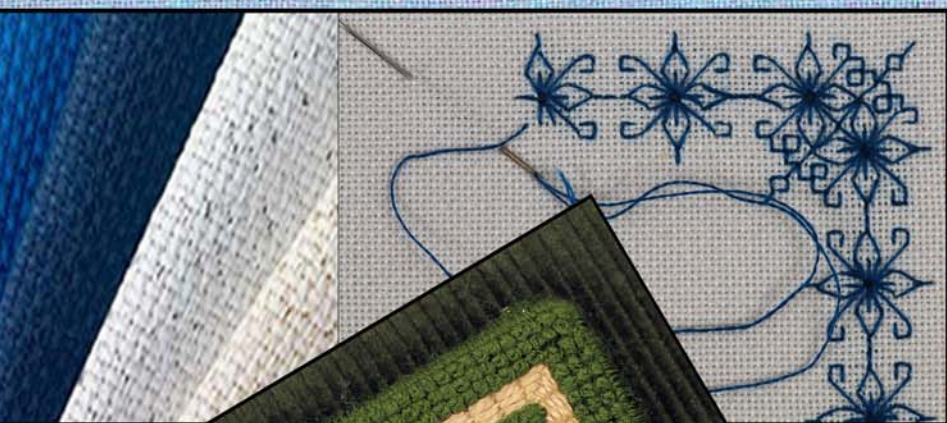




Blackwork Journey Blog

July 2014



Knot Gardens

Aida v Evenweave

Freestyle embroidery

New designs

'Save the Stitches'

Numbered



Embroidery

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The latter part of June and the beginning of July has been an emotional roller coaster. We got to meet our new baby grandson weighing just 2lb1oz. He is so very tiny and in intensive care for some time to come, but he is so very precious!

The love and care baby James has received from the doctors and nursing staff has been outstanding and whilst he has a long way to go, he has received the love and support from so many people around the world.



On the same day that James was born, I received an e-mail which brought home to me the value of embroidery in supporting people's lives and made me feel that what I am trying to achieve with Blackwork Journey is well worthwhile.

I cannot thank her enough for that e-mail because it meant so much to me;

"Liz, I had almost lost my interest in stitching after my husband died last fall. He enjoyed so much watching me create and "paint with thread" - afterwards it was just too tough to remember him being right beside me as he made dollhouse furniture.

About a month ago, I joined a stitching group online and there are new friends from all around the world. One of them sent a picture of either your site or her project from your site.....and I was intrigued. I hadn't ever really tried blackwork before, but your designs were so elegant and your instructions sounded like you were the teacher right there in the room!

I'm going to start my first serious project in almost a year and thought you should know that your work is the inspiration for that - and the first attempt at me taking up my "painting" again in his honour."

The on-line family

The value of the 'on-line' family cannot be underestimated. It can provide an important link to people who live in isolated communities, are confined to home

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because of ill health, carers for elderly relatives or young mums wanting to contact like minded people.

Used wisely, it is an amazing teaching tool which can encourage, inspire and develop new skills and ideas, but most of all, it connects people together with love, enthusiasm and support. I feel very privileged to be part of that journey, so thank you for all the help and support you give to me!

