



Blackwork Journey Blog

June 2023





In May we celebrated the Coronation of King Charles III and his wife Queen Camilla in London. To see the historic ceremonial robes, military costumes and banners on display was a feast for the eyes and the fine embroidery and goldwork was a joy to behold.

The Coronation Service at Westminster Abbey



The Coronation service took place at Westminster Abbey which is a royal church and a World Heritage site with over a thousand years of history. Since 1066, it has been the location of the Coronations of 40 English and British monarchs and a burial site for 18 English, Scottish and British monarchs.

King Charles and Camilla arrived at the Abbey in procession from Buckingham Palace, known as the “King's Procession”. After the service had taken place, the couple returned to the palace, where they were joined by other members of the royal family.

They made a family appearance on the balcony to conclude the day's ceremony.

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Queen Camilla arrived to be crowned in the same Robe of State used by Queen Elizabeth II at the 1953 Coronation. She chose to wear the crimson robe for the start of the ceremony, in keeping with The King's desire for as much of the event as possible to be sustainable.



The robe was made of crimson velvet and has been conserved by Ede and Ravenscroft. The Robe of State is worn for arrival at the Abbey for the Coronation. It is exchanged at the end of the service for the Robe of Estate which is made of purple silk velvet.

The Dress

Queen Camilla wore a white coat dress, designed by Bruce Odfield, with an embroidered underskirt underneath. The long-sleeve dress was made from silk fabric with a matt finish with delicate gold and silver embroidery of flowers such as daisy chains, forget-me-nots, celandine, and scarlet pimpernel, which are meant to represent the King and Queen's love of nature.



On the hem of the underskirt and cuffs are flower emblems from the United Kingdom's four nations, including a rose, a thistle, a daffodil and a shamrock. She finished the look with silk shoes from Elliot Zed.

The Robe of Estate

This new robe was designed and hand embroidered by the Royal School of Needlework, while the robe itself was made by Ede and Ravenscroft who are the oldest tailors in London, established in 1689.

The piece is made of a majestic purple velvet, matching King Charles's Robe of Estate. Its gold embroidery features the Queen's cypher, the United Kingdom's national emblems and symbols of nature, the last of which reflects the couple's deep "affection for the natural world".

Buckingham Palace said in a statement, "These naturalistic illustrations include bees, a beetle, and plenty of flora".

The embroidered flowers also have a special meaning to Camilla; the Lily of the Valley was one of Queen Elizabeth's favourites and was also included in Camilla's 2005 wedding bouquet and the Delphinium is one of



Charles's favourites as well as the birth flower for July, Camilla's birth month.



To look in close detail at the robes and Coronation jewels of King Charles III and Queen Camilla there is an excellent article by the Court Jeweller at;

<https://thecourtjeweller.com/2023/05/coronation-jewels-of-king-charles-iii-and-queen-camilla.html>

They are incredible and convey the majesty of this special occasion.



The Stole Royal and Girdle were created and embroidered by the Royal School of Needlework from a design created by Timothy Noad, Herald Painter at the College of Arms, overseen by Garter King of Arms.

