

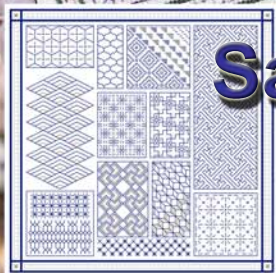
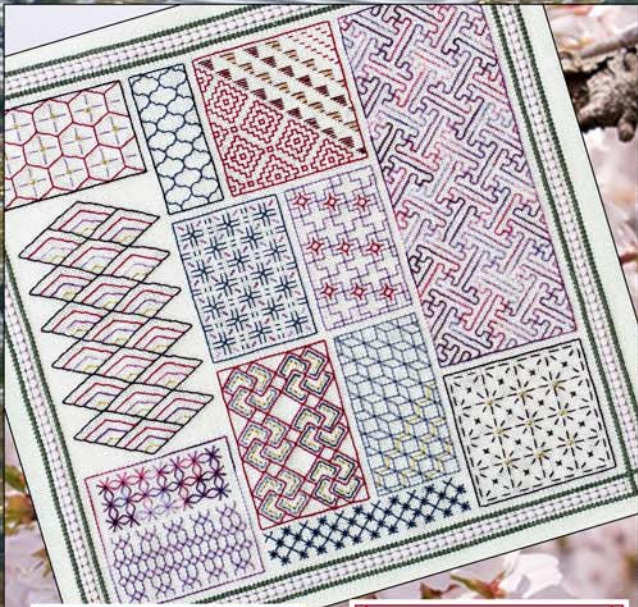


Blackwork Journey Blog

July 2021



A dress fit for a King!



Sashiko into Embroidery

July – the height of Summer!



July marks a turning point in the calendar for me as I start to consider seasonal patterns and so far I have designed and stitched patterns for Christmas and Easter 2022 for some publications and a calendar.

Christmas comes early in magazine land and I find it quite strange to be designing Christmas and Easter embroideries for the following year in May/June. However, I know lots of people like to start their Christmas designs early.

'Triangle Tree' will be featured in the August 2021 issue of 'Just CrossStitch'.

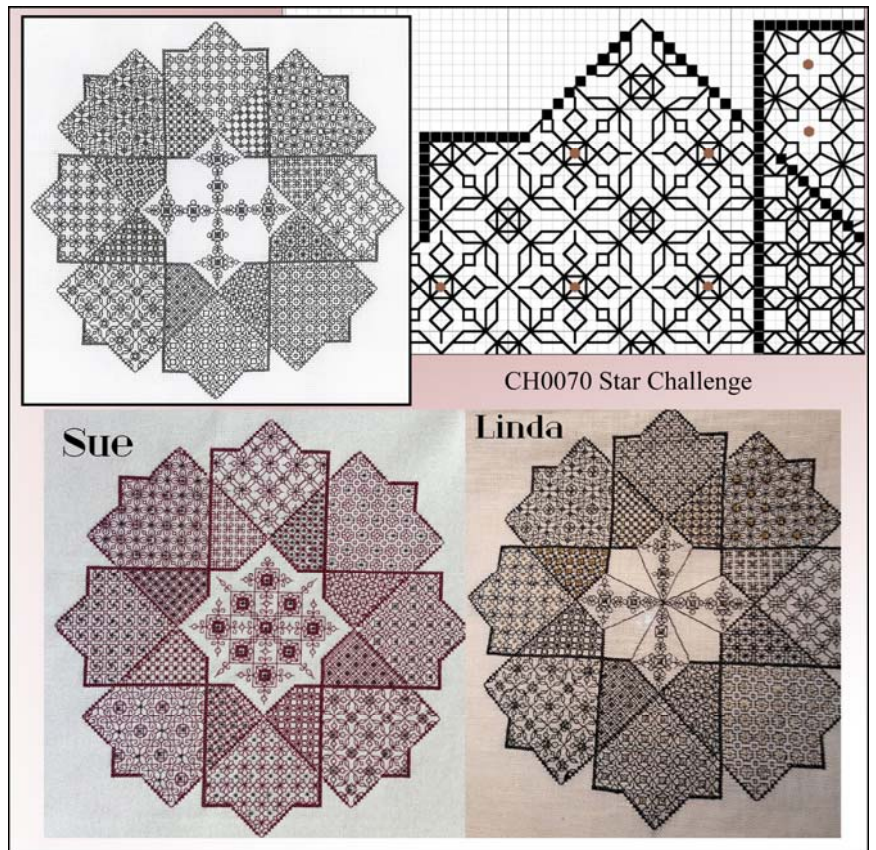
I have been designing a number of patterns based on triangles for the website using different techniques. It is one of the basic shapes in geometry and can be adapted and used in so many ways from patchwork to pulled thread stitching. A number of triangle designs will be added to the Blackwork Journey website in the coming months.

