



# *Blackwork Journey Blog*

August 2023



FREE PROJECT

### August and an English summer!

2023 is flying by and we are now in the middle of an English summer with long hot days interspersed with heavy bursts of rain. School is out until the beginning of September and the holiday season is underway. It is a time for quiet stitching in the garden and new projects, but for me it is a time when I sort out my studio and prepare kits for the coming season of workshops and talks.

I like to have everything planned in advance so if there are any sudden changes I am prepared. It can be fun looking through the boxes and finding fabrics and threads that you have forgotten you had and I think we all have a stash we have collected over the years but not used. There may be kits you have bought and will never stitch, or fabric you will not use. Consider using the fabrics in a slow stitching project or possibly donating them to a charity shop. Tastes do change with the passage of time and what appealed once may no longer inspire you, in which case, pass it on to someone who would appreciate it.

### Recycle!

Vicky recently sent me some photographs of a slow stitching calico bag she has made out of her scraps of fabric. I love the way she has added sequins round some of the patches to add sparkle and used a simple diamond sashiko running stitch pattern to anchor the fabrics in place. Many supermarkets give away calico bags printed with their logos. I am loathe to throw them away and this is a practical way of recycling them.



*Vicky's calico tote - Recycle and make something new!*

### Sourcing fabrics for kits and projects

It takes me some time to prepare the kits for workshops to ensure that different levels of ability are catered for and the charts are clear and readily understood. All the threads and fabrics have to be included because

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the days have long gone when you could just pop to the local needlework store to buy half a metre of fabric and some floss and it is not easy sourcing from the internet. I like to examine and feel the fabric and look at the colours of the threads, so when I do find a fabric or needlework shop on my travels, I always take a look inside to see what treasures I can add to my stock.

Quilt Festivals and needlework shows are not only an opportunity to stock up on fabric and threads, but also to see what other people are creating and possibly be inspired to create something new, join workshops and listen to inspirational speakers. Often different situations will trigger a new line of thinking which you can take through into your own work.



The annual Festival of Quilts held in Birmingham, UK is one I try to visit if possible. There are exhibitions, stalls, book vendors, and workshops. It is full of ideas and supplies that really tempt me and I know that this may be one of the few opportunities to see and handle the fabrics that I need for the

coming year. I always find such visits rewarding, although they can be expensive!

When I travel to America to see our son and his family, one of the joys is finding craft and needlework shops and even the supermarket chains often carry needlework and craft supplies. I often find it worthwhile to research the area I am visiting in advance to find shops, craft suppliers, museums and galleries.

However, before I buy anything new I ask myself whether I really need it and will I use it? If the answer is 'No' before in theory, I walk away. All active needlewomen will know just what I mean!

Once I have sourced the fabric and printed the charts I have a cutting and packing session. This can take several days depending on how much fabric is included and how many different types are needed for the different projects.

For example:

- 25 kits with 8 pages of charts and instructions = 200 pages
- 3 pieces of fabric per kit to be measured and cut = 73 pieces
- 4 lots of thread to be cut packed = 100
- 25 needles
- 25 bags for backing.



This is just for one workshop, so calculating how much fabric will be needed in the course of a year can be quite complicated. Fabric, especially Zweigart fabrics have to be ordered well in advance and there are often shipping delays or standard fabrics are not available at the time they are needed. Prices frequently change, so planning in advance is essential.

Once the kits are packed I then move on to the next workshop, prepare for that one and so it continues.....

Recent publication Special Edition 'Just Cross Stitch Halloween'  
On sale now!



Happy Halloween!

*The area where we live in the north of England has a history of witches, so it seemed appropriate to design a blackwork witch!*

Designing charts nearly a year in advance for Valentine's Day, Easter, Summer and Halloween at different times of the year always seems strange. Christmas in Spring always seems out of kilter and the actual planning and organisation of the charts, co-ordinating with designers and compiling the final publication is time consuming and challenging. Factor in postal strikes, lost designs, damaged packages and all the other elements can prove quite a headache not just for the editor, but for the designer.

I always post using 'Track, Trace and Signed'. To see the progress of the parcels is fascinating and at times worrying. I have had designs held up by volcanic eruptions in Iceland which closed the airspace, fire and floods in Australia, postal strikes, a mugging where the design and my handbag were stolen and an embroidery posted to go to 'Just Cross Stitch' in Indiana which was posted in the UK, travelled to Chicago, forwarded to California, back to Chicago then to the UK, out to Chicago and eventually to Indiana!! With the editor tracking it from the USA and me tracking it from the UK, it finally arrived at its destination just in time for publication.

