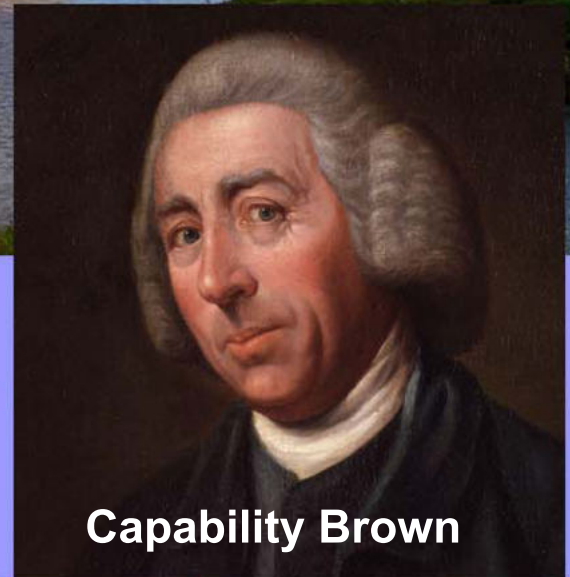




Blackwork Journey Blog

June 2024

Croome Park



Capability Brown



Sarita's Book





“What is one to say about June, the time of perfect young summer, the fulfilment of the promise of the earlier months, and with as yet no sign to remind one that its fresh young beauty will ever fade”

Gertrude Jekyll



Early June and the may blossom is in full bloom, the trees are in leaf and it is a quiet time to enjoy the season before the heat of the summer.

One of the pastimes we really enjoy is exploring stately homes and gardens owned by the National Trust and English Heritage in the UK. Many of the gardens were designed by prominent figures of their day and their impact has lasted long after they have gone. Whether it is the formal gardens of Capability Brown or the vibrant floral herbaceous borders of the Jekyll gardens, they are a source of inspiration for the artist and embroiderer.

Gertrude Jekyll VMH (1843 –1932) was a British horticulturist, garden designer, craftswoman, photographer, writer and artist. She created over four hundred gardens in the United Kingdom, Europe and the United States and wrote over 1,000 articles for magazines such as “Country Life” and William Robinson's “The Garden”. Jekyll has been described as "a premier influence in garden design" by British and American gardening enthusiasts.

Her less formal approach contrasts with my other favourite landscape artist. Capability Brown who lived between 1715 – 1783.

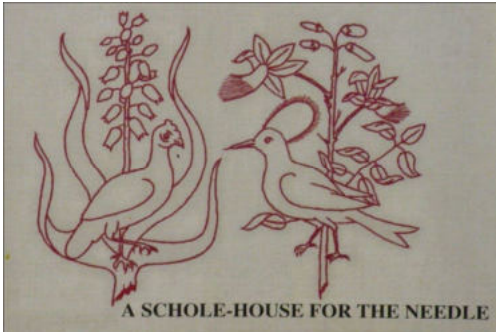


“Capability” Brown redesigned hundreds of parks and gardens throughout Britain and developed the natural looking English landscape style that became renowned throughout the world.

His style came from the three practical principles of comfort, economy and elegance. He designed landscapes on an immense scale, which provided a setting for mansions surrounded by woodlands and parklands dotted with trees and carefully contoured ground. His landscapes also incorporated serpentine shaped lakes and carefully designed architectural features including follies, temples and bridges. His work endures at Belvoir Castle, Croome Court (where he also designed the house), Blenheim Palace, Warwick Castle, Harewood House, Highclere Castle, Appuldurcombe House, Milton Abbey and nearby Milton Abbas

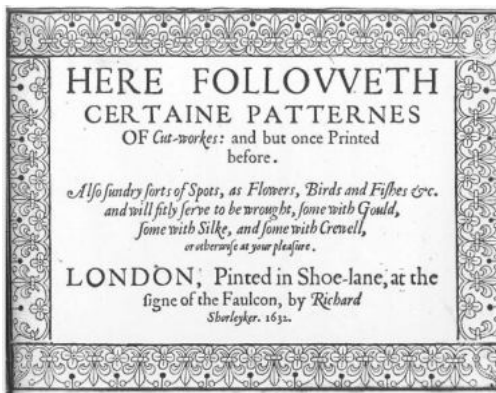
village where we spent many happy holidays with the children when they were growing up and in traces at many other locations.

