



# Blackwork Journey Blog

December 2022



# Merry Christmas

**Blackwork Journey**  
Little Book Of Alphabets  
E-Book EB0026

**Blackwork Journey**  
Inspiration - Lily Mills

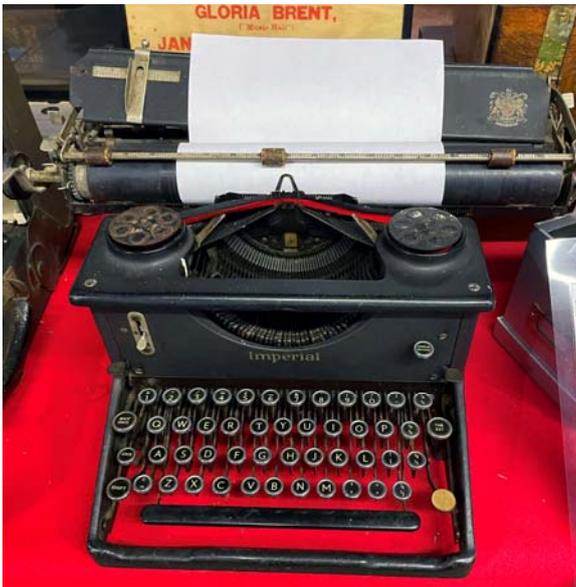
Alphabet Quilt





*I wish all my readers a very happy and peaceful Christmas!*

Coming towards the end of another eventful year and looking forward to 2023, I thought about all the changes that have happened in my lifetime and not least, the way in which I now use technology as an everyday part of my life, including writing my monthly Blog.



In the days before computers, like many people, I used a typewriter and when I visited a museum recently and saw one there it brought back so many memories! Whilst mine was not quite as old fashioned, I remember loading the ribbon, getting covered in ink and using Tippex to do my corrections and oh, the joys of carbon paper!!!

Nowadays, we take technology for granted. Having instant access to information via the internet and the mobile phone. Storing photographs on the Cloud and being able to download and print copies immediately instead of taking a roll of film to the chemist, waiting for the photos to be developed and discarding most of them!

If the internet fails or we cannot get a signal on the phone it is an inconvenience, but being able to contact members worldwide in an instant, send charts to Australia, Canada or

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Africa with no delay and no postal charges or delays is a joy. To keep in contact with family and friends through Facetime or Skype, do presentations through Zoom, especially through the recent Covid19 pandemic has been reassuring and a comfort.

Technology has been a steep learning curve for many of my generation who did not grow up with either computers or mobile phones. Our children have never lived without that knowledge and take it for granted. They will never understand how uncomplicated our lives were and cannot understand why we cannot grasp immediately how to access something, why the form won't fill in or how a programme works? I went back to college to do a three year web design course and various other photographic courses before I set up Blackwork Journey and if I was starting it today, I would do things very differently, but it is a lifelong learning process and so, of course, is embroidery.

Looking forward....

If we look back over the years to the projects we first did and look at what we do now we can see how tastes have changed and ideas and skills developed! Lifelong learning is essential and should be embraced, especially with practical skills such as needlework where confidence grows and ideas develop. The more you do the better the outcome. Try new techniques and keep an open mind. If you find that you have tried a technique and you don't enjoy it there are many other aspects to explore.

**New for Christmas 2022 EB0026 'The Little Book of Alphabets' – 100 pages to explore!**

**Looking for a Christmas gift for someone special? The front page can be personalised, just e-mail me!**

I have added a new e-book this month called EB0026 'The Little Book of Alphabets' which can be found in E-books on the Blackwork Journey website. This e-book was designed and stitched during the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic in 2021 – 2022 as my way of coping with the challenges of the last two years and investigating new ideas.

Alphabets can be used in many different ways and are always interesting to create. This e-book consists of three different size alphabets that can be enlarged or reduced in size using a photocopier. Different blocks, projects, techniques and ideas have been included to demonstrate how the designs can be used. Embroidery charts and samplers have been added where appropriate and each block, project and design has been embroidered. Coloured photographs and drawings of all the alphabets are included.