'Triangle Tree' is a counted thread embroidery, so what does that mean?

Counted thread embroidery is any embroidery in which the fabric threads are counted by the embroiderer before inserting the needle into the fabric. Evenweave fabric is usually used as it produces a symmetrical image as both warp and weft fabric threads are evenly spaced.

Among the counted-thread embroidery techniques are:

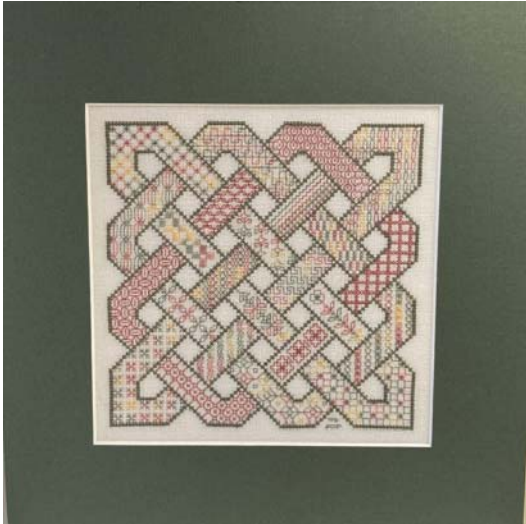
- Assisi
- Bargello, or Florentine work
- Blackwork
- Canvas work
- Cross-stitch
- Hardanger
- Needlepoint
- Drawn thread work
- Pulled thread work



Embroideries by Sue and Linda

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It makes life easier for the needlewoman if she has a definite framework to count and I often use cross stitch to create frames which can then be filled with different patterns. For example, Sue and Linda have both completed their 'Star Challenge'. The framework was worked first in cross stitch in two strands of floss and then the blackwork 'diaper' or filler patterns were added using one strand of floss.



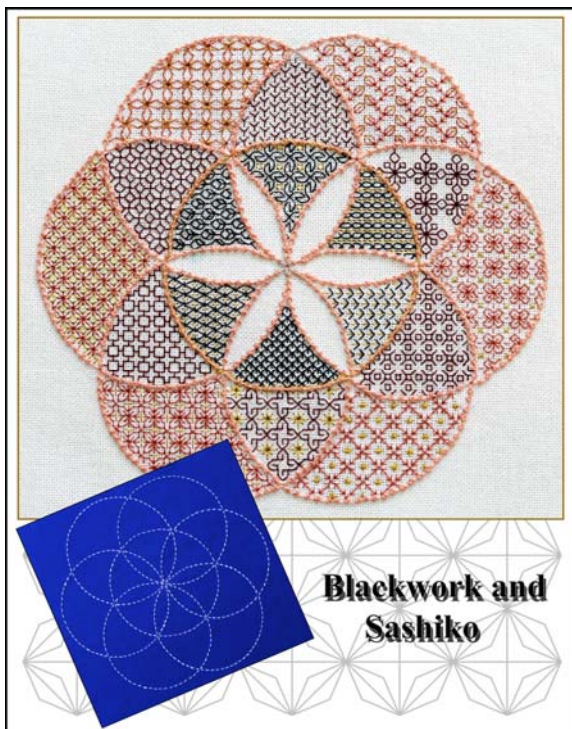
Cross stitches are easy to count, but a back stitch frame is less easy. Cross stitches also add weight to the pattern and define the areas to be stitched.

