



Blackwork Journey Blog

December 2013

Happy Christmas

Best wishes from

Blackwork Journey



'Save the Stitches' - new project!
Australia and New Zealand
Inspiration for 2014



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Well, it is the end of another year and Blackwork Journey is now five years old. I never thought when I started just where it would lead me and how many friends I would make along the way. It really has been a journey! Initially, it was a very steep learning curve well outside my comfort zone, but it has brought me joy, satisfaction and frustration, but most of all it has enable me to encourage other people to look at blackwork from a fresh perspective. New techniques have been introduced and these will be developed over the coming months, especially the pulled work embroidery and the free style blackwork.

"Save the Stitches"

I have been thinking about starting a major project for some time and I feel that now the time is right to put my ideas into practice!

When planning any major project, time spent considering all the different aspects at the early stages can save hours of frustration later on.

Basic considerations:

What do you want to achieve by creating the piece? Are you experimenting with new ideas, techniques, threads and materials?

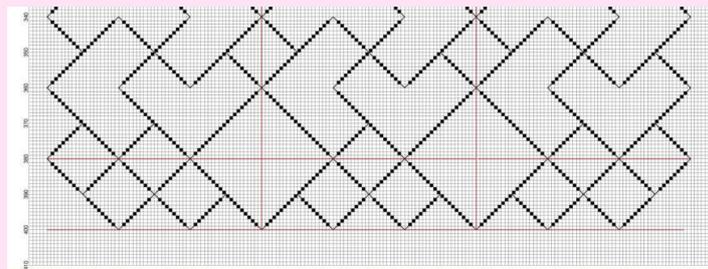
- a. What techniques will be used on the project?
- b. How will the design be transferred onto the fabric? Is the technique suitable for the chosen fabric?
- c. Collect suitable threads and try them out on a spare piece of the fabric.
- d. Consider what beads and embellishments could be used
- e. How will the finished project be mounted, hung or framed?

By considering all these aspects before actually starting to stitch, changes can be made and potential problems thought through. That is not to say that changes cannot be made during the stitching, but it helps to focus the mind and saves unnecessary stress!

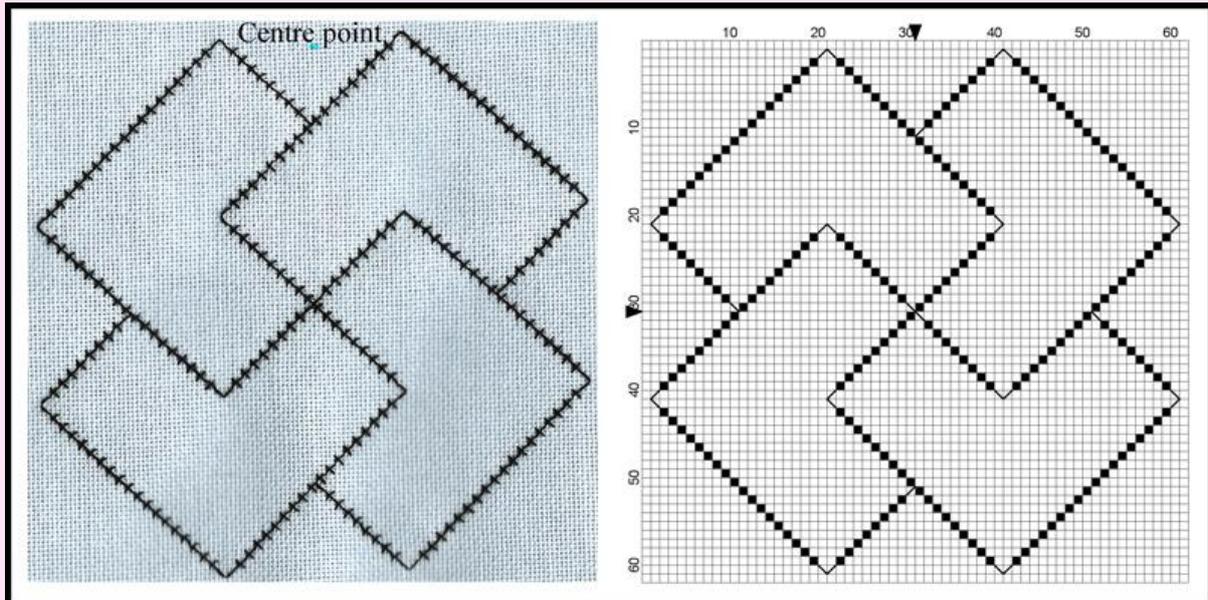
So, what is the subject to be?

