



# Blackwork Journey Blog

June 2025



Canvas Bag with pocket  
Six areas to embroider using  
specialist stitches.



Pocket - Kamon crest in sashiko  
stitching.

Side panels - fly stitch, straight stitch,  
Colonial knots.





### Welcome to Summer!

After one of the driest Springs ever here in the UK, when I have been able to sit in the garden in the sunshine and stitch, the month of June is starting with rain that is desperately needed for the farmers and gardeners.

This is always a busy time for me and this year my talks and workshops have taken me to parts of the country that I would not normally have visited and enabled me to meet new groups. I invariably take a wide range of embroidery with me so that people can see, photograph and handle the items including finished pieces of the projects that they will be working on and discussing in the workshop.

Since needlework shops are often difficult to find in some parts of the UK I provide kits and materials to not only cover the talks and workshops, but special requests that may arise on the day. try to anticipate every request and packing the car with sufficient resources to cover every eventuality. For example, if evenweave or aida fabric is required I pack different fabric counts to cover any members who might have eyesight problems and a few extra items for contingency purposes. This usually works well, but recently I was asked to provide 19 kits and a few extra so I prepared and packed 24, only to find 27 members appeared on the day! Fortunately, I had printed extra copies and was able to put the extra kits together on the day!

### Morocco, an interesting experience!

I have been trying to get to Morocco, North Africa for over 50 years and finally made it in May. Exploring the cities of Marrakech and Fes was a feast for the eyes, the smells and sounds combined with the architecture and the souks was sensory overload.



In Morocco, a 'souk' is essentially a market. It is a place where tradition and daily life intertwine. Every souk in Fes has a unique character and purpose, often named by the products sold within. Here, you will find everything from fresh produce and spices to handcrafted copperware and leather goods, each area offering a distinct insight into Moroccan culture. It can be overwhelming but is also exciting!

*Narrow lanes, crowded stalls, a loaded donkey and Souk Jeld, Fes's Iconic Leather Tannery. Here, leather is dyed using traditional methods, creating vibrant shades of red, blue, yellow and green.*





*Skilled craftsmen and women creating their own unique designs, many for export.*

Midst all the hustle and bustle, skilled artisans could be found selling traditional high quality articles. Whilst they were not always easy to find but seeking them out was well worthwhile!

Inexpensive clothing, jewellery and pottery was everywhere although small specialist units were often found in the back streets and outskirts of the cities. Fabrics and wool, silver inlaid and hand painted pottery are available for viewing and purchase at set prices. Haggling is not usual in these shops unlike the souks where it is the norm.



Two other areas of interest were the creation of mosaics and the weaving. I visited two workshops specialising in these skills. Watching a craftsman cut the fine stone and pottery pieces and another fitting pieces into a metal framework on the wrong side and coating them with adhesive, to seeing the finished article was fascinating!



*Creating decorative mosaics for furniture and buildings is a skilled art!*





Souk Sebbaghine is the Dyers' District. This souk is dedicated to fabric dyes. Vibrant skeins of wool hang above the narrow alleys. The colours range from deep indigos and reds to striking yellows, each crafted using traditional dyes. Local artisans specialise in dyeing textiles for clothing, rugs and decor. Walking through Souk Sebbaghine offers a glimpse into Moroccan textile artistry, with colours that bring the medina to life.

Many of these threads and wools are used by the weavers within the souk and their products are well crafted and vibrant.

Hidden in an alley was the “Atelier De Broderie De Tissage” which is a typical small weaving business. Here large wooden looms are used to produce a variety of woven scarves and shawls.

I also visited the “Ensemble Artisanal” in Marrakech ([Av. Mohammed V, Marrakech 40000](#)) which is a government-run venture comprising of a numerous small shops run by classically trained craftsmen and artisans. These stalls offer a similar selection of handcrafted goods that you find in the Souks, yet the quality of the goods is often of a higher standard and there is no haggling.

Within the souks of Marrakech and Fes I found very little hand embroidery, but I did manage to purchase one small piece of Fessi embroidery.

Fessi embroidery, also known as Tarz al Fassi is a traditional style embroidery from the city of Fes. It is known for its





intricate, geometric and reversible designs. Fessi embroidery is usually large, with tablecloths and napkins often taking months to complete.



In recent years, artisans have begun to create smaller items, such as handkerchiefs, and napkins and this is what I was able to purchase. The napkin was worked on a medium weight linen fabric with a rolled blanket stitch edge. The embroidery was worked in a thick matt thread.