### **How can I use the alphabets?**

The patterns can be embroidered, quilted or used as Japanese sashiko designs. They can be used for free style embroidery and stitched on cotton or calico using free style embroidery stitches, or traced on to Zweigart 28 count evenweave fabric and filled with blackwork patterns. Project 1 'Alphabet quilt' contains all 36 blocks.

An Appendix with a free style font London Letters, a stitch dictionary and alphabet letter templates has been included.

Read through the e-book and decide how you want to use the letters and different techniques to create your projects or use your imagination to try something challenging!

However, I hope you enjoy exploring the many different ideas.



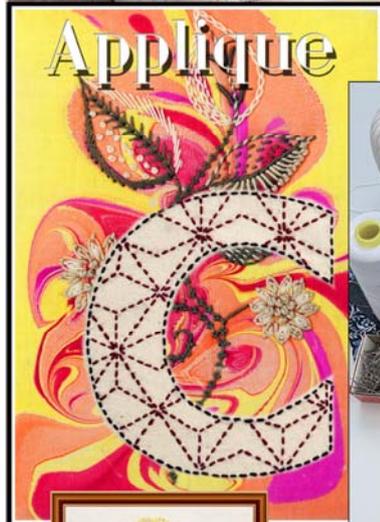
# Blackwork Journey

## Little Book Of Alphabets

E-Book EB0026



Alphabet Quilt



Applique



Recycle!

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff  
Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq  
Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

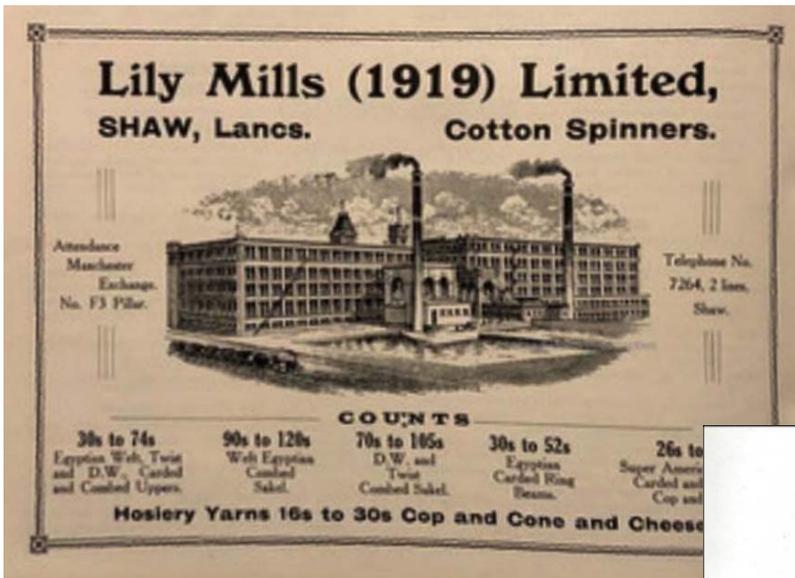


## SP0011 Lily Mills. The Story of a Lancashire Mill in the North of England

A new addition to 'Inspirations' this month is 'SP0011 Lily Mills'. The Story of a Lancashire Mill. Two embroideries were designed and stitched for a recent exhibition called,

### The Colours, Textures & Heritage of Lancashire Astley Hall Coach House Gallery 9th September - 16th October 2022

Lancashire the area in England where I live was dominated by cotton mills and the area was known in Victorian times as 'Cottonopolis'. This was a 19<sup>th</sup> century nickname for Manchester that was then in Lancashire, as it was a metropolis and centre of the cotton industry.



