



Blackwork Journey Blog

March 2017

Travel - Inspiration



*Japanese
style Kigin*



Spring is coming, time to travel!

The month of February proved to be very interesting. We spent a week on the Mediterranean island of Malta where I lived when I was a little girl and my father was in the Royal Navy. It was a chance to escape the damp and dreary UK winter and explore a tiny, but fascinating island.

I remembered the smell of incense in the village church, the goats who wandered onto our veranda and the firecrackers at the numerous festivals, but this time I wanted to find out whether crafts, like lace making, still played a part in the lives of the Maltese women and I will explain more about what I found in my April Blog

Stitching for Blackwork Journey has been carried out in many parts of the world, but seldom in such a picturesque setting as the ramparts overlooking Valletta harbour. However, it was somewhat colder than I expected!

Malta has a long history and has been inhabited since settlers from Sicily arrived around 5200 BC. Malta's location has historically given it great strategic importance as a naval base and a succession of powers, including the Phoenicians, Romans, Moors, Normans, Sicilians, Spanish, Order of St. John, French and British, have ruled the islands. With just a little imagination it is possible to visualise Suleiman the Magnificent laying siege to Malta, moored outside the Grande Harbour in 1565, or to imagine the knights of the Order of St John with their eight-pointed cross consolidating their rule over the island and endowing it with great buildings and works of art.

Malta became an independent state in 1964 and a republic in 1974 and since 2004 the country has been a member state of the European Union.



*Star - Venerable Order of St John
Malta
Design for the future?*



Latest design:

"Lavender Cantara" by Liz Almond

"Just Cross Stitch" April 2017

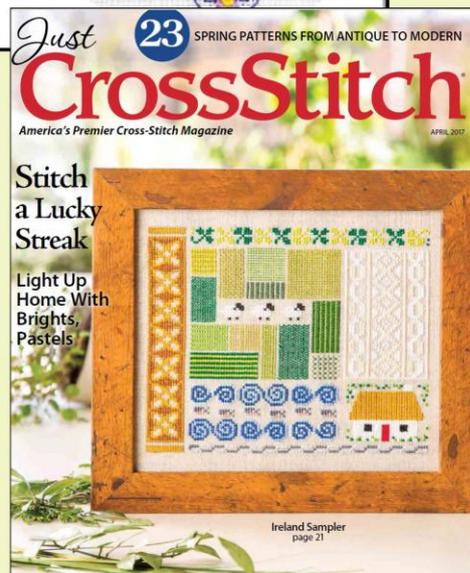


Lavender Cantara Design by Liz Almond of Blackwork Journey



Just Cross Stitch

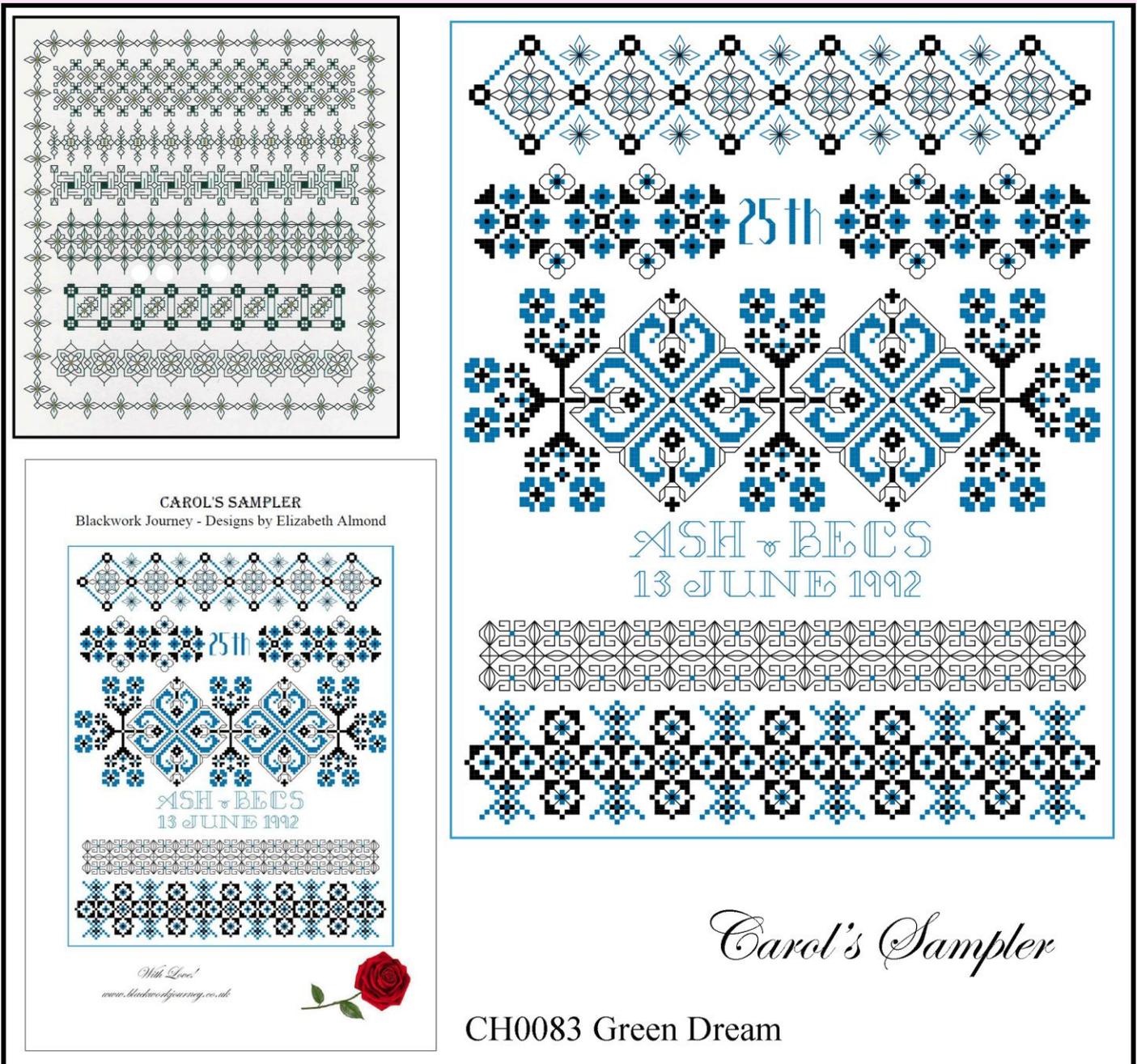
April 2017



'Cantara' is an Arabic baby name meaning 'bridge'. The Muslim meaning is 'small bridge'. In this design Cantara is the bridge between two different techniques, cross stitch and blackwork.

Changing designs to suit the occasion.

Carol wanted to create a 25th Wedding Anniversary sampler for her friends and asked me if I could help. The chart she chose was CH0083 Green Dream. This is an early band sampler from my site and could be altered. She already had a frame which she wanted to use, so Carol gave me the information and I altered to chart. I then created an individual PDF for her to embroider.



Many of the designs in Blackwork Journey can be altered to suit different occasions and I will alter, design embroideries, add initials and dates if requested. If you would like a design personalised, please let me know in good time and I will do my best to help!

Pandora's Box - Port Elizabeth Embroiderers' Guild - South Africa.

I have been working with this enthusiastic group on 'Pandora's Box' which was a free project published in Blackwork Journey. Alice has been co-ordinating the work and keeping me updated on their progress with e-mails and pictures over the past year. so when I received this e-mail I thought I would share it with you.

"We as a group had so much fun working on your Pandora's Box. I am attaching some photos of some of the individuals who participated as well as some of the work done by our ladies.

This project took off like wild fire. There was much discussion regarding what fabric to use and what threads to use. As you can imagine with a group of people we used anything that took our fancy – Aida, Evenweave, Floba, large count small count. I personally used Floba so I could see what I was doing! As for the kinds of thread, both stranded and perle were used. As for the brands, we used DMC, Mez, Anchor, House of Embroidery, to mention a few. As for colours, there was autumn shades, purples, reds, multi-coloured, whatever took the particular embroiderer's fancy.

Some of the ladies worked at a leisurely pace, while others "attacked" the project like a steam train going full ahead. It was lovely to see what progress each member had made between meetings. As I was leading the group, I tried my best to stay ahead of the group, but did not always succeed.

Each month I would do a power point slide show of what was in the latest pattern on the internet. I also explained to the ladies how to join your Facebook page so that they could draw more inspiration from your comments and from what the ladies all over the globe were doing. The advantage of the power point slide show was that the work was large and could be easily seen by the ladies.

