



Blackwork Journey Blog

September 2014

New Inspirations
Printing on Fabric

Readers Gallery
Save the Stitches

Arabesque Design

*Blackwork Journey
Inspirations
Doors*



Go with the flow!

Just occasionally in my stitching world something occurs that cannot be ignored, an embroidery thread or a photograph triggers an ‘idea’ and I just cannot settle until I have explored and developed what may be a very tentative thought and turn it into reality!

I was cutting evenweave material into squares recently, to pack into kits and thinking how bored I was with working with plain fabrics and how I wanted to work on a patterned background of my choosing without having to go through the process of dyeing my fabrics or getting my paints out. Was there a way in which I could transfer a design onto a fabric easily? I have a normal printer and a little imagination, so I sat down to really think it through!

I already had a design in mind which I was itching to stitch and two skeins of variegated Anchor embroidery thread which were just right, but plain fabric would not enhance the design!

I wanted to transfer an Islamic pattern onto 28 count evenweave fabric. I even had an appropriate photograph taken in the Alhambra Palace in Spain.

I wanted to retain the arabesque details as background on two different pieces of fabric. One piece was to be much darker than the other with a band of embroidery worked vertically. The other piece was to be paler, but with an overall embroidery pattern worked on the surface using the background to compliment the design.



Arabesque detail in sepia and black and white, Alhambra Palace, Spain

The first stage was to decide which colour I wanted the background to be, so initially I discarded the colour and turned the photograph into black and white. However, this was too harsh and after playing with different colour combinations, I returned to the original photograph and reduced the opacity using Adobe Photoshop.

Transferring the design onto fabric:

Equipment needed;

Printer

Adobe Photoshop, Gimp or similar photo editing programme (This is only essential if the photograph needs to be altered. If the photograph is suitable without adjusting, omit Stage 2.)

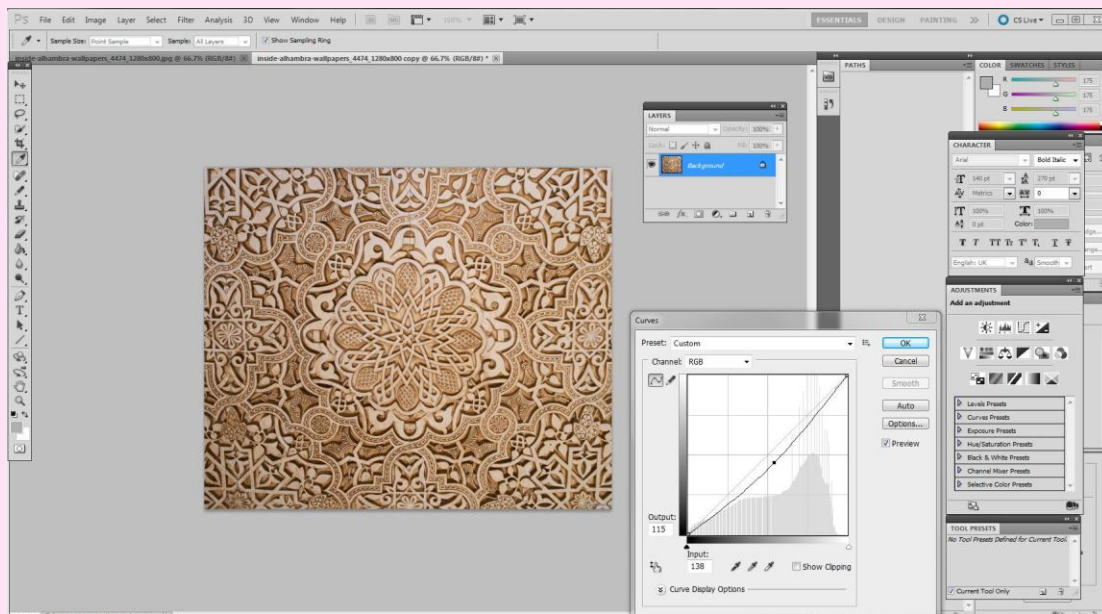
Photograph to be transferred onto fabric

Fabric 28 count evenweave, white, Size A4 - 8.25 x 11.75 inches

Self adhesive label Size A4

Method:

