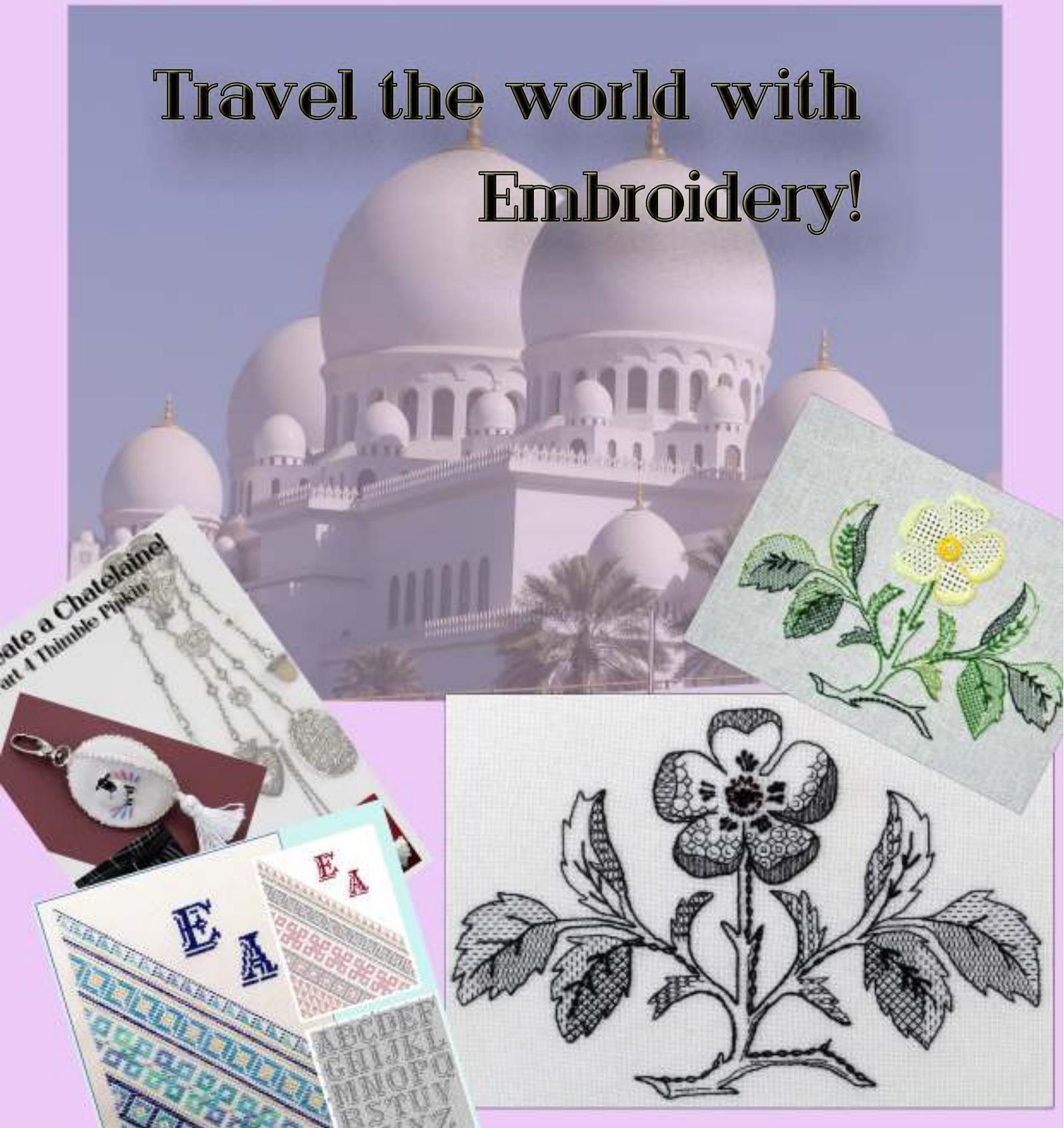




Blackwork *Journey Blog*

June 2018

Travel the world with
Embroidery!