For the ladies who did not have access to the internet or perhaps did have but did not have a printer, I would go to a local photographic shop where the staff would print the pages for me. They were then sold to the ladies at the exact cost of the printing. No profit was made. It was just more convenient as I was passing the shop en route to the meeting. There was also an interest shown by the ladies at the shop, so each month they would see what is happening.

What happened to the work upon completion. I have turned mine into a coffee tablecloth. Other ladies have framed theirs, turned into a cushion and even a tray. The work is protected from spillage by the glass. It is a lovely way of displaying your work."

Best wishes from Alice and the ladies!



Pandora

EB006 Pandora's Box





*Port Elizabeth
E.G.
S Africa*



Sheila's work. She unpicked it a couple of times as she was not happy with either the colour or the thickness of the thread, but the finished embroidery is really beautiful!

Blackwork Journey Blog, March 2017

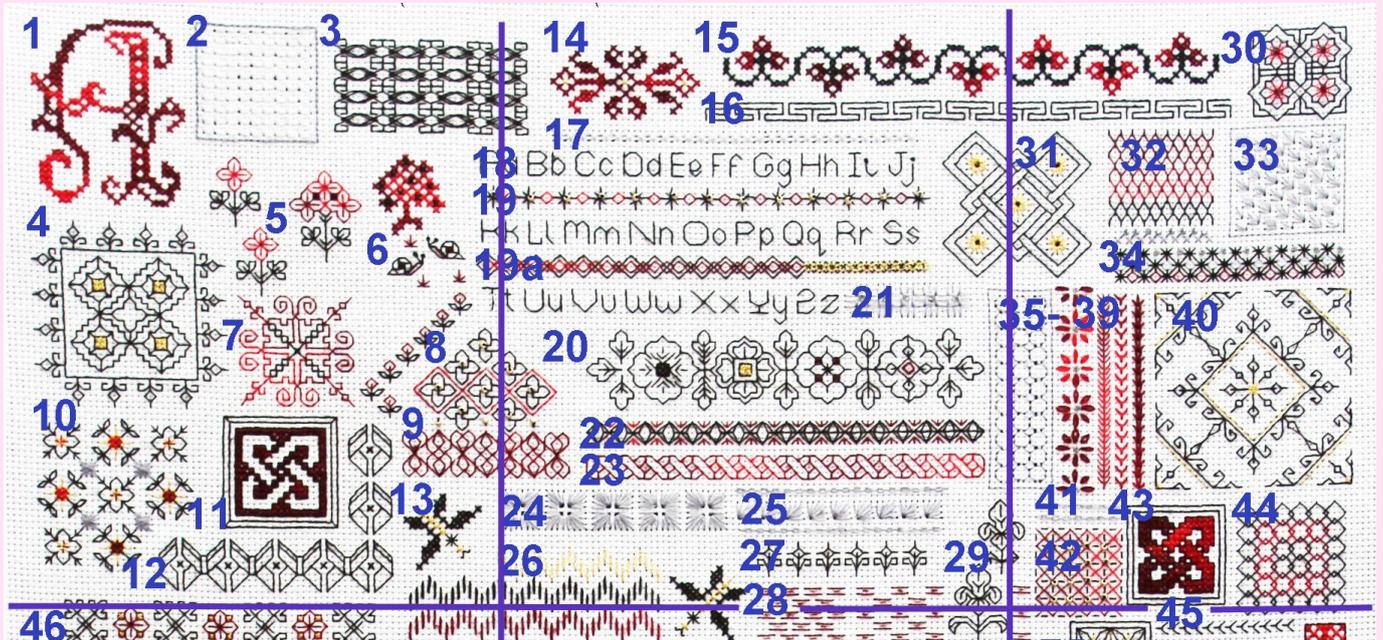


I am attaching some of the photos just to give you an idea of how much we enjoyed the project. The people in the photos are: Riana H (her own work in the right hand and Anne Stin the left hand), Alice Wilson (current chairlady) and Sue P"

