



Blackwork Journey Blog

January 2024



Triangle Trail

 **Blackwork Journey**
Little Book Of Alphabets
E-Book EB0026

 **Blackwork Journey**
Exploration
E-Book



2024



*To all members of the Blackwork Journey family
I wish you a happy, peaceful and creative 2024*

Image by hannazasimova on Freepik

Looking forward to 2024

Starting a new year and looking forward to the opportunities it will offer is also a time to take stock and reflect on the previous year. 2023 was challenging! The Covid pandemic had long reaching effects for many people and I spent much of 2023 teaching groups who had been booked prior to the pandemic and were keen to resume a normal routine. Many older readers were still apprehensive about moving out of their sheltered environment and had lost a lot of confidence. This seemed to be a common reaction which lessened as the year progressed.

Many groups who had been members of the Embroiderers Guild have re-established themselves as new groups and are keen to make a fresh start. They are all growing, have new members and a clear idea about their future plans. It has been very satisfying to work with them and see the enthusiasm and joy in their new status.

I travelled the length and breadth of the UK teaching and in the summer went on holiday to Hawaii and the USA. I designed embroideries for books and magazines, kitted hundreds of packs and continued to develop the Blackwork Journey website. The Facebook groups are still expanding and I receive and answer many e-mails from members worldwide. I also caught up on craft shows and exhibitions for the first time for several years. It was a joy to see and handle fabric and threads and see designers work on display. As an embroiderer and designer I work in isolation much of the time and need that stimulus and contact.

My family are an integral part of my life and from dog sitting in the Dales to visiting my family in San Francisco takes time and organisation to fit in everything that needs to be done.

So, as I enter 2024 I made a resolution to pace myself more, to stop setting myself impossible deadlines and to slow down a little. However, looking at the diary and all the bookings for talks and workshops the schedule is already pretty full! We will see how the year progresses.....

*"With the new day comes new strength and new thoughts."
Eleanor Roosevelt*

2024 New Blackwork Project “Triangle Trail” - A Dictionary of Blackwork

2024 will see the launch of a new project in Blackwork Journey. The initial idea came from looking at an antique flying geese quilt with its rows of triangles. There were so many different ways in which the triangles could be arranged that I decided to design and stitch a blackwork panel based on the quilt. One thing led to another and “Triangle Trail” was created.

With over 300 different blackwork patterns included, it became a reference dictionary for blackwork. Each block will be shown in both colour and black and white with detailed photographs of each section worked on Zweigart 28 count evenweave or Zweigart 25 count Lugana.

Master Chart consists of 65 triangles, 26 quarter triangles and 78 motifs.

Design Area: Zweigart 28 count evenweave 23.14 x 25.07 inches

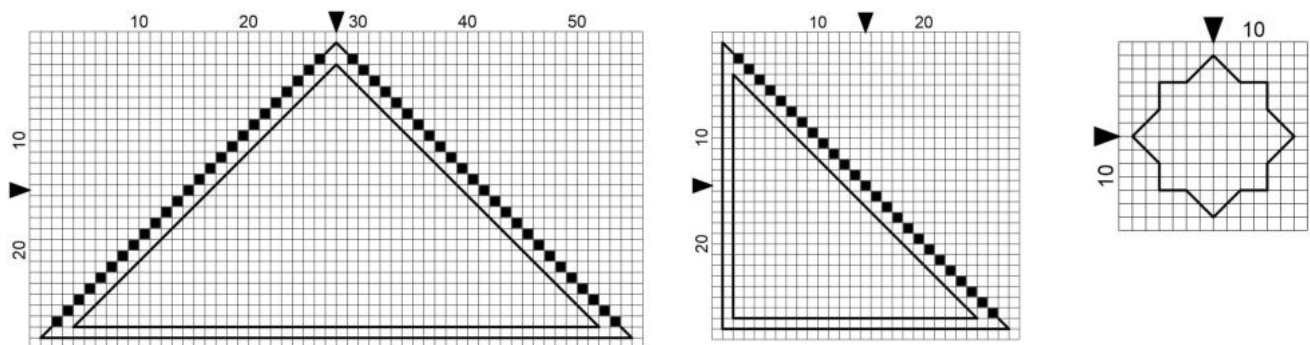
Stitches: 324 x 351 stitches

65 triangles are filled with 2 - 3 different blackwork patterns in each one, showing how patterns can be developed. The 26 quarter triangles, also have more than one pattern included. 72 individual motifs are inserted between the triangles.

