



Blackwork Journey Blog

January 2018



Elegance



Cocktail



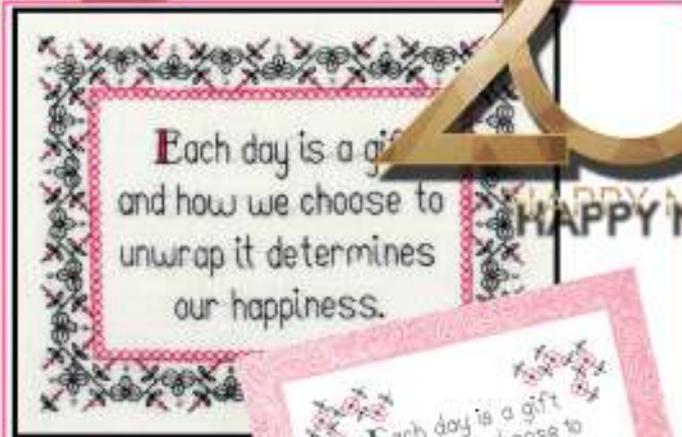
Summer
Cruise



Mary-Jane



2018

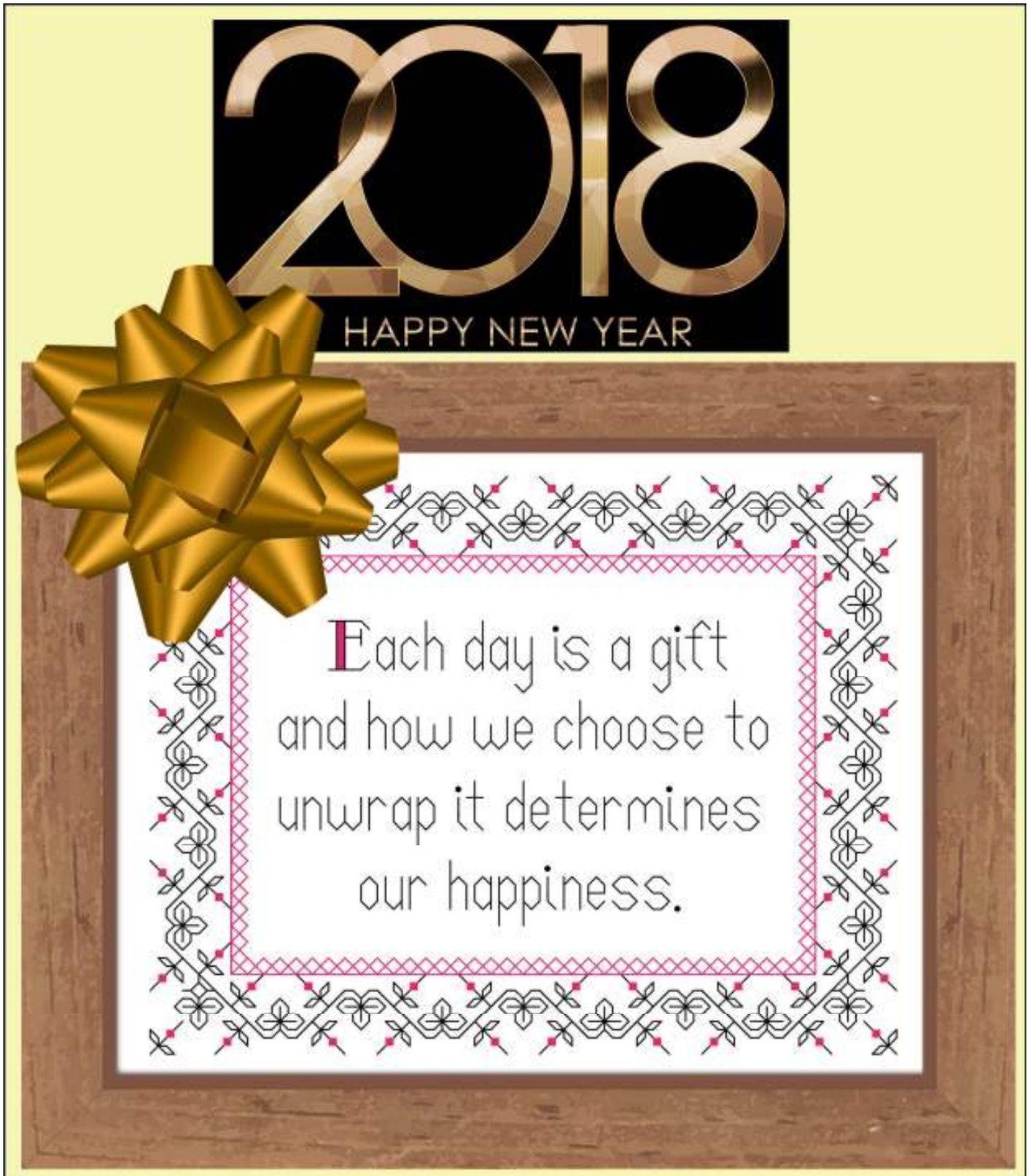


Each day is a gift
and how we choose to
unwrap it determines
our happiness.

HAPPY NEW YEAR



Each day is a gift
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Welcome to Blackwork Journey 2018!

Blackwork Journey is ten years old this year and what a journey it has been! It has evolved into a much larger enterprise than I ever imagined with challenges and triumphs, setbacks and successes, but most of all, working with wonderful readers and editors.

Blackwork Journey Blog, January 2018

I have a number of ideas in the pipeline for the coming year and several trips overseas, where I will meet up with fellow embroiderers and explore new areas and designs which is exciting and something to look forward to as I look out over our snow covered garden! The sunshine of San Francisco last year seems a world away, but I am looking forward to going to America again in 2018 and to Kenya, which I have never visited before.