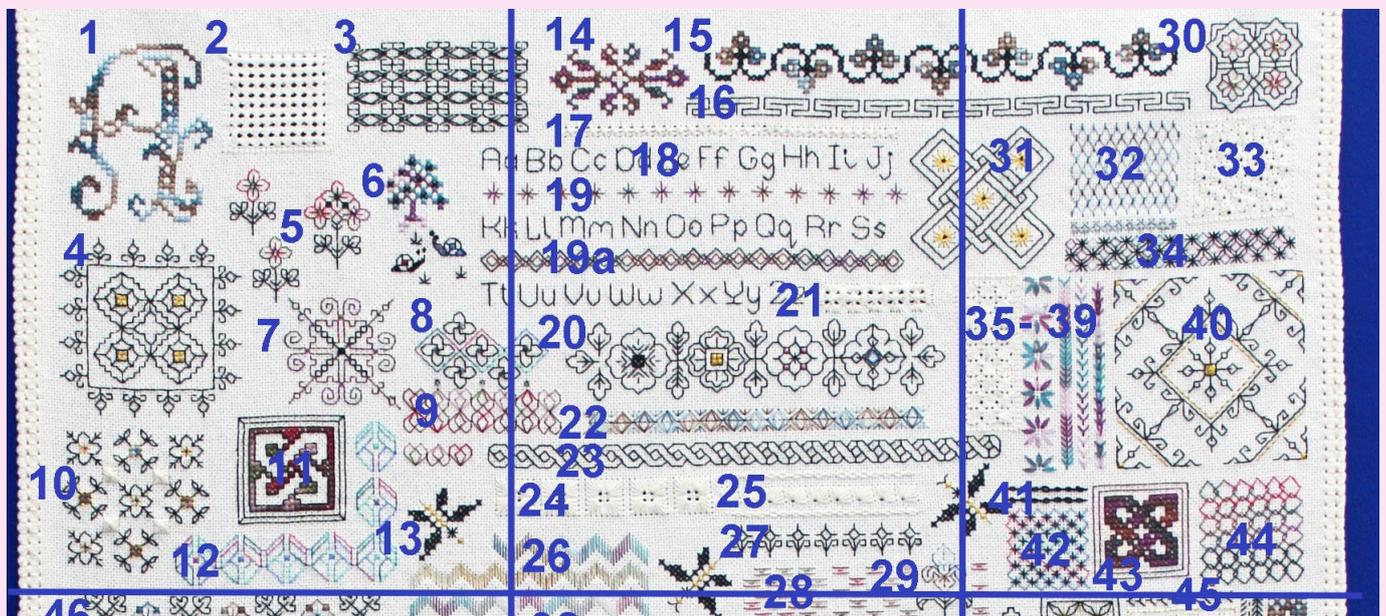
My thanks go to Ann, Alma, Judith and Noreen (current assistant projects co-ordinator) Sue, Wendy Anne B and Alma, all the ladies of the group and especially Alice for all her hard work!

Sublime Stitches Part 3

Part 3 completes the full width of the design and Part 4 next month will continue underneath Part 1. Because of the way the software prints the charts Part 3 is not as wide as the other parts, so it will allow you to catch up on the previous sections. However, it is full of different patterns and stories. If you look back over the first three parts you will see that there are at least 45 different patterns in a very small area.



'Sublime Stitches' Aida Parts 1 - 3 Patterns 1 - 45



'Sublime Stitches' Evenweave Parts 1 - 3 Patterns 1 - 45

A number of readers have already completed Parts 1 and 2 and have been sending pictures into the Facebook group set up for the project:

Sublime Stitches - Elizabeth Almond Designs

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1695785137378480/#>



Work in progress by Dawn, Julie, Lisa, Patsy and Geke!

