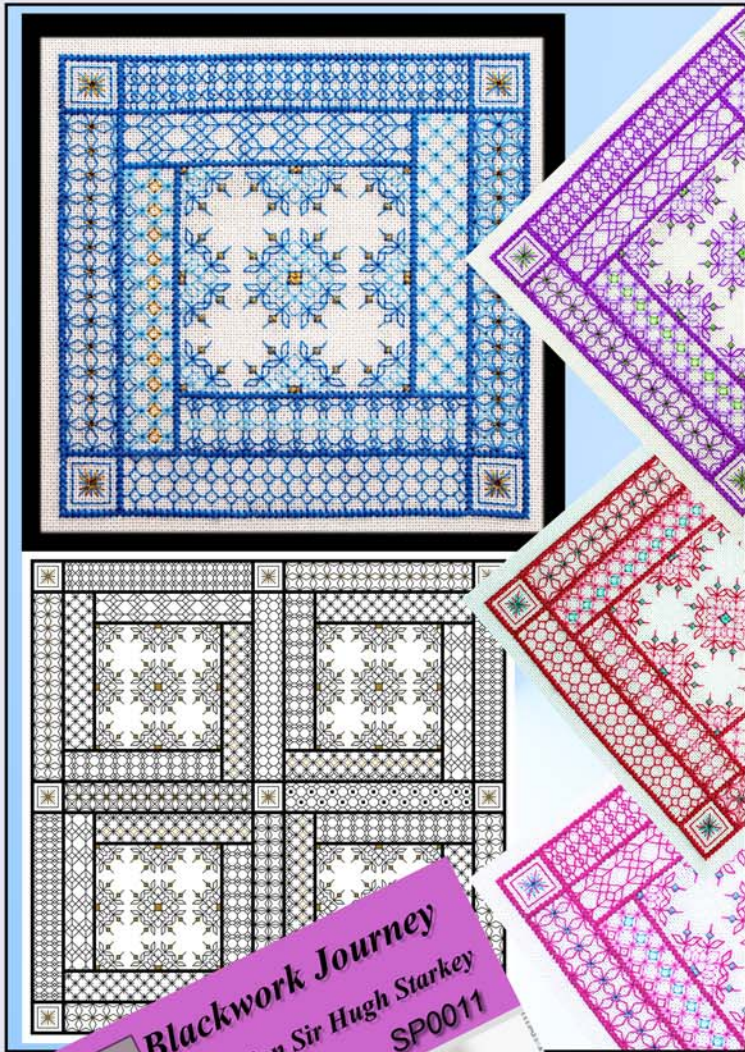




Blackwork Journey Blog

September 2022



Blackwork Journey
Christmas in September

EB0024



Blackwork Journey
Inspiration Sir Hugh Starkey
SP0011



Blackwork Journey Blog, September 2022

September – time for reflection!

“September days have the warmth of summer in their briefer hours, but in their lengthening evenings a prophetic breath of autumn.”

- Rowland E. Robinson

The hot, dry days of the summer have finally come to an end and the leaves are beginning to change colour. Berries are ripening and as I write the rain is pounding on the roof. It has been a difficult year for many readers around the world and there are serious concerns about the economy, cost of living, rising prices and the disruption to so many people by conflicts across the globe. September is a time for reflection, to look to the past, but also to look forward with positivity and determination.

Needlework brings us together, allows us to lose ourselves in colour, pattern, fabrics, threads, designs and look back on past projects. We learn from our mistakes and move forward with increased confidence. For me, “Sir Hugh Starkey” was just such a project!



1986 – 2022 Sir Hugh Starkey

In 1986, when I was working for my City and Guild’s embroidery qualifications, blackwork embroidery was part of the course. I knew very little about the technique at the time, but after some research decided to work on a large piece of embroidery learning as I stitched.

In hindsight this was not the way to work a large project, but I did learn from my mistakes and this embroidery began a lifelong fascination with the technique which I have explored for the last 30 years and led to the founding of Blackwork Journey in 2008.

The subject I chose to explore in 1986 was;
Hugh Starkey of Oulton Esquire Died: 1527
Father John Starkey Esq. died 1462.
Mother: Agnes Needham.