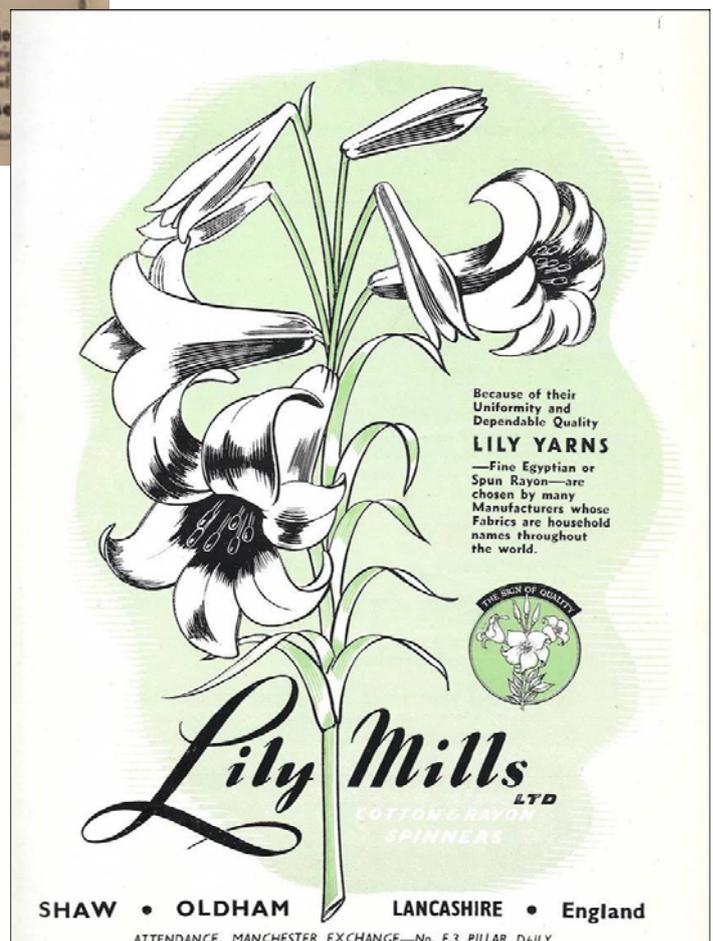
### Inspiration for Embroidery

The brief was to design a piece relating to the heritage of Lancashire. From a book on the Lancashire Textile Industry( 64th Edition) published in 1949, I found an illustration of Lily Mills Ltd, Shaw which was a cotton and rayon spinning factory, one of many that have since disappeared across Lancashire.

I know Shaw and the surviving mills in the area and was fascinated by the history, the lives of the mill girls and the conditions in which they worked.



*Lily Mills dominated the landscape.*





This is a large piece of free-style embroidery worked in textured stitches on calico.

**Stitches used:**

- Back stitch
- Back stitch whipped
- Stem stitch
- Wheatear stitch
- Lazy daisy stitch
- Mountmellik stitch
- Satin stitch

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Threaded back stitch  
Fly stitch Detached fly stitch  
Cable chain stitch Colonial knots Double knot stitch  
Chain stitch Whipped chain stitch  
Running stitch

*The second piece was printed onto calico and enhanced with free style embroidery stitches and blackwork.*



