

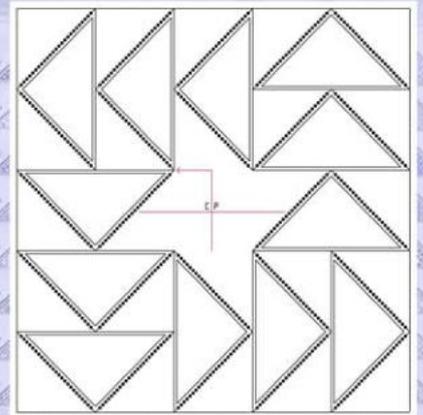


# *Blackwork Journey Blog*

March 2024



## Flying Geese Part 1



6 Part free project  
based on  
EB0029 Triangle Trail



New project to explore!  
Flying Geese

### March and the arrival of Spring!

After a really wet and miserable February, the first signs of Spring are here in the north west of England. The daffodils and snowdrops are in full bloom and the leaves on the lime trees are in bud. The owls are investigating the owl box and we are beginning to clear the garden of debris from the trees. My embroidery talks and day schools are full and preparing for these dominates much of my time. However, teaching in different parts of the country does give me the chance to explore new areas and visit museums and art galleries that I would not normally see.

Teaching in Derby recently gave me the opportunity to visit 'The Museum of Making' which is a museum of local industry and history. The museum is located on the former site of Lombe's Mill, a historic silk mill which marks the southern end of the Derwent Valley and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The silk mill was started between 1717 and 1721 by George Sorocold who built the mill beside the River Derwent to house machines copied from the Italians for "doubling" or twisting silk into thread.



## Blackwork Journey Blog, March 2024

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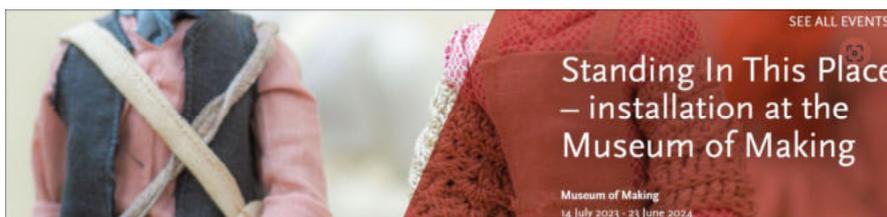
Lombe's Mill houses one of the few remaining narrow fabric looms. This loom was an important element in the textile industry within Derbyshire. Narrow fabrics include any textile made by weaving, knitting or braiding yarns or fibres and must be no more than 300mm (12 inches) in width. Narrow fabrics are still woven today for a variety of sectors including aviation, marine and medicine.



This portrait of a female worker assembling warp threads ready for weaving at English Sewing Cotton in Belper in 1954 was replicated in every weaving mill across the cotton industry!

Life within the mills was hard and sometimes dangerous. From 1721 to the mid-1800s, this silk mill employed around 300 men, women and children. In 1833, they worked Monday to Saturday from 6.15 am to 7.00 pm, with three breaks for breakfast, lunch and tea. In 1834, there were 85 children aged 12 or younger employed there.

This is no ordinary museum. It has been created and built by the people and industries of Derby, with hundreds of local volunteers helping to shape and design the way the museum will work for visitors. It will also tell the story of making in the region to help inspire visitors to unleash their own creativity and start making.



## Blackwork Journey Blog, March 2024

The current exhibition '**Standing In This Place**' is an arts and heritage project co-created by sculptor Rachel Carter in response to the National Lottery Heritage Fund funded project 'Legacy Makers' by Bright Ideas, Nottingham.

This was a fascinating exhibition which seeks to highlight the contributions and connections between white mill workers and black enslaved women uprooted to the Americas, showing how their stories and histories are connected by cotton, sorrow, strength and resilience.



*Small figures were scattered in the cabinets throughout the display*

The costumes on show are a contemporary artistic interpretation of the clothing worn by working class mill workers and women of African descent working in the cotton fields. Two full size figures and 18 small wooden mannequins dressed in the costume of the day were displayed throughout the exhibition. Each design was researched from historical image databases, podcasts, and archive records.



*Am I not a woman and a sister? –  
The art of quiet protest*

A full size statue will be created by Rachel Carter and located in Derby

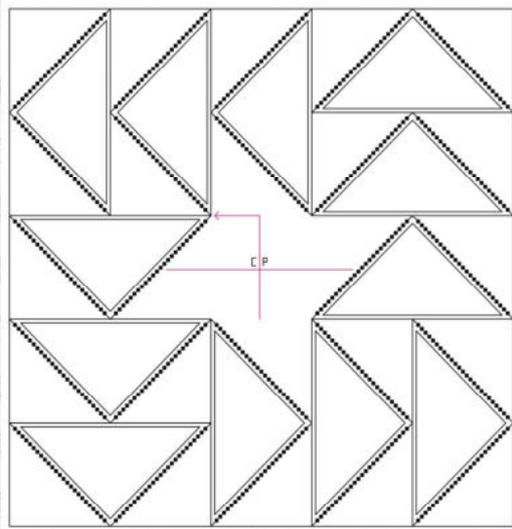
One thing leads to another....

In April I will show how inspiration from the photograph of the female worker assembling warp threads ready for weaving led indirectly to two entries for an exhibition to be held in April at Astley Hall, Chorley, Lancashire, UK

What's new for March?