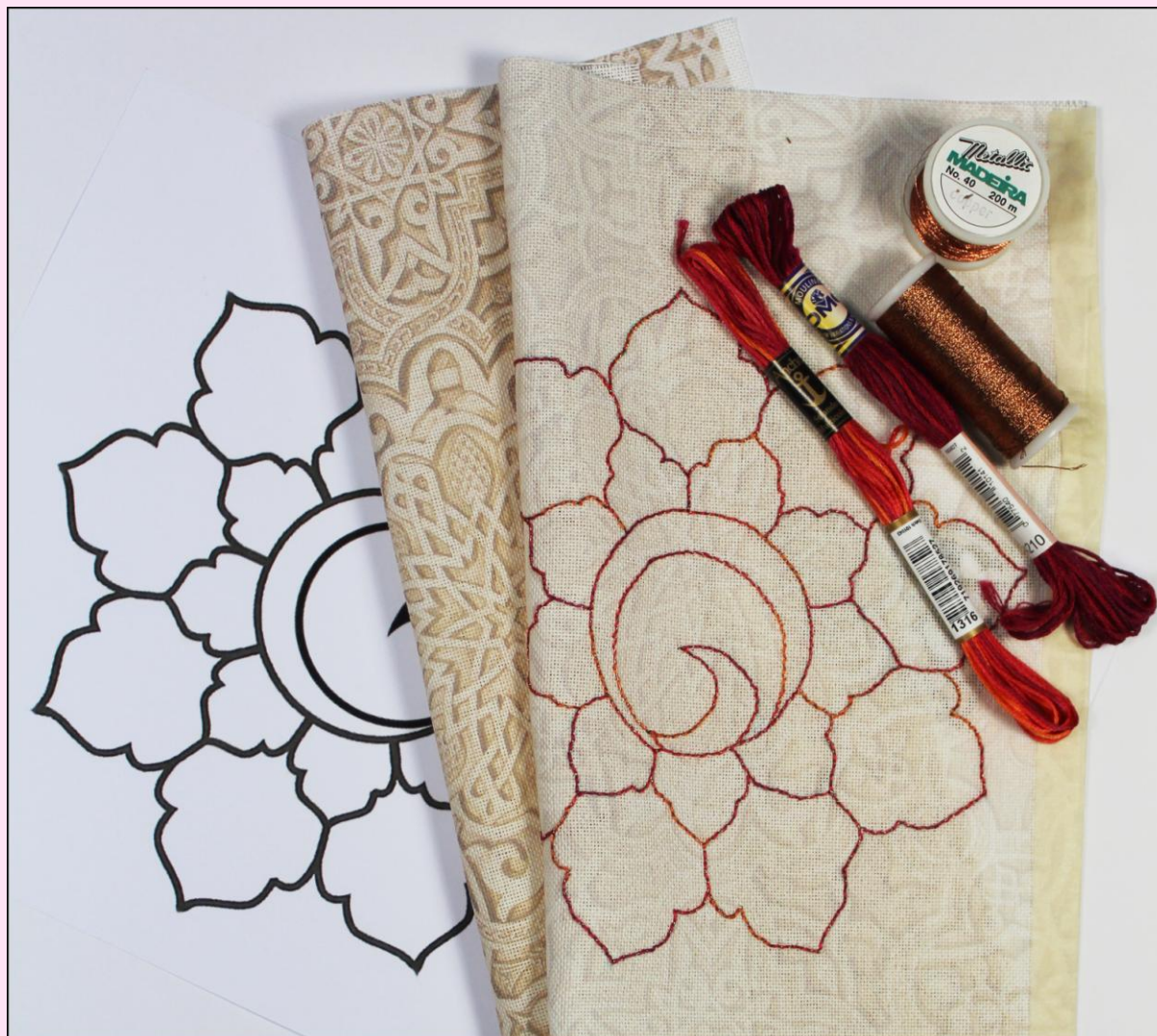
1. Stick the A4 self adhesive label to the back of the fabric. Trim off any loose threads ready for printing.
2. Prepare the photograph as required – size, opacity etc



Photograph being prepared using Adobe Photoshop. Any photo editing programme can be used.