I have a photograph of the editor holding the missing embroidery saying 'It's arrived'! The Post Office in the UK has a slogan 'Post early for Christmas'. They fail to say which Christmas?



**New designs for August**  
Two very different designs are on the Blackwork Journey website this month.

**CS0011 Cross Stitch Sampler**

**Design area:** 12.36 x 12.36 inches

**Stitches:** 173 x 173

**Fabric Size:** 16 x 16 inches

The pattern contains the full design and a number of needlework accessories which can be made as gifts for a special occasion.

*The sampler was worked in Paintbox Cotton P rle No.12 in three colours of teal – dark, medium and light on Zweigart 28 count evenweave*

I seldom design a cross stitch pattern, but I do have a number of different cross stitch patterns that I use as fillers in other designs frequently so I thought that I would combine my favourite filler patterns in one sampler. There are 25+ patterns and several variations within each pattern that can all be used to create a variety of different projects.

The patterns can be worked on different counted thread fabrics from evenweave to Aida in a variety of threads from Cotton P rle No.12 to stranded and variegated floss. I especially like the DMC Coloris range of threads.

It is a variegated six-strand thread. Each combines four complementary colours so you can create patterns without changing thread. Unlike many variegated threads the colour repeat is over a short distance and the darker colours work especially well for blackwork and cross stitch.



**Blackwork Journey**  
**'Tiny Treasures' Rectangle**  
**E - Book 13**



**Colour**  
**Black & Gold**



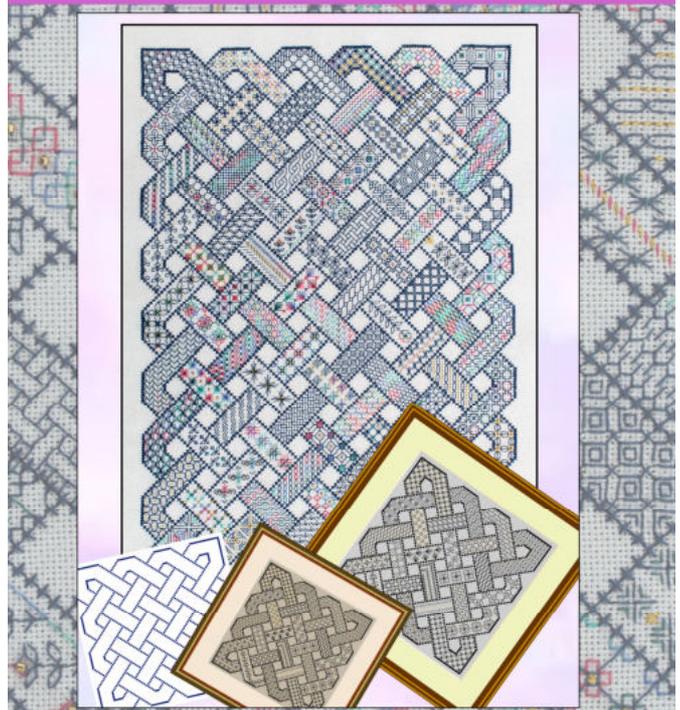
**Blackwork Journey**  
**Tanya's Chessboard**

**E - Book 16**



**Blackwork Journey**  
**Memories**

**E-Book 19**



*Many of the e-books in Blackwork Journey use DMC Coloris threads.*



The second chart for the month is **PR0078**  
**Interlocking Triangles**

These appear in Celtic and Norse mythology. The nine points of the triangle have been associated with the nine worlds of Norse mythology.

The triangles can be interlocked in many different ways. The large design uses red, blue, purple and gold metal thread for the blackwork pattern.

**Fabric:** Zweigart 28 count evenweave, 10 x 10 inches

The second design is a free style embroidery worked on calico using variegated threads and specialist stitches.

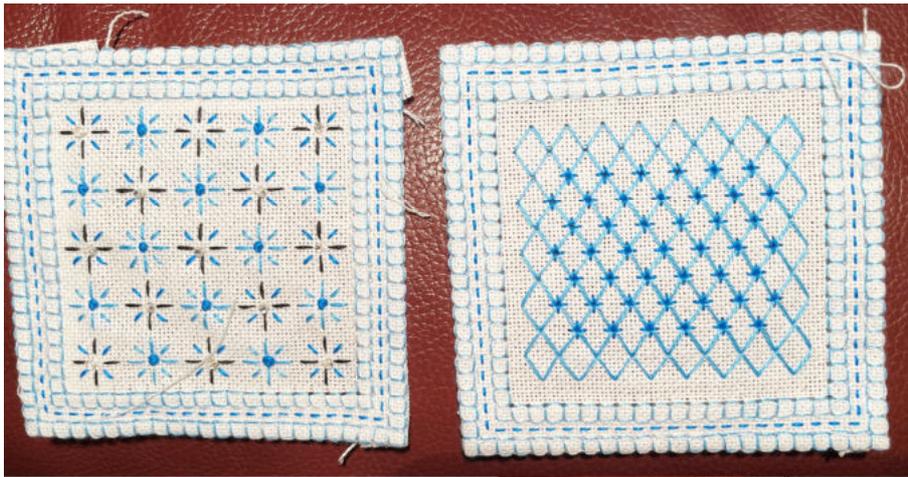
**Fabric:** Pre-washed calico or medium weight cotton, 10 x 10 inches.