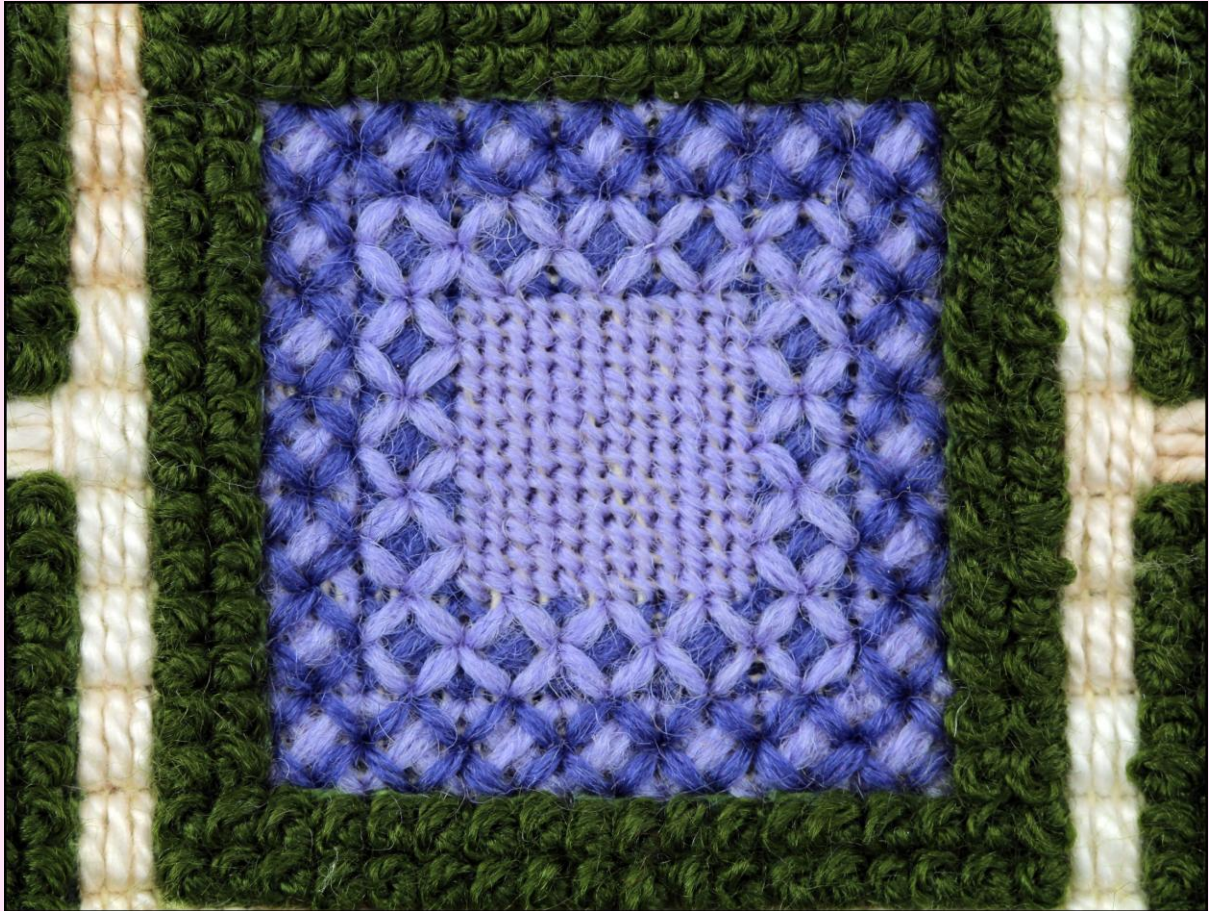
Knots are addictive!

In May, we visited the Gardens at Villandry in France and my instinctive reaction after seeing all the formal knots gardens was that I wanted to create some knot gardens using wools, canvas and cotton Pèrlé, as well as designing a knot garden using embroidery silks.