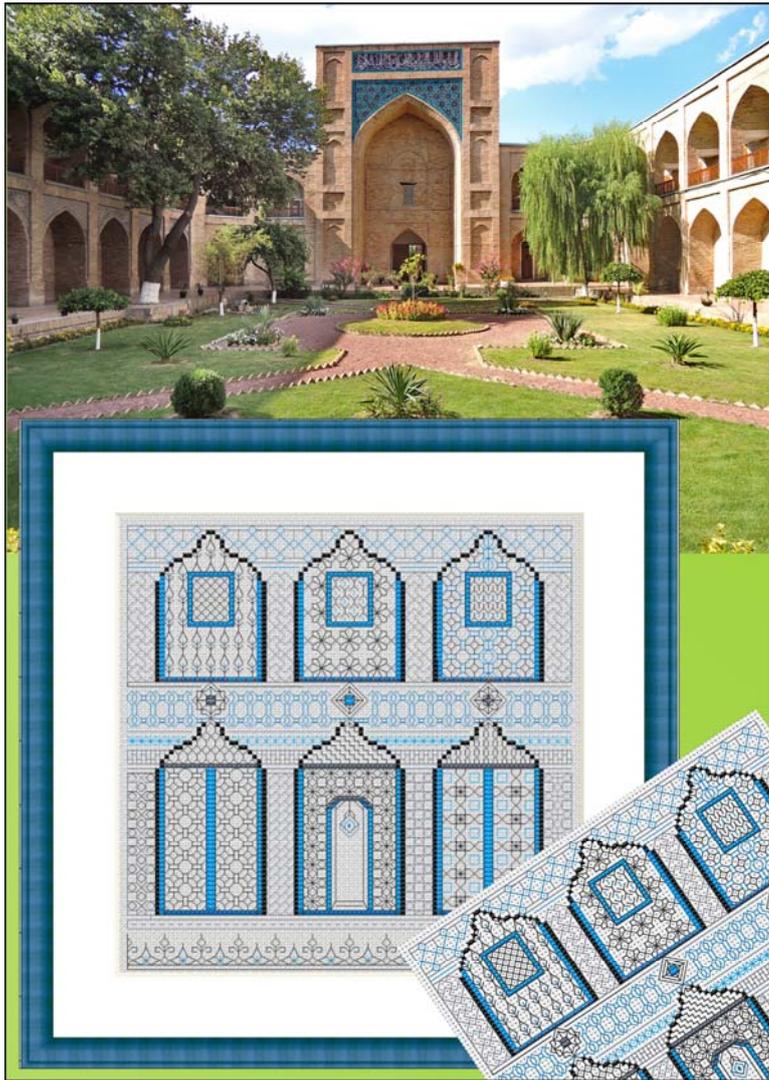
Cotton for Lancashire was unloaded at Liverpool Docks and transported through the 37 mile long Manchester Ship Canal to Manchester and then distributed to mills throughout the area.

Wooden shuttles and bobbins were the weaver's tools and can be found in many Lancashire homes including mine!

Unloading cotton - The Maritime Museum, Liverpool.

The work in the weaving sheds was hard and the days were long.

The weaving shed in Queen Street, Burnley, Lancashire is a good example of the layout of the looms. It was the world's only steam powered weaving shed.



**CH0429 Tashkent Summer**

Explore Islamic geometric design through the jali or stone screens found throughout the Islamic world from Tashkent to India. The electric blue reflects the coloured tiles found in Uzbekistan.

There are 26 different geometric blackwork patterns to explore.

**Design Area:** 6.86 x 6.93 inches

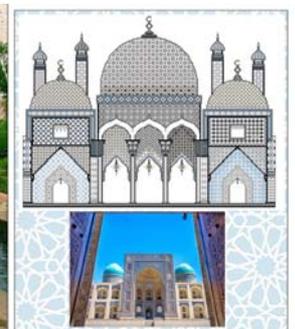
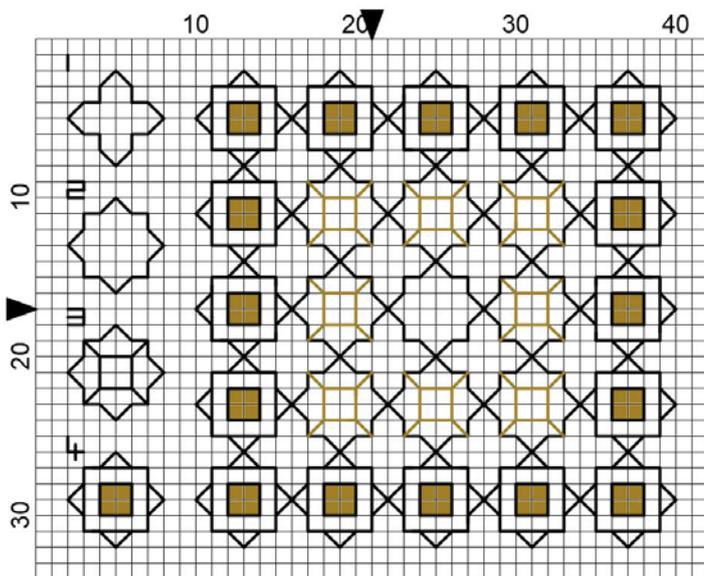
**Stitches:** 96 x 97

**Materials:**

Zweigart 28 count evenweave or 14 count Aida, 11 x 11 inches

The architecture is similar in many of the Islamic countries, but it is the colour in Uzbekistan and the intricate designs that captured my imagination.

