



Blackwork Journey Blog

May 2014

***Flower & Bolton Royal
Pulled thread designs***



Web sites & magazine

***Victorian laundry
Wallington Hall***



Blackwork Journey Blog - May 2013

May 2013

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the readers around the world for their wonderful e-mails, cards and messages, following my recent accident. They have been so very encouraging!

I am now out of hospital and slowly recovering, but will be in a wheelchair for a while and not able to drive for some three months which is annoying.

However, as part of my recovery, my husband took me to visit a stately home in Northumberland recently where they provided me with an electric scooter which gave me a new found freedom whilst touring the gardens. You don't appreciate being able to move around freely until you are not able to do so, but it does at least mean that I will have plenty of time for designing over the next few months!



Motorised and cold!

Magazine entry

I am delighted to see that in the May 2013 edition of "Cross Stitch and Needlework" that they have featured one of my designs entitled "Da Capo". There is always a sense of satisfaction when you see a design in print or get to complete a piece of needlework that had been unfinished for a long time. I always have several projects on the go because I like to leave them alone and come back to them a few days or weeks later and look at them anew. This often enables me to introduce new ideas about stitches, colours or even different techniques. It just needs a little confidence to make the changes. The more experienced the embroiderer, the more likely she/he is to experiment.



'Cross-stitch and Needlework' magazine May 2013

FR0081 Alphabet Soup YZ marks the end of the current Alphabet series. I have enjoyed creating these letters and I hope you find them useful. Naming and dating the work that you create is simple to do, but can have long-term implications as in years to come, people will look at your work and know who created them and when. They become your heirlooms for the future!

Charts

Samplers are always popular and provide a good way of learning new stitches. CH0305 'New Connections' shows how different colours can be used effectively. Beads and metallic thread add an extra dimension and texture.

Projects

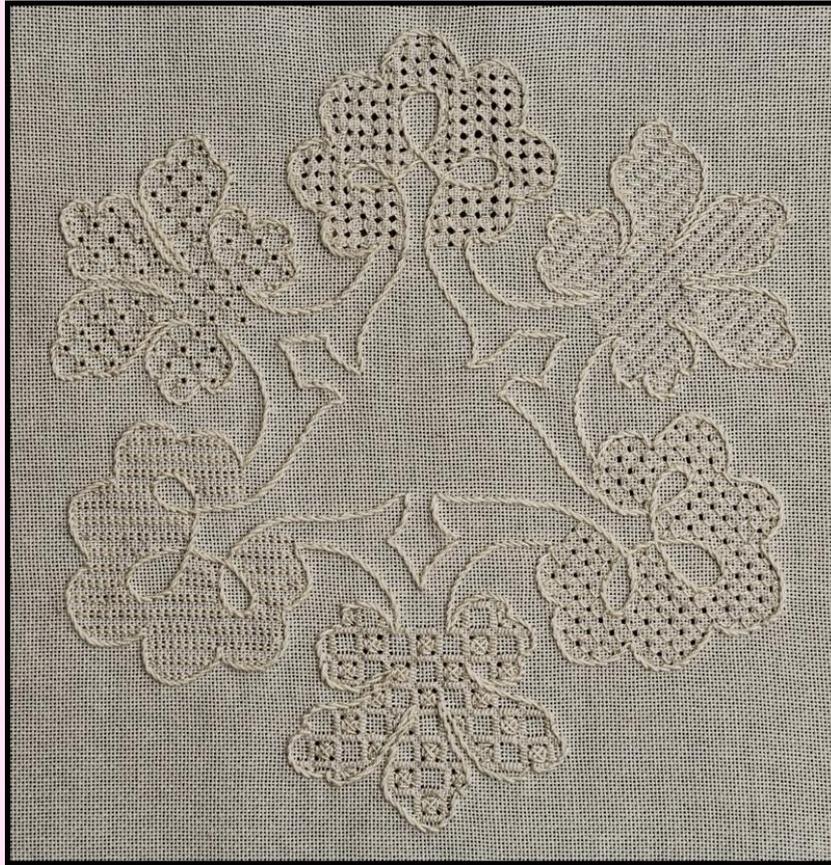
I have continued to add to the Whitework collection of patterns. PR0017 features a pulled thread flower featuring eleven different designs. PR0018 uses six different filling patterns in a simple stem stitch frame.



Changing the colour changes the dynamics of the design!



From start to finish, developing a design in pulled work.



PR0018 Bolton Royal - designed and stitched whilst I was in hospital, hence the name!