I have long admired the traditional samplers which recorded ideas of the time and used a variety of threads and stitches. Ranging from the nine inch wide band samplers to complex Victorian embroideries, this became a favourite method of compiling designs before pattern books were widely available and they have always fascinated me.

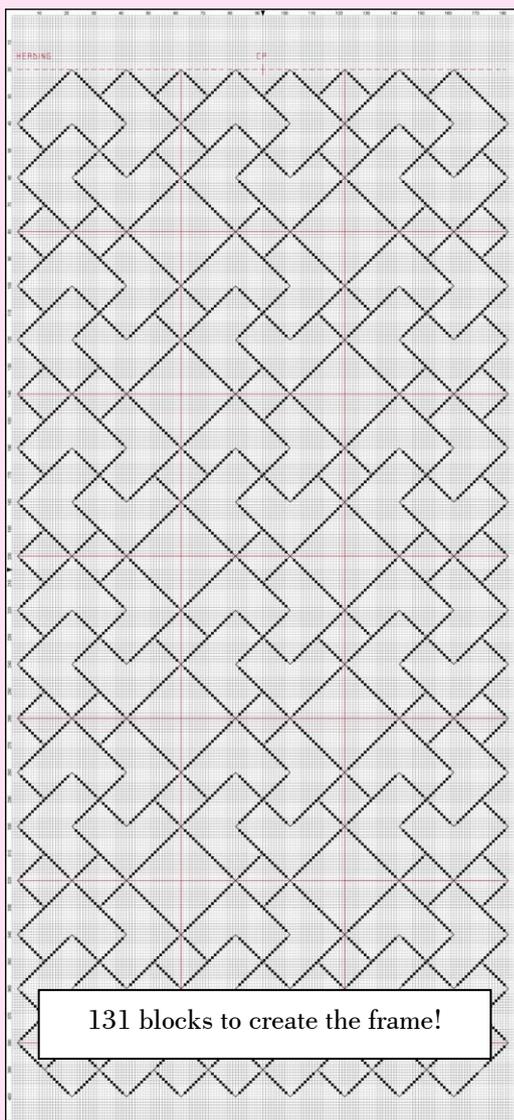
I wondered whether it would be possible to recreate the same idea using blackwork, but in a more complex and modern framework.



Name and date on the bottom row of the char, or.....?



The four square block, 60 x 60 stitches

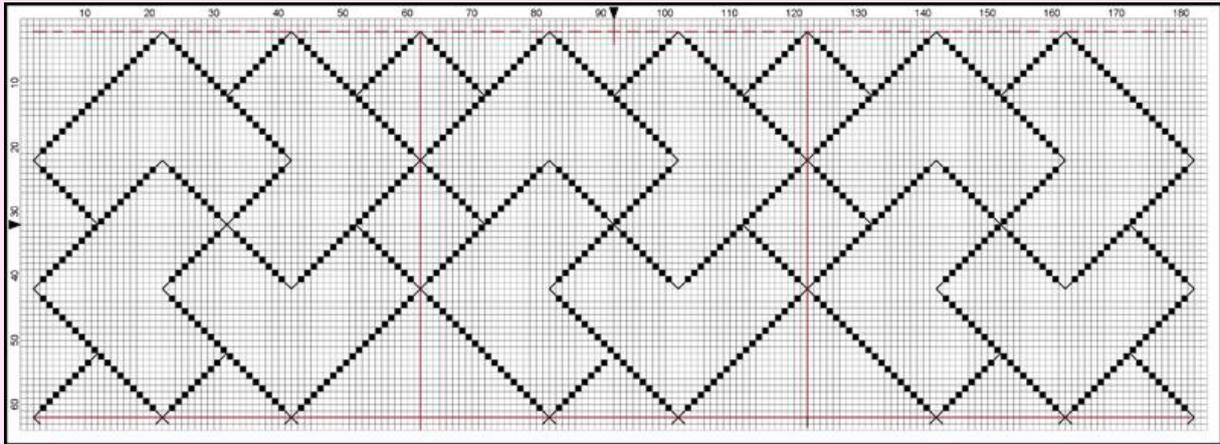


With this in mind, I created a basic interlocking block which consists of four squares. The pattern block measured 4.29 x 4.29 inches, 60 x 60 stitches. Multiplied by three, the pattern would be 180 stitches wide.

