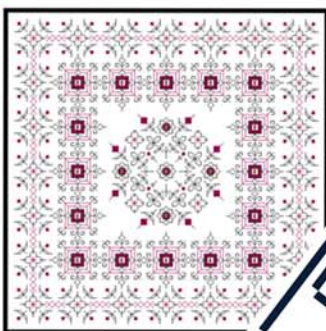




Blackwork Journey Blog

September 2012

Itznik variations
Bess of Hardwick



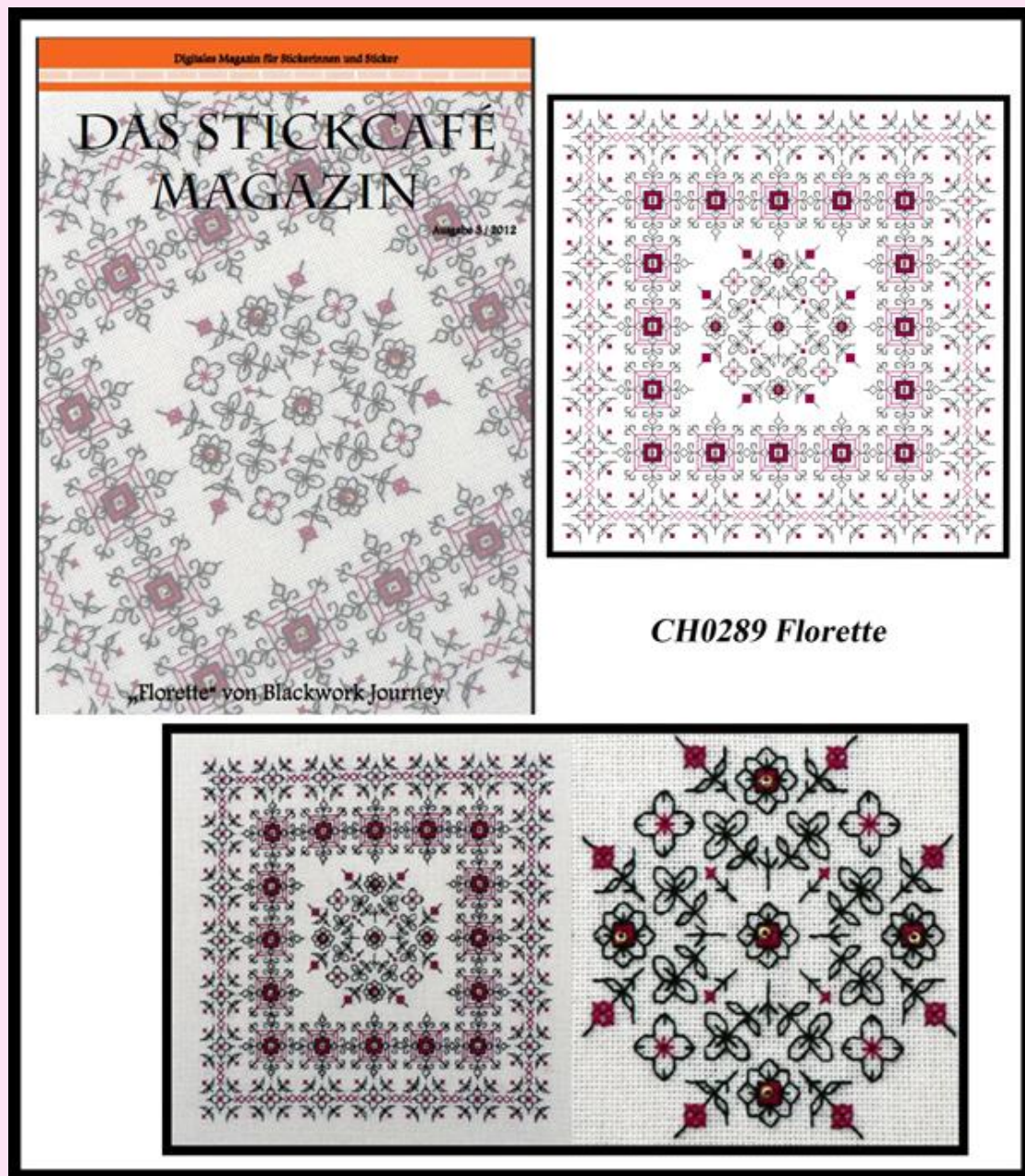
New magazine!



