



Blackwork Journey Blog

December 2016



Christmas gift!



India

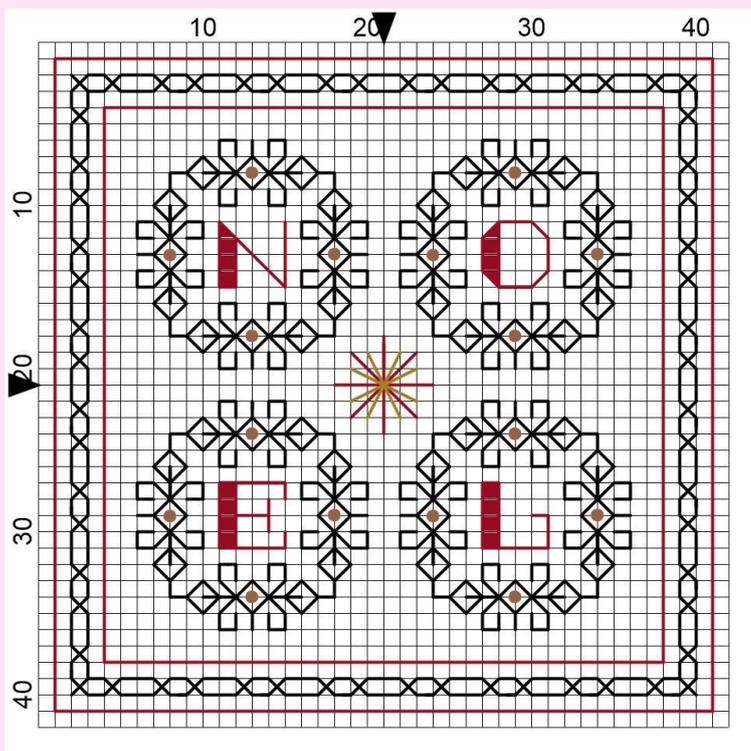
**‘Sublime Stitches’ -
Introduction**

*'You are never too old
to set another goal or to
dream a new dream.'*

C.S.Lewis



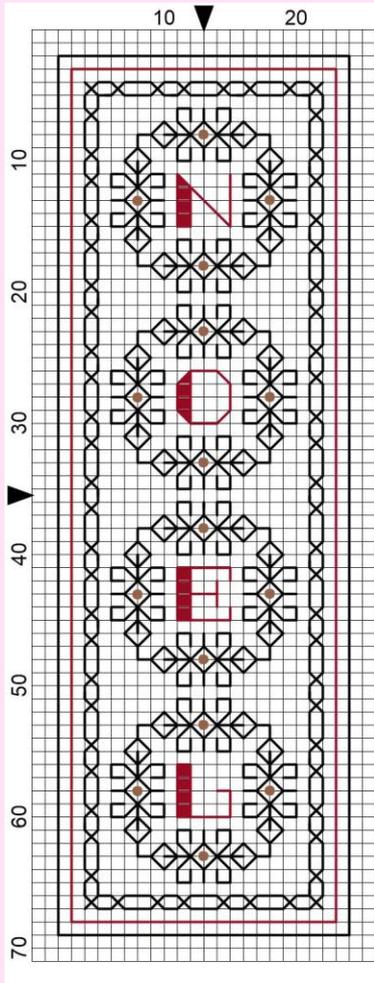
My Christmas gift to you!



December is here once again and thoughts are turning to Christmas and all the preparations still to be made! With family and friends scattered round the world, cards were sent in advance and presents packed long before I would normally even begin to consider it.

I have enjoyed contact I have had with my readers through the Facebook groups and I really appreciate all the news, comments and photographs you have posted, so thank you all and I look forward to working with you in 2017.

Special thanks go to Lori, Banu, John and my husband George for all the help they have given me throughout the year. They have made my work much easier.



E-cards make sending greetings to Australia and the Far East quick and simple and enable me to keep in touch with many readers as well, but there is still time to make a special card or small gift by using the charts below. For a bookworm, create a Christmas bookmark or add initials in place of 'Noel' to personalise the piece.