This was designed for some of the 'Embroidery into Islamic architecture' day schools that I teach, where students can fill the shapes with their own choice of geometric blackwork patterns.



This simple pattern is built up from 4 basic shapes.

**Design area:** 2.14 x 2.14 inches **Stitches:** 30 x 30 **Fabric:** Zweigart 28 count evenweave, 5 x 5 inches

**Threads:** DMC 310 black, DMC E3852 gold. **Stitches used:** Back stitch, 1 strand Cross stitch, 2 strands

Beautiful Blackwork



This piece was on display at Harrogate in November and whilst it was difficult to photograph because of the reflection of the lights on the glass it is a wonderful piece of embroidery which I am sure you will enjoy.

**The Royal School of Needlework  
Embroidery Studio**

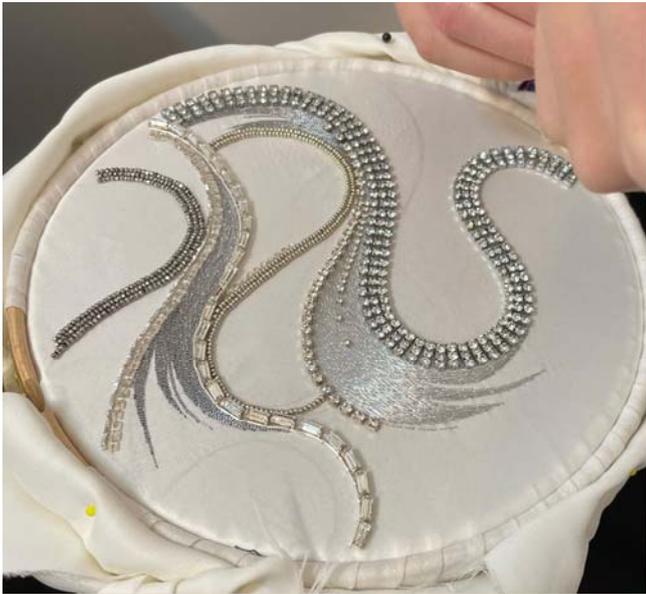
**In Celebration of  
HM The Queen's  
Reign**



This embroidery has been created to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II's 2022 Platinum Jubilee and is inspired by a Canvas work design found in the RSN Archive originally designed to celebrate the Silver Jubilee.

Counted Blackwork and Surface Stitches worked on Hardanger linen in a mix of Stranded and Perle Cottons combined with beadwork.