The final part of 'Sublime Stitches' was posted in December and many readers have already finished this year long project, whilst others are just starting. 'Save the Stitches' is still attracting new readers every week and I love to see all the photographs that are being sent in about the many different projects. Your interpretation of my designs is always interesting to see and I learn much by looking at your work.

Introducing different embroidery techniques and forgotten stitches is a major part of Blackwork Journey and last month I attached a detailed list of useful embroidery stitches to the Blog for you to download and keep for reference. Adding just a few new stitches to the repertoire can make a considerable difference to your work and there will be some more free style embroidery designs added to the site during the course of the year.



I was especially interested in the way Brenda has been working with free style embroidery stitches and lace motifs.

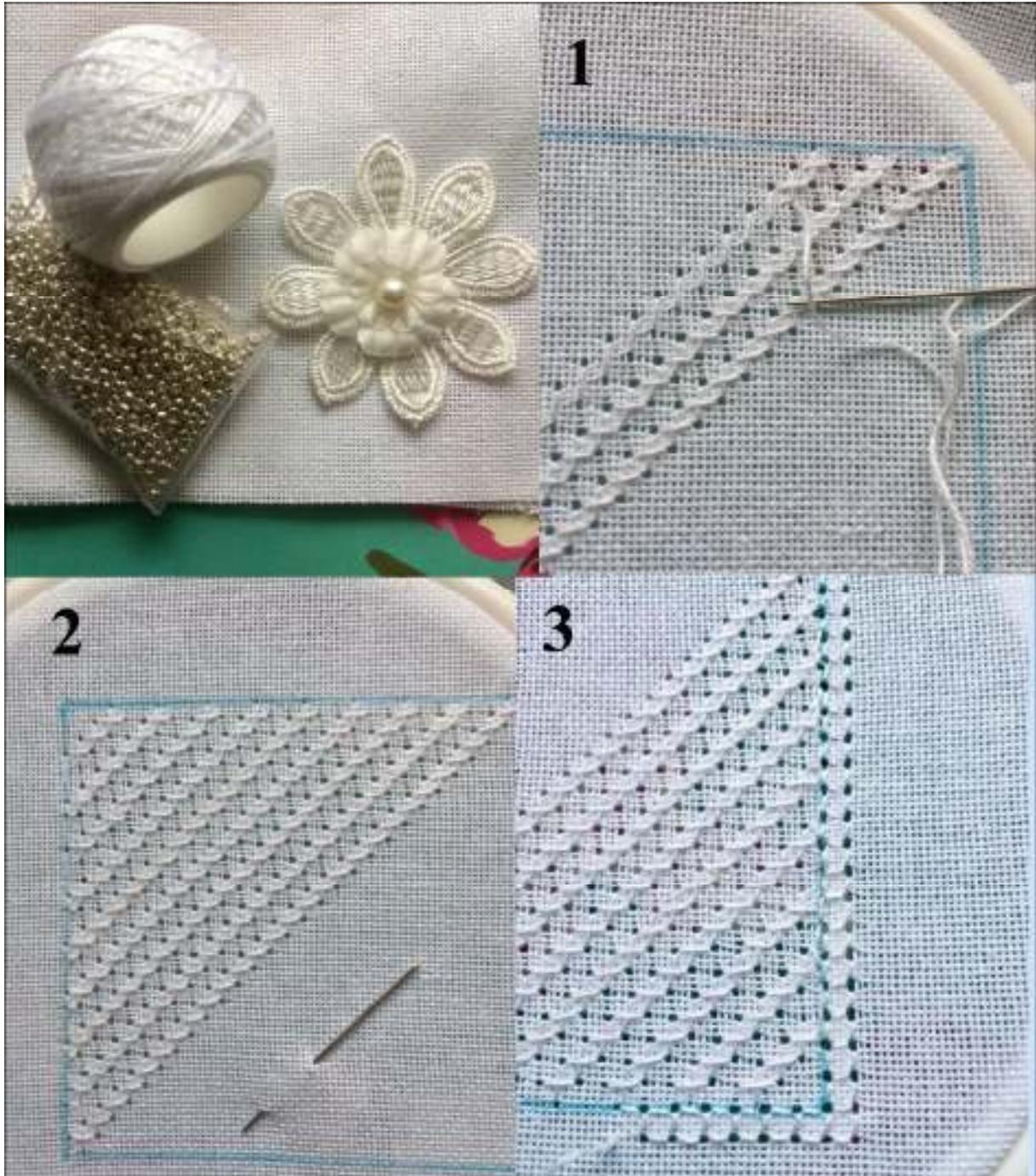
We all use beads and embellishments to enhance our work, but Brenda has taken lace motifs and worked the embroidery round them.