3. Place the fabric face down into the print tray of the printer. Press 'Print' and the material and label will pass through the printer as normal.
4. Peel the sticky label off the material.
5. The material is then ready for use.

Caution: Material that has been printed in this manner may not be colourfast. If the embroidery is to be washed, TEST the fabric beforehand.



Printed fabric for new design 'Inception', a Spanish design based on the Alhambra

Using this method it is possible to create specialist backgrounds, but the size of the paper limits the size of the material than can be printed. An A4 printer will produce a printed fabric 21.0 x 29.7cm, 8.27 x 11.69 inches, which is suitable for a small project.

An A3 printer will produce a printed fabric 29.7 x 42.0cm, 11.69 x 16.53 inches which is suitable for a medium size project.

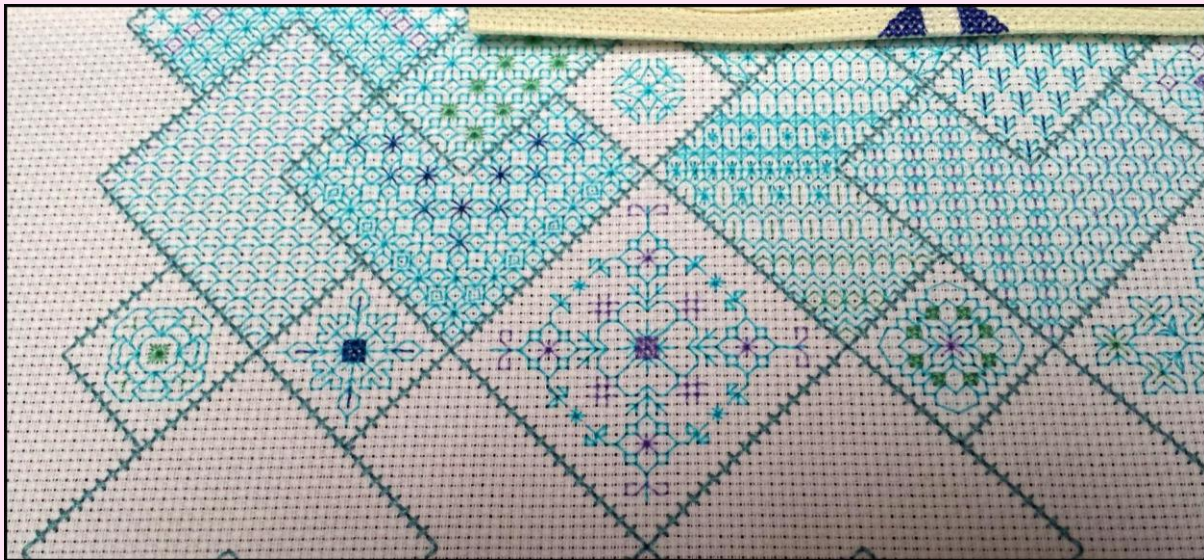
Readers Gallery

Many readers across the world are participating in the 'Save the Stitches' project and it has been a pleasure to see how people are approaching the blocks month by month. It is also interesting to see which frames individuals are using for their work.

Blackwork Journey Blog – September 2014

The use of a frame is down to individual preference. I prefer to work without a frame for most of my projects, but for pulled work or Hardanger, I would always use a frame.

My 'Save the Stitches' project was worked without using a frame, but Chris has carefully mounted her work in a frame where she can see the full width of the pattern and the fabric is under tension across the whole piece. (See below)



'Save the Stitches' worked by Chris on 14 count Aida blockweave

Viviana is using a plastic frame which clips onto the work and can easily be removed and repositioned. These frames are very light, hold the fabric firmly and are easily removed at the end of a session which is important if the fabric is not to be marked by the frame.



Viviana is using a plastic clip frame for her work. I am using a sit-on frame which leaves both hands free!