Maureen has worked the smaller design from EB0019 'Memories' using a cross stitch frame and inserting the filler patterns



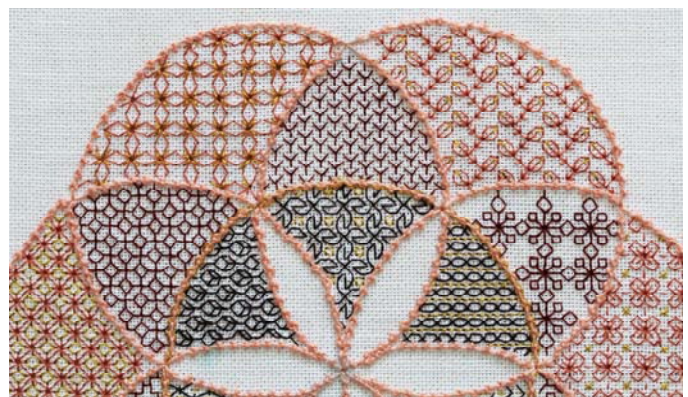
If you are new to counted thread embroidery choose a pattern with a clearly defined outline. Adding the filler patterns is then very simple.

CH0193 Recital combines cross stitch, back stitch and eyelets to create an interlocking design which is easy to count because all the stitches are counted from the chart. The colours can be changed to create a different effect.



If the design is **free style** the pattern is drawn onto the fabric first for example CH0400 Interlocking Circles.

Work the outline in whichever stitch is recommended and then add the filler patterns. Start each filler pattern in the centre of the block and work outwards towards the edges adding compensating stitches where necessary near the edge.



CH0400 'Interlocking Circles' is a free style design



Quiet corner to relax and stitch:

The last 18 months have been very painful for everyone. Difficult circumstances, not seeing family and friends has been distressing and lonely for many which is why it is so important that you take the time to look after your own physical and mental wellbeing.

Create a quiet corner somewhere where you can be comfortable. A good light, cosy blanket or throw, coffee and music or an audio book, then just relax and stitch!

I find that stitching by hand helps me focus. I use the time to think about the day, plan my next projects and just wind down. The pressures drain away and I sleep better at night. This is my time and my space even if it is only 30 minutes or so.

There are many studies that show it helps to promote relaxation, relieve anxiety and in some cases reduce blood pressure. The terms 'mindfulness and slow stitching' have been used many times throughout the pandemic to encourage people to slow down, perhaps meditate and think about what

they are doing rather than the demands of the world around us. There are courses on the internet that you can follow, but if you already stitch on a regular basis you will be aware of the many benefits it can bring.

My stitching goes everywhere with me and when I can, I take it out and do a little bit more. Five minutes here and there and the piece grows very quickly. You don't need to spend a lot of money on materials and equipment to create blackwork embroidery and at the end of the process you will have something to enjoy or give as a gift and in the process, you will have helped your own wellbeing.

New projects for July:

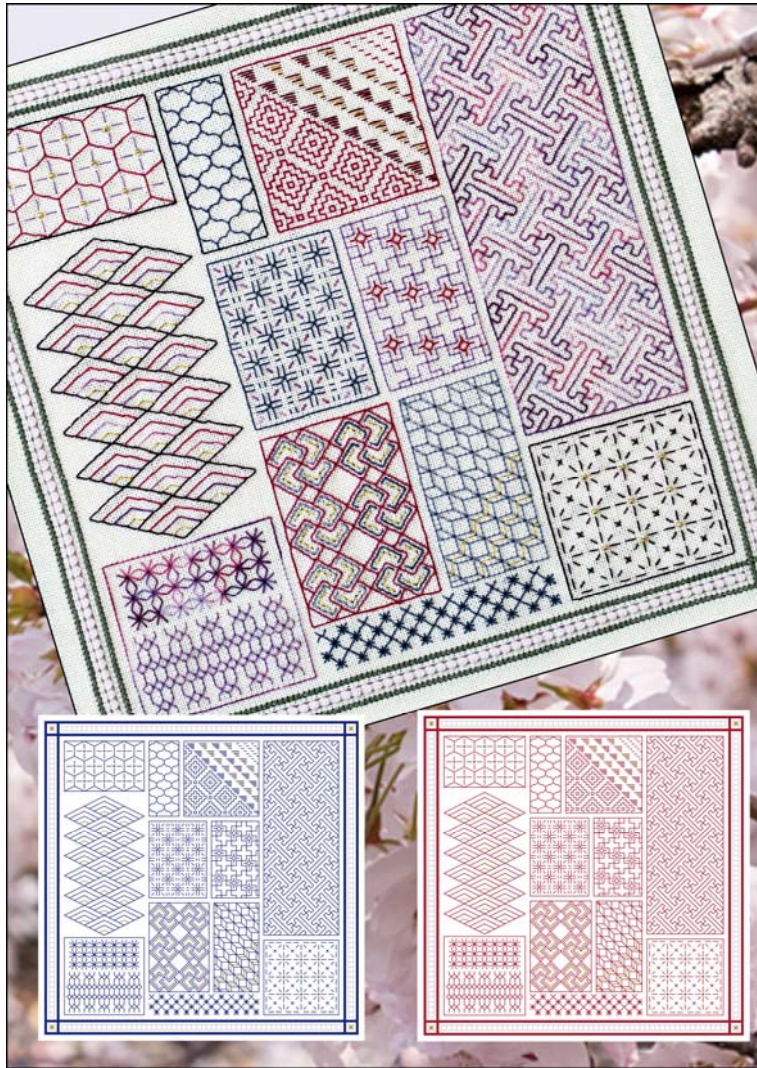
It was during one of these quiet sessions when my mind was wandering that I came up with the idea for a series of four designs taking blackwork embroidery in a different direction. I have really enjoyed working and designing Japanese Sashiko designs during lockdown so I began to think about taking Sashiko patterns and interpreting them as blackwork designs. Many of the patterns are structured and geometric and lend themselves to counted thread embroidery. Once I started drawing with a ruler and graph paper the ideas began to come together and this month I have included the first two designs.

CH0414 'My Time' – a stitch challenge!

Taking traditional Japanese and Islamic patterns and translating them into blackwork embroidery requires a leap of imagination, but in no way does it undermine the centuries of history and tradition behind the patterns. Stitch this unusual sampler using colours of your choice on evenweave or Aida and take time out to relax and enjoy the rhythm of the needle! Enjoy the beauty of the designs and remember the people who created them!