Christmas Greetings 2016

Square Design

Design Area: 2.86 x 2.86 inches (40 x 40 stitches)

Material: Zweigart 14 count Aida or 28 count evenweave, 6 x 6 inches

Rectangular Design

Design Area: 1.57 x 4.79 inches (22 x 67 stitches)

Material: Zweigart 14 count Aida or 28 count evenweave, 4 x 8 inches

Threads:

DMC 310 Black, one skein

DMC 816 Garnet, one skein

DMC Light Effects E3852 metallic gold, one skein

Mill Hill glass beads 557 gold, one packet

Tapestry Needle No 24

Beading needle

Stitches used:

Back stitch, one strand, Cross stitch, two strands, Half cross stitch, two strands

Use one skein of DMC white and navy fabric to create the white and blue 'Noel'

Legend:

■ [2] DMC-816 ANC-1005 DLE- garnet

Backstitch Lines:

— DMC-310 black

— DLE-E3852 Dark Gold

— DMC-816 garnet

Beads:

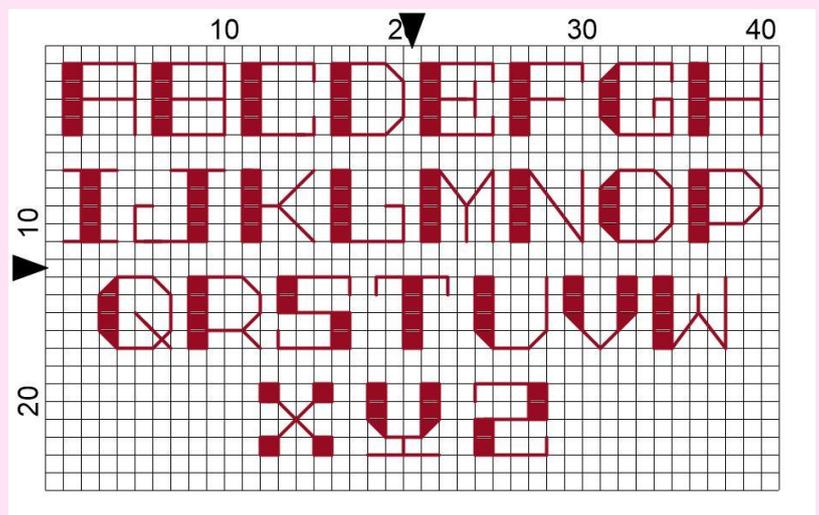
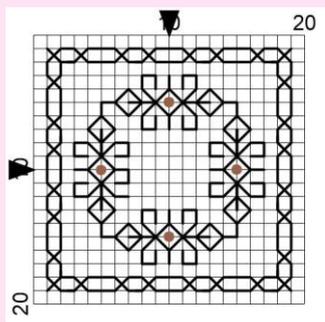
● MHG-557 Mill Hill Glass Beads-Gold

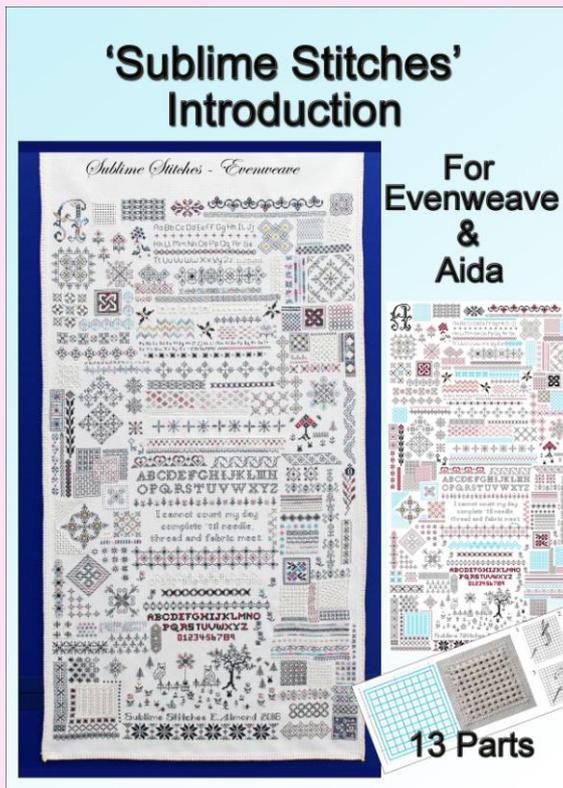
Key or Legend for all designs

Single motif

Design Area: 1.29 x 1.29 inches (18 x 18 stitches)

Join single motifs together and insert letters from the alphabet to create individual names. Back stitch round the cross stitch after the cross stitch has been worked.