September 2012

The summer is whizzing by, but because it has been so wet in England this year I have been finishing off a number of outstanding projects, creating and stitching some new charts for books and magazines and working on a rather special project which will be revealed in October.

A new internet magazine called "Das Stickcraft Magazin" has been launched in Europe recently and I have had the pleasure of being asked to design for it and wish its editor Nicole, every success in the future.

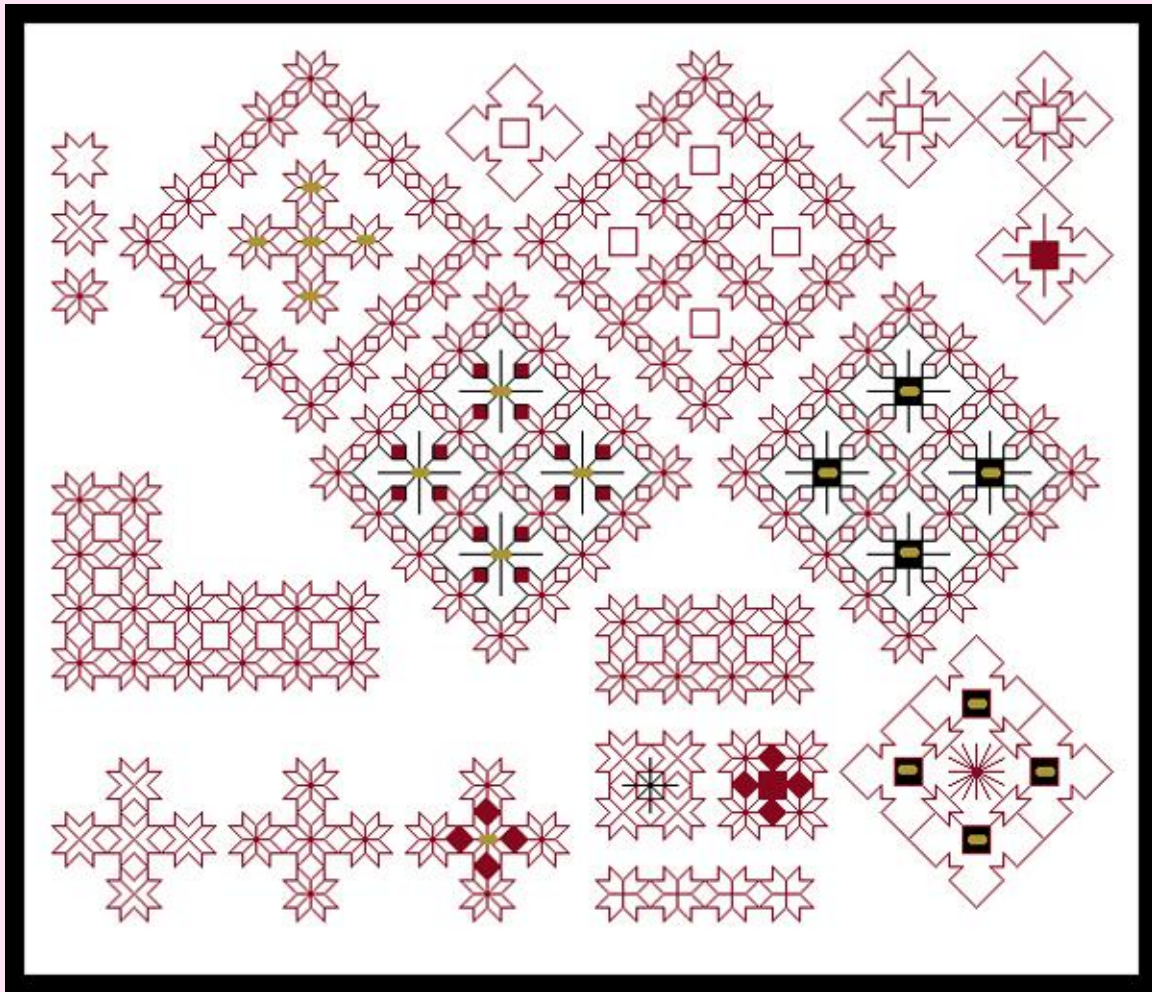


Florette was my first contribution to the new magazine and will be followed by a witchcraft design in November.

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Internet magazines play an increasingly important role in sending information worldwide, but they are vulnerable to piracy. Whilst safeguards are put in place to limit this, they are not infallible and it is down to every one of us who use these publications, to protect them as much as possible or they will not survive!