She has also used sequins with knots and beads. It is really effective and using different thickness of threads and simple stitches such as stem stitch and French knots has given a three dimensional appearance to the embroidery.

Brenda's designs

Lavender Sachet

Brenda also gave me a lace flower to play with and this is the result!



For this, you will need:

2 squares of Zweigart 28 count evenweave, 6 x 6 inches

2 squares of cotton 2.50 x 2.50 inches for sachet,

Dried lavender

Lace motif

DMC Cotton P rle No.12, one ball

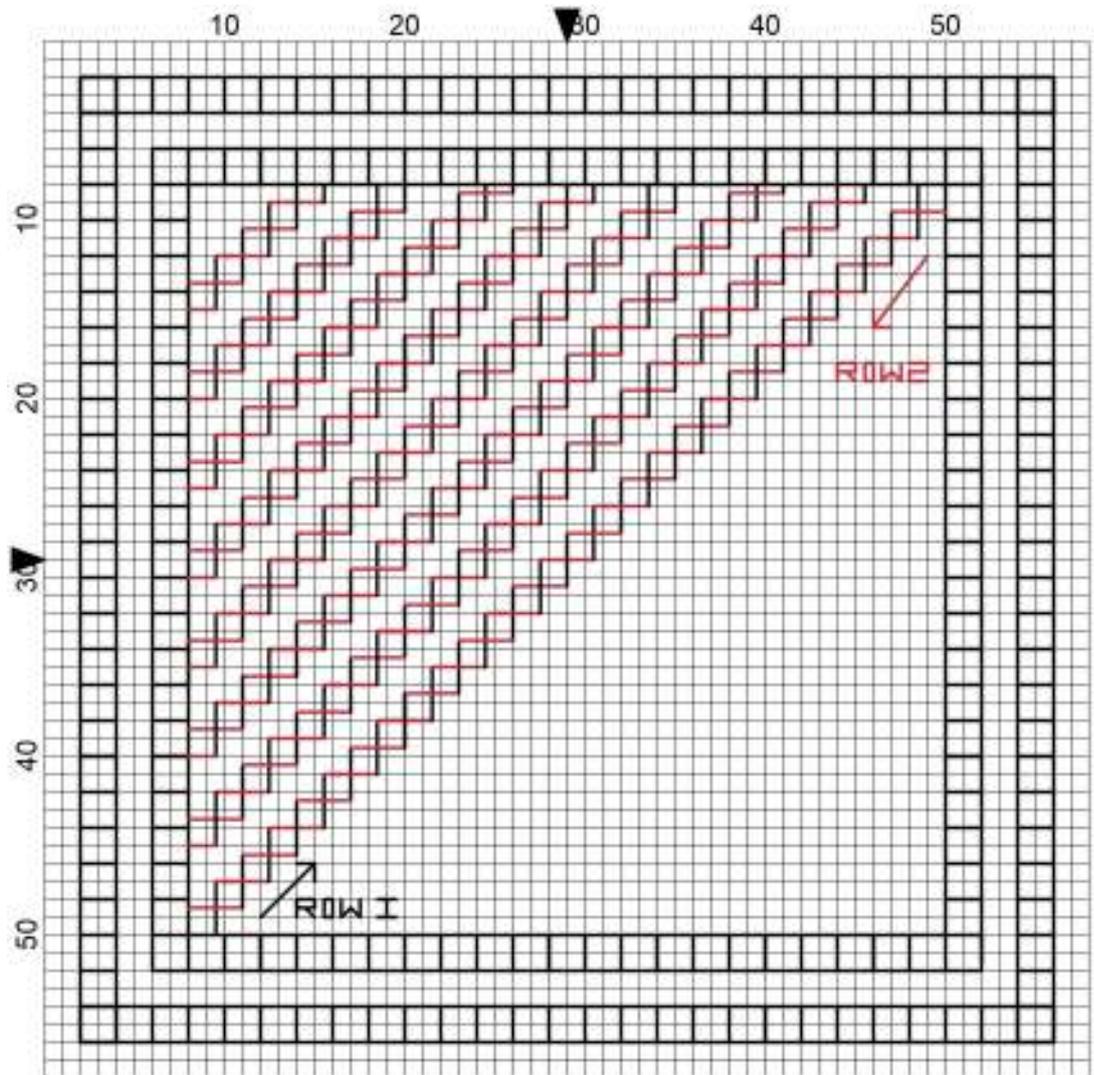
Mill Hill glass beads No 2022 Silver, one packet