Talks and Workshops 2024 Talented embroiderers from “Threads Worcester”.



I have been preparing courses and talks on texture in embroidery and have turned frequently to the resources and ideas that garden designers worked with, to create interesting environments and new embroidery subjects to explore.

Last year, I did a workshop for “Threads Worcester” on “Blackwork with a twist” which included several Elizabethan style designs taken from the early pattern book, “Schole-House for the Needle” written by Richard Shorleyker in 1614. I was able to obtain a copy and my intention is to eventually embroider all the drawings in the original pattern book.



I selected one design for the students to explore and drew a simple free-style design traced onto medium weight calico of acorns and leaves from one of the original drawings, embroidered the design and presented the idea to the students.

A Schole-house for the Needle: Produced from the original book printed in 1632 and now in the private collection of John and Elizabeth Mason

Several of the ladies decided to work the design as part of the day and I was delighted to see the finished results when I returned in May this year to work with the group again. Sarita and Carolyne approached the design from different angles and embellished them in different ways, but the finished pieces were both beautiful and practical. The fine seeding was well executed.



“Oak Leaves” by Sarita and Carolyn.

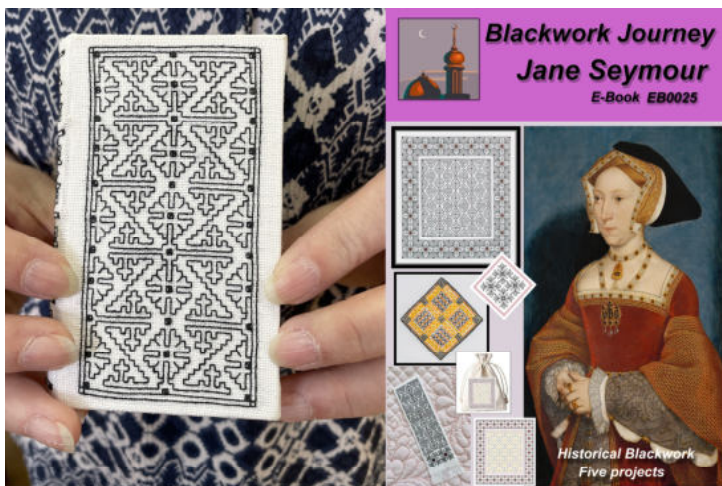


An heirloom for the future - Sarita's Book and exercise in Elizabethan style embroidery based on the cuff from the portrait of Jane Seymour.

Jane Seymour (1508/9–1537) was Henry VIII of England's third wife. Henry married her in 1536, shortly after the execution of Anne Boleyn, and she died the following year, twelve days after giving birth to Henry's son and heir, the future Edward VI. In accordance with his wishes, Henry was buried with Jane at Windsor Castle, the location of Holbein's sketch for this painting.

Jane Seymour (1508/9–1537)

Extracts from this portrait were used to create several different historical embroideries. Details from the blackwork cuffs have been adapted for the students to make a sampler with a modern border and a bookmark. However, I did not expect to see Sarita's embroidered book on returning to Worcester.



Sarita has been studying book binding and took details from my charts and created the most detailed and elegant object.

The embroidery was worked on evenweave fabric using one strand of DMC 310 black floss. The stitches used were back stitch and cross stitch. Once the embroidery had been completed it was carefully mounted with four motifs down the spine of the book.

The edges of the pages were gilded and a diamond pattern pressed into the surface to complete the book.

The next stage will be to make a box to contain the book and protect it from wear.



