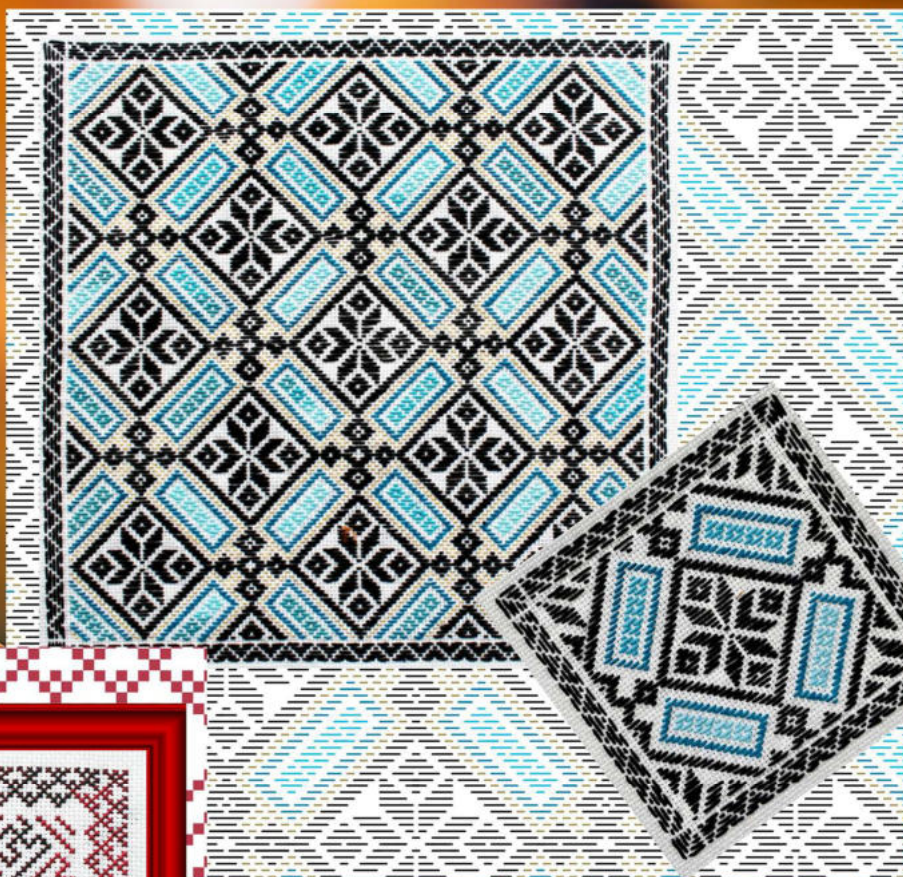




Blackwork Journey Blog

November 2025





November, a time for planning and reflection.

We seldom think of November in terms of beauty or any other especially satisfying tribute. November is simply that interval between colourful October and dark December. Then, nearly every year, come a few November days of clear, crisp weather that make one wonder why November seldom gets its due.

There is the November sky, clean of summer dust, blown clear this day of the urban smog that so often hazes autumn...

There is the touch of November air, chill enough to have a slight tang, like properly aged cider. Not air that caresses, nor yet air that nips. Air that makes one breathe deeply and think of spring water and walk briskly.

Hal Borland, "Bright November Day" November 1970

Whilst I miss the warm, bright days of summer and the final burst of colour from the changing oranges and browns of the autumn.

Making embroidery accessible for readers with eyesight problems.

Deteriorating eyesight is an unpleasant fact for many people and combined with specific eye conditions such as macular degeneration or cataracts, it may be necessary to rethink how you work. Do you need to change your approach or adapt to ensure that you can continue to do what you love. Is there equipment available which will help to make life easier?

Given this, I have been exploring alternative methods of working by changing threads, fabric, needles, or trying different embroidery techniques to find what makes life easier if eyesight is becoming a problem.

For example, I looked at two of my previous Blackwork Journey designs, CH0417 'Sayagata' which was worked in blackwork and pulled thread work on Zweigart 28 count evenweave and PR0069 'Meditation Sashiko' worked as a Sashiko design for a table runner and cushion.