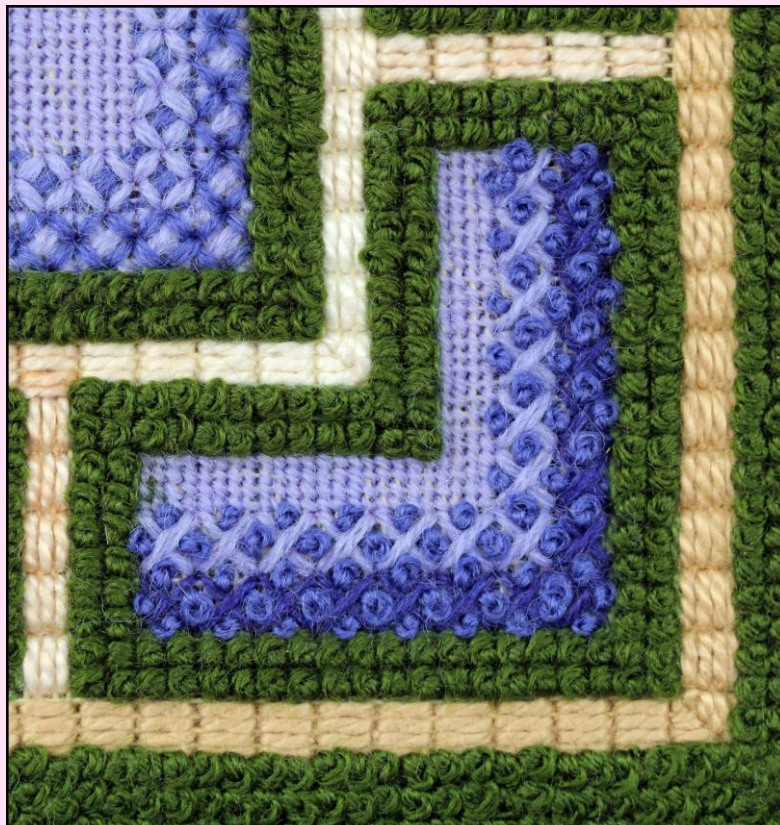
I used a combination of Paterna tapestry wool and space dyed cotton Pèrlé on a 28 count single thread canvas background and offset the knots with rice stitch and tent stitch. I then mounted the finished embroidery on dark green corduroy.



Knot garden in wool and cotton Pèrlé

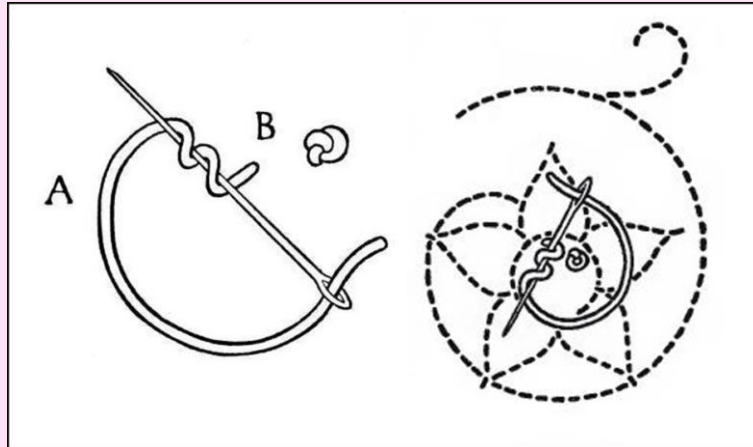


Rice stitch and tent stitch contrast with the heavy woollen knots



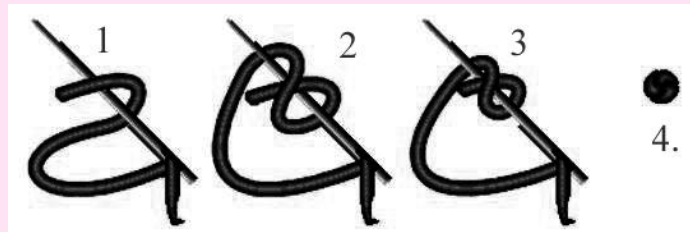
Can I use colonial knots in place of French knots? Which do you prefer?

Either knot can be used, but I actually prefer using colonial knots. I find that they 'sit' on the fabric better and cannot fall in different directions unlike French knots which seem to have a mind of their own!



The French Knot is worked in three stages:

1. Bring the needle up through the fabric where the knot is to be placed. Wrap the thread twice round the needle.
2. Hold the thread firmly and twist the needle back to A and insert it back through the fabric near the point where the thread emerged.
3. Using the thumb to control the tension keep the needle upright and pull the gently off the needle onto the fabric.