A number of alternative arrangements will be included so that the embroiderer can choose a small project consisting of just a few triangles, or can complete the whole design!

Fabrics: Zweigart 25 count Lugana, Zweigart 28 count evenweave or Zweigart 14 count Aida. If Zweigart 14 Aida fabric is used there will be some split stitches.

The embroidery can be worked in a single colour enhanced by metallic gold or copper thread or, it can be worked in four different colours and metallic threads added. The cross stitch framework was worked in Cotton P rle No.12. Some Mill Hill gold beads have been added.



Triangle, quarter frameworks and single motif. These elements are used to create all the pattern variations.

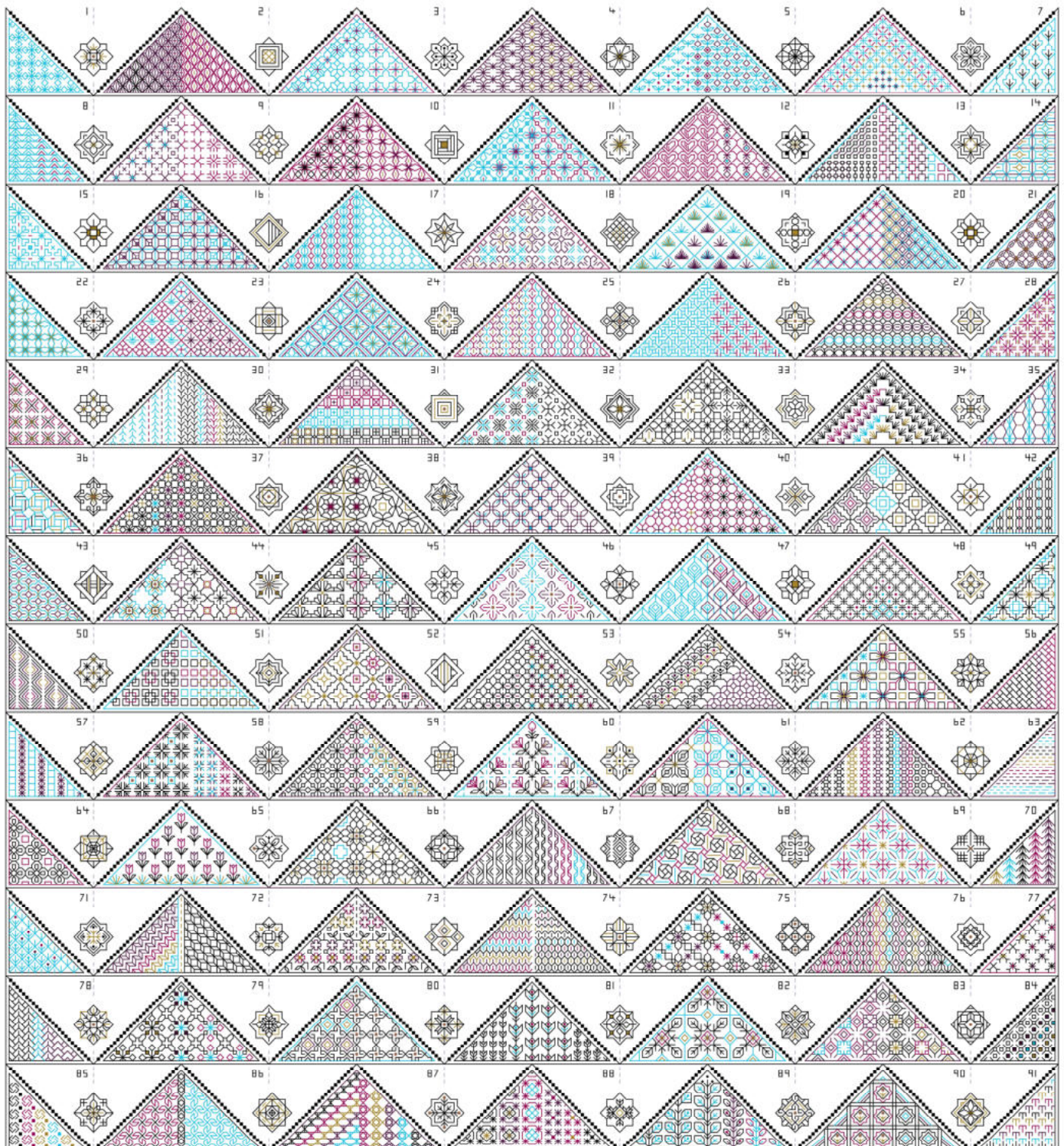
Working in good light

The embroidery was stitched over a period of time mostly over the winter months when the light was poor. The photographs show the importance of using good lighting. Choosing colours should be done in daylight when the true colours of the threads can be appreciated.



Work in progress

Master Chart



Next month we will look at the different pattern arrangements from small four block projects to the full master chart and its variations.

Preparation for projects

At the “Knit and Stitch Show” at Harrogate UK in November, some of the students from the Royal School of Needlework displayed some goldwork samplers and I was excited to see the display boards showing how the different stages were worked from the basic felt padding to the final worked sample.



Goldwork is the use of various types of metal threads and embellishments to adorn fabric. The majority of the metal thread remains on the surface of the fabric.

Goldwork is historically associated with high-status embroidery due to the cost of the materials.



Goldwork techniques can be worked in silver or other metal threads.

To examine a partly worked piece can also be helpful. It demonstrates how much work is involved in this technique and how the different stitches can be used effectively. The two examples below show how the goldwork has been built up over the felt padding and the stitches used.