The two Japanese patterns were named after a brocade weave introduced into Japan from China (1392–1568).

Whilst keeping these Sashiko designs, I decided to use a simpler technique for those with eyesight problems as I wanted to see how effective it would be as a cross-stitch design worked in a thicker thread on a 14 count Aida fabric.

Would it be easier to see and count?



CH0417 'Sayagata'

As a result, I have produced a new cross stitch pattern which is inspired by these two designs which is easy to see and count. It is called 'Sayagata Cross' and is shown on Page 3.

PR0069 'Meditation Sashiko'

I chose Zweigart 14 count Aida and a ball of Cotton P rle No. 8 and a large eyed tapestry needle. The design could also be worked on Zweigart 28 count evenweave fabric.



Aida fabric comes in many different shades!



Aida fabric is made from 100% cotton. It is the perfect fabric as you can see the weave in the material and the squares are easier to count than on linen. Antique white is easier on the eyes than bright white to work on. Light threads on darker fabrics work well, but the holes may be harder to see.

The use of good lightening and a magnifying lens is also important for anyone with eyesight problems and more details about these can be found in TQ0001 'Lights and Lenses' in the Techniques section of Blackwork Journey.



CS0012 'Sayagata Cross'

This was the finished design which has been added to 'Cross Stitch' on the Blackwork Journey website.

Measuring 9.36 x 9.36 inches.

Fabric 12 x 12 inches.

Stitches: 131 x 131.

Sayagata main motif and Urokozashi (fish scale) cross-stitch border

It was an interesting piece to create and easy to stitch.

Whilst I do not usually stitch on Aida fabric, I intend to create a series of small cross stitch designs based on traditional Japanese patterns as an alternative to some of the more complex designs worked on evenweave fabric.

More new charts for November

I have also added two more designs for November, one a traditional Kogin design CH0445 'Creative Kogin' and the other is a small blackwork and pulled thread work design called CH0446 'Exquisite Stitches'. 'Creative Kogin' is a modern interpretation of a Japanese Kogin style pattern darning design.

What is Kogin Embroidery?

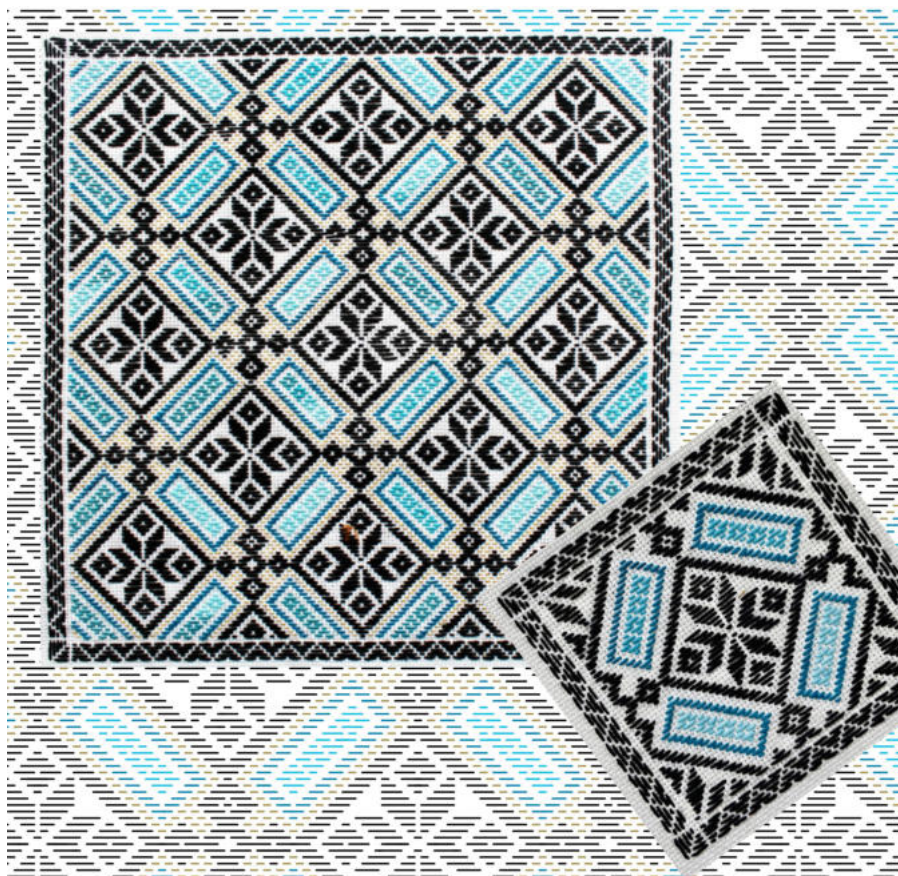
Kogin embroidery is a form of counted pattern darning, which originated in the Aomori Prefecture