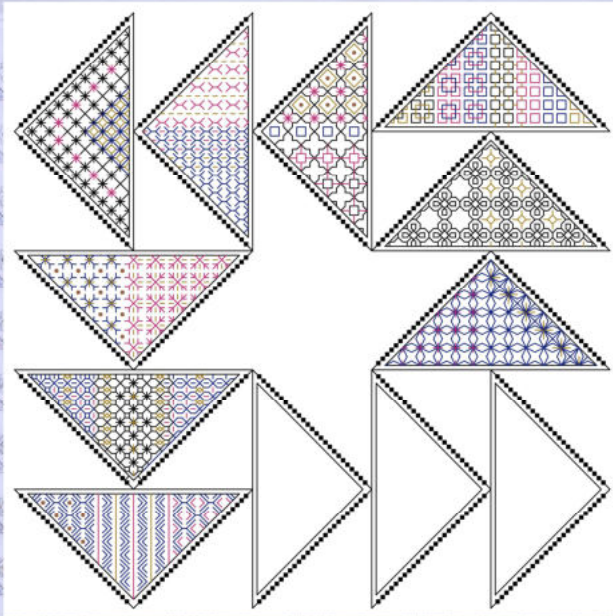


Sarita's Book

Her book is really outstanding and I hope you enjoy her work as much as I did. It is something I will always remember with great pleasure.

Thank you and well done Sarita!

Flying Geese Part 4

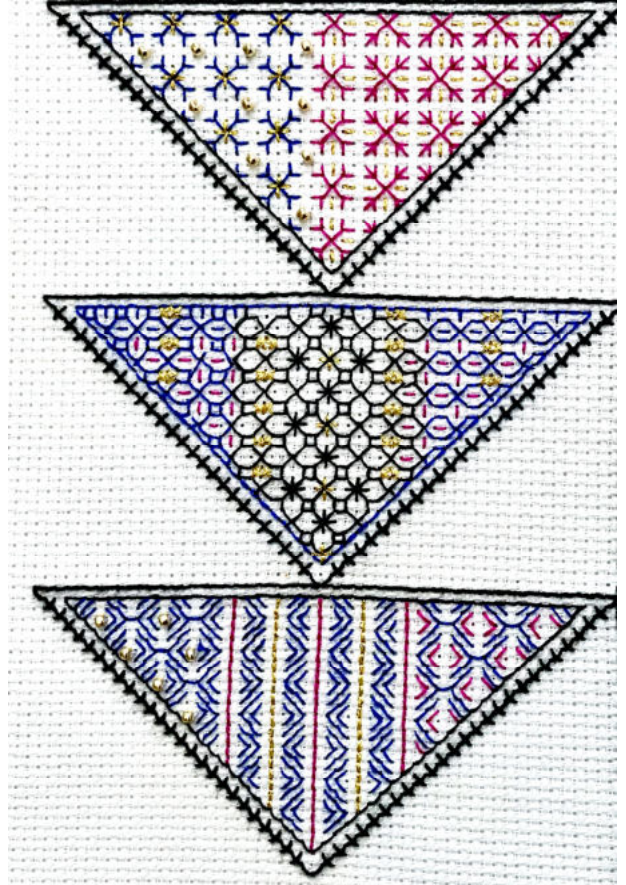


based on
EB0029 Triangle Trail

Part 4 embroidery. The gold metallic thread contrasts with the embroidery floss adding sparkle and texture.

Free Project for readers

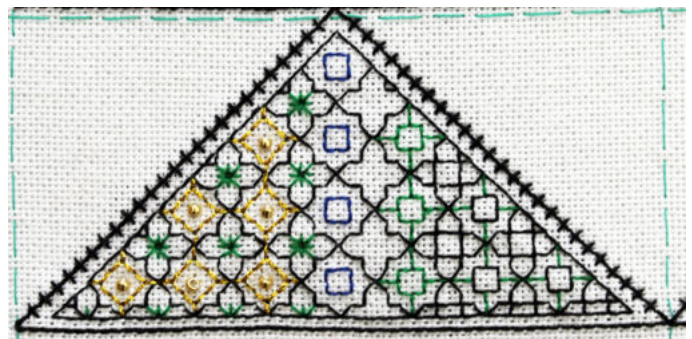
The next instalment of FR0195 Flying Geese has been added to “Freebies” this month with three more triangles.