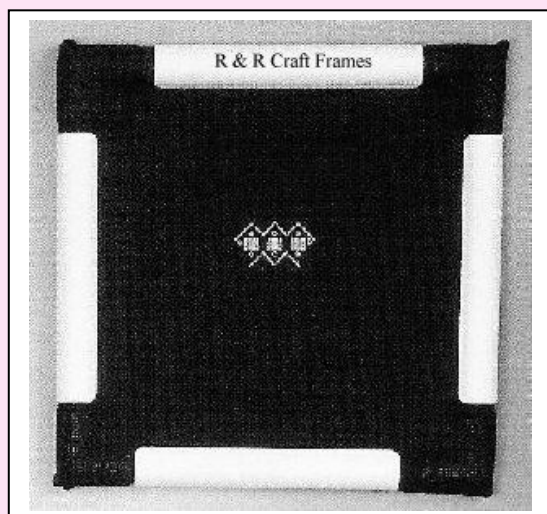
There are various versions of these plastic frames available in different countries and I find them very useful and have a wide range of them in my workroom, including a full size quilt frame which can be assembled within a few minutes.

They are washable and do not have any screws or fittings which makes them suitable for anyone with arthritis or other muscular problems. They can also be clamped into a floor frame. I use mine with my Lowery metal floor frame if I need to keep both hands free. (See below)

The version most commonly available in the UK is made by R & R Enterprises

R & R Enterprises

Universal Craft Frames©



Hand Frames (individual sizes)

Ideal for needlepoint, embroidery quilting, cross-stitch, silk painting etc. These frames are suitable for any application where the work has to be held firmly, but gently in place with variable tension.

6" x 6" (15cm x 15cm) - fixed size

9" x 9" (23cm x 23cm)

11" x 11" (28cm x 28cm)

11" x 17" (28cm x 43cm)

14" x 14" (35cm x 35cm)

17" x 17" (43cm x 43cm)

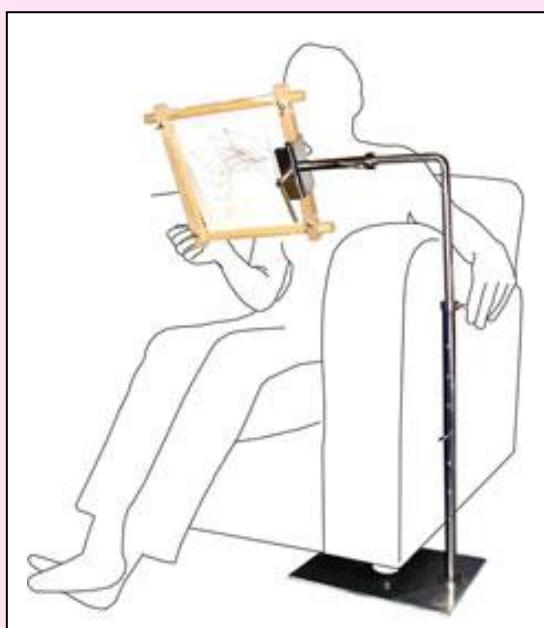
Multi Pack

Any of the above frames are interchangeable
(excluding 6" x 6")

e.g. 9" x 9" (23cm x 23cm) and

14" x 14" (35cm x 35cm)

will also make 9" x 14" (23cm x 35cm)



Multi Pack

A choice of three frame sizes. The pack will make a
17" x 17" (43cm x 43cm) frame and an

11" x 11" (28cm x 28cm) frame at the same time.

or by using two long lengths and two short lengths an
11" x 11" (28cm x 28cm) frame can be made.

Tube diameter: $\frac{3}{4}$ " (19mm)

I find the 9" x 9" inch and the 11" x 11" useful for most
small to medium projects.

Lowery metal floor frame

Other variations and manufacturers can be found by a
search on the internet but find a frame that suits your needs and is comfortable for you to
work with. A good frame is a worthwhile investment!