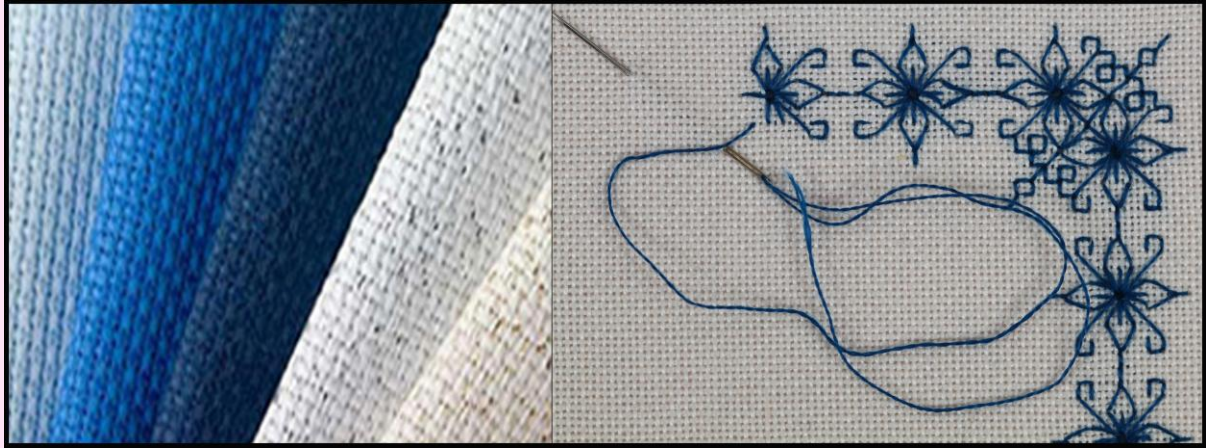
The Colonial Knot is worked in three stages:

1. Bring the needle up through the fabric as you would a French knot.
2. Push the thread away from you towards the RIGHT. Wrap the thread round the needle in a figure of eight. Use your thumb to control the thread.
3. Keep the needle as upright as possible and push the needle downwards into almost the same spot as you came up.
4. Pull the thread gently and you will have a perfect colonial knot every time!

Practice makes perfect, especially when working a large number of individual knots!

Just a reminder!

What is the difference between Aida blockweave and evenweave?