**FR0192 Flying Geese** A new free 6 part project starting this month. The design is based on the e-book **EB0029 'Triangle Trail'** which was published in February.

## Flying Geese Part 1



6 Part free project  
based on  
EB0029 Triangle Trail

The original idea for the design came from an old quilting pattern called 'Flying Geese' where patchwork triangles were used in different combinations.

The design consists of twelve triangles and a central pattern or an initial. The design can be worked on evenweave or Aida fabric.

Each triangle can be a different colour using threads left over from other projects, or it can be worked in one colour, the choice is yours!

**Design Area:** 9.43 x 9.43 inches

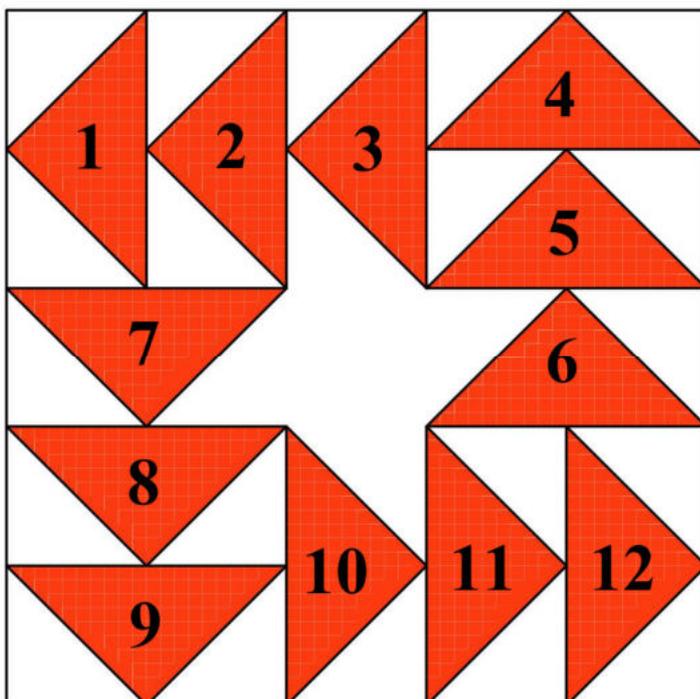
**Stitches:** 139 x 139

**Fabric:** Zweigart 28 count evenweave or 14 count Aida, 14 x 14 inches.

NB. If Aida fabric is used there may be some split blocks.

### Threads:

Framework: Cross stitch 2 strands of floss, two skeins, or Cotton P rle No.12, one ball. The framework needs to be a strong colour.



The filler patterns will be fitted into the cross stitch and back stitch framework.

Rainbow Gallery Petite Treasure braid , or DMC Metallic E3852 dark gold, or an alternative thread may be used to add sparkle and interest. Mill Hill glass beads are optional. MHG 557 Gold, one packet or alternative colour. Tapestry Needle No.24 Small embroidery ring or frame

If you would like to follow this free project Part 1 is in 'Freebies' on the Blackwork Journey website.



**An unusual experience!**

I volunteer at a charity for the homeless called Emmaus. Emmaus Bolton provides a home and meaningful work to up to 22 people with experience of homelessness and their social enterprises generate the revenue which keeps the community self-sustainable.

As part of the enterprise we run a scrap store where people donate fabric, threads, beads, scrapbooking materials etc. Items are made and sold to the public and many individuals and charities come through our doors looking for something special to use in their craft making.

At the end of January, I met an amazing gentleman called Yao Ming Chein and his friend Mike. They came into the store to look for craft items which Yao could use and they went away with fabric, beads etc. A week later Yao and Mike came back, this time with a large suitcase!

What was in the suitcase took my breath away!



*Just one of many items in the suitcase!*

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Inside the suitcase was a collection of giant hand embroidered wall hangings all made by Yao and he thought I would like to see them. They were wonderful and I wanted to share his work with our local textile group and with you.

Yao is a Taiwanese refugee living in Bolton. He has been deaf from birth, but after arriving in the UK in 1993, he learnt English Sign Language, allowing him to communicate with others. An America friend initially introduced him to embroidery at the age of 36 and several years later his passion was reignited.



*More of Yao's work*

## Blackwork Journey Blog, March 2024

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Yao, working from pictures by a window with plenty of natural light; painstakingly transfers his image to canvas, before colouring it in entirely with hand stitches and sometimes tiny beads. One of his most elaborate embroideries – ‘Heavenly Kiss’ – took four dedicated months and a magnifying glass to complete!

He is self-taught and his imagination and skill are exceptional with the ability to take a small design and recreate it on a giant scale, but his smaller pieces are full of texture and detail.



*Ideas for using buttons and beads in a different way!*

## Blackwork Journey Blog, March 2024

He also has a collection of small very detailed embroideries which I really enjoyed. These are just a few of them. Many of the beads and trimmings used came from the Emmaus scrap store. Buttons played a big part in some of Yao's smaller pieces and I am sure if you raid your stash you will find buttons and beads to create something similar. Brooches, necklaces and small cards could also be created easily and would make attractive small gifts.



*The attention to detail within these small 10 x 10 inch pieces was interesting.*

Yao has exhibited in Birmingham, London and now in Bolton. I hope you enjoy his work as much as I did!

Thank you for reading this month's Blog.

If you have any queries please contact me at [lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk](mailto:lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk)

Happy stitching,

*Liz*