Blackwork Journey Blog, June 2018

Summer is here at last! The tawny owl has raised her baby and they have both left our nesting box although I can still hear the baby in the trees calling quietly to her mother. The owls proved to be the highlight of a needlework course held at my house over the recent Bank Holiday weekend.

Mum posed all week in the ivy, so the first thing that everyone looked for was the owl! To see an owl in broad daylight so close to the house is unusual and I hope she returns again next year.



Mum tawny owl and baby

Groups, talks and day schools

This year I will travel all over the UK giving talks and day schools to different needlework groups. Japanese Kogin embroidery is proving to be very popular and is a really enjoyable class to teach. It grows quickly and watching the patterns develop is a joy.

However, the real thrill for me is when I am contacted by a group from overseas asking to work one of my designs as a group project and when Deirdre Appel from the Harare Needlework Guild in Zimbabwe contacted me I was delighted to hear from them. The Needlework Guild has been working together for over 25 years and Deirdre recently sent me some photographs of some of their members at work.

If any other groups would like to work my designs as group projects, please contact me and I would be delighted to help. Their work can be displayed in the closed Facebook groups and shared with members worldwide.

Facebook groups set up for Projects:

Blackwork Journey - Elizabeth Almond Designs

<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/#>

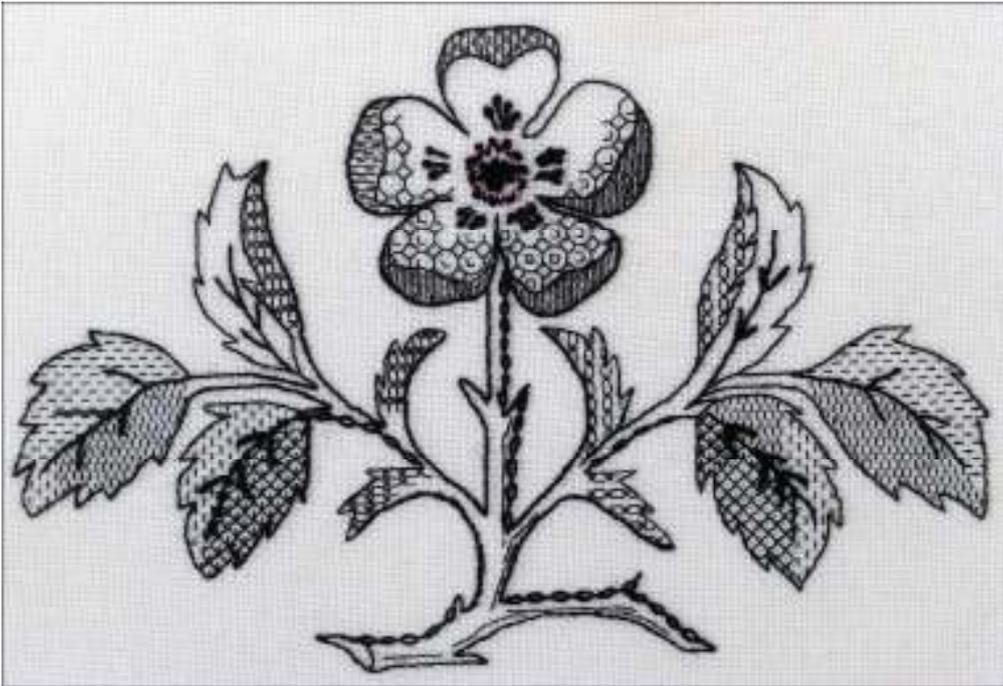


**Greetings from the ladies of
the Needlework Guild of
Harare, Zimbabwe**

Many different groups have worked with me over the years and are now in touch with each other. Networking, sharing information and ideas is social media at its best.