### Linnea Lyndon Royal School of Needlework Graduate 2022 – 2023 The Graduate Showcase 2022, Harrogate



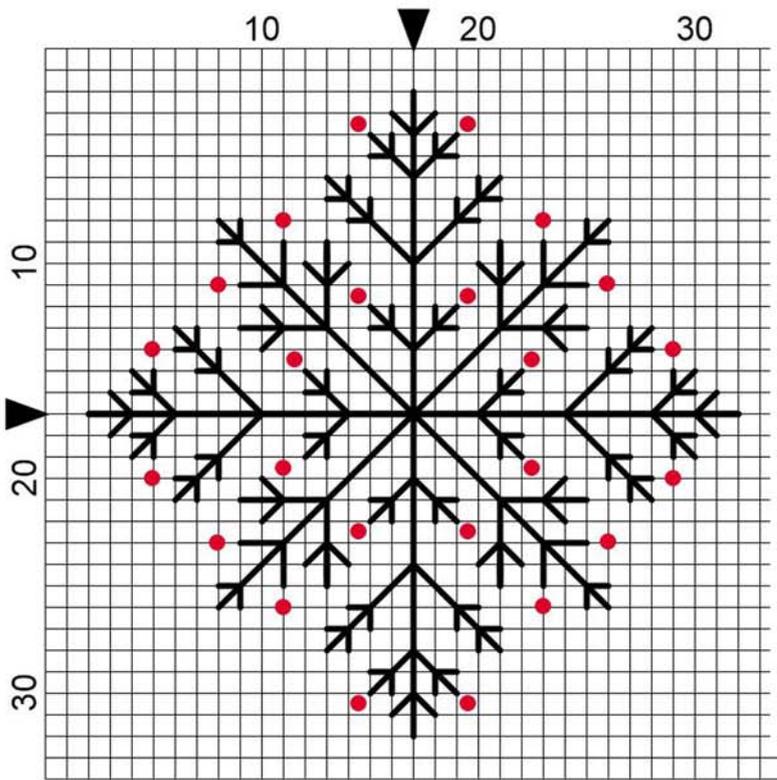
Delivered in partnership with the Embroiderers' Guild, the Graduate Showcase has been part of The Knitting & Stitching Shows for over 20 years, providing a platform for emerging talent to present work from their final degree shows.

This year's show hosted a gallery of work selected from final degree shows in fashion, textiles and embroidery from across the UK, celebrating the talents of the country's most innovative newly qualified designers.



It is always interesting to see new, young designers and their work and I really enjoyed talking to Linnea. She is just starting her career and has some clear ideas what she wants to achieve. I wish her well for the future!

## Christmas wreaths



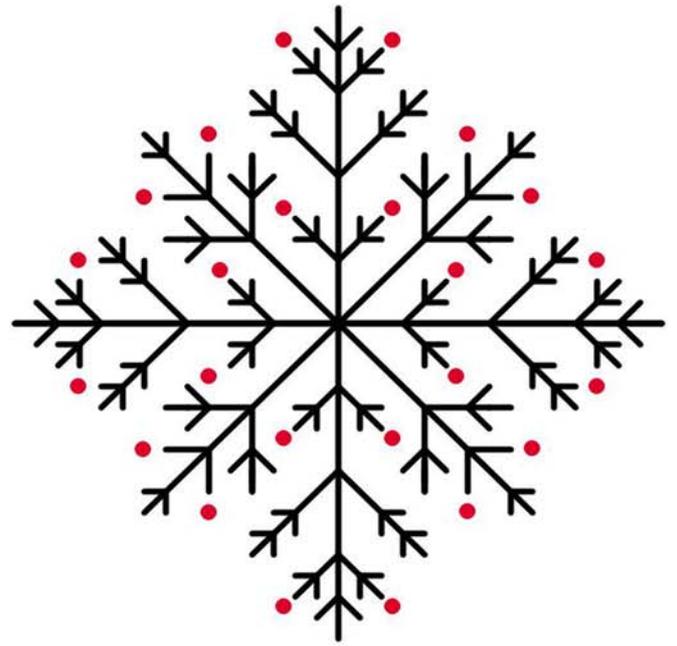
### 1. Counted thread

Design area: 2.43 x 2.43 inches, 34 x 34 stitches  
 Zweigart 28 count evenweave or 14 count Aida  
 Stitches used: Back stitch, 1 strand  
 Colonial or French knots, 3 strands