Hugh Starkey was born at Oulton, Cheshire, England. He married Margaret Egerton, daughter of Philip Egerton and Joanna Smith.

Children: James and Elizabeth Starkey

“Taken from “The History of the County Palatine and City of Chester” by George Ormerod in 1819

In a small parish church called St Chad’s in Cheshire was the large brass plate of Sir Hugh Starkey. The brass has since been stolen, but I did a rubbing of the original brass with a view to embroidering the rubbing.

I bought some pale blue evenweave linen, embroidery floss, a book on blackwork stitches and taught myself by trial and error! I traced the design onto the linen using an HB pencil and worked the outline in backstitch which I then whipped to create a corded edge. Nowadays, I would use a water-soluble pen, but they were not available in the 80’s.

Blackwork Journey Blog, September 2022

I started with the face, thinking that if the face looked correct the body would be simple. The shading was created by imagining where the light would fall and working in one or more strands of thread to create the depth. The closer the stitches the denser the pattern would be. The whipped back stitch defined the areas to be filled. I worked by instinct rather than by planning the project or thinking it through!



I have worked many embroideries of people since and have always started with the faces concentrating on the main features, especially the eyes.

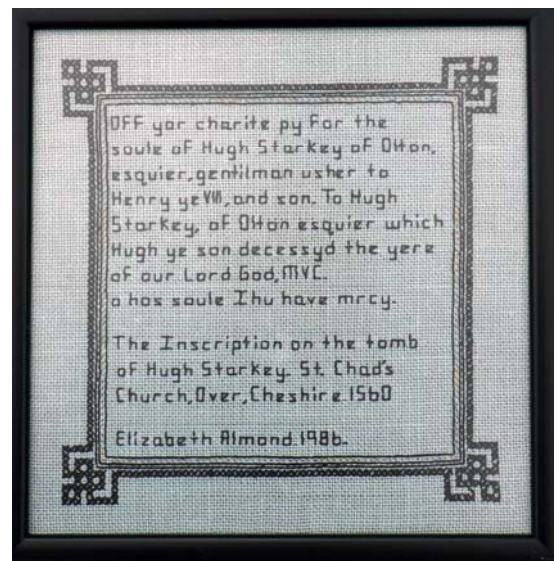


Description of the Brass – James Thornley 1893

The brass of Hugh Starky of Oulton, in the Church of St. Chad at Over, near Winsford, in the County Palatine of Chester, is well preserved and is a fine example of contemporary monumental art.

The Cheshire esquire of the sixteenth century appears smoothly shaven and wearing his hair long. The effigy is full-fronted and the hands, which are without gloves, are joined in prayer. He wears plate armour over a shirt of mail, portions of which are shown. The lower part of his mail shirt is divided in front. He wears sabbatons with spurs and his knee and elbow plates are handsomely ornamented. He wears a dagger and a cross-hilted sword, the latter slung in a slanting position behind him. The high shoulder guards should be noticed. As we have seen, the head is bare, but rests upon a helmet richly adorned with mantling and bearing his crest, a stork's head erased, having a viper in its beak. The feet rest upon a mound of earth, upon which are plants or flowers and grass. Beneath the figure is this inscription in old-English letters.

‘Off yor charite py for the soule of Hugh Starky of Olton, esquier, gentilman usher to Kyng Henry y e VIII. & son to Hugh Starky of Olton esquier which Hugh e son decessyd the yere of or lord God mv, o hos soule Ihu haue m'cy.’



There is also a shield charged with storks, the “canting” heraldic bearings of the Starky family.

Sir Hugh Starkey had fought at the battle of Flodden and subsequently had connections with the court of Henry VIII as a gentleman usher. The idea of creating an embroidery of a man who lived at the time of one of Britain's most famous Tudor kings was an added attraction.

I re-examined Hugh Starkey and his history recently when I was researching another project on Jane Seymour and decided to publish it as SP0011 'Sir Hugh Starkey' to accompany SP0003 Lady Margaret. 30 years later I met the descendent of Sir Richard and Lady Margaret Bellingham who lived at the same time as Henry VIII and would probably have been associated with Sir Hugh at court. I documented the embroidery of Lady Margaret in 'Inspirations' SP0003.