Both designs are traced onto the fabric using a water-soluble pen or an HB pencil.

### Quick and Easy - Using fabric scraps

We all accumulate small pieces of fabric which just take up room. Over the next few months until Christmas I am going to use some of these small pieces for quick projects. The first one is a scented sachet using two small squares of evenweave. Aida fabric could also be used.

I have attached a pdf at the end of the Blog with the pattern. Photographs of the work in progress show the different stages. The edging is four-sided stitch which is used to join the pieces together.



**Scented sachet**

Work the embroidery from the chart. Cut and fold the raw edges in.

They are out of shape so damp and pull into shape.

Place together, right sides facing outwards.

**Bead and join at the same time.**  
Pick up the top stitch for each side and slip a bead on the needle.



**Legend:**

☒ [2] DMC-995 ANC-410 DLE- electric blue - dk

**Backstitch Lines:**

— DMC-823 navy blue - dk

— DMC-995 electric blue - dk

— DMC-996 electric blue - md

**French Knots:**

⊗ DMC-995 electric blue - dk

**Beads:**

○ MHG-2022 Mill Hill Glass Beads-Silver

**Design Area:** 3.43 x 3.43 inches

**Stitches:** 48 x 98

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**Quick and easy!** Using three different colours and simple stitches create a card or scented sachet as a gift for someone special! Initials could be added in place of the diamond pattern to personalise your gift.

### Fabric:

Zweigart 14 count Aida or 28 count evenweave, or Zweigart 16 count Aida or 32 count evenweave.

Two pieces: 6 x 6 inches

Threads of choice, or DMC Stranded floss

DMC 310 Black,

DMC 995 Electric blue

DMC 996 Electric blue - medium

DMC white, one skein.

Cotton P rle No 8 can also be used.

Beads: Mill Hill glass beads MHG 2022 Silver, one packet

Tapestry needle No.24 Beading needle, Small ring or frame

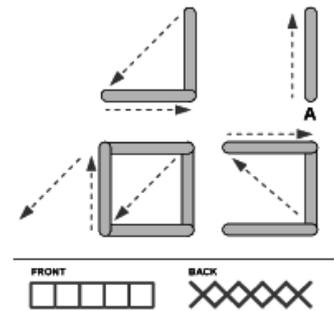
### Stitches used:

Straight stitches - 2 strands

Running stitches - 2 strands

Long stitch diamonds and cross - two strands

*Four-sided stitch*



### Four-sided stitch:

Worked in white or one strand of DMC 996 and one strand of white. This 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- 4. Pull firmly to create the holes.

### Method - Front:

1. Fold the square into quarters to find the centre point. Add the crosses first shown as black on the chart. Fill in the other stitches around the crosses and move outwards until all the central motif is complete.

2. Using two strands of floss, one strand of blue and one strand of white, or two strands of white, work the two four-sided stitch borders. Add the running stitch between the two rows.

3. Add the beads. Place the finished embroidery face down on a soft towel and press lightly.

Back - 1. Fold the square into quarters to find the centre point. Add the diamonds using long stitches. Work the upright crosses over the diamonds as shown on the chart.

2. Using two strands of floss, one strand of blue and one strand of white, or two strands of white work the two four-sided stitch borders. Add the running stitch between the two rows. Place the finished embroidery face down on a soft towel and press lightly.

### Joining:

If the two pieces are to be joined to make a scented sachet the outside row of four-sided stitch should be used. Turn the raw edges inside and tack in place on both pieces. Add a ribbon hanger to one piece. 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 at each stitch. Leave a small opening, insert the lavender sachet and a small amount of wadding. Slip stitch and bead the opening closed.