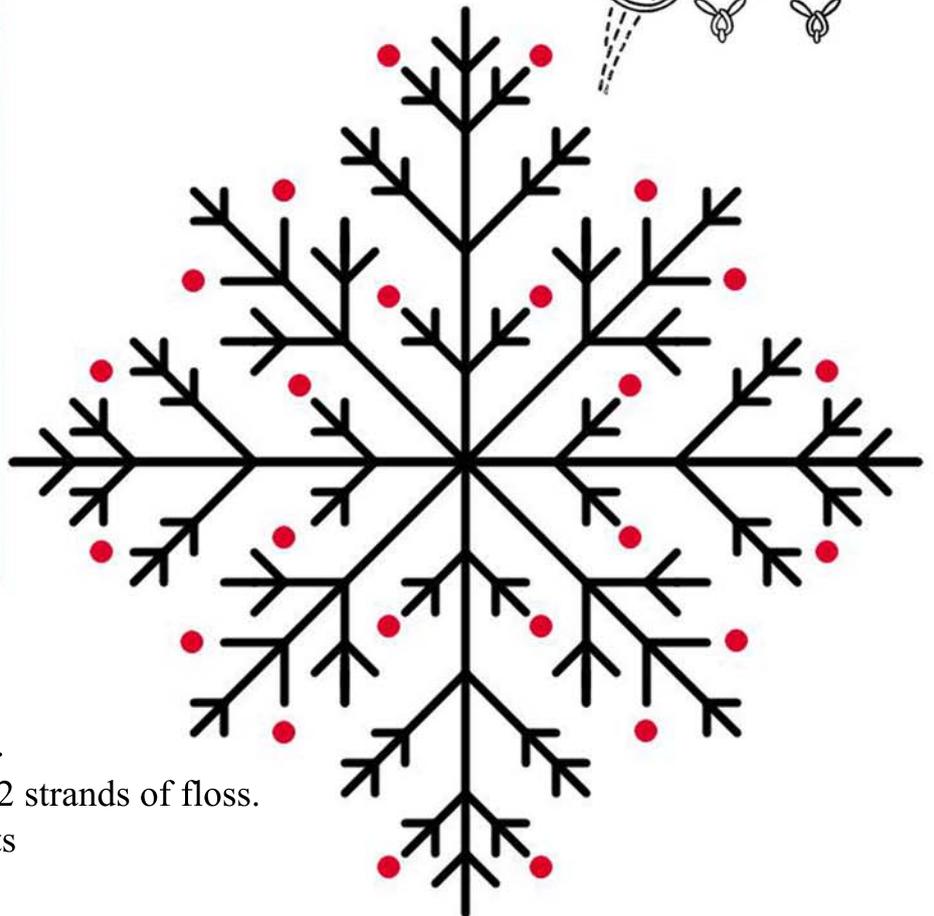
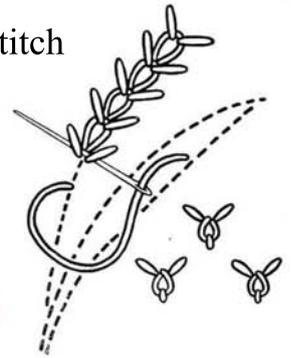
### Large wreath