New charts for June

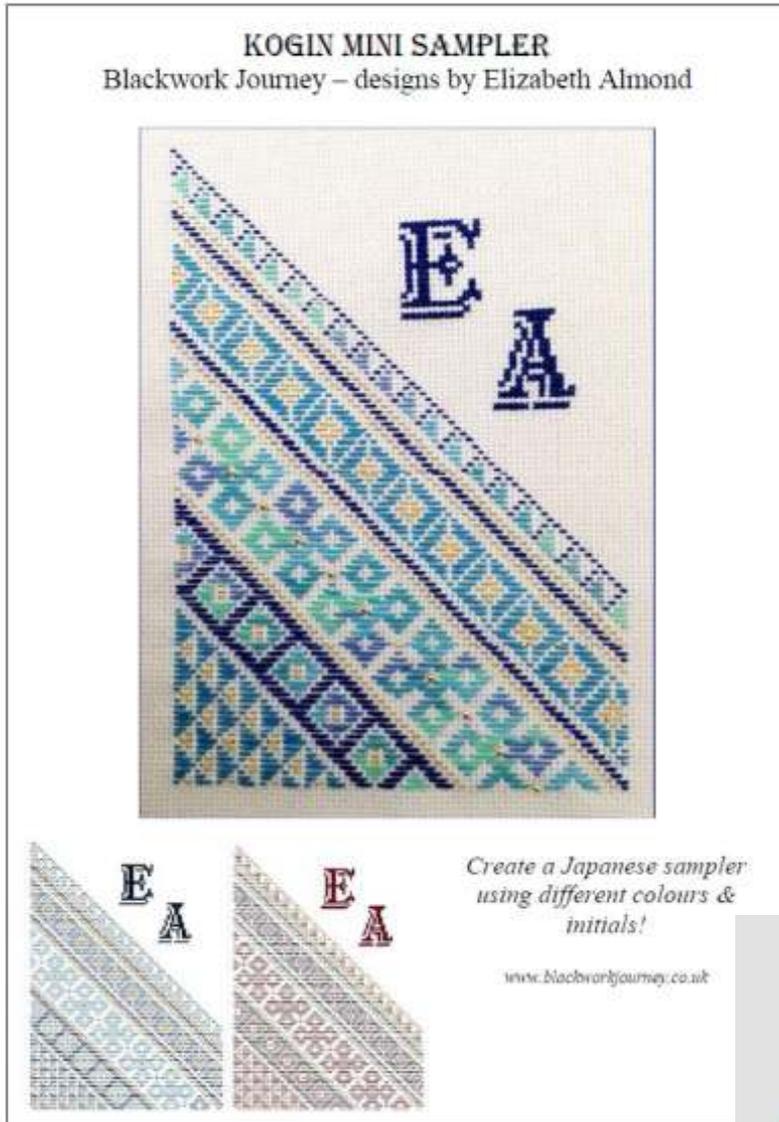
Following my visit to Kenya in February, I was asked if I would add my three Kenya roses to the site. The first two have been added this month and the final whitework rose one will be added to 'Projects' in July. I have also designed a small Kogin mini sampler which can be personalised by adding letters and made into a special card or book cover. It is small enough to introduce new readers to this fascinating technique and contains many different traditional elements to tempt the embroiderer.



CH0376 Kenya Rose -
Blackwork

PR0042 Kenya Rose - pulled
thread work and blackwork
combine in this rose pattern.





CH0377 Kogin Mini Sampler

There are many more Japanese Kogin style designs being worked, so watch this space!

Matt and variegated threads were used!

FR0157 Part 4 Pipkin

Part 4 in the 'Create a Chatelaine' has been added this month.

The pipkin is a three dimensional thimble holder which holds my precious silver thimble and by joining all the sides together it makes an attractive ornament. Change the template sizes to create a whole variety of different objects.

Many more objects could be added to your chatelaine. Decide which tools you find most useful and add them to create your own unique piece. Many museums hold chatelaines in their collections if you want to explore the subject further.





Antique Chatelaines

Chatelaine. Place of origin: England (probably made) Date: 1730-1735 (made) Artist/Maker: Unknown Materials and Techniques: Pinchbeck

Pinchbeck chatelaine incorporating scissors case, needle case, etui and two thimble cases, probably England, 1730-35

<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/113893/chatelain-unknown>

The Met Museum in New York also has Chatelaines in their collection and I especially like this example.

Date: 1750–60

Culture: British

Medium: Gold, moss agate

Dimensions:

Overall (confirmed): 7 3/4 × 1 7/8 × 7/8 in. (19.7 × 4.8 × 2.2 cm)

Classification: Metalwork - Gold and Platinum



Talented readers

I am always delighted when I receive pictures from readers who have completed my designs and Jean is a very prolific embroiderer. Her 'Arabesque' (CH0001) and, 'Portail De Fleurs' (CH0342) show just how varied blackwork can be!