Tapestry needle No.24

Beading needle

Stitches used:

- Four-sided stitch
- Raised diagonal band over 6 threads
- Slip stitch



Sachet chart

Method: Front

Four-sided stitch and diagonal raised bands are pulled thread work stitches.

Pulled thread work is a counted embroidery technique, worked on a loosely woven evenweave fabric.

Stitches are worked around groups of threads in the fabric and pulled, using the tension of the stitches to form gaps, creating lacy, open fillings, bands, border and hems. It is usually worked in white thread on white fabric, but can also be worked with coloured threads.

Four-sided stitch

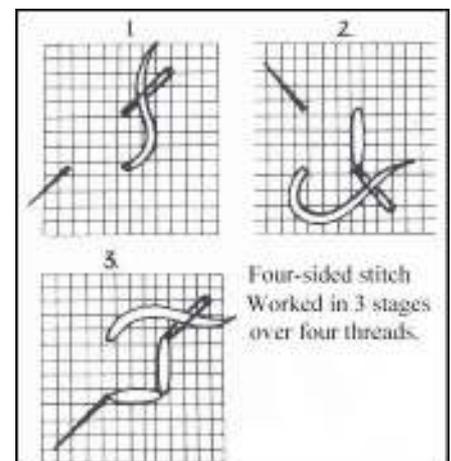
1. Work two squares of four-sided stitch using Cotton Pérle. The outside row of four-sided stitch will also be the joining line for the two completed squares of fabric.

Four-sided stitch consists of 3 straight stitches, to form the end, the middle and the top of the 'square'.

Work from right to left over 4 threads. Always put the needle in at one corner and come out at the opposite one. Follow diagrams 1-3

Pull tight to create the holes.

The rows of four-sided stitch are worked backwards and forwards until the space is filled.



Diagonal raised bands

2. Work the rows of diagonal raised band following the chart above until half of the square is filled.

This stitch is worked in diagonal bands over six threads. The vertical stitches (black) are worked first starting in the bottom left hand corner and moving towards the top right. The horizontal stitches (red) are then worked downwards from the top right to the bottom left, completing the band.

Pull the stitches tightly to create the holes.

There are **six threads** between each diagonal row. Repeat each row until half the square has been filled.

3. Trim the square to half an inch beyond the outer row of four- sided stitch. Fold the raw edges in and tack carefully to hold the raw edges in place.

4. Stitch the lace motif onto the centre of the square.

Method Back:

5. Work two squares of four-sided stitch on the back. Trim the square to half an inch beyond the outer row of four- sided stitch. Fold the raw edges in and tack carefully to hold the edges in place.



Making up!



