



# *Blackwork Journey Blog*

March 2012

Jane Zimmerman

What are "Call Outs?"

Don't Quit



### March 2012

Hopefully, the worst of winter is over and we can look forward to an English Spring with longer days, spring flowers and time to enjoy planning future projects. I long for the first green shoots on the trees and the sight of blue tits seeking out nest sites. A small mouse has appeared in the garden looking for seeds from the bird feeders. Since we have owls in the vicinity, I doubt he will survive very long! There is an owl box high in one of our trees. It has been investigated by a pair of tawny owls and this year, they might take up residence. Last year, they just left us a feather!



*Tawny owl feather!*

### Internet treasure!

Researching the Internet can produce some exciting finds and I recently came across an excellent pdf entitled "The Art of English Blackwork" by Jane Zimmerman, which deals with English Blackwork. It contains numerous portraits by Hans Holbein and other artists which illustrate the blackwork designs used in costume of the period in fine detail.

<http://www.janezimmerman.com>

# Jane D. Zimmerman

## NEEDLEWORK HISTORY

[\[Home\]](#)

### NEEDLEWORK HISTORY CHAPTERS

Having a website I am now able to share my image and slide collection of needlework history with the internet audience. This presentation will be produced in stages over the next few years. All publications will be offered in the PDF format to be viewed by Adobe Acrobat Reader (see below\*). You can print all the information, this for your personal use only. Bookmark this page and check back periodically to see what has been added, for these free internet publications will be written in stages.

CLICK on the topic of interest - those that are highlighted are currently available: (Note: These files are large so they may take time to load, particularly if the internet is busy - BE PATIENT!)

- (1) [The Medieval Embroidery Technique of Or Nuè](#)
- (2) [English Medieval Embroidery](#)
- (3) [The Art of English Blackwork](#)
- (4) [The Elizabethan Needleworker](#)
- (5) [Dressing the Elizabethan Woman](#)
- (6) [The Elizabethan Home](#)
- (7) [The Art of English Canvas Embroidery](#)
- (8) [The Art of Stumpwork](#)
- (9) [The Golden Age of Samplers](#)
- (10) [18th Century English Embroidery](#)
- (11) [Eastern Embroidery](#)

\* After viewing a PDF file in Adobe Reader, close the program (the "X" in the upper right corner of Adobe Reader's window) and you will be returned to this website.

## Blackwork Journey Blog –March 2012

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Having researched the history of Blackwork over a period of years, I found this a very satisfying and comprehensive examination of this inspiring technique.

### *Designing charts*

Designing charts is not always straightforward. The inspiration may be there, but knowing exactly how to transfer an idea into a chart does not always follow, although on some occasions everything flows naturally and the design grows instinctively.

When I first started designing I used graph paper, pencil and an eraser, but the software available nowadays makes the whole process much quicker and more accurate. Once the idea is graphed the checking begins. There are numerous stitches in each design and every one has to be checked individually. Missing the odd stitch in a chart consisting of hundreds or even thousands of stitches does occasionally occur, however carefully the chart is checked.

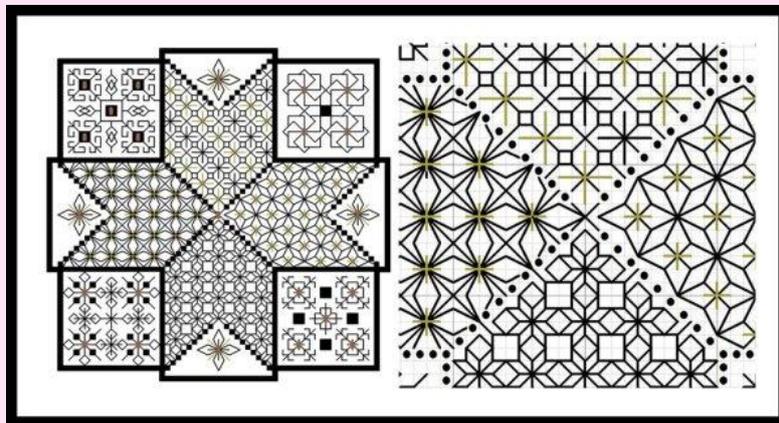
There is an appropriate saying in the Middle East "Only Allah is perfect!" which I think is often very appropriate!

Software uses different terminology dependent on the country in which it was developed. For example, the software I use describes a colour key as a "Legend" and metallic cross stitch as "Call outs" which can be very confusing to someone who is not familiar with those terms. In England, we call "floss" silk and so it goes on! (See Page 3)

Whilst I enjoy using specialist threads, they can be very difficult to obtain in parts of the world unless you have access to the internet and I therefore design for standard, easily available threads.