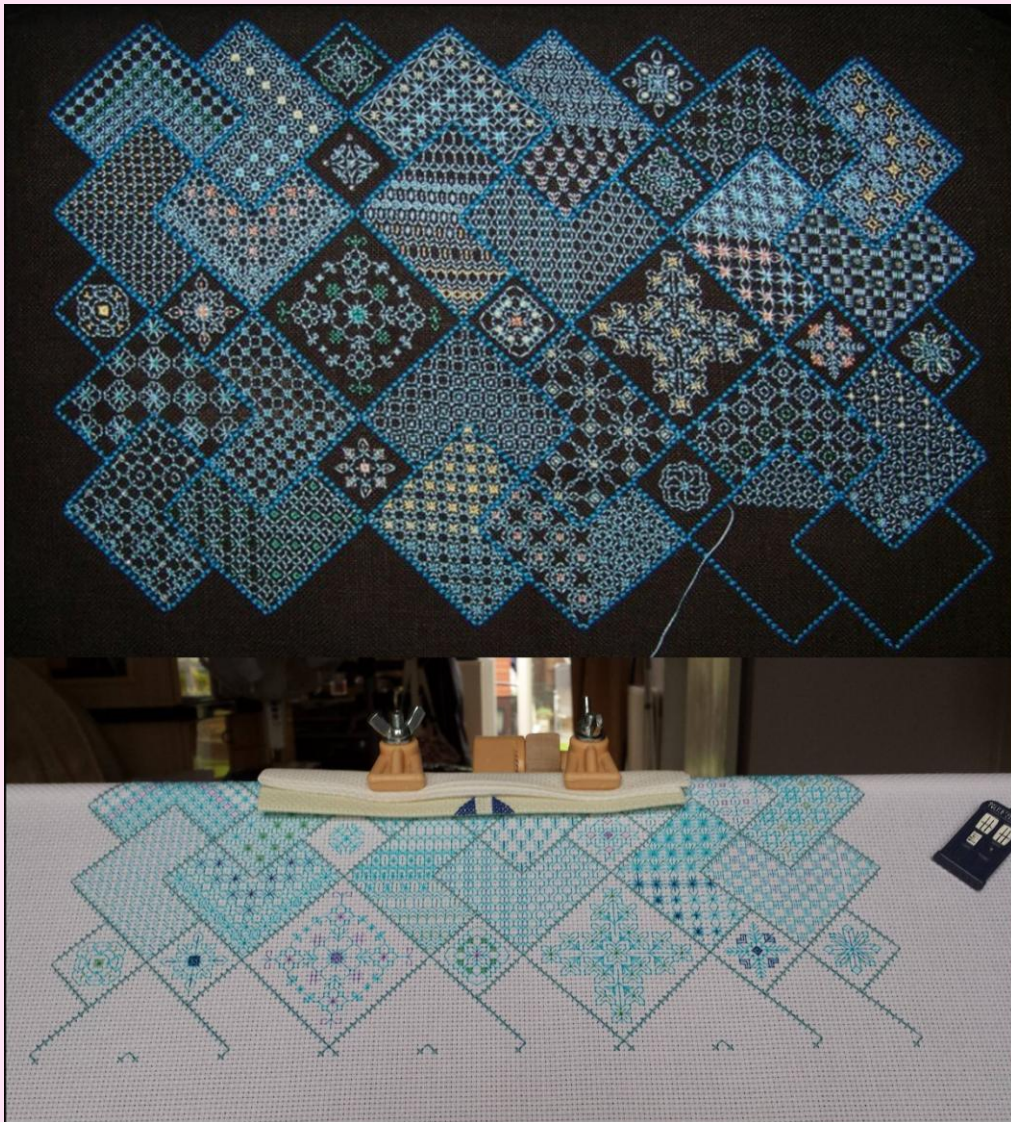
For more information about frames, go to the ‘Techniques’ section of Blackwork Journey - TQ0002 Frames.

Using colour in ‘Save the Stitches’

Nothing highlights the differences as well as a photograph!

Chris and Meg have both chosen green threads, but Chris has chosen to work on white Aida fabric, whereas Meg is working on black evenweave fabric.

Dark colours can be very hard to see and the colours have to be carefully selected so that they make an impact. Light colours can also be difficult to see if the threads chosen do not stand out sufficiently on the fabric.