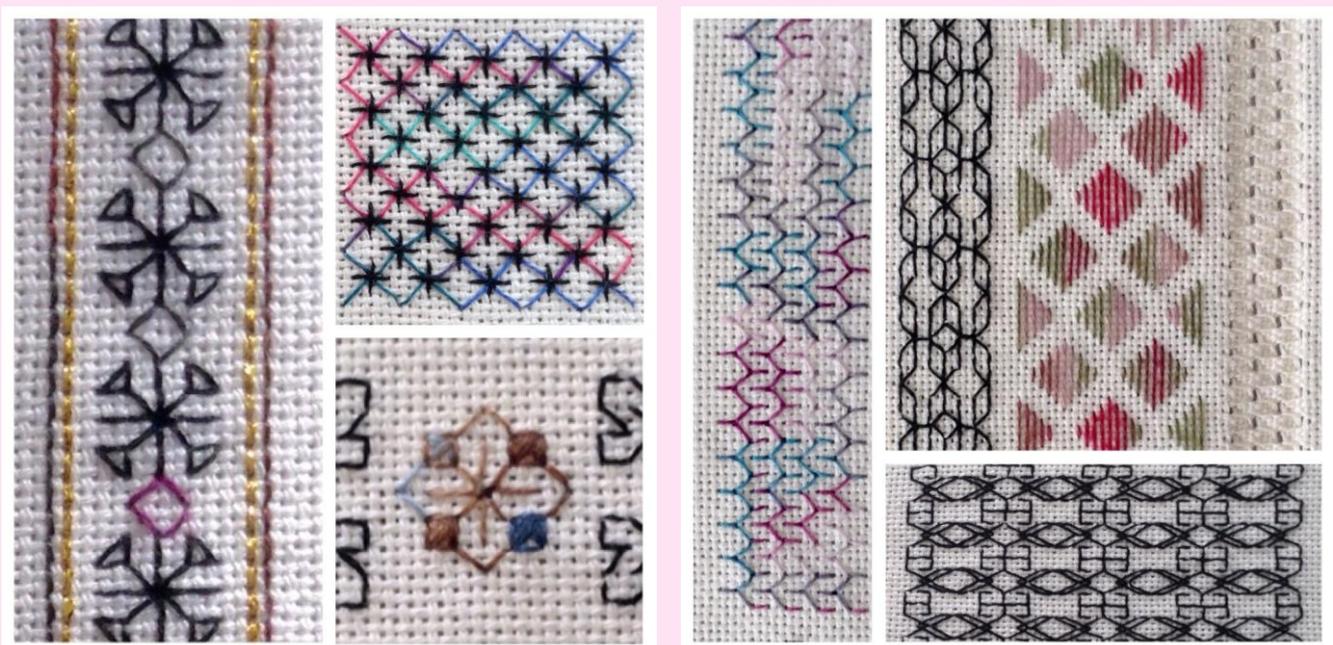
There have been three samplers created and posted in Blackwork Journey for readers who want to work smaller samplers, but still using the stitches from "Sublime Stitches". Sampler 3 is shown below.



CH0350 Sampler 3 designed from Part 3 of "Sublime Stitches"



CH0347 Sampler 1 and CH0349 Sampler 2 can be found in 'Chart's on the Blackwork Journey website



Extracts from "Sublime Stitches". The design can be worked on evenweave or Aida fabric.

DMC Coloris threads are very effective, but choose carefully. Some of the paler shades will not show up well on light coloured fabric. DMC plain threads are also linked to the Coloris range

To show how effective the plain and the variegated threads are together I have grouped some of the threads together. They range from the subtle to the dramatic..

Blackwork Journey Blog, March 2017



DMC Coloris 4504
 DMC Floss:
 3781
 3032
 3803
 316



DMC Coloris 4507
 DMC Floss:
 502
 959
 798
 3808



DMC Coloris 4514
 DMC Floss:
 153
 317
 3809
 3834

Pale pink 153 is too pale to use as a single thread on white fabric.



DMC Coloris 4519
 DMC Floss:
 321
 498
 838
 500

This is a much stronger group of colours.

New Design for March!

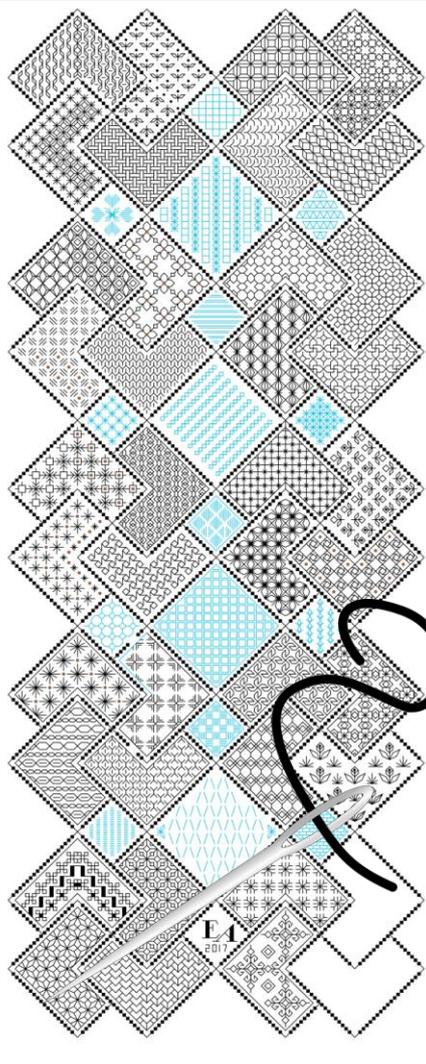


CH0351 Colour
Aomori can be found
in 'Charts' in
Blackwork Journey

*Japanese
style Kogin*

This design uses the DMC Coloris and plain threads very effectively. It has been highlighted with gold metallic thread and beads.