An information sheet should always contain details about the design size, number of stitches, material used, thread, needle and stitches used. If a chart is complicated enlarge the design to a size you are comfortable with. For example the centre of one chart I use for day schools is quite complicated so I have enlarged that particular section so it becomes clear to the less experienced embroiderer where and how to begin.

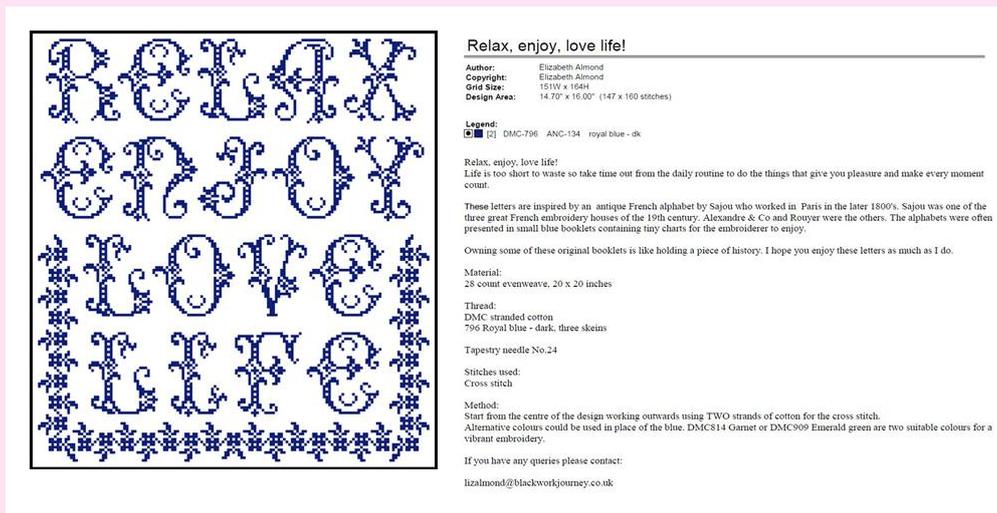
By always starting in the centre of the design it is less likely that mistakes will occur. A cross stitch framework can make counting easier and define borders, so it may be appropriate to include cross stitch with the blackwork. The dots represent the cross stitches. The black lines are backstitch and the gold is metallic thread.



*CH0168 Star Time Sampler*

Where possible, I include some personal details about the chart or an appropriate quotation because every chart is personal to me as the designer and I would like to feel that the design also becomes personal to the embroiderer.

Where possible, add your name and the date that you embroidered your piece as one hundred years from now, someone may well look at your work and wonder about the person who created it!



### *CS0006 Relax, enjoy, love life!*

This is a new chart from the Cross Stitch section using only cross stitch but again it contains all the details necessary to create accurate and interesting embroidery!

Information on a pattern sheet helps the needlewoman make informed choices

### ***Call outs***

I have received a number of queries about the term "Call Out" which is used by my pattern designer programme "PC Stitch." It is an unusual term, which I have never met before. However, it represents metallic cross stitches and is shown by a square with a symbol inserted.

"Legend" is another term that has been queried and is the American term for the UK Stitch Key, which lists the symbols and silk numbers used in the chart.

Two symbols together on the "Legend" represent DMC thread and the Anchor alternative thread number.

I always use ONE strand of thread for back stitch and TWO strands for cross stitch. Metallic threads are used straight from the skein, or reel without splitting unless specified.

Example:

### Chessboard

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**Author:** Elizabeth Almond  
**Copyright:** Elizabeth Almond  
**Grid Size:** 223W x 223H  
**Design Area:** 15.64" x 15.64" (219 x 219 stitches)

■ ■ [2] DMC-310 ANC-403 DMM- black

**Call Outs:**  
■ ■ [2] DMM-5282 Gold DMC Metallic

**Backstitch Lines:**  
———— DMC-310 black      ————— DMM-5282 Gold

Incidentally, I found a poem the other day which made me smile because it is so appropriate to the modern world and so I designed a new addition to the 'Cross Stitch' section of my site called "Relax, enjoy, love life!"

I am trying very hard to follow these words and make every day count!

#### *Don't Quit*

When things go wrong as they sometimes will,  
When the road you're trudging seems all up hill,  
When the funds are low and the debts are high  
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,  
When care is pressing you down a bit,  
Rest if you must, but don't you quit.  
Life is queer with its twists and turns,  
As every one of us sometimes learns,  
And many a failure turns about  
When he might have won had he stuck it out;  
Don't give up though the pace seems slow--  
You may succeed with another blow,  
Success is failure turned inside out--  
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,  
And you never can tell how close you are,  
It may be near when it seems so far;  
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit--  
It's when things seem worst that you must not quit.

Edgar A. Guest  
Happy stitching!

*Liz*