FR0129 Introduction 'Sublime Stitches'

The Introduction to 'Sublime Stitches' is included this month in 'Freebies'. If you want to follow the project, read last month's Blog and the 'Introduction' very carefully. Decide whether you want to work the project and which version.

There are two patterns to choose from, one worked on evenweave fabric and one worked on Aida. Whilst they are similar, they are not identical. The evenweave project features pulled thread work patterns.

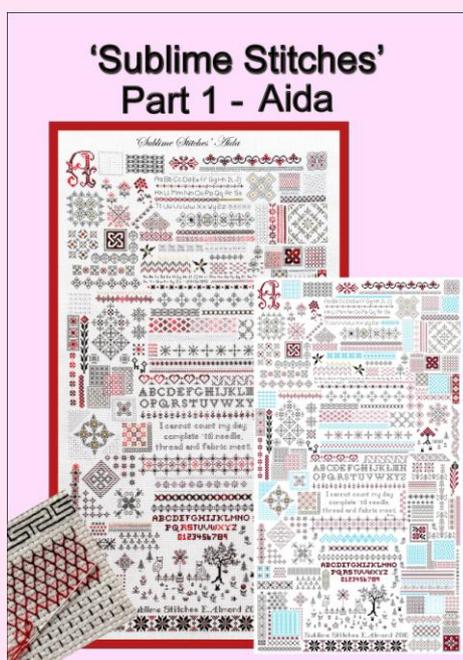
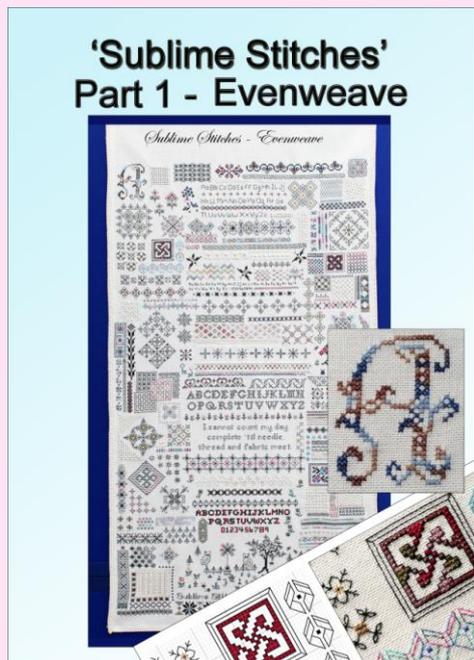
The Aida version has alternative embroidery patterns.. The Aida version can be worked on evenweave fabric but the evenweave project cannot be worked on Aida because of the pulled thread work.

Choose fabric and threads you are comfortable using. If you have any queries, please contact me by e-mail and I will discuss it with you.

FR0129 Introduction

The Facebook group will also be opened on December 1st if you wish to join this closed group. I will be able to add your photographs here and you will be able to share your work with others in the group. If you are new to blackwork this is a good way to gain information about fabrics and colour schemes. Many members will choose to work the designs in their own colours rather than using the ideas I have provided which leads to a lot of variety and interest. Whether you are a beginner or an experienced embroiderer you will find something of interest here.

If you want to use 'Sublime Stitches' as a group project, I would be delighted to work directly with you in the same way as I work with various groups round the world already on the different projects.



In January the first charts will be added to 'Freebies' in Blackwork Journey.

Two new charts will be added every month, one for evenweave and one for Aida.

I received a question from a reader recently which may apply to a number of readers.

I love the idea of 'Sublime Stitches' but I cannot tackle a project as large as this. How can I participate?