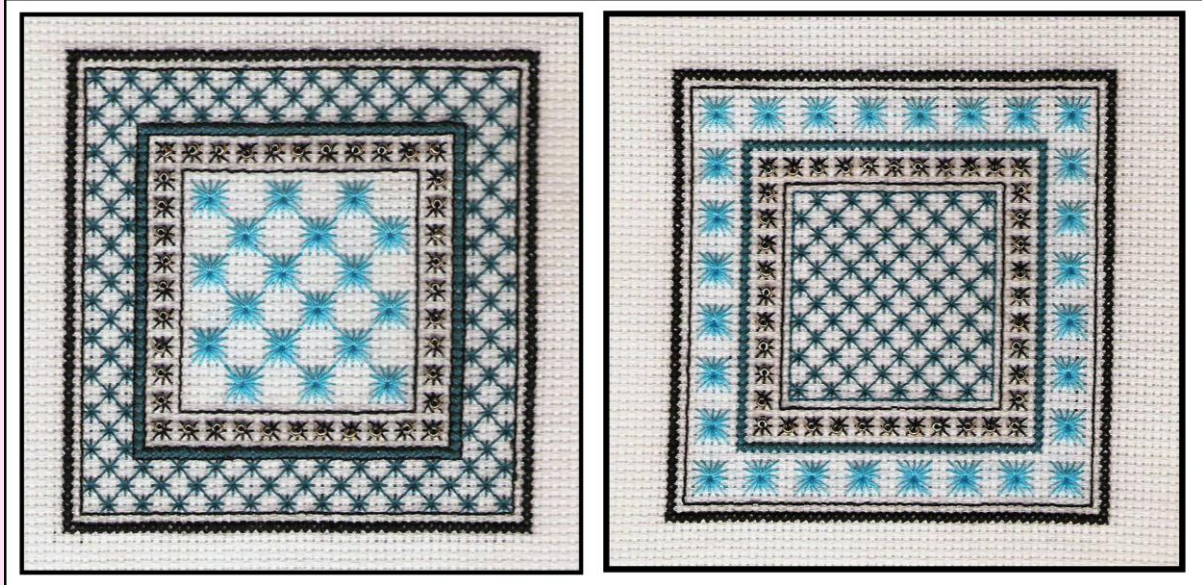
‘Save the Stitches’ work in progress by Meg and Chris

Blackwork Journey Blog – September 2014

When deciding which fabric and threads to use, lay them out on the fabric. Pull out one strand and see if it shows up sufficiently. If necessary, work a small sample to see if it provides the desired effect. If it is not dark enough, one shade darker will often produce the right result and planning at this stage will reduce the amount of unpicking later!



Using one strand of the pale colour will not show up on the fabric when working back stitch. Change to a darker tone and the back stitch line will 'stand out' on the fabric. This is particularly important when choosing pastel tones.



CH0143 Scented Sachets. The electric blue makes an impact – a paler blue would not have had the desired effect.

Experimenting with new techniques, colour and equipment can open up new avenues for exploration and whilst it may mean stepping outside one's comfort zone it can provide immense satisfaction for the embroider.

Readers Gallery

I always look forward to receiving photographs of work that people have completed and two special ones arrived in my inbox this month from Lynne in New Zealand and Judith in the UK.



'Cross Stitch and Needlework' May 2013.