'Arabesque' was the first design I ever created for Blackwork Journey and has a very special place in my memory.

Little did I know some ten years ago just how Blackwork Journey would develop and where in the world it would take me! Thank you Jean for bringing back so many memories!





PR0017 Pulled Thread Flower by Julie Foster

Pulled thread embroidery 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.

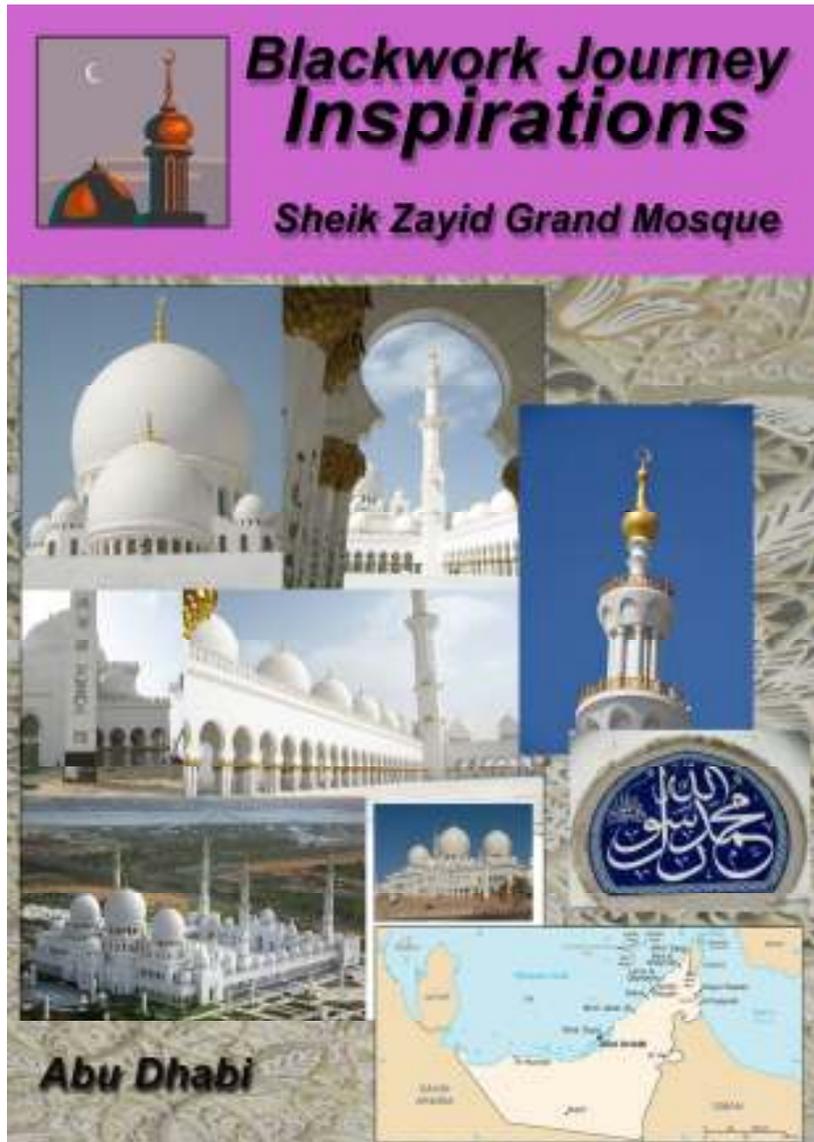
Every petal is a different pulled thread stitch

Art in Abu Dhabi - Part 1. The Sheik Zayid Grand Mosque

In February I was fortunate to return to Abu Dhabi to visit one of the most impressive buildings in the world, the **Sheik Zayid Grand Mosque** which I first visited the day it opened in March 2008 and the new **Louvre Abu Dhabi** which had been opened a few weeks earlier. In July I will explore the Louvre Museum in the Blog with you.