'Sublime Stitches' is not for the faint hearted and I know that it is far too large for many people to contemplate, so I have designed a series of small samplers based on the motifs and patterns within the large project. These will be added to 'Charts' in Blackwork Journey on a regular basis so that you can still participate if you wish to do so. These charts are complete projects and are suitable for framing or making into cushions etc. The first chart will be added in January and can be worked on either evenweave or Aida.

'Sublime Stitches' Mini Sampler 1



Design Area: 9.71" x 9.71" (136 x 136 stitches)
WITH BORDER

Design Area: 8.14 x 8.21 (114 x 115 stitches) NO
BORDER

I am busy stitching this design at the moment, so you will be able to examine the actual embroidery. Colours can be changed easily to suit your colour scheme and the design can be worked on either evenweave or Aida.

The electric blue is actually a very pale dove grey which does not show up on the chart, but works well on the fabric for pulled thread work or as an embroidery stitch.

As with the full size design, stitch instructions and photographs are included at every stage.

This is based on Page 1 of 'Sublime Stitches' but is a complete design in its own right. Each chart will have a different border so you will be able to build up a library of borders and stitches in the same way as you did with 'Save the Stitches' 'Pandora's Box' and 'Box of Delights'.

Borders and corners on 'Sublime Stitches' and associated samplers

Questions have been arriving daily about the forthcoming project. I am always delighted to answer them, no matter how small.

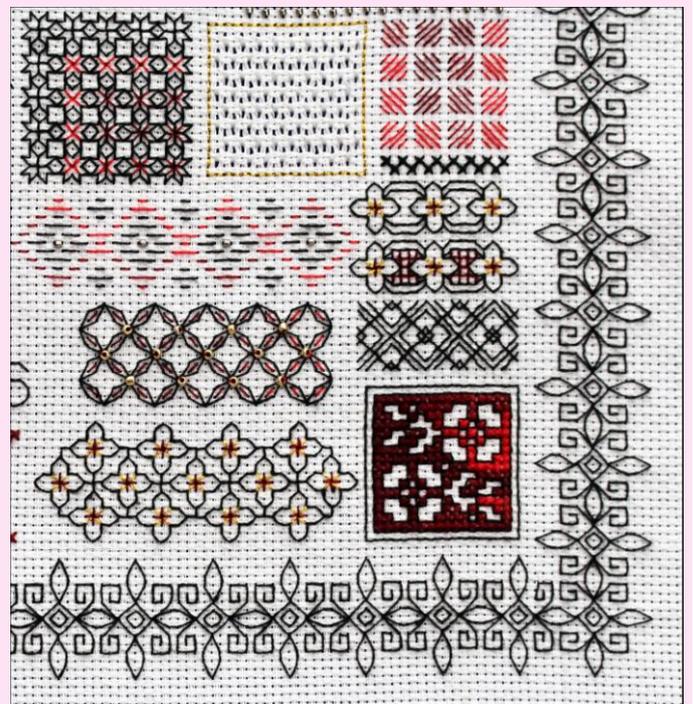
A question was posted about adding borders to 'Sublime Stitches'. I have worked in two different ways to finish the designs. Since they will both be wall hangings for taking to classes and overseas the embroideries



needed to be as light as possible. I added a four-sided stitch pulled thread border on the evenweave project. This has the advantage of strengthening and neatening the edge. I used ecru Cotton Pêrle No.12 for this. It will then be backed with a cream cotton with an opening at the top to slide a rod through for hanging.

The border added interest to the design without dominating and I was pleased with the overall effect.

Lugana 25 with a four-sided stitch border. The four-sided stitch was worked in a Cotton Pêrle No 12



The border I chose to add to the Aida version of 'Sublime Stitches' serves a different purpose. I wanted to 'frame' the embroidery with a deep, but simple blackwork border.

Additional material had been allowed for borders to be added if you so choose. They can be very simple or more complicated and they are optional, but I think it has pulled the Aida pattern together and added the finishing touch.

The edges will be turned under just beyond the embroidery and a lining and opening attached. Aida is a much stiffer fabric than the evenweave so a fine cotton lining will be appropriate.

'Sublime Stitches' Aida border and corner

The border was worked in one strand of DMC 310 which is the base colour used throughout the design to link all the different patterns.