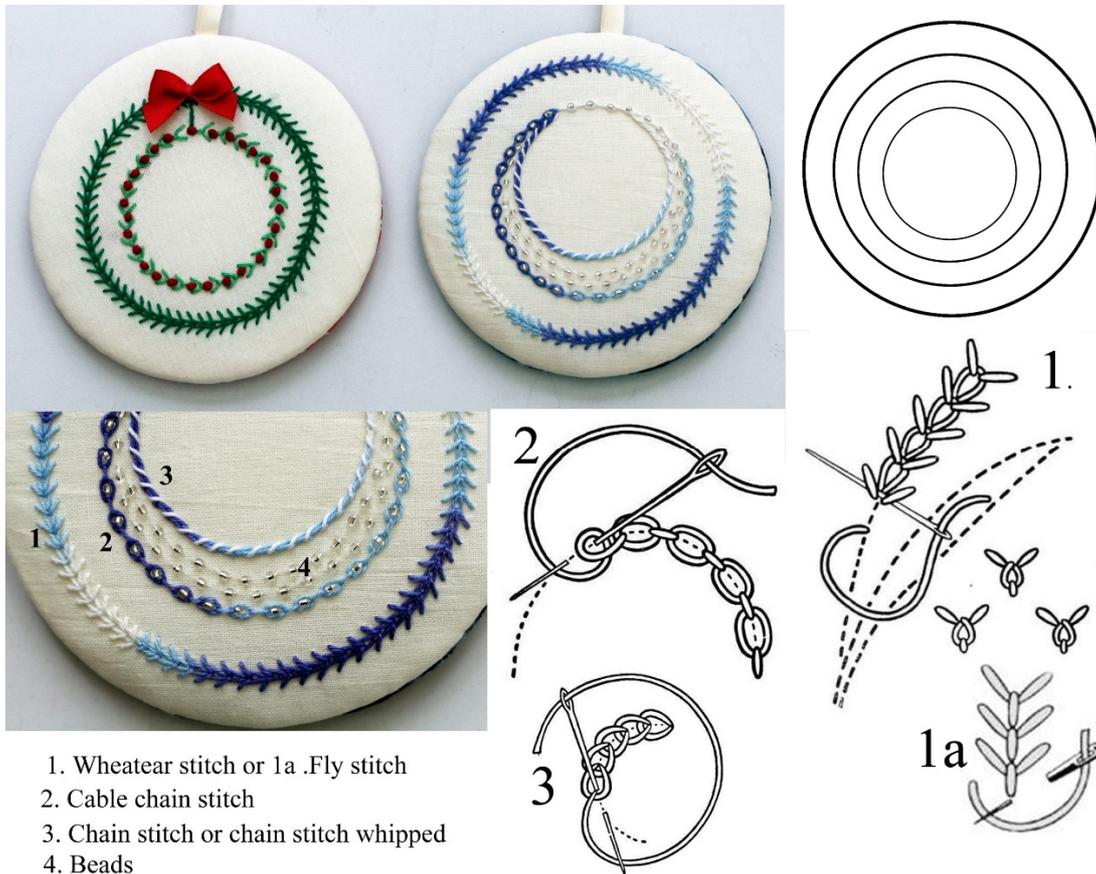
Trace the design onto calico or cotton.  
 Back stitch and whip the branches in 2 strands of floss.  
 Add beads or colonial or French knots



### 2. Small free style wreath

Wheatear stitch





1. Wheatear stitch or 1a .Fly stitch
2. Cable chain stitch
3. Chain stitch or chain stitch whipped
4. Beads

## Creating a wreath design using textured stitches for ornaments or cards.

**Fabric:** Cotton or calico – two pieces, 8 x 8 inches

**Threads:** Selection of threads of your choice, stranded floss, matt crochet cottons, Cotton P rle No 5 & 8

**Needles:** Crewel (large eye, sharp point) in different sizes. Small embroidery ring

**2 card circles** – use an old CD to draw the outside ring. Thin wadding to pad the card

### Method:

1. Draw the outside circle round the CD using a water-soluble pen. Add an inner circle 3 inches diameter and additional circles. Any textured stitches may be used but these are some of the most effective.
2. Using 4 strands of floss, Cotton P rle or chosen thread, work wheatear stitch or fly stitch round the circle. The centre fly stitch line can be whipped with a different colour.

**Green wreath** – Wheatear stitch, detached fly stitch and colonial knots (4 strands) or beads

**Blue wreath** - Row 1. Wheatear stitch Row 2. Cable chain stitch, beaded in chain Row 3. Chain stitch (4 strands) whipped with 4 strands. Row 4 two rows of beads.

3. Place the finished embroidery face down on a soft towel and press lightly. Cut the 2 fabric circles one inch larger than the outline.
4. Cut out the two card circles, add wadding (optional). Using a strong thread work running stitch round the fabric and draw up over the card, Add a ribbon hanger and bow. Slip stitch the two pieces together. There are 12 more designs in E-books on the Blackwork Journey website.

If you have any queries please contact:

[lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk](mailto:lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk)

Website: [www.blackworkjourney.co.uk](http://www.blackworkjourney.co.uk)

Happy stitching, *Liz*