of Northern Japan. This area is rural, with snow covered mountains, thick forests, and rice paddies. Protective clothing for the farmers and fishermen was essential, so the fabrics were joined together by stitching and made into clothing for warmth and stability.

The patterns in Kogin embroidery are very intricate and many of the garments were very old and had been patched and re-stitched constantly with thick white cotton threads. Cotton fabric and threads were expensive, so local indigo dyed hemp cloth was used for these garments.

The designs were usually geometric, often diamond shaped and the running stitches which varied in length and worked in rows, along the weft of the fabric. It was worked in the hand without using a frame and with a number of stitches on the needle at any one time, making it faster to stitch.

CH0445 'Creative Kogin'



Large pattern: Design Area: 11.93 x 11.86 inches. Stitches: 167 x 166 stitches.

Fabric: Zweigart 16 count Aida 14 x 14 inches or 18 count Davosa (15 x 15 inches).

Small pattern: Design Area: 5.07 x 4.86 inches Stitches: 71 x 68.

Fabric: Zweigart 16 count Aida 8 x 8 inches.

Threads: Sashiko cotton, cotton P rle No.8 or 3 or 4 strands of DMC stranded floss in colours of choice. Four colours were used for the worked example: DMC floss, 2 skeins of each colour or 1 ball of Cotton P rle No 5 of each colour. DMC Light Effects metallic thread DLE E3821 Light gold or Rainbow Gallery Petite Treasure Braid PB01 Bright gold, one card. The gold metallic thread is optional.

Kogin designs can also be effective if eyesight is a problem because the threads are worked across the fabric from right to left using a thicker thread than usual. For easy counting the design can be worked on either Zweigart 16 count Aida or a 20 count Davosa. The design also works well on 14 count Aida for easy

counting but requires a thicker thread to cover the fabric correctly. Consider using Sashiko threads or a thicker matt crochet cotton or Cotton Pêrle No.8.

A smaller design has also been included if you are new to this technique and want to try a small piece first.

CH0446 'Exquisite Stitches'

For the blackwork addicts I have created a versatile embroidery worked as a whole or sections used to make cards, gift tags, scented sachets for Christmas or a special gift.

There are 16 different motifs surrounded by running stitch and four-sided stitch worked on Zweigart 28 count evenweave.



Design Area: 6.29 x 6.29 inches.

Stitches: 88 x 88.

Fabric: Zweigart 28 count evenweave 10 x 10 inches.

Long term projects - Explore Blackwork Journey E-books.

I have been stitching, designing and teaching for over 50 years and when I look back over the years and consider how I personally have benefitted from teaching embroidery and how many people I have worked with across the world I am very grateful for both the physical and mental benefits I have enjoyed. It has supported me all through my life in ways that I could not have imagined and allowed me to work with and

contact people I would not normally have engaged with. It has taken me to different parts of the world, and I have experienced cultures I would not normally have explored so why I am promoting long term projects?

Never underestimate the long-term benefits of embroidery on your mental and physical well-being. Working on big craft projects offers many health benefits, including reduced stress and anxiety, improving mood, and enhanced cognitive skills like focus, memory, and problem-solving. Once the project has been started the repetitive nature of stitching can calm and sooth as you concentrate on the task in hand leading to relaxation and a sense of achievement and satisfaction. Additionally, needlework improves fine motor skills, keeps hands supple and can provide a positive distraction from negative thoughts.