Both these designs were drawn with a blue water soluble pen and when I came to dip the finished work in cold water to remove the blue lines, it reminded me just how laundry techniques have changed over the years as I clearly remember when I was a little girl, my mother having an enamel bowl of Robin's starch under the cooker and on every washday, out came the starch and the Reckitt's Blue. Without fail, my starched school shirts stood up on their own and were worn with great discomfort for the first few days!

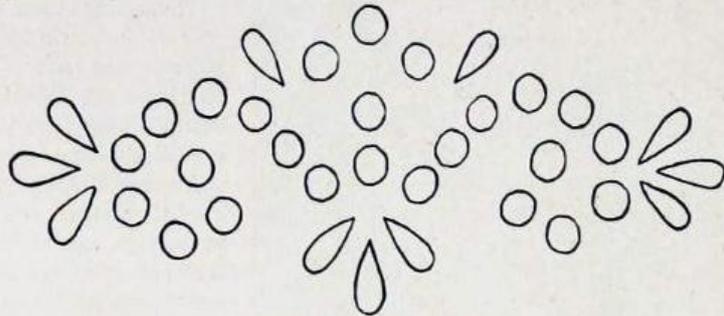
Reckitt's Blue is a very old product which predates laundry liquid blue. It comes in the form of a small tablet and is used in a wash (NOT a washing machine) as a whitener to help delay the yellowing effect when cotton ages. The colour is aquamarine blue and is still available through the Internet and the instructions are still the same.



Looking back through some antique needlework books, I found a lot of information about laundering household linen. Gum arabic took the place of starch in the article below, although the instructions for ironing the embroidery face down on a soft towel are still relevant today, I would not recommend using the ironing press I saw in Wallington Hall, a stately home in Northumberland, recently! (See below).

How to Launder Hand Embroidered Articles

Make a strong suds in a bowl or agate basin, being sure to use a pure white soap and water not too hot. Wash the piece or pieces of linen, rubbing the soiled parts between the hands; never rub soap on the embroidery. When clean, rinse thoroughly in several waters, and should the linen be at all yellow put some blueing in the final rinsing water. If it is too soft or slimy dip in gum arabic water, but never use starch. Do not wring the linen, but instead partially dry by squeezing gently between two towels. Iron at once or, if this is not convenient, the linen may be rolled up in a towel and set aside for an hour.



A French Embroidery Design

The ironing board should be well padded or a large Turkish towel may be folded twice and laid over the board and the linen pressed on that. Lay it face down and cover with a damp cloth unless the linen itself is very damp, when the cloth may be used dry. Press from the center outward, first horizontally, with the grain of the goods, then perpendicularly. This prevents the centerpiece or doily from stretching or puckering out of shape. When the linen is almost dry the cloth may be removed, and the final pressing done on the wrong side of the centerpiece. Should it be impossible to get the linen to lie perfectly flat, try this method: While the centerpiece is still damp lay out smoothly on a well padded board. Pin the edge down firmly to the board, using fine steel pins so that the holes will not show when the pins are removed. Put the first pin in the center of one side, then place another directly opposite; next place one at the center top and bottom, then continue along the edge, taking care to keep the grain of the goods perfectly straight. Work in this way all around the edge of the centerpiece leaving it pinned on the board until thoroughly dry. This is an especially good method to follow for any centerpiece having a lace edge or for one that has been stretched out of shape by careless washing.



Ironing press and flat iron - Wallington Hall Northumberland England.



Wallington Hall Northumberland, England.

If you enjoy looking at antique craft books, two web sites worth investigating are:

www.antiquepatternlibrary.org

"This ongoing project is an effort to scan craft pattern publications that are in the public domain, to preserve them, so we can keep our craft heritages in our hands. Most of these scans have been graphically edited to make the images easier for craft workers to see, and to reduce file sizes. They are available, for free, to anyone who wants them, for educational, personal, artistic and other creative uses."

www.archive.org

"The Internet Archive, a non-profit organisation, is building a digital library of Internet sites and other cultural artefacts in digital form. Like a paper library, we provide free access to researchers, historians, scholars, and the general public."

To see how these authors approached needlework provides a fascinating insight into the way people organised their lives and the values they placed on hand crafts. I have found their publications a great source of inspiration and information.

With the resurgence of interest in knitting, crochet and sewing today and the abundance of colourful, reasonably priced craft books, it would be interesting to see how future generations will regard our current publications and how many will survive. Whilst we remember prolific authors from the past such as Therese de Dillmont (1846-1890), Mrs Archibald Christie and Mrs Isabella Mary Beeton (1836-1865) which authors, I wonder how many will be remembered one hundred years from now?

It is good to be back at the computer again. I hope you enjoy this month's offerings.

Happy stitching!

Liz