Design Area: 9.00 x 9.00 inches, 126 x 126 stitches

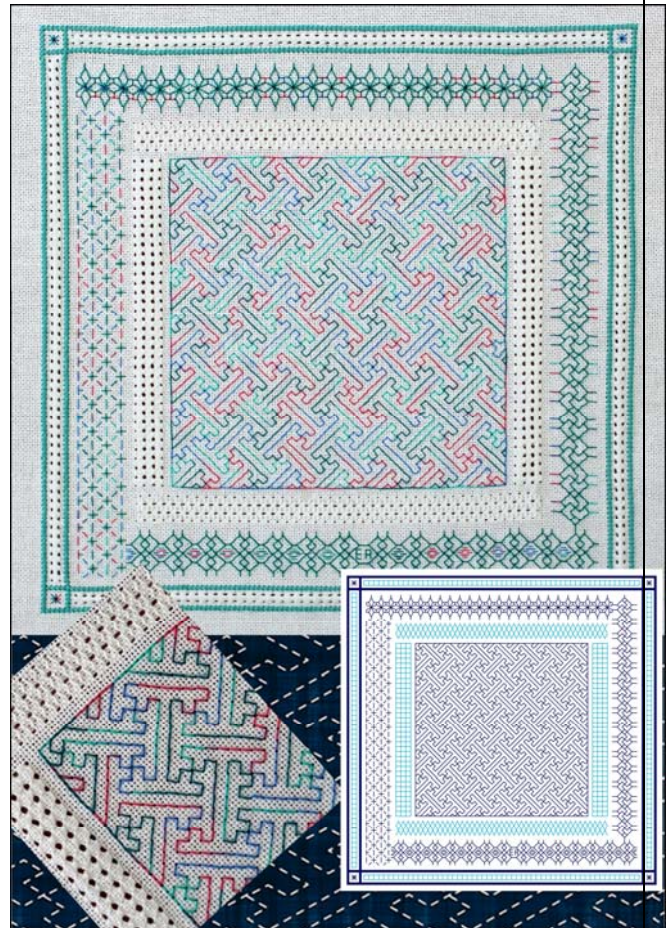
Material: Zweigart 28 count evenweave or 14 count Aida, 12 x 12 inches minimum



CH0414 My Time – a stitch challenge!



Paint-Box Threads Cotton Pêrle No 12 Floss



CH0415 'Sayagata'

'Sayagata' was a joy to create and stitch. It is based on the Japanese Sashiko pattern called Sayagata which was named after a brocade weave introduced into Japan from China (1392–1568). I wanted to translate this angled design into blackwork embroidery. By drawing and charting the design on graph paper first the pattern was then translated onto evenweave fabric. It can be stitched on Aida, but there are a few split stitches so use a sharp needle to split the blocks

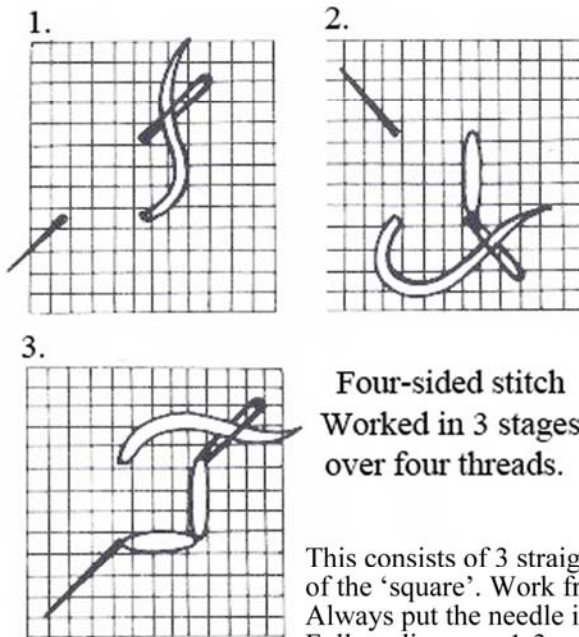
Design Area: 9.00 x 9.00 inches. 126 x 126 stitches.

Materials: Zweigart 28 count evenweave or 14 count Aida, 12 x 12 inches minimum.

Four-sided stitch worked in Cotton Pêrle No.12 or 2 strands of white floss is used on both charts.