The architecture and traditions of the Arab world are reflected in these two very diverse buildings and have provided a great source of inspiration to my view of needlework with its Islamic influences. Both buildings have made a significant impact on the life of the region and their influence is felt in communities in many different parts of the world.

I featured the Sheik Zayid Grand Mosque in 'Inspirations' in Blackwork Journey several years ago and returning after so many years, I wondered whether it would still make the same impact on my senses. I was not disappointed. Now fully open to the public with tour guides and hundreds of visitors, it still retained the same mystique I remembered on that first day.



SP0002 Sheik Zayid Grand Mosque



This architectural work of art is one of the world's largest mosques. It has a capacity for 40,000 worshippers. It features 82 domes, over 1,000 columns inlaid with semi-precious stones, 24 carat gold gilded chandeliers and the world's largest hand knotted carpet. The sheer scale of the building impresses and entralls the visitor.

The main prayer hall is dominated by one of the world's largest chandeliers – 10 metres in diameter, 15 metres in height and weighing twelve tonnes. The mosque's first ceremony was

the funeral of its namesake, Sheikh Zayed, who is buried at the site. Arabesque designs mingle with Islamic geometric patterns decorating almost every surface. Inspiration abounds in every corner of this imposing building.

Reflective pools surround the mosque, enhancing its beauty. These pools were empty on my first visit and the palm trees were wrapped in hessian.

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At night, the mosque is transformed to a magical place which dominates the skyline. To experience such a unique place is a joy and I used the ideas I found there to create a piece of embroidery called 'Islamic Spring' to remind me of its beauty and influence.



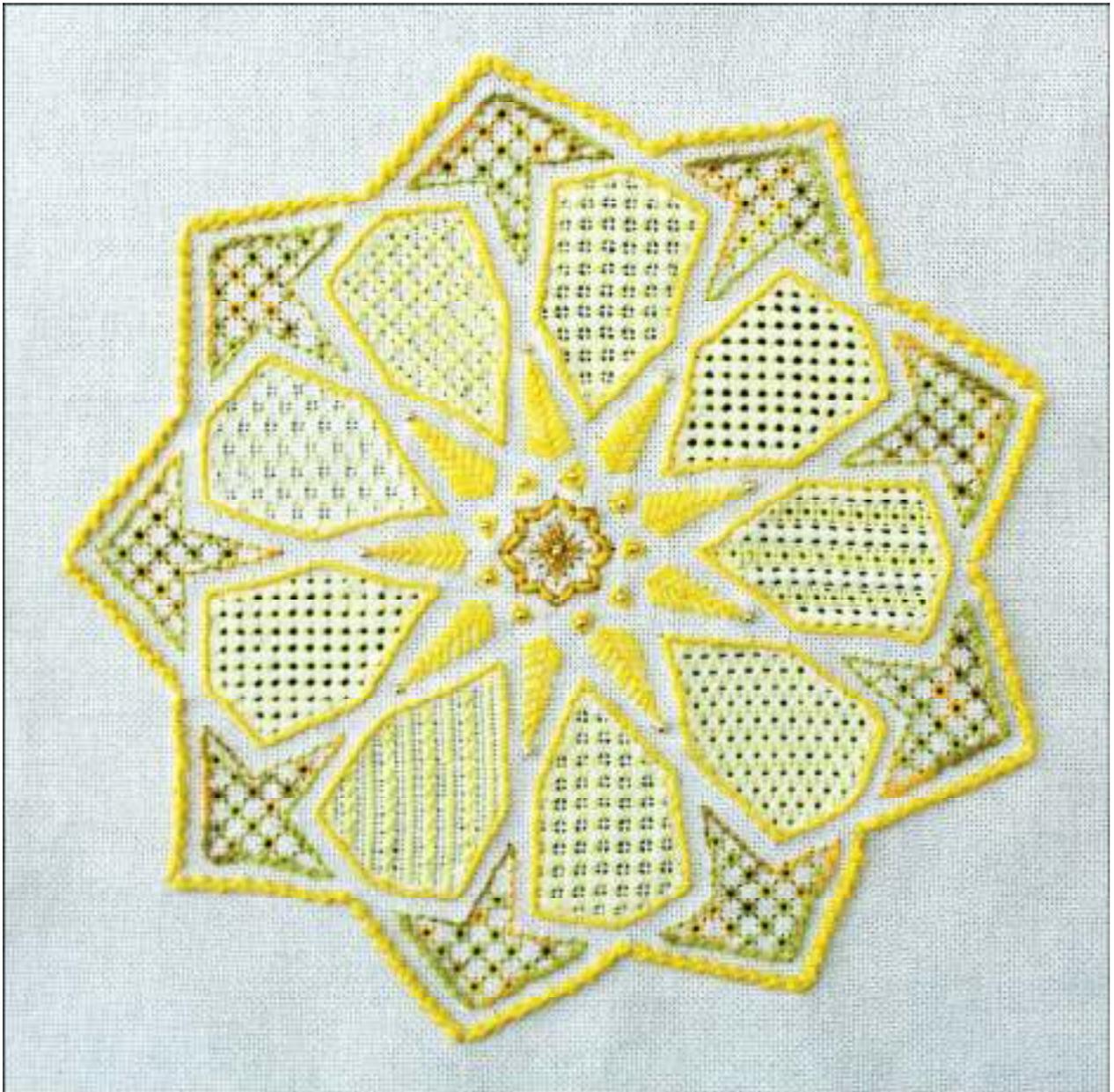
Suitably dressed to enter a place of worship!