It is not until you see pictures of the actual embroideries that you realise just how vibrant the patterns are. Whilst charts provide the stitch details it is the stitching and choice of threads that brings the embroidery to life and reveals the beauty and simplicity of blackwork.



The Aida version of 'Sublime Stitches' on the left has the border round the whole design. Compare it with the chart on the right which has no border and make your own decision as to whether to add one or not. It does not have to be as large or as complicated, but it does create a different effect. Allow an extra skein of floss if you choose to add a border.

Far flung lands and the Internet

How important the internet is to me was bought home very forcefully in November when we went to Southern India for three weeks. Trying to keep up with the Facebook groups and Blackwork Journey was very difficult when you are in a tea plantation half way up a mountain!



However, India is a very beautiful country and a great source of inspiration which I hope to feed into the site over the next year. From Mysore with its markets to cruising on the backwaters of Alleppey, to the Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary and the mysteries of the tea plantations, my senses were overwhelmed by this amazing country and it will take time to go through the photographs and commit the many craft ideas to paper.

Blackwork Journey Blog, December 2016

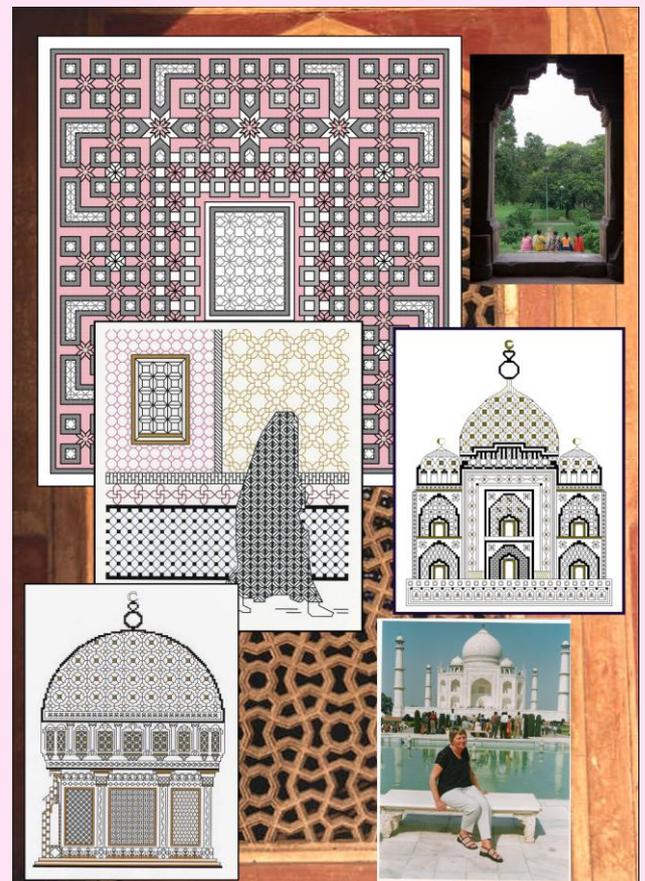
Like Japan, crafts of many kinds can be viewed everywhere as part of everyday life and the vibrant colours and the punghant tastes and smells will remain with me for a long time. Whilst I have spent time in Delhi and the surrounding area and visited Agra and the Taj Mahal, India is a country of great contrasts with warm and friendly people. Many embroideries already on the Blackwork Journey site resulted from my previous visit there so I look forward to presenting some new ideas in 2017.



Knowing what to look for in future embroideries comes with practice. Small details can make more impact than a mass of decoration however beautiful!

Stonework, Taj Mahal, Agra

CH0021 Jaipur Jali, CH0047 Delhi Mosque, CH0061 Mughal Mausoleum and CH0081 Woman in Colour are some the designs inspired by my previous visit to India.



Henna patterns are found in many countries of the world and I did have a small design on my hand which took several weeks to fade!

CH0298 Henna Hand CH0301 Trust are worked on medium weight cotton with embroidery stitches as free style embroideries.



Take a fresh look!