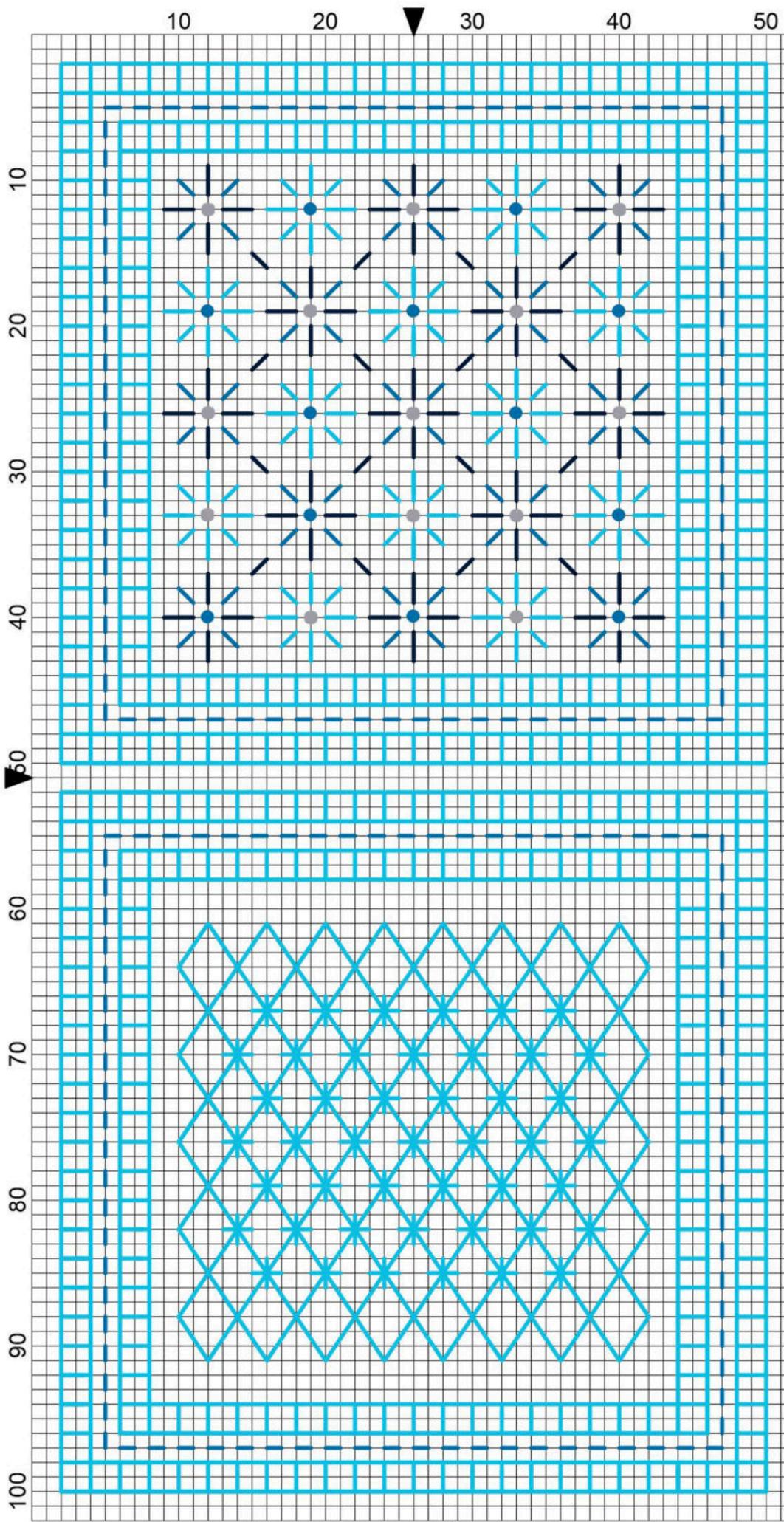
I hope you enjoy this month's Blog.

If you have any queries please contact:

[lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk](mailto:lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk)

Happy stitching,

*Liz*



**Quick and Easy  
Patterns 1 & 2**

**Backstitches:**

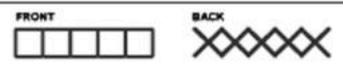
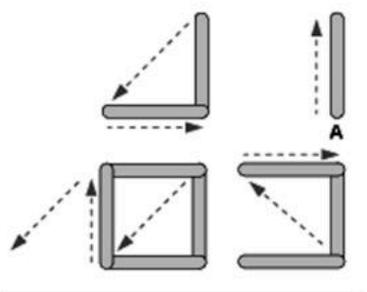
- DMC-823
- DMC-995
- DMC-996

**French Knots:**

- ⊗ DMC-995

**Beads:**

- MHG-2022



**Four-sided stitch**



**Slip stitch - add a bead  
at each stitch**