This month, I have also completed the free alphabet design series which I hope you have found useful and added two more designs, Pattern Plus and Iznik Tiles, based on floor tiles I saw in a Mosque in Istanbul.



Pattern Plus

Pattern Plus shows how a pattern can be developed from a single small star motif. By connecting the individual shapes together and adding or taking away different lines, endless patterns can be created. Select the design you would like to stitch from the combinations in the pdf and create a new shape. The design can be as simple as five stars connected together to make a cross, to 5 x 5 stars used to create a frame.

Add beads or metallic threads, sequins or pearls, work on coloured fabric or use variegated threads. Blackwork does not have to be black!

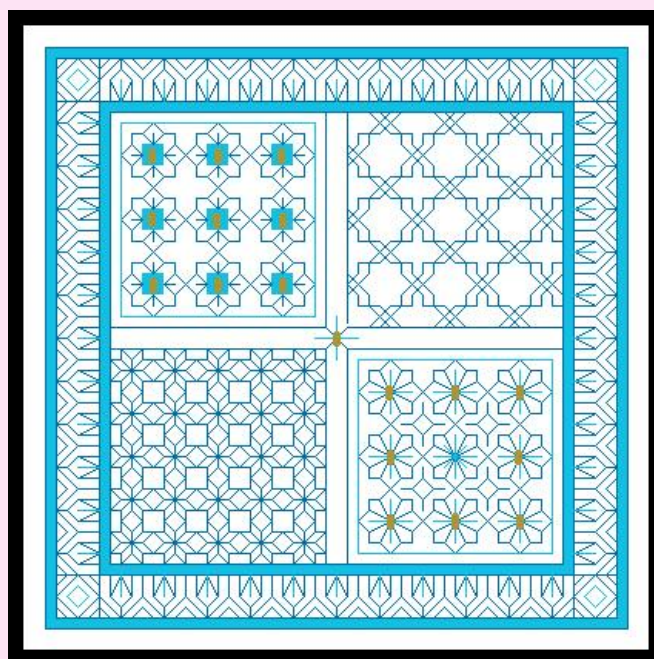
This is a good introduction to the technique of blackwork. Use either Aida blockweave 14 count or 28 count evenweave, a Number 26 tapestry needle and scraps of embroidery

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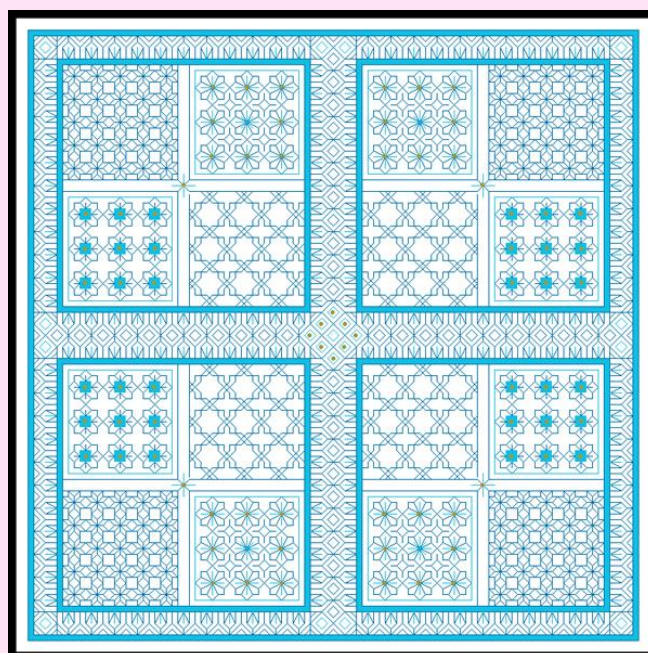
stranded cotton. Mistakes are easy to find and correct. The pattern is logical and can be as simple or as creative as you wish to make it.