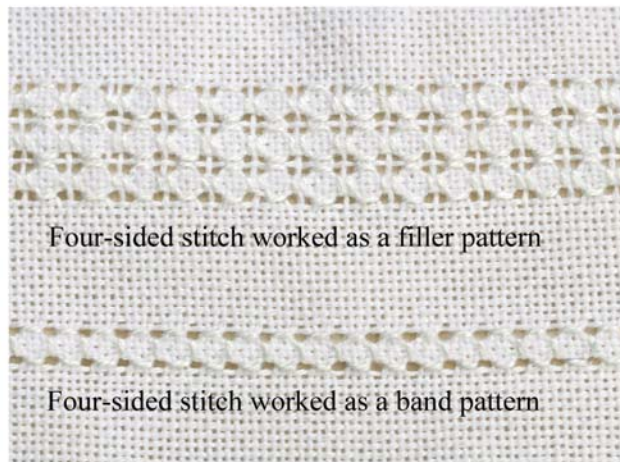
Four-sided Stitch

One of the stitches I use frequently for borders and filler patterns is four-sided stitch.



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 1-3.

If the stitch is used to fill a large area turn the work at the end of each row. Pull each stitch medium tight to create a small hole. This depends on the fabric being used.



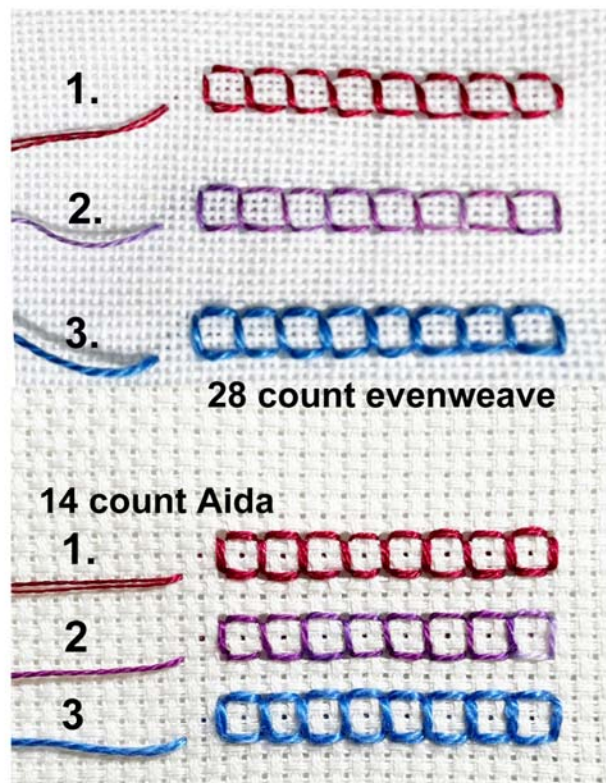
Whilst this stitch is a pulled thread work stitch it can still be worked on Aida fabric but the stitch is not 'pulled'.

Several types of threads can be used to create four-sided stitch but they have a different appearance.

1. DMC floss - 2 strands. This works well on both evenweave and Aida and can be 'pulled' to create a fine band of stitching.

2. Cotton Perle No.12 - this works well on both evenweave and Aida.

3. Cotton Perle No. 8 - this has a much thicker appearance with a slight sheen. It does not 'pull' easily on evenweave or Aida.



If the stitch has been worked correctly there will be a line of cross stitches on the back.

Preserving the Past - "A Dress Fit for a King"

I visited Berrington Hall, Leominster, Herefordshire, England recently and made an unusual discovery which I think you will enjoy.




Just to set the scene - Berrington Hall is a country house located about 3 miles (5 km) north of Leominster, Herefordshire, England. During the 20th century it was the seat of the Cawley family. It is a neoclassical country house building that Henry Holland designed in 1778-81 for Thomas Harley. It has a rather austere exterior, but the interiors are subtle and delicate.

Berrington had been in the possession of the Cornwall family since 1386, but was sold in 1775 to Thomas Harley, a banker and government contractor, who had been Lord Mayor of London in 1767. He commissioned the rebuilding of the present Berrington Hall in 1778-1781 in place of the previous old house. He made it available to his daughter Ann and her new husband George Rodney, the son of Admiral Rodney. After Harley's death the house descended in the Rodney family for 95 years.