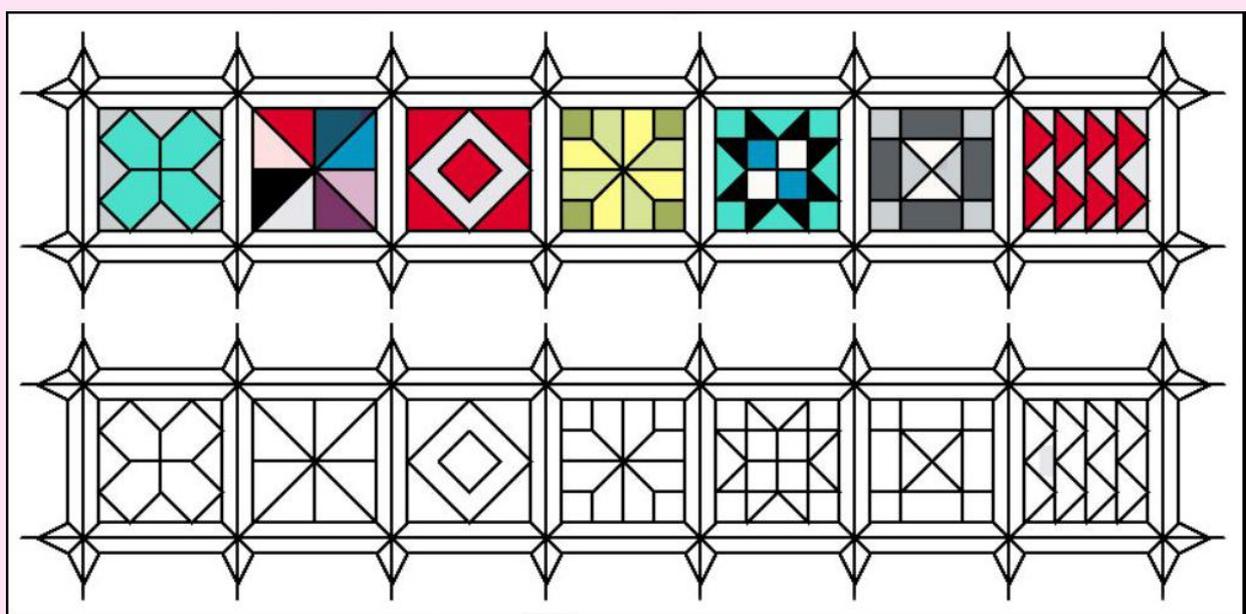
Over the past few weeks I have been looking back through some of the earlier charts and updating them. One such chart is CH0150 Quiltastic.

Many of my readers are also quilters and the idea of creating an embroidery using quilting motifs was interesting. The original design had more potential so I updated it and added several different variations which could be used in a number of ways.

Working the framework without the fillers was a simple and attractive alternative but it could also be used as a border for table linen. Motifs could be joined to create a series of new designs.

*CH0150 Quiltastic,
developed and extended*

With or without the fillers the blocks make attractive shapes.



Rachel's Story

Christmas is not always an easy time of the year for many readers, but I would like to share Rachel's story with you.



Rachel has been working on 'Pandora's Box' and posting regular updates to the Facebook group. Her husband Bill a keen golfer, was really intrigued with her design and very proud of her work, so much so that he was happy to take down one of his much loved golfing pictures in order to display 'Pandora's Box'.

However, I received an e-mail from Rachel earlier in the year to tell me that sadly and unexpectedly, Bill had died. She shared her news with my Facebook group who rallied round and supported her. The needlework was put away until she felt she could face it, knowing that Bill was not there to see it. However, she picked up her needle again and like for so many of us, it became a support and a challenge. I graphed out Bill's name and date and Rachel added it to her design as a memorial to Bill. She

shared her picture with us and is taking small, but positive steps towards the future.

I am so proud of her and of the many readers who face the world with courage and fortitude. For many their craft skills are much more than just a hobby, they are a support, a passion, a contact with other likeminded people and the benefits are positive and long lasting. I feel proud and humbled to be involved in your lives and your embroidery, so thank you for all the pleasure that you have brought to me during 2016.

*May I wish you all a peaceful,
joyful time wherever you are in the
world.*

Happy stitching!

Liz