The story of Lady Margaret was documented in 'Inspirations' SP0003. If you wish to follow SP0011 Sir Hugh Starkey, he can also be found in 'Inspirations'



Blackwork Journey
Inspiration Sir Hugh Starkey
SP0011

Blackwork Journey
Inspirations
Lady Margaret 1533

1986 - 2022

From brass to embroidery - the story of Lady Margaret Bellingham

New charts for September

EB0024 Christmas in September

Christmas in September – twelve different ideas to explore!

Handmade gifts are always appreciated and many readers start Christmas projects in September. The designs are simple to create using card circles of different sizes, textured embroidery stitches, oddments of thread in different thicknesses and small pieces of fabric. They can also be used for cards or framed as small gifts.

There are eight freestyle designs and four counted thread patterns worked on Aida or evenweave fabric. Templates have been included, but it is easy to draw round a glass, use a compass or a CD to create the perfect circle! The six freestyle designs list the textured stitches and instructions for each stitch. Stranded floss, matt crochet cotton. Cotton P rle No's 8 and 5 have all been used to create the designs.



Blackwork Journey

Christmas in September

EB0024

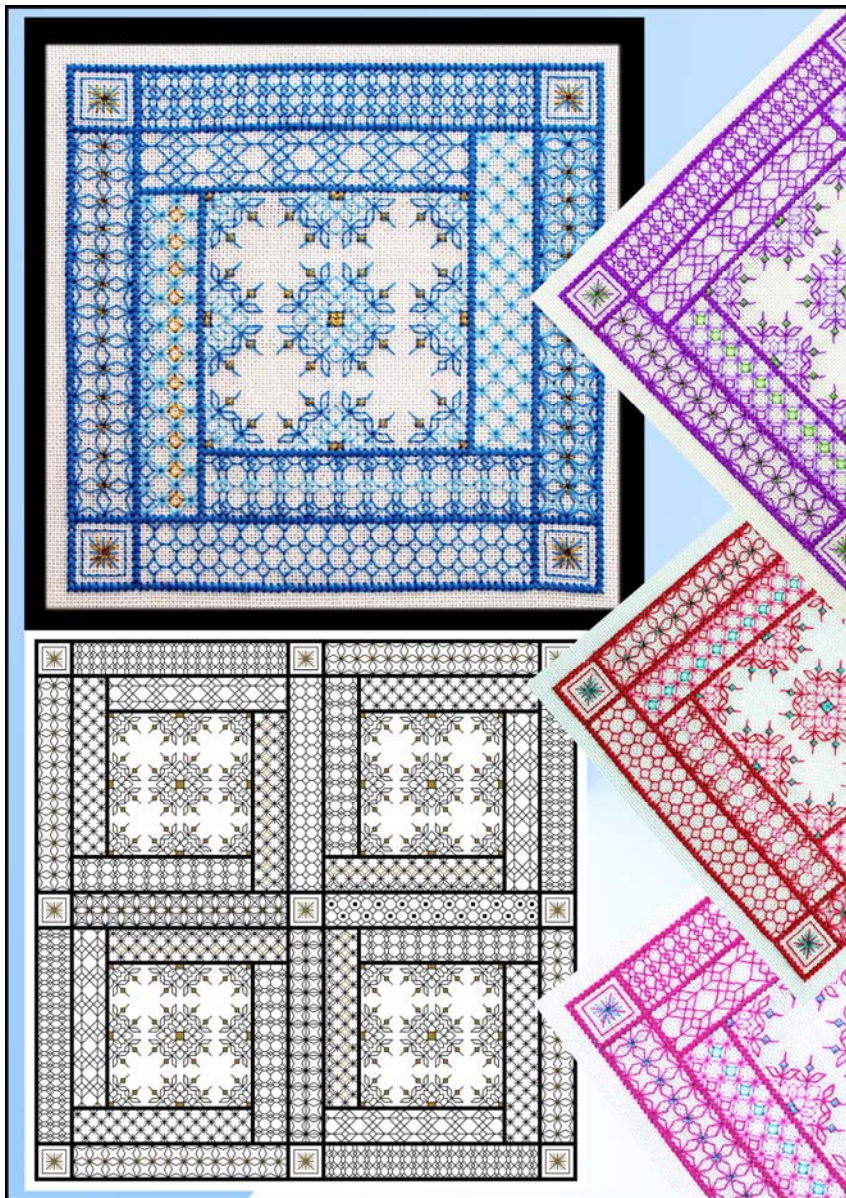




1. Wheatear stitch or 1a .Fly stitch
2. Cable chain stitch
3. Chain stitch or chain stitch whipped
4. Beads

The freestyle designs are drawn onto cotton or calico. The four counted stitch designs are worked on small pieces of Zweigart 28 count evenweave and 14 count Aida.

Instructions for textured stitches and designs are included but always try new stitches out on a 'doodle' cloth first.



CH0427 Log Cabin Blue

This can be found in 'Charts' on the Blackwork Journey website.

Blackwork embroidery always attract interest and this design can be worked in many different colours on Zweigart 28 count evenweave or 14 count Aida. The design can be worked in two ways i.e. as a single block or four block design.

Single block Design Area: 5.29 x 5.29 inches (74 x 74 stitches)

Material:

Zweigart 28 count evenweave or, 14 count Aida, 9 x 9 inches

Four block: Design Area: 9.86 x 9.86 inches (138 x 138 stitches).

Material:

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

The pattern can be found in 'Charts' on the Blackwork Journey website.