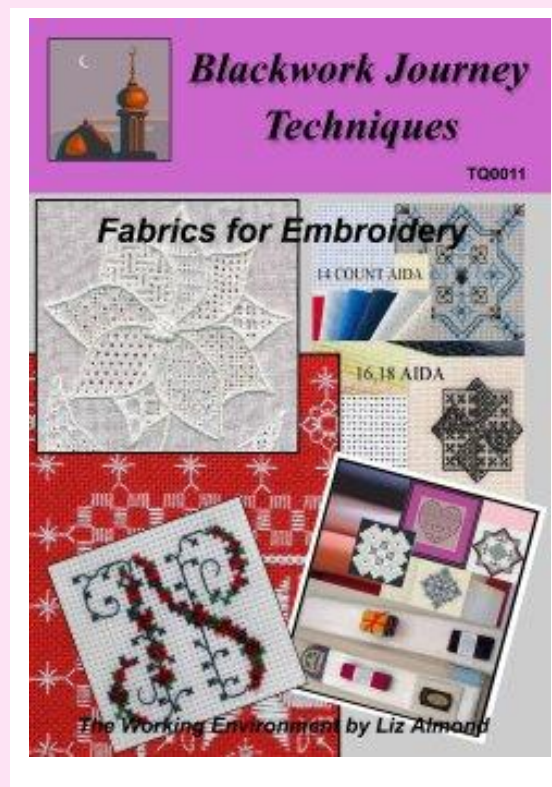


14 count Aida blockweave and 28 count evenweave

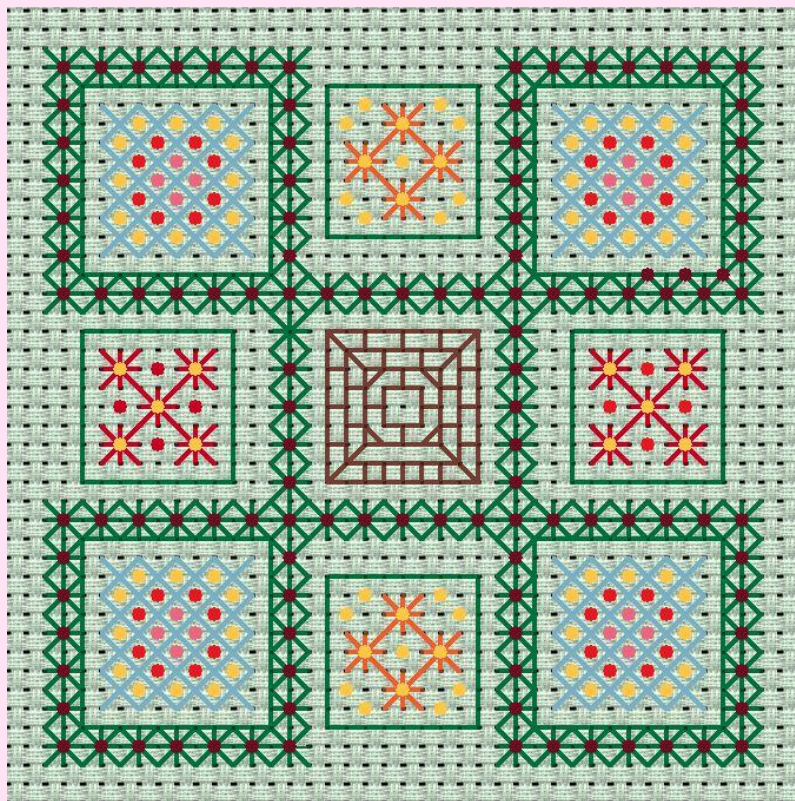
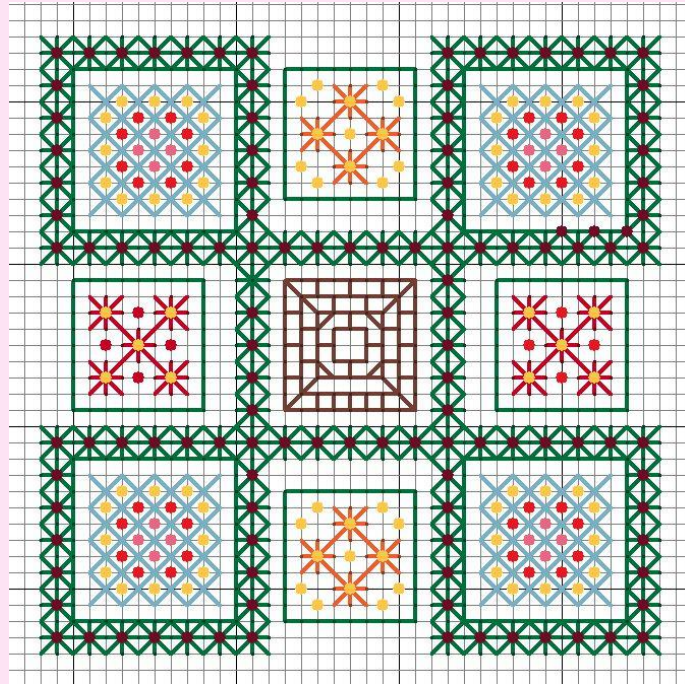
The fabric is constructed in a different manner... Aida fabric consists of small blocks. The stitches are worked over one block Aida 14 count has 14 cross stitches per inch or 54 cross stitches per 10 cm.

An evenweave, for example Brittny Lugano, the Count is in threads per inch. 28 count = 28 threads per inch. A metre is 39 inches. Evenweave is worked over two threads x two threads.