To sum up, there are numerous positive benefits from having a long-term project to pick up and work on throughout the year. It can be both satisfying and challenging knowing you can pick it up and continue at your own pace. Pick a technique you enjoy or choose something new, learn and explore as you go knowing that at the completion you will have created something special for you.

Heather is a good example!



'Save the Stitches'

Just finished. Really enjoyed doing this piece. Worked on 28ct Jobelyn (China Pearl) with DMC 815 and 740 and gold beads. Started 26 Nov23 and worked in rotation with other projects.

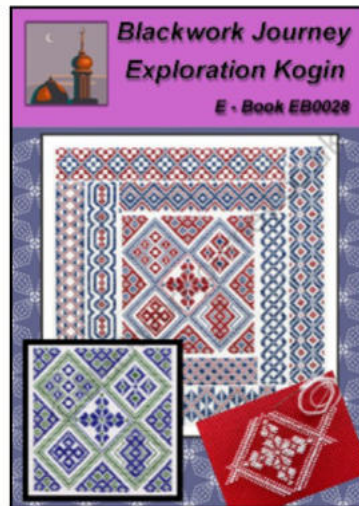
*Heather Marsh
Finished 17th October 2025*

Well done Heather and thank you for sharing your excellent work!

Just a few of the 26 E-books on the Blackwork Journey website covering a wide range of techniques are shown below!



Triangle Trail



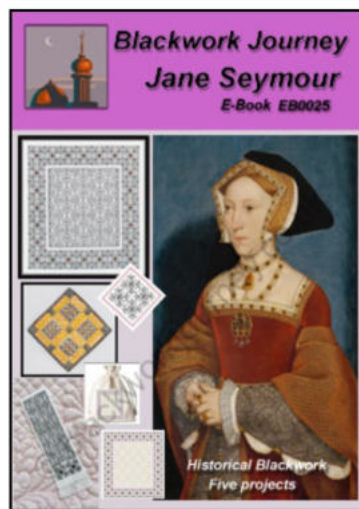
Exploration Kogin



Cool Cream



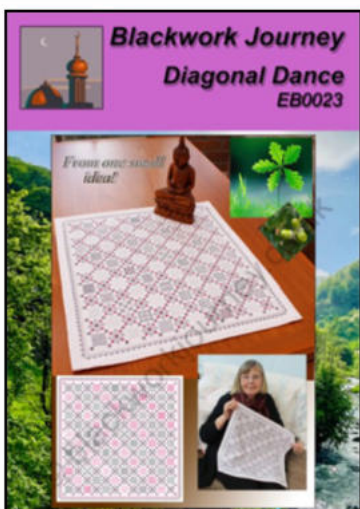
Little Book Of Alphabets



Jane Seymour



Christmas In September



Diagonal Dance



Pick And Mix



Celtic Knotwork

Blackwork Journey Blog, November 2025

The e-books range from blackwork, Islamic designs, pulled thread work, embroidery, Japanese techniques of Kogin and Sashiko to historical projects and more. They take the reader step by step through the projects with explanations, photographs and designs at every stage. Help is always available through my website and e-mail.

‘Stitch Along’ 2025 Block 10 & 10a

The final part of the sampler has been added at the end of the Blog and will also be added to the Facebook groups. This completed the main body of the pattern. If you have made alterations in sizing to the pattern consider carefully whether you will have enough fabric left to mount the piece especially if it being mounted as a wall hanging.

Block 11 (December) consist of two different borders which will be worked round the pattern. The final part (January) will show alternative ways of making up the embroidery.



Block 10 Embroidery



Block 10a Simple Stitches embroidery.

Colour co-ordinated!



One of my ladies made me smile! She loves teal green and I couldn't resist taking a picture of her co-ordinated nails and embroidery.

I hope you have enjoyed this month's Blog. If you have any queries please contact:
lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk

Happy stitching,

Liz

Block 10

Block 10. is worked in blues or colours of choice. **Threads:** Use threads from earlier blocks plus metallic thread and beads.



Block 10 Numbered



Block 10 Embroidery

Instructions:

Start one row above the previous block with **Row 71.** Eyelet and diamond blackwork band.