Idea for the future!

"Save the Stitches" has proved to be a very popular design and new people are starting it every month and joining the associated Facebook group. However, not everyone wants to start a project quite as large so I am in the process of designing a new project called "New Stitches" which will be a smaller version of "Save the Stitches".

It will be 124 x 310 stitches
8.86 x 22.14 inches

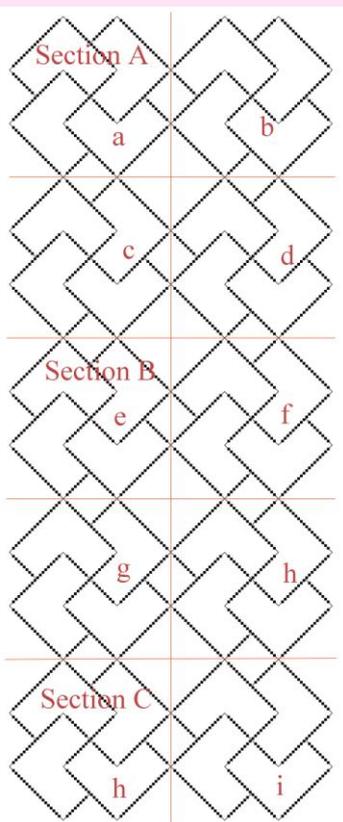
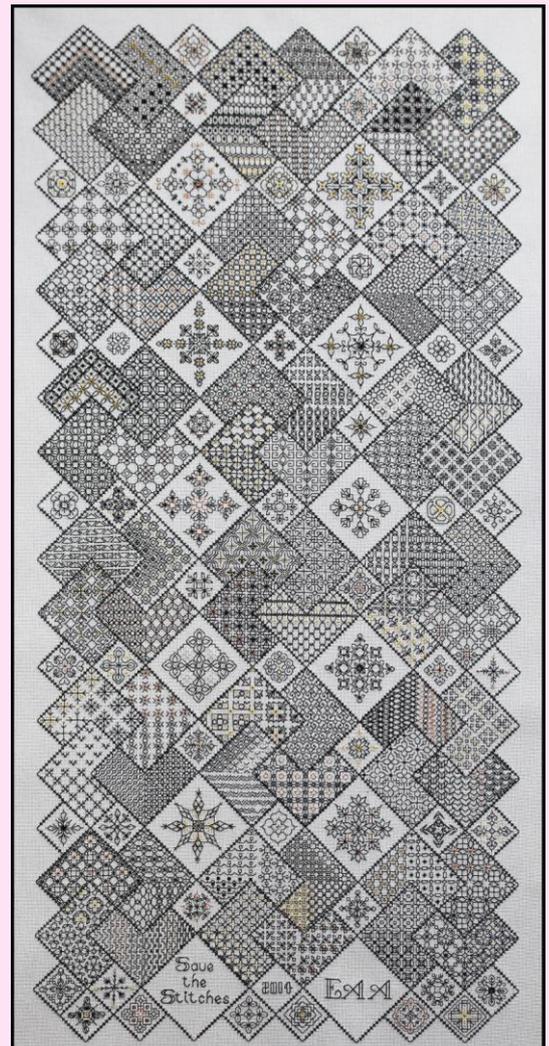
Again, if you wanted a smaller design still, it can be split into different parts by omitting some of the blocks

There will be 16 areas of pulled thread work patterns included to add interest and some colour guidelines and 16 additional blackwork motifs for a traditional blackwork design.

Work in progress "New Stitches"

To make the design smaller just omit some of the sections.

An optional border will be created for "New Stitches" but it is still in the design stage.



The original "Save the Stitches" measured:

14.29 x 29.29 inches
Full pattern width and height:
180 x 386 stitches

I hope you have enjoyed this month's Blog and that it has given you food for thought,

Happy stitching!

Liz