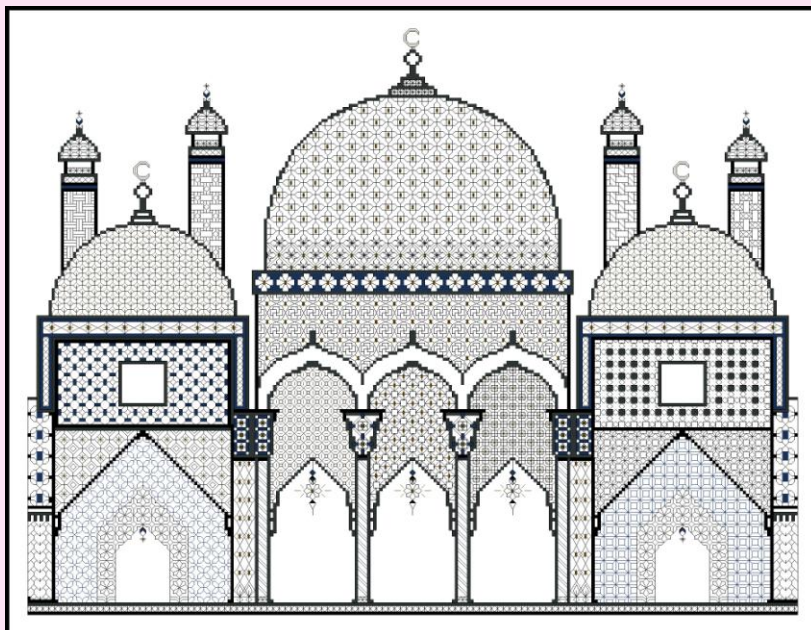
Blackwork Journey Blog – September 2014

Julia in New Zealand decided to stitch the chart and the result is here for all to admire! It has been framed in a similar way to the magazine presentation and the dark wood enhances the embroidery.



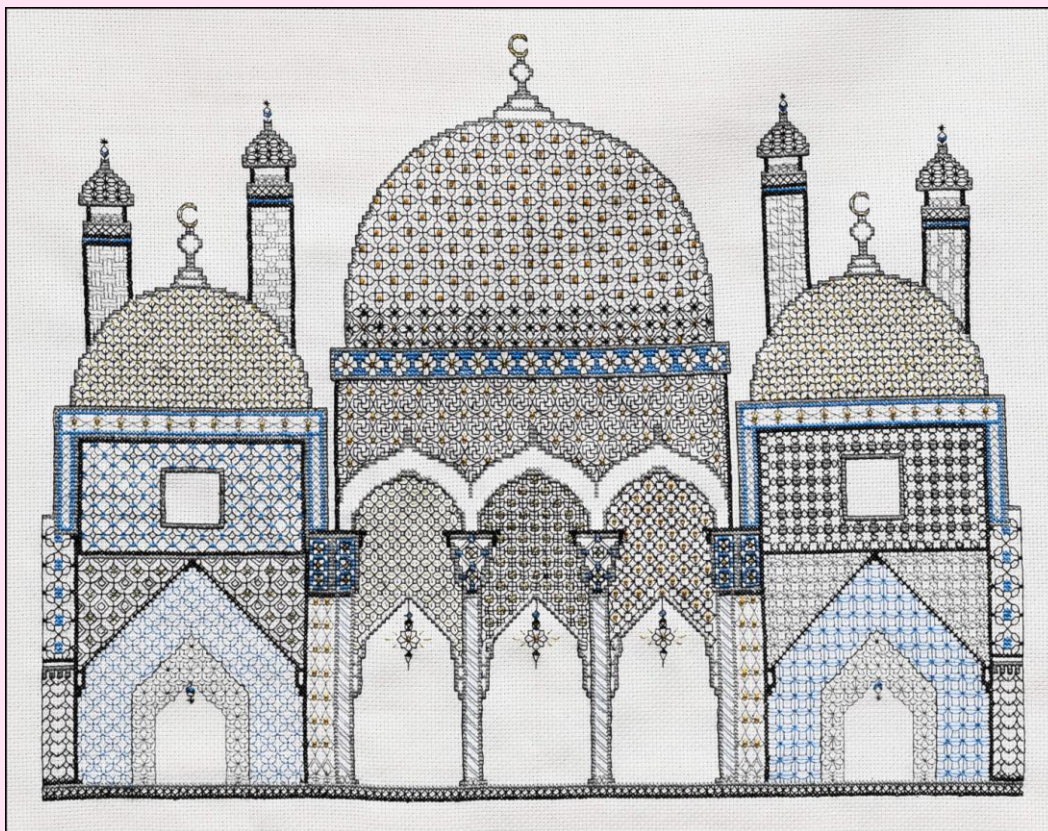
'Da Capo' by Lynne

Islamic patterns have always been important in my designing and CH0218 Bukhara was a large design with many complicated patterns and some intricate details. Judith decided to take on the challenge and has produced an excellent piece of embroidery which will be framed and entered into a competition in 2015.



"I am very pleased with it and much enjoyed doing it. I am fascinated by all the different stitches which one can achieve and the effect of gold thread and beads. I can see how you have become 'hooked' on it."

Judith



CH0218 Bukhara worked on 14 count Aida blockweave by Judith, UK



Jacqueline from France has sent me her latest work in progress 'Save the Stitches'

Happy stitching, *Liz*