Fessi embroidery uses a double running stitch which creates a unique double-sided design where the embroidery looks the same on both sides of the fabric. This double-sided technique requires the embroiderer to plan the stitch sequence in advance. Fessi embroidery is mostly done in dark blue, green or red on white cotton or linen fabric. Other stitches include back stitch, running stitch and chain stitch and Fessi embroidery designs are typically geometric or floral.

### CH0442 Fes Adventure



I had already decided to embroider a piece of a small piece in the 'style' of Fessi embroidery. I chose to use a Zweigart 14 count Aida fabric and a 12 count Guterman variegated thread. It was easy to count and the stitches were clear. I used the stitch sequence as far as possible to create an authentic design but have great admiration for the women who work these designs freehand and know instinctively where to place the stitch.

If you want to try your own Fessi design, I have included it in 'Charts' on the Blackwork Journey website.

### CH0442 Fes Adventure

**Small project Design Area:** 5.07 x 5.07 inches

**Stitches:** 71 x 71 **Fabric:** Zweigart 28 count evenweave or 14 count Aida, 9 x 9 inches

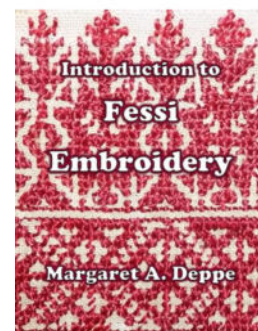
A larger more complicated chart for a cushion has also been included.

**Cushion Design Area:** 10.14 x 10.14 inches

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

Introduction to Fessi Embroidery by Margaret A. Deppe is an excellent book.

[www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)



### Useful gifts at reasonable prices

Personalising your own gifts can be cost effective and very satisfying. For example, simple canvas bags can often be found in craft stores and can be decorated in different techniques or why not buy some pre-washed calico or canvas and make your own? I recently purchased some plain canvas bags in Primark. They each cost £3 to buy and nothing but time to decorate. Could you find something similar in your local store?



**Canvas Bag with pocket**  
Six areas to embroider using specialist stitches.



**Pocket - Kamon crest in sashiko stitching.**

**Side panels - fly stitch, straight stitch, Colonial knots.**





*If there is a larger area, use it to practise specialist stitches!  
The pocket and the centre panel of the bag were ideal for small motifs.*

**Stitches used:** Double knot stitch, Reverse chain stitch – whipped, Fly stitch, Lazy daisy stitch on whipped back stitch stem, colonial knots, straight stitches.

**Thread used:** matt variegated crochet cotton.

**‘Stitch Along’ 2025 Block 5 and 5a Special Stitches** can be found at the end of this Blog.

New photographs of completed blocks are being posted monthly in the Facebook groups and it is interesting to see how many people have added their own touches both in colour and pattern layout. Please keep posting your blocks.

I hope you have enjoyed 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*





## Block 5. Buttonhole stitch variations.

Block 5 is worked in reds and oranges or colours of choice. **Threads:** Two shades of red plus 3 shades of orange and colours from previous sections. Gold thread and gold beads. Tapestry needle No 24.



*Block 5 Numbered.*

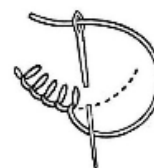


*Block 5 Embroidery*

**Instructions:** Start two rows above the previous block with Row 33.

**Row 33.** Buttonhole stitch whipped over 2 x 1 block. Whip the top edge with another colour.

*Buttonhole stitch*



**Row 34.** Interlocking buttonhole stitch using 2 colours and 2 strands of floss.

**Row 35.** Buttonhole motif band over 1-5 blocks. Add Colonial knots or beads between motifs.

**Row 36.** Up and down over 4 blocks. Embellishment – Colonial knots or beads between each group.

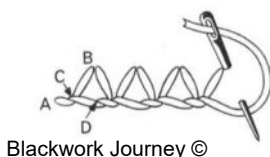
**Row 37.** Buttonhole rings (6 x 6 blocks) and border.

*Buttonhole rings and border*



**Row 38.** Closed buttonhole stitch bands.

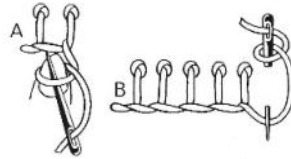
*Closed buttonhole*





**Row 39.** Knotted buttonhole. **Alternative:** Row of buttonhole stitch over 2 blocks. Colonial knot on each stitch.

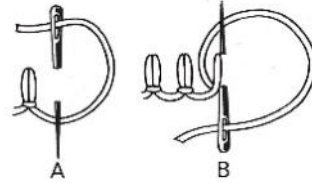
*Knotted buttonhole*



**Row 40.** Buttonhole crossed.

**Row 41.** Up and down buttonhole. Both stitches go into **same** hole.

*Up and down buttonhole*



**Row 42.** Straight stitch fans – just for fun!

<https://rsnstitchbank.org/stitch/buttonhole-stitch>  
Mary Corbet Needle n Thread. [www.needlenthread.com](http://www.needlenthread.com)