Making up

6. Line the two squares up carefully so the four-sided stitch edges meet. Using sewing cotton and the beading needle catch the top loops from both squares and slip stitch together. Add a bead each at each stitch.

Leave a small opening, insert the lavender sachet and a small amount of wadding. Slip stitch and bead the opening closed. Enjoy!



Combining blackwork and cross stitch CH0367 'Shoeholic'

Most women like shoes, the essential 'must have' item and logic does not necessarily enter into the argument! 'Why do you need another pair of shoes?' can be heard in many households as another pair finds its way into the wardrobe.

I have always liked shoes and wherever I go in the world I take photographs of unusual shoes and send them to friends who are equally interested. Whilst I do not wear them I do admire them as an art form, so when I sent a photograph of a pair of shoes I found in Los Angeles to a friend who is addicted to shoes, her comment was 'Please can you embroider them?'



This started me thinking and I designed an elegant shoe for my friend Serene for Christmas. It was fun to stitch so I designed a few more and posted them on the Facebook group where they were greeted with delight so I added another shoe to make a set of four. I hope you enjoy them!



The trademark of Christian Louboutin shoes is red bottoms and heels so I designed Elegance in the style of a Louboutin shoe. Whilst Elegance has the signature high heels it does not come with the same price tag!

Cross stitch, blackwork filler patters, beads and metallic threads have all been used to create this collection which can be worked as a square design or as a panel. The next stage would be to create some 'designer' handbags to go with the shoes.

Embroidery should be fun and different. It is so easy to use techniques that are familiar and comfortable, but it is good to try out new ideas, to take a fresh look at designs and to keep an open mind about subjects to stitch. Applique a shoe onto a background fabric and embellish it with embroidery and beads. Stitch the design in wools on canvas to develop the idea further. The options are endless.



CH0367 'Shoeholic'



If I am using beads and embellishments do I need a card mount, a box frame or glass?

I have been asked this question a number of times and if the piece of embroidery is being mounted under glass then I think a card mount is generally required to provide space between the embroidery and the glass.

If large beads have been used a double card mount will allow extra space and prevent the embroidery being squashed. A double card mount in two different colours can enhance the design.

Pandora's Box used a double card mount. The black is picked up in the frame.

Embroidery is generally quite hard wearing and quite a few of my pieces do not have glass covering them, especially the really textured pieces. However, it is possible to mount textured design in box frames which add depth and protection.



Choosing a box frame

The box frame should not be so deep that the embroidery is in shadow and cannot be appreciated.

Which glass should I use?

Which glass to use if you are framing your work is another matter entirely and is more complicated than it first appears. Further advice can be found on the Internet, but there is a very good article on:

Picture Framing Glass: Plain or Non-Reflective?

By Framing Fairy at;

<https://framingfairy.wordpress.com/2011/03/01/picture-framing-glass-plain-or-non-reflective/>.



She was painted by Ludger Tom Ring the Younger (1522-1584) in 1571. On closer inspection, I saw that she had blackwork on her collar and cuffs! As far as I could see the motifs were free style blackwork flowers and seeds and the embroidery was similar to blackwork embroidery from the Elizabethan period in England.

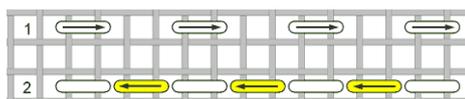
It is possible that the cuffs and collar were worked in double running or Holbein stitch

Holbein stitch is a simple, reversible line embroidery stitch most commonly used in Blackwork embroidery and Assisi embroidery. The stitch is named after Hans Holbein the Younger (1497-1543), a 16th-century portrait painter best known for his paintings of Henry VIII and his children, almost all of whom are depicted wearing clothing decorated with blackwork embroidery.

Although superficially similar to Back Stitch, Holbein stitch produces a smoother line and a pattern that is identical on both sides of the fabric.

It can be worked in straight lines, diagonally, or in a stepped fashion to make a zigzag line and is well suited to creating outlines or intricate filling patterns.

Holbein stitch is also known as double running stitch, line stitch, Spanish stitch, Chiara stitch and two-sided line stitch.



Holbein stitch



CH0368 Each Day - New design!

Start 2018 with a memorable saying to help you through the year.



CH0368 Each Day



I hope you have enjoyed this month's Blog. I look forward to seeing your work during the course of the year through the Facebook groups and through e-mails.

If you have any queries please contact me through:
lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk

"The only way where housework comes before needlework is in the dictionary"

Mary Kurtz

Happy stitching!

Liz