In 1901 the Manchester businessman Frederick Cawley MP, later Baron Cawley, purchased the estate from George Brydges Harley Dennett Rodney, 7th Baron Rodney. In 1957 the 3rd Lord Cawley transferred it to the UK Treasury, which passed it on to the National Trust. Lady Cawley was allowed to remain in occupation until her death in 1978

The person we are interested in is Anne and her husband George Rodney and it starts with a rather special dress. In 2016 at Christies Auction House in London a deconstructed formal court gown with full history came up for sale and purchased by the National Trust. The original listing can be found:

<https://www.christies.com/lotfinder/Lot/a-deconstructed-court-mantua-formal-gown-mid-18th-6014859-details.aspx> along with a photo of the deconstructed dress. The aim of the purchase was to conserve and reconstruct the dress.



PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE LATE SIR JASPER & LADY MORE, LINLEY HALL, SHROPSHIRE

A DECONSTRUCTED COURT MANTUA (FORMAL GOWN)

MID-18TH CENTURY, THE SILK PROBABLY LYON

Price realised	Estimate
GBP 6,250	GBP 7,000 - GBP 10,000

Closed: 14 Sep 2016

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Auction description:

A DECONSTRUCTED COURT MANTUA (FORMAL GOWN) MID-18TH CENTURY, THE SILK PROBABLY LYON

In white cannelé brocade woven with a gilt meander and flowers, with double sleeve ruffles, one sleeve, petticoat and three fragments, elements lacking, including one sleeve, the bodice lacking some skirt panels. The long single panel: 38 in. (97 cm.) long; width selvedge to selvedge: 19 ½ in. (49.5 cm.) wide

Provenance

Almost certainly, Anne Harley (daughter of Edward Bangham MP), wife of The Hon. Thomas Harley, (1730-1804) Lord Mayor of London and by descent to their daughter, Anne Harley (d. 1840), wife of George, 3rd Lord Rodney of Berrington Hall, Herefordshire, by descent at Berrington Hall, Herefordshire until the contents were sold in 1901 and probably purchased by Lady Norah More (d. 1948) (*née* Browne – daughter of the 5th Marquess of Sligo) of Linley Hall, Shropshire and by descent at Linley hall to the present owner.

View condition report

This dress, was almost certainly made for Anne Harley, wife of The Hon. Thomas Harley (MP for London and then Herefordshire) and may well have been worn by her whilst her husband served as Lord Mayor of London 1767-8. The Harley family were resident at Berrington Hall, Herefordshire, which was completed to the designs of Henry Holland in 1778-81 and it is likely that the dress remained there until the estate was sold in the early twentieth-century. The dress was probably acquired at that time by Lady Norah More who was an inveterate collector, purchasing much from sales in the vicinity of her husband's family home, Linley Hall, Shropshire. The dress, now deconstructed, which has remained in the More family collection at Linley Hall, is accompanied by a hand-written note in Lady Norah's hand identifying it as '...worn by Hon: Mrs Harley.../when Lady Mayoress.

The upstairs of Berrington Hall is being used to display the exhibition "A Dress Fit for a King" showcasing the Court Mantua dress designed and worn by Anne Bangham, wife of the original owner of Berrington Thomas Harley around the 1760's.



This exquisite dress was made of the finest silk, with gold thread, superbly tailored but in pieces. Now for the first time you can see the dress, find out about the woman who wore it, and what has been revealed through conservation.



In March 1754, Anne married Thomas Harley, 4th son of the 3rd Earl of Oxford. In their marriage settlement, Edward Bangham agreed to give his daughter £4,000. This was paid directly to Thomas to *'increase and enlarge his Capital in his way of Trade as a merchant'*. This would be about £550,000 today which was a considerable sum.

No known portrait of Anne survives but, in reconstructing her dress, we are able to unfold the life of a daughter, a wife and a mother.