This basic layout could then be repeated as many times as required. However, I decided to repeat the rows six times with additional large and small diamonds at the base of the design for name and date etc.

Working on a design width and height of 14.29 x 29.29 inches, additional length needed to be included for mounting. I decided it would be mounted on a bar rather than framed as it needs to be portable. Whilst I had initially thought of making the panel wider and longer, I reduced the size so it would be easier to handle when working.

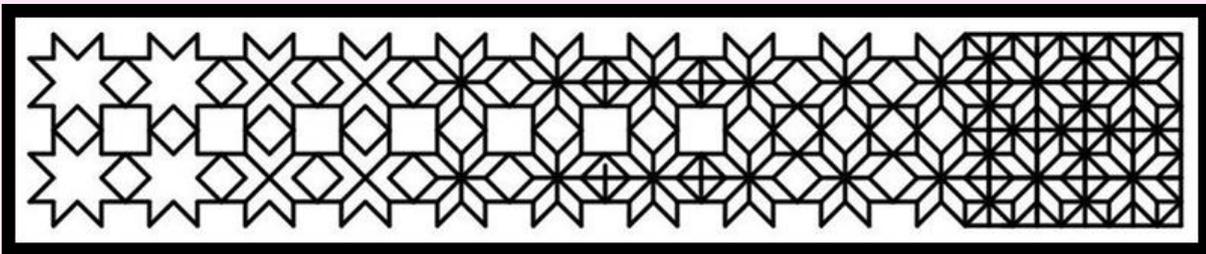
The completed cross stitch framework.



*The pattern is repeated three times with additional small blocks on the top row.
The cross stitch framework is worked in Cotton P rle No.12*

Diaper Patterns

When I create blackwork designs I often look back through charts and different diaper patterns that I have used and have found that some have become particular favourites and are used frequently. However, there are many patterns which can be adapted by adding and removing lines and thereby creates new ideas. Also, adding and removing lines can create light or dark patterns depending on how close or how far apart the stitches are placed. I want to include pattern changes and shading within the blocks as an integral part of the embroidery.



Adding and removing stitches changes the dynamics of a design!

Therefore, there would be 131 blocks, each one to be filled with different diaper patterns and motifs. Once stitched, this would give me a working reference sampler of many of my favourite variations and patterns worked within one piece.

Which fabric?

I wanted to use a fabric which would be easy to work and would have pattern areas large enough to use as a teaching sampler, so after much research I selected:

Zweigart 25 count pale blue grey Lugano, 20w x 37h inches to include a border and sufficient material to make a sleeve to hang the panel from a brass bar.

An alternative material could be a Zweigart 28 count even weave in cream or ecru which would create a slightly smaller design.

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Colour?

I decided not to use white because of the glare factor and because the project will be completed over a long period of time and could get soiled! Lugano comes in a wide range of colours; it is 52% Cotton & 48% Rayon and is washable! If the piece is to be handled by students this is an important consideration.

Threads?

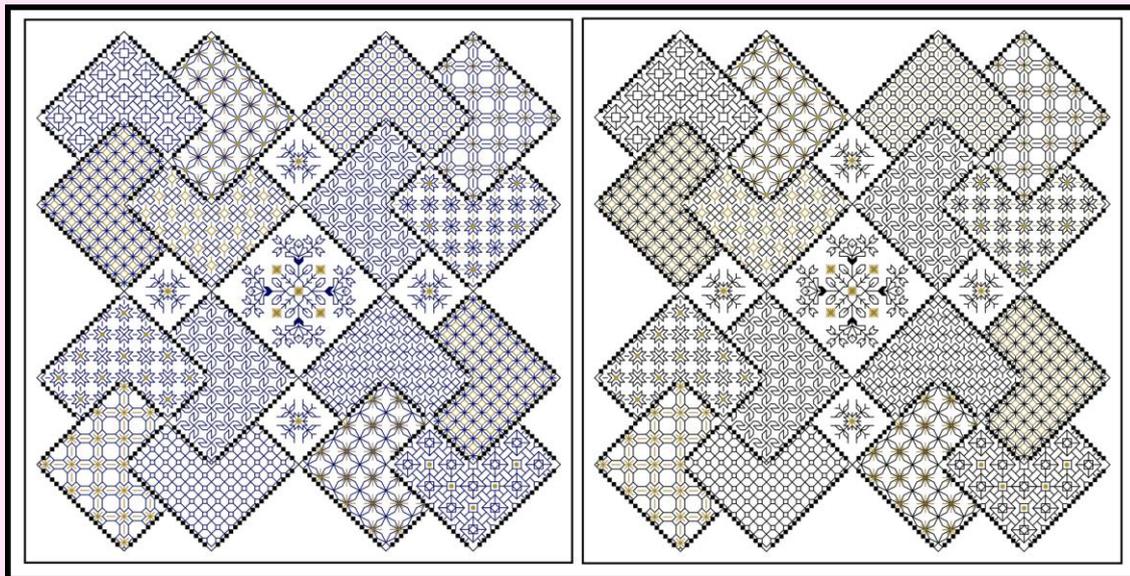
I considered using a wide range of colours and was very tempted by variegated threads, but the aim of the project is to present the stitches in the clearest way possible and I thought too much colour could prove a distraction so the threads I will be using are:

DMC Cotton P rle No.12, black two balls
DMC stranded cotton 310, black, three skeins
Gutermann sewing cotton, Black, one reel
DMC Diamant Metallic gold, copper and silver
Mill Hill glass beads gold, copper and silver

If you would like to join me in this project a section will be added to my Freebies section every month starting in January 2014. I will publish your work on the site if you send me your jpgs as we 'Stitch Along' along together. If you don't actually want to do this, then why not collect the charts to make your own Diaper Dictionary?

New Patterns

Two new patterns have been added this month to encourage you to start "Save the Stitches" CH0321 Rotation and CH0322 Black and Gold use different colours to create different impacts. Colour is a very personal response but look outside your comfort zone and use colours that you would not usually consider!

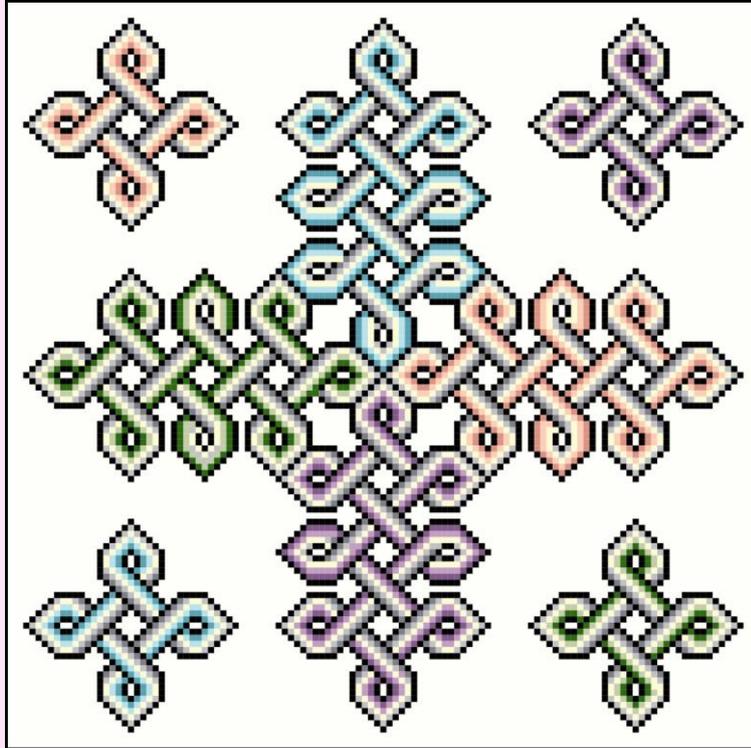


CH0321 Rotation and CH0322 Rotation Gold

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Also in Cross Stitch is a Celtic cross design in delicious pastel colours which was added last month to have you stitching into 2015.

Celtic designs are always interesting to stitch and quite challenging to ensure the lines are interlaced correctly.



CS0010 Celtic cross



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The Journey of a Lifetime - November, December 2013 Los Angeles – Australia – New Zealand – Singapore

I have recently spent five weeks in Australia and New Zealand exploring wonderful cities, deserts and oceans meeting people who have inspired me and scenery that has awed me. I hope to share my adventures with you over the coming months.

Thank you for all your love and support during the year!
Have a wonderful Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Happy stitching!

Liz