The design is based on a log cabin quilting block. The lacy central motif and the corner blocks remain the same but the border patterns rotate round the blocks in different configurations.



Carefully consider the colour scheme e.g. dramatic or delicate? Metallic threads and beads? Lay the threads out first. Do they make an impact? If in doubt, lay one strand on the fabric. If it does not show up don't use it. Thinking the project through first can save a lot of unpicking later!

Just Cross Stitch 2022 Special Collector's issue is now on sale!



I have lost count of the number of Halloween designs I have created for magazines over the years, but there is always something special about spiders and spooks!

I live in Lancashire, UK, an area where stories of witches abound.

Perhaps the most notorious witch trial of the 17th century, the legend of the Pendle witches is one of the many dark tales of imprisonment and execution at Lancaster Castle.

Twelve people were accused of witchcraft; one died while held in custody, eleven went to trial. One was tried and found guilty at York and the other ten were tried at Lancaster. Only one was found not guilty.

It was an unusual trial in that it was documented in an official publication, "*The Wonderfull Discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Lancaster*", by the Clerk of the court, Thomas Potts.

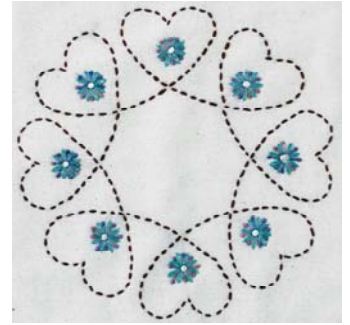
The brooding beauty of Pendle Hill. Once the home of ancient woodland, wolves and wild boar



Recycle, Reuse - make do and mend! Don't throw scraps of fabric away.
They can always be reused and this is just one example.

Table centre

1. I embroidered a sashiko heart design on a square of calico for a demonstration and set it aside meaning to use it on a future project. It lay around until I came across a number of yellow patterned and plain pieces which I didn't want to throw away, but wasn't sure how I wanted to use them.



2. Creating a patchwork piece.

I laid the scraps round the heart design and thought about it! I then machined the strips together to create a patchwork square. Rather than leave raw edges as in Japanese Boro, I turned the edges in to make a neater

finish. The strips were not cut exactly to size but were used as they came in different sizes and shapes.