After their marriage, Thomas and Anne set up home in Aldersgate, in the City of London. In his book 'English Society in the Eighteenth Century' the historian Roy Porter listed what was expected of a wife of the period:

- To obey her husband
- To produce heirs
- To run a household, including the supervision of domestic servants, overseeing accounts and arranging entertainments
- To be lady-like, 'an ambassadress of grace', dressing well, cultivating taste in decoration and furnishings and practising the arts of sewing and drawing.

Anne bore Thomas 8 children, 6 girls and 2 boys:

Henrietta born 1755

Martha born 1757

Thomas born 1758

Anne born 1759

Sarah born 1760

Edward born 1762

Elizabeth Born 1763

Margaret born 1765

...sadly both boys died before they reached the age of 6.

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Women's clothing styles retained the emphasis on a narrow, inverted conical torso, achieved with boned stays, above full skirts. Hoop skirts continued to be worn, reaching their largest size in the 1750's and were sometimes replaced by side-hoops, also called 'false hips', or panniers. Court dress had little or no physical comfort with restriction of movement. Full size hoops skirts prevented sitting and reminded those wearing them to stand in the presence of the King. Stays forced a proper standing posture. Garments like these could not be washed very often because of the fabrics from which they were made. Anne's dress fitted into this category.



This modern replica of a mantua shows clearly how the dress panels were constructed. Underneath she would have worn complex undergarments

The underwear was determined by the shape of the dress with its large panniers. Panniers worn in the 17th and 18th centuries extended the width of the skirts at the side while leaving the front and back relatively flat. This provided a panel where woven patterns, elaborate decorations and rich embroidery could be displayed and appreciated.

Anne would have spent a considerable time in her bedroom completing her morning routine. This would vary whether she was in London or at Berrington Hall. As well as the lengthy process of dressing, she might also have her breakfast on a tray, have visits from the dressmaker and wigmaker, write her letters and her diary and entertain friends all the while completing her dressing, hair and makeup. Anne would change her clothes several times a day assisted by her maid.



Underdress or petticoat and boned stays firmly laced did not allow for comfort!



When Ann wore her court mantua she would not have worn knickers as they were not invented until the 1760's. She would use a 'bourdaloue' shaped like a gravy boat as a toilet and hand it to the maid.

The maid was a valued member of the household and was often given her lady's old clothes

So what went underneath Anne's dresses?

Chemise and stockings

Stays

Pockets

Petticoats

Hip pad, Panniers

Hooped petticoat

Fichu - is a large, square kerchief worn by women to fill in the low neckline of a bodice.

Stomacher - is a decorated triangular panel that fills in the front opening of a woman's gown or bodice. The stomacher may be boned,



as part of a corset, or may cover the triangular front of a corset. Gown petticoat and finally the Gown. The assistance of a maid would be essential!

After Anne was dressed she would then attend to her hair which like her attire was complicated.

To read about 18th Century hairstyles follow the link below for a fascinating insight:

<https://justhistoryposts.com/2017/09/11/historical-fashion-georgian-womens-hairstyles/>



The laundry at Berrington Hall – all mod cons!

Gaining an insight into Anne's life has been fascinating and I hope you have enjoyed reading about it. When we consider how we dress today and the advantages of modern fabrics, washing machines, tumble dryers, steam irons etc. spare a thought for the servants and laundry maids who worked tirelessly to serve their employers in spartan conditions.

Personalising a garment - white denim waistcoat with Japanese sashiko and embroidery

Last month, I posted some pictures of a blue denim waistcoat which I had embroidered with traditional Sashiko patterns. I found a similar garment in white denim and decorated the back with Sashiko and embroidery to add my own touches.

The band pattern on the back is Hiragumi manji tsunagi. I drew a full size pattern on graph paper and traced the design onto the denim using a water soluble pen. The yoke is a popular pattern called Asanoha hemp leaf design. An interlocking pattern was added to the front and the yoke.



Embroidery is an endless source of inspiration, challenges and pleasure and I hope you have enjoyed this month's Blog.

Remember, if you have any queries please contact: lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk

Happy stitching, *Liz*