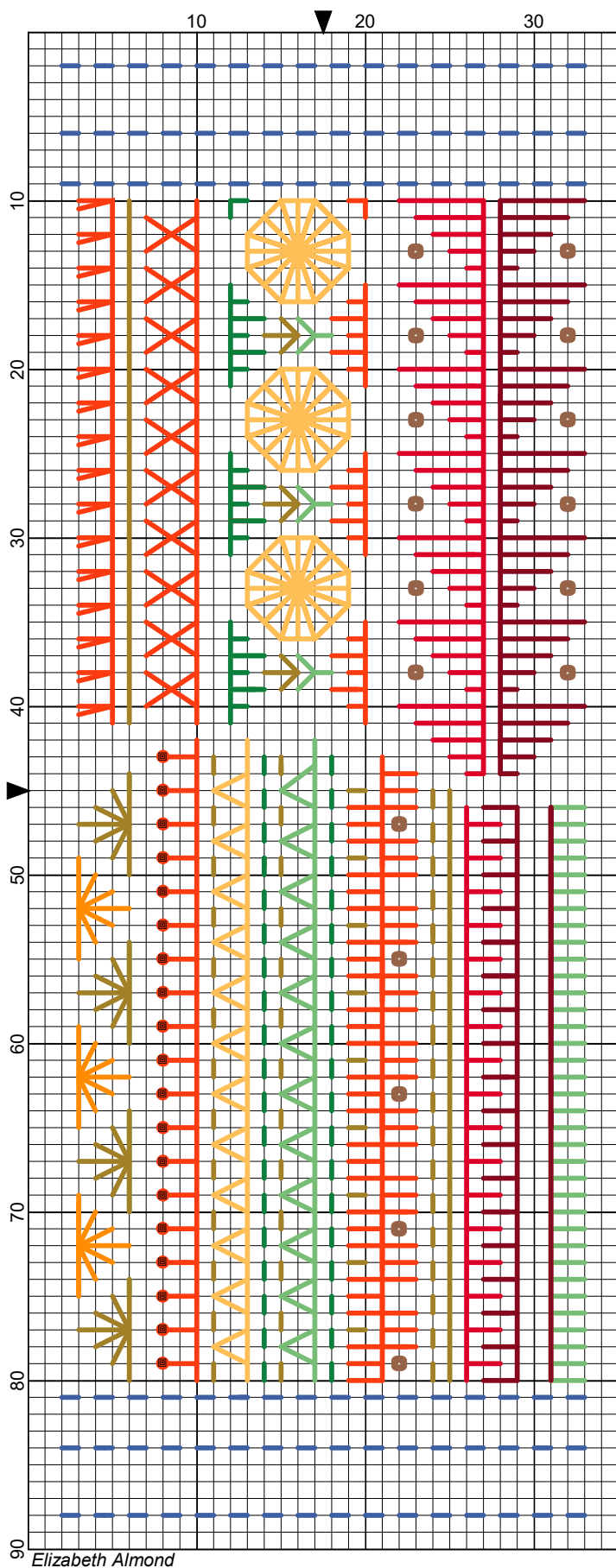
This completes Block 5.