Goldwork threads vary considerably in price so choose wisely! Research the subject thoroughly if you intend to work your own piece.



Work in progress

An excellent source of information is the “RSN Stitch Bank”. A detailed list of the stitches used in goldwork, photographs and instructions allows the beginner to learn and experiment with new stitches.
<https://rsnstitchbank.org/technique/goldwork>.



Test pieces and doodle cloths

If you are starting a new technique it is always helpful to work a test piece first as it provides the opportunity to try out the stitches before moving on to the main project. If necessary, write the name of the stitch, the threads and number of strands used on the fabric.

A doodle cloth is a piece of fabric used to work new stitches before moving on the final piece. Linen, cotton and calico can be used for free style stitches and a piece of 28 count evenweave can be used trying out counted thread stitches, pulled and drawn threadwork etc.

E-Books on the Blackwork Journey website

On the website there are a number of e-books covering a wide range of techniques ranging from the very popular EB0002 “Save the Stitches” to EB0007 “Introduction to Pulled Thread Work”. There are 28 different e-books covering a wide range of techniques. Each book looks at a project in depth with full instructions, diagrams and photographs.

How to use the e-books

Looking at a subject in depth through an e-book takes it further than just working a chart. The background behind the technique can be just as important and informative as the actual stitching and there are a number of e-books based on the Japanese techniques of Sashiko and Kogin. Designed to be eco-friendly save paper and ink by downloading the e-book to the computer and only print the charts needed to complete the embroidery.

*If e-books are too large, consider smaller designs from “Projects” on the website. There are 80 detailed designs to explore!

In 2024 take time out to decide what you really want to stitch and achieve!



I hope you have enjoyed the first Blog of 2024 and it has given you some ideas to consider. If you have any queries please contact: lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk

Happy stitching,

Liz