Row 72. Leaf and cross stitch band using 1 strand of floss.

Row 73. Star stitch band.

Row 74. Florentine stitch band using the colours from Block 1. Florentine (6 strands) over 4 blocks. Grade the blues from dark to light.

This completes the band sampler patterns.

Block 11 will add the border patterns for both samplers.

Block 12. Instructions for making up both samplers, one as a wall hanging and the other as a runner or hanging.

This completes Block 10, and the next stage will be to add the borders to both designs.

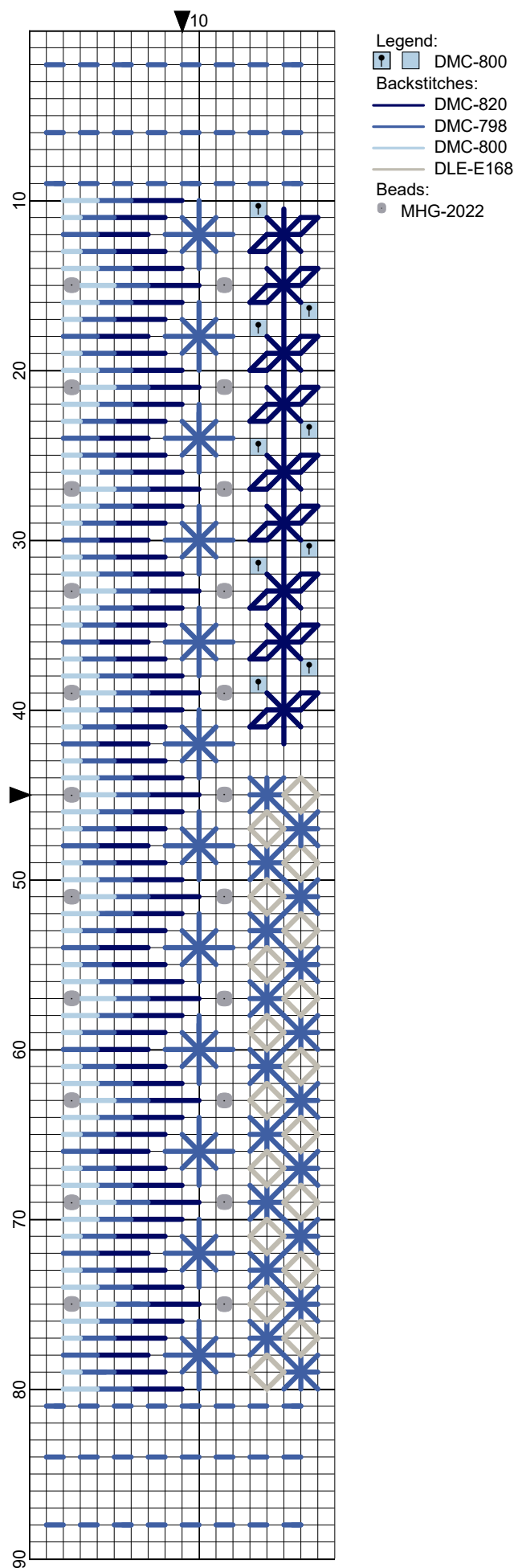


Block 10a Simple Stitches embroidery.