The azure sky and the shimmering white marble combined to create a magical exterior. The interior of the mosque reflects the skills of the many craftsmen who created it!

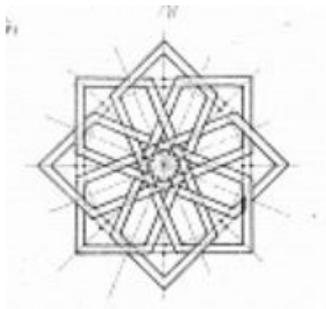


The interior of the Sheik Zayid Grand Mosque showing the use of Islamic patterns on every surface.

'Islamic Spring' - a treasured memory!



Colours for the design were based on a translucent design set into the marble and lit from behind. The geometric free style design was drawn onto the fabric in water-soluble pen.



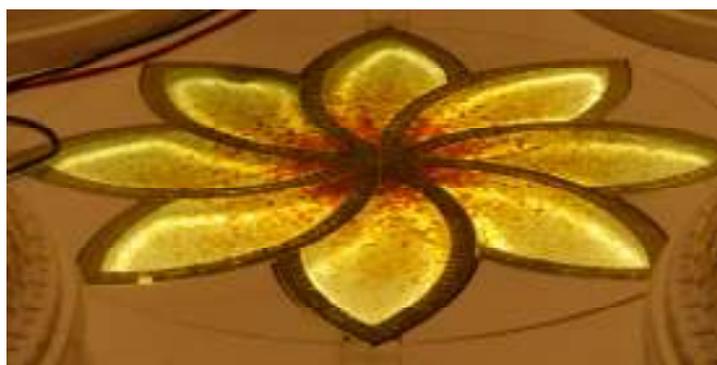
This geometric design is very traditional and I have seen it in several parts of the world.





Centre of the design showing the use of metallic thread and beads to add weight and texture

Capturing a memory and transferring it to fabric in a way that interprets the delicate designs and inlays was recreated using different weights of DMC floss, six strands down to one strand and a variety of pulled thread work stitches and embroidery stitches and beads.



Whilst the design could have been worked as a whitework embroidery to reflect the white marble I focused on the effects of the sunshine reflecting through the stained glass windows onto the deep pile carpet on the floor below and the mosaic inlaid in the floor and lit from underneath.

The outline of the design was worked in double knot stitch using six strands of floss and the internal pattern borders were worked in two strands of floss whipped with two strands to create a



corded effect to surround the pulled thread work patterns. Three strands of floss were used including DMC 4080 variegated floss which ranged from yellow to green and created a much stronger effect than I had anticipated. The thread contrasted well with the paler yellows and focused the eye on the centre nine pulled work panels.

Next month I will explore the Louvre museum in Abu Dhabi, another amazing architectural experience.

Happy stitching! *Liz*