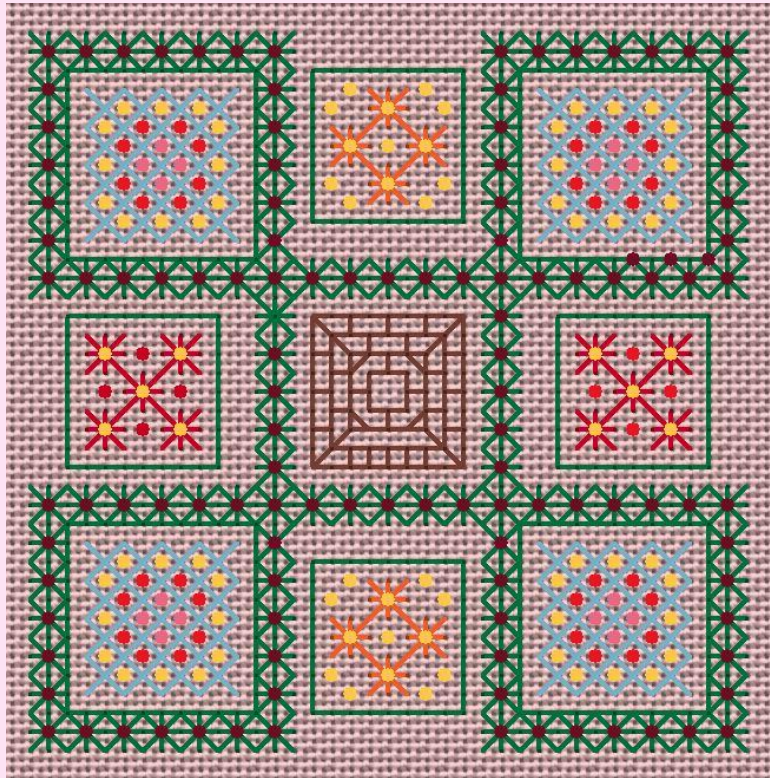
For further information refer to my 'Techniques Fabrics for Embroidery' section.



Look at the mini Knot Garden below to see how the stitches look on the actual fabric.



Knot Garden worked on 14 Count Aida blockweave



Knot Garden worked on 28 Count evenweave, using colonial knots and eyelet stitches

If there are no half or split stitches Aida fabric can be used. Blocks are difficult to split whereas evenweave requires no splitting.

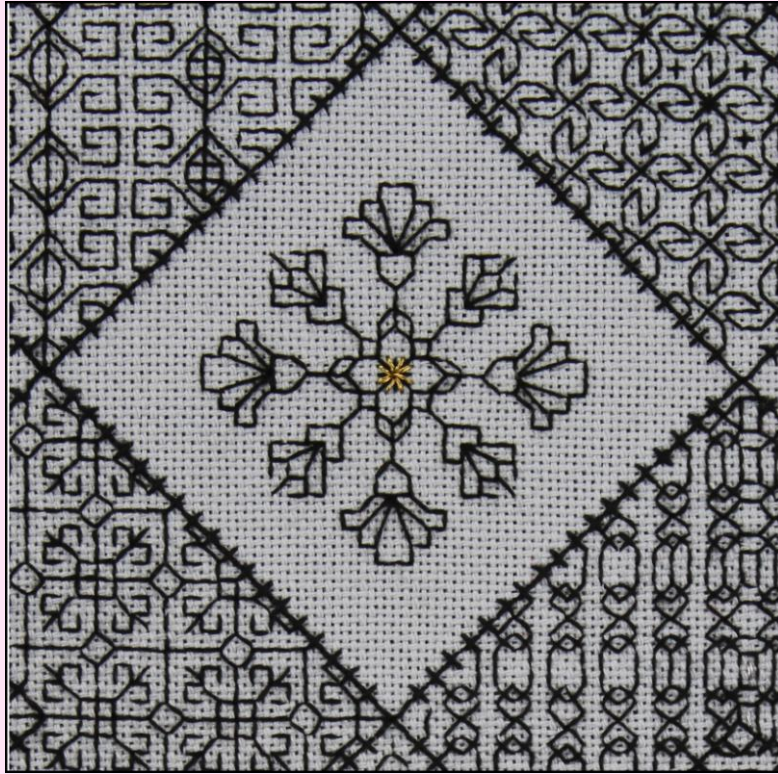
Generally, if there are fractional stitches in the design, evenweave is a more suitable fabric to use.