Stitches used:

1. Four Japanese Hitomezashi border designs.
 2. Sakura cherry blossom – back stitch whipped.
 3. Lazy daisy flower and leaves.
- Lazy daisy with knots on stalks – heart centres
Four different textured stitches round the central square;
Fly stitch
Herringbone stitch
Wheatear stitch

Detached chain and Colonial knots

3. Building up the design - a problem using patterned fabric!

Four different Japanese Hitomezashi line designs were to be used on the outside borders. The lines were marked in water-soluble pen to be stitched in cream matt sashiko thread. The lines did not show up sufficiently on the patterned fabric in cream thread so the thread was exchanged for a black matt crochet cotton.

4. To link the borders and to add interest to the corners four sakura cherry blossoms were drawn and worked in black back stitch whipped with pink to pick up the colour in the patterned fabric. Lazy daisy flowers and leaves DMC stranded floss, four strands were added. The same lazy daisy flowers were added to the centre of the hearts, but knots on stalks were used for the 'leaves'.

5. To complete the patchwork table centre top four textured embroidery stitches were worked round the central square in cream sashiko thread.

6. The water-soluble pen was removed with cold water and the piece was then placed face down on a soft towel pressed lightly.

7. A soft wadding was added and a black cotton fabric slip stitched to complete the piece. The techniques involved were: Patchwork, Japanese Sashiko and Hitomezashi and textured embroidery. Cost of project was one ball of black crochet cotton, time and patience! Making something from nothing is very satisfying and the end result was practical.

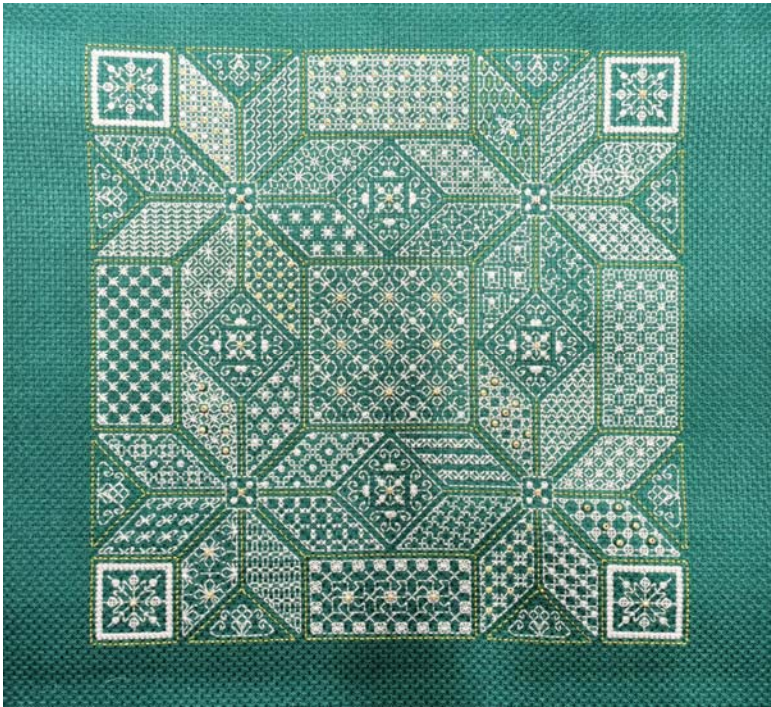


The finished table centre

Readers with flare

Charles and Daniela both completed pieces of blackwork based on the same designs CH053 “Wandering Star” and CH0334 “Shooting Star”

Charles worked his design on green Aida in white floss whereas Daniela has chosen the more complicated pattern worked on evenweave fabric and enhanced by adding her own border and motifs to make a very attractive table centre.



And finally this month, but certainly not least!!

Jennifer asked me if I could graph a saying that she wanted to embroider for her son. The words are a message to all of us throughout this troubled world.

I hope you have enjoyed this month's Blog. If you have any queries please contact;
lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk.

Be Kind

10

30

40

10

20

30

40

50

60

70

80

90

100

In a world where you
can be anything
be kind!

Pattern 1

Kind hearts are the gardens,
Kind thoughts are the roots,
Kind words are the blossoms,
Kind deeds are the fruits.

10

20

30

40

50

10

20

30

40

50

60

70

80

In a world where you
can be anything
be kind.

Pattern 2



Happy stitching, Liz