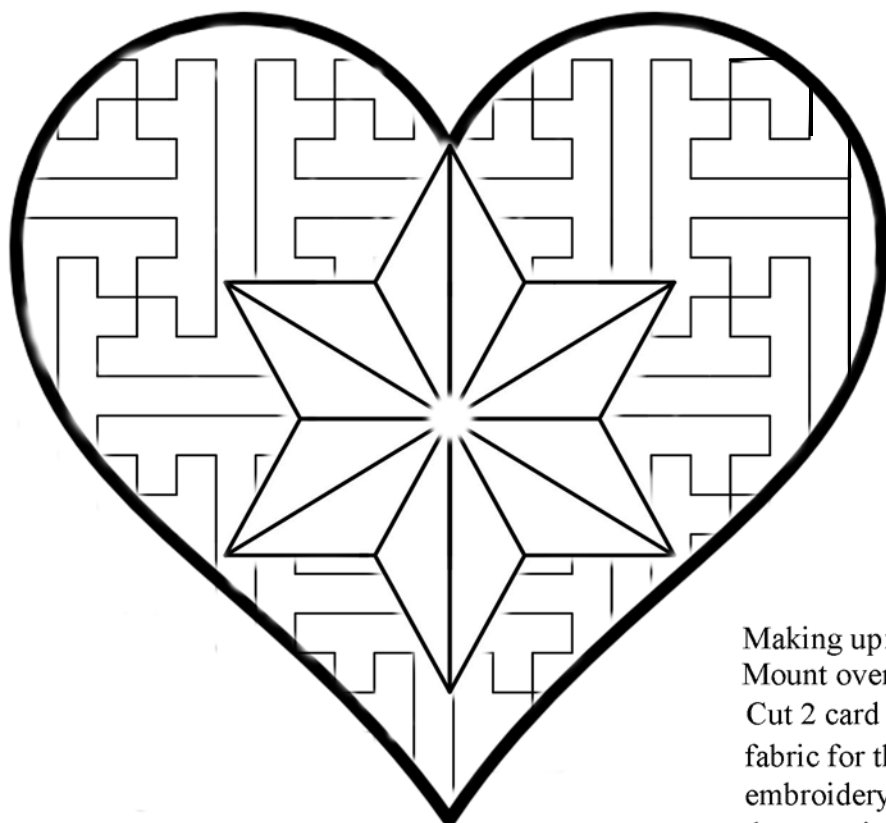
Work the outline first in a textured line stitch.

Add the sashiko filler patterns in running stitch using 3 strands of floss or Cotton Perle No 8.

Use beads, sequins and metallic threads for sparkle.



Work straight stitches or lazy daisy stitches into centre



### Making up:

Mount over circles, squares or cut out the shapes.

Cut 2 card shapes for each ornament. Use a Christmas fabric for the backing. Lace, glue or gather the embroidery over the card. Add a ribbon and slip stitch the two pieces together.