Save the Stitches Blocks 12 and 13 have been added in July.

The project has now reached its halfway stage with 24 blocks in all. I have completed my blocks and am considering how I am going to mount the finished embroidery. Have you considered how you want to frame your finished piece? Let me know what you are considering as I would be very interested to know how different people are going to finish their work

Extracts from these charts can be used to create new designs, gifts or cards. The fillers or diaper patterns can be used for different charts especially free style blackwork designs where the outline is stitched and then the shapes are filled.

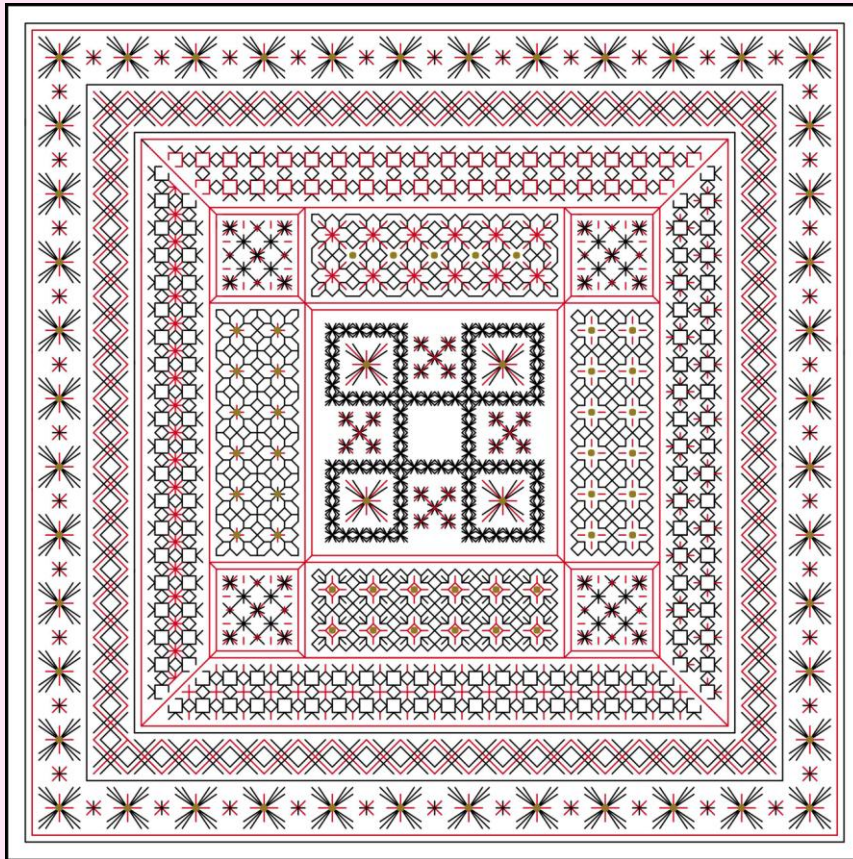
The possibilities are endless!



Extract from Block 12 could be used in a variety of ways.



Block 13 embroidered. No beads have been added to the embroidery at this point. They will be added after the embroidery has been completed.



Be Bold – Bedazzle!

CH0326 Bedazzle - use specialist stitches to create an unusual sampler. Change the colour to suit your tastes. Add metallic threads and beads.

Experiment with new ideas and add them to your own designs



PR0024 Dandelion Dance

Enjoy a freestyle embroidery using different stitches, metallic thread and beads.

Draw the design onto the fabric and create your own touch of Summer!

Textile Holidays in Spain

Liz Almond of Blackwork Journey

Blackwork Embroidery inspired by Spain

10 – 16 May 2015

Explore the beauty of blackwork in its birthplace by developing new techniques and expanding existing skills. From Catherine of Aragon and Islamic influences to the 21st century design, create and enjoy a week of exciting stitching. This course is for beginners through to experienced embroiderers, see

<http://castanea-craft-courses.com>



Enjoy the Summer!

Happy stitching!

Liz