Itznik Tiles

Designs are never wasted! Use them to make gift tags or cards and whilst you are creating them you are building up your confidence to either create your own designs or tackle some of the charts in 'Blackwork Journey'.

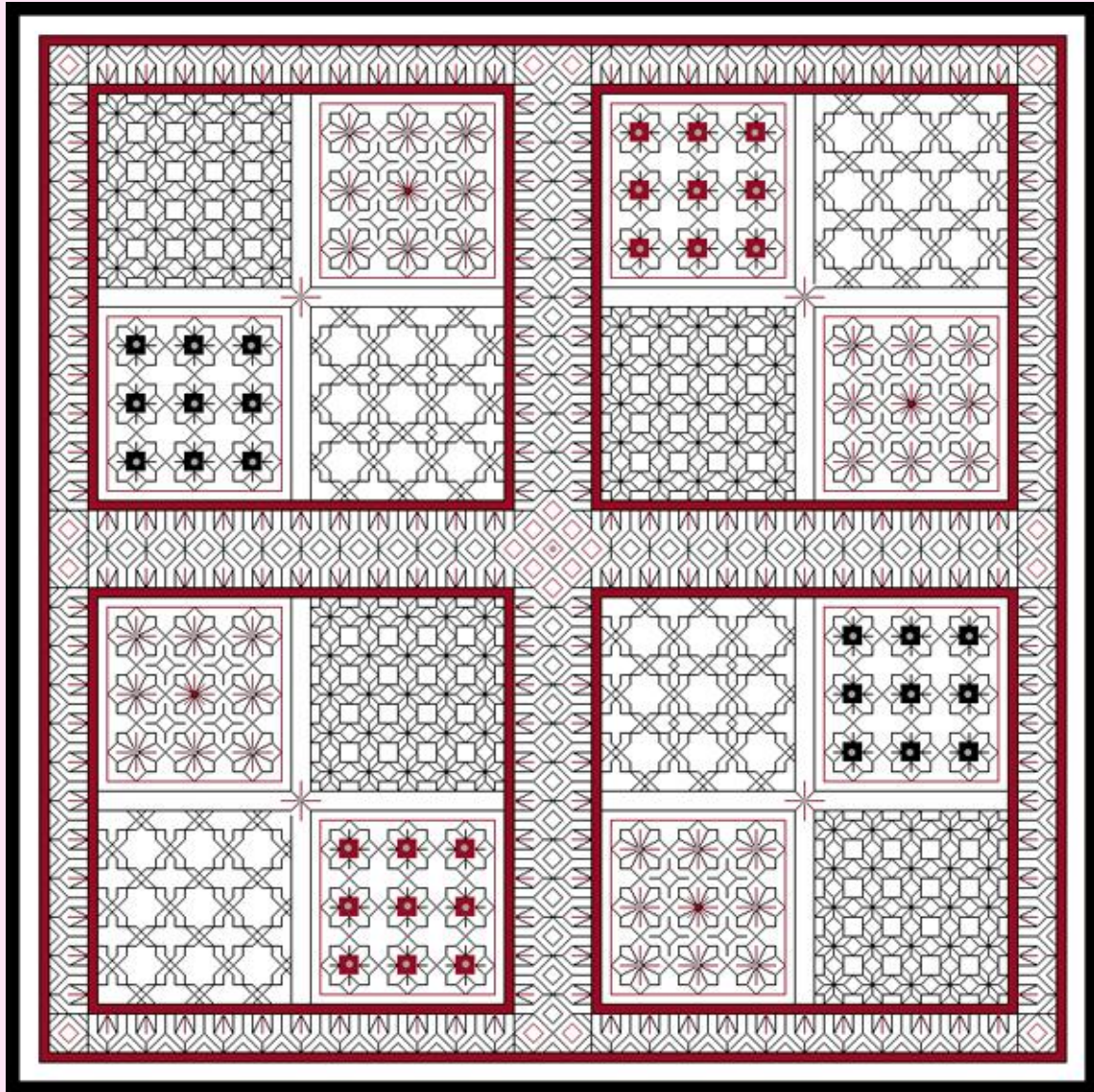


Itznik Tiles and New Itznik It just takes a little imagination to convert one design into another!



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Itznik Tiles takes some of the elements from Pattern Plus and develops them further into a tile design worked in traditional colours. This can be a small practice sampler, or it can be repeated to become a larger square design. Additional gold beads can be added into the diamond borders or colours can be changed to suit the individual.



Itznik Variations

The pdf's for New Itznik and Itznik Variations will be in my Freebies section in October

New threads

I am very excited by the new additions from DMC. They are a joy to use and easy to obtain, unlike many specialist threads which have to be ordered through the internet.

They have just introduced 24 NEW Colour Variations colours to the Colour Variation line of specialty threads, available in six strand embroidery silk skeins and Pearl Cotton skein Size 5. Colour Variations are beautiful multi-coloured threads designed to give the look of hand-dyed thread whilst being colourfast and fade resistant. Additionally each Colour Variations

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colour is guaranteed to be consistent from one skein to the next. DMC's Colour Variations threads offer a wide range of colours in only one skein! Every 6 to 7 stitches, each thread from the Colour Variations line reveals a succession of colour changes which are unique on each needlework project.

These threads make experimenting with colour very simple and the results are very effective.



DMC New Colour Variegated Threads