*Block 5a Simple Stitches embroidery*



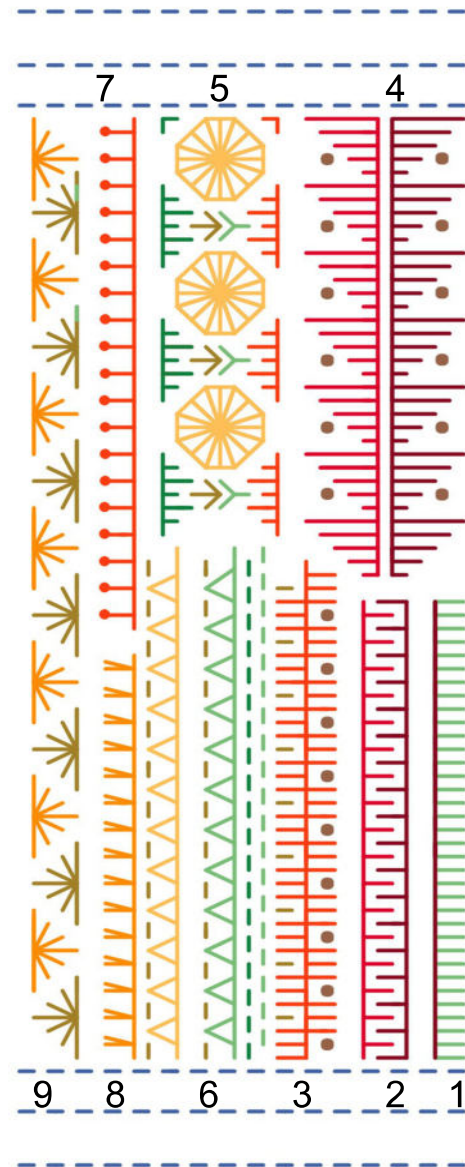
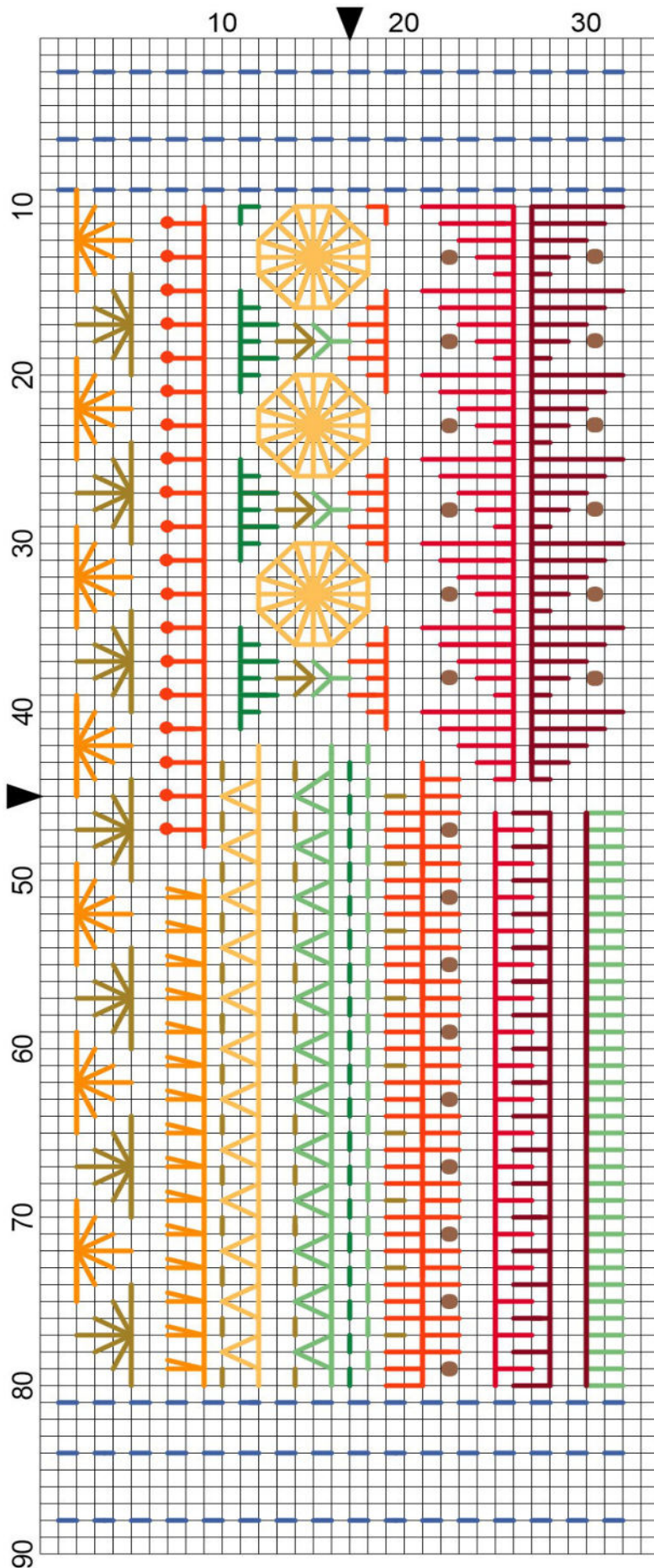
# Block 5 Vertical



Elizabeth Almond



# Block 5a Simple Stitches



## Buttonhole stitch variations

**Row 1.** Buttonhole stitch whipped over 2 x 1 block.

**Row 2.** Interlocking buttonhole stitch.

**Row 3.** Up and down over 4 blocks.

**Row 4.** Buttonhole motif band over 1-5 blocks.

**Row 5.** Buttonhole rings (6 x 6 blocks) and border.

**Row 6.** Closed buttonhole stitch bands and running stitch.

**Row 7.** Knotted buttonhole.

**Row 8.** Up and down buttonhole.

**Row 9.** Straight stitch fans.