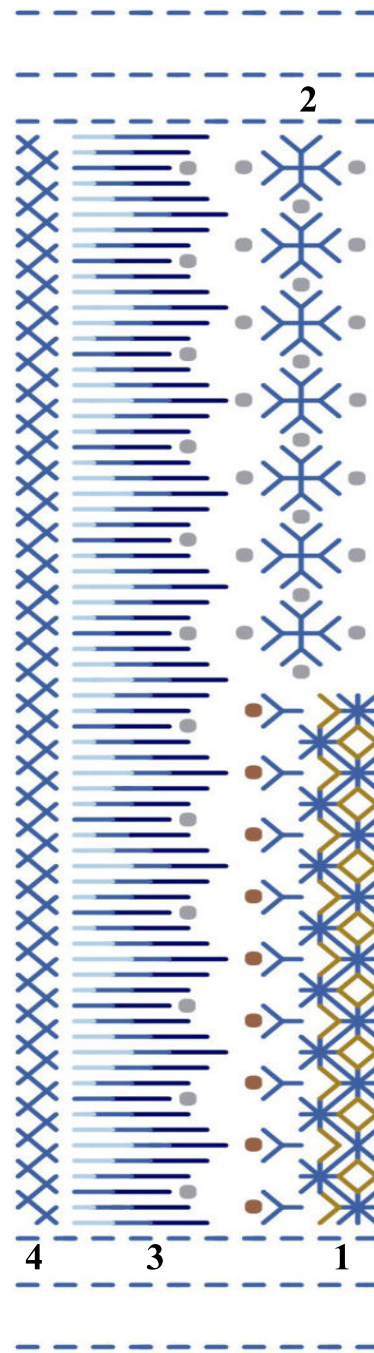
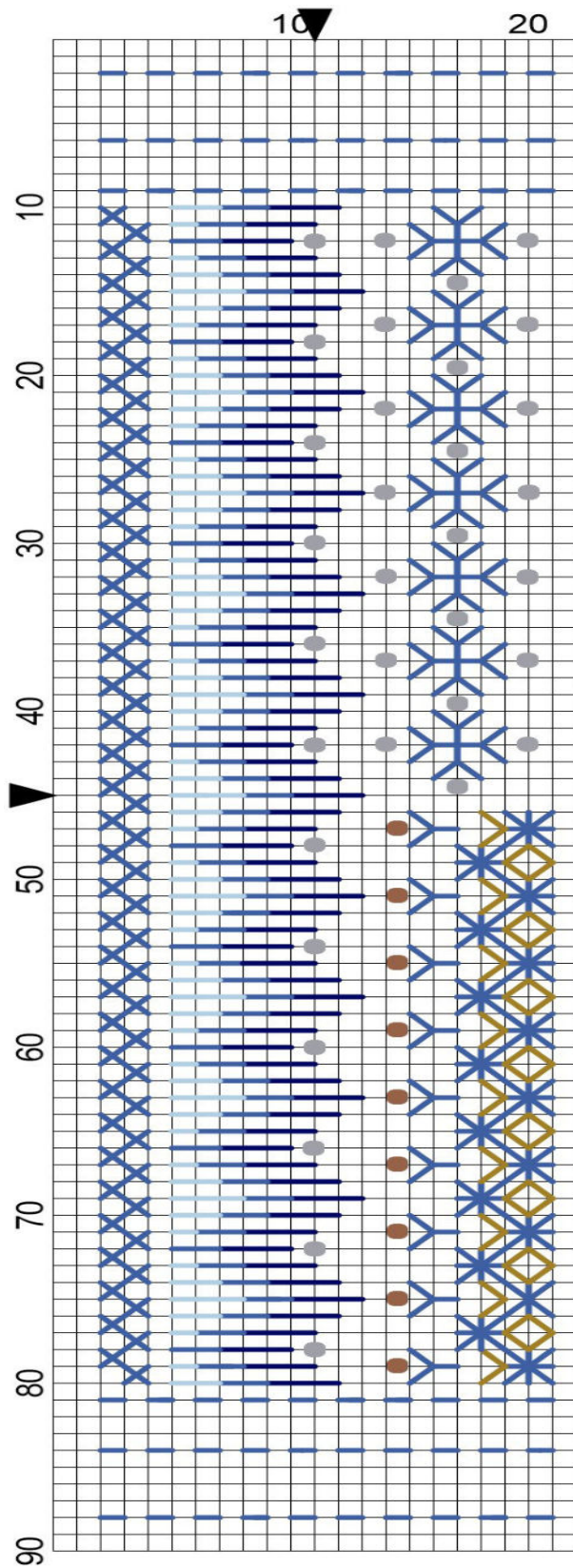


*Band Sampler and Simple Stitches
The band samplers are ready to add the borders.*

Block 10



Block 10a Simple Stitches



Row 1. Eyelet stitch with detached fly stitches.

Row 2. Fly stitch motifs

Row 3. Florentine (6 strands) over 4 blocks.

Grade the blues from dark to light.

Row 4. Cross stitch band.