Blackwork Band Sampler Part 8



The Facebook Sal is also progressing well with 8 parts added so far and many new members have joined “Box of Delights”.

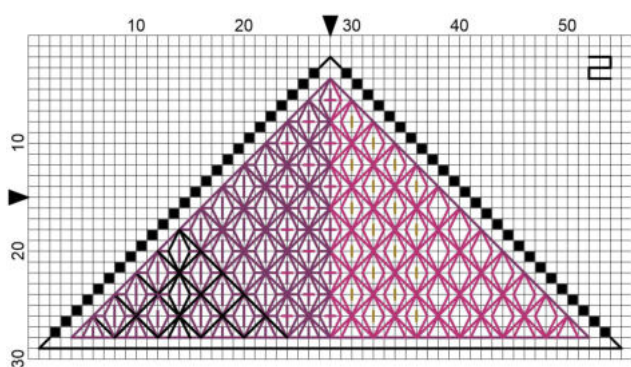


Part 8 Triangle

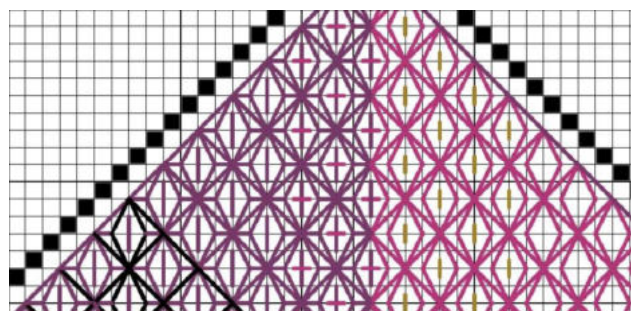


Creating charts for Blackwork Journey – which software do I use?

Free projects allow readers to try new techniques without having to purchase expensive charts and they have a role to play. Designing any chart takes time and much thought as to how best to present the information and to produce charts that are easy to see and understand.



There are some very expensive design programs available, but for a simple, clear programme I use “PC Stitch Pro” as my design software. It is also accepted by the publishers that I work with as one of their standard software programmes.



Whilst I use “PC Stitch Pro” there is a standard version available which offers fewer features but is suitable for the reader who wants to create her own basic designs and there is a detailed list on-line outlining the differences between the two products. Unfortunately, it is not available for Apple products.

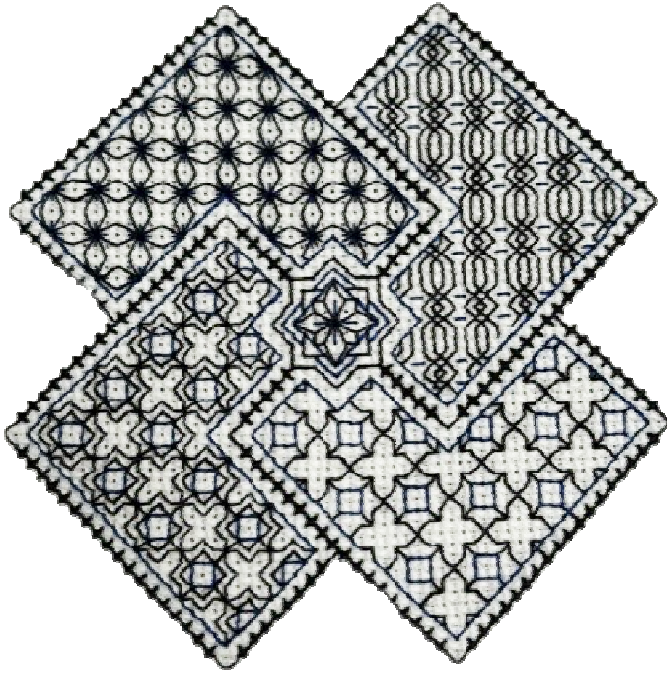
The chart needs to be large enough to read easily and clear enough for complicated details to be followed. By keeping the chart on the computer as well as printing off the relevant sections it is possible to zoom in and take a closer look.