Hand dyed threads can be vulnerable to fading, are frequently not colourfast and the colour changes can be inconsistent but they should still be considered seriously and experimented with, especially if the embroidery is not going to be washed regularly. Like all threads they add an extra dimension to your stash and may be just what you are looking for! Remember all embroidery will fade if it is exposed to sunlight.

Bess of Hardwick

In Tudor time's gold, red and silver threads, silver spangles and embellishments on costumes were commonplace amongst the wealthy. This portrait of Bess of Hardwick, 1550 clearly shows the beautiful red blackwork embroidery on her sleeves, collar and cuffs.

Bess was an amazing woman for her times and I have great admiration for her personality and courage. Elizabeth Shrewsbury Bess of Hardwick) married four times, each time rising in status and wealth. Her husband, the Earl of Shrewsbury, was the richest man in the country and when he died in 1590 Bess became the second richest woman, second only to Queen Elizabeth



Bess of Hardwick's crest and initials

1.



*Bess of Hardwick (later Elizabeth Countess of Shrewsbury) when Mistress St Lo, 1550s
Note the blackwork patterns on her sleeves and collar*

Bess had a very strong personality and she and the Earl argued violently. In the sixteenth century marriage was the only way a woman could advance herself and Bess of Hardwick did so through force of character rather than beauty.

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She was estranged from her husband and lived in her old family home in the small manor of Hardwick which can today be seen as a ruin alongside Hardwick Hall. She was interested in buildings and Hardwick Hall was built in the 1590s. This Tudor building in Derbyshire, not far from where we live is almost the same as when it was built.

Elizabeth Shrewsbury (Bess of Hardwick)



Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire, England

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I hope the Blog has given you something to think about and encouraged you to explore the idea of creating your own patterns and perhaps using threads you had not considered before.

Happy stitching!

Liz