Question from reader regarding EB0002 Save the Stitches

“I am collecting threads and fabric to start this design, but I have a query about the cross-stitch framework which surrounds each block. I do not enjoy doing cross stitch so can I use back stitch instead?”

The reason I use cross stitch to outline many of my designs is because it is easier for the embroiderer to count cross stitches rather than back stitch and there is less likelihood of an error.

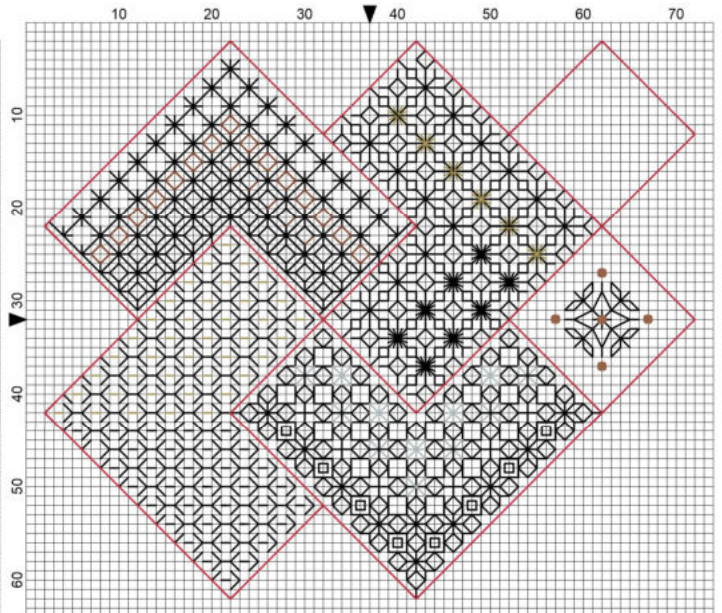
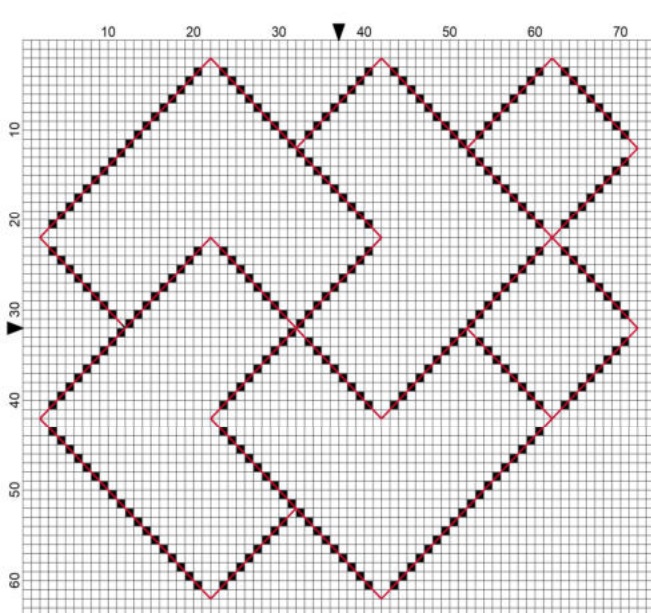
Nicky B e-mailed me a picture of an embroidery she worked with me at a workshop which illustrates the point. The cross stitch is easy to see and the filler patterns fit within the block.



Nicky's block showing the cross-stitch frame

However, it is possible to turn any cross-stitch frame into back stitch by using a ruler and a marker pen and drawing a line through the cross stitch. Work one back stitch in place of one cross, but count carefully and only work one block at a time rather than working the full framework for the design.

Cotton P rle No. 12 can be used for the back stitch frame or two strands of DMC floss. One strand of floss is not heavy enough to create the outline for the filler patterns.



I hope you have enjoyed this month's Blog.

If you have any queries, please contact me at:

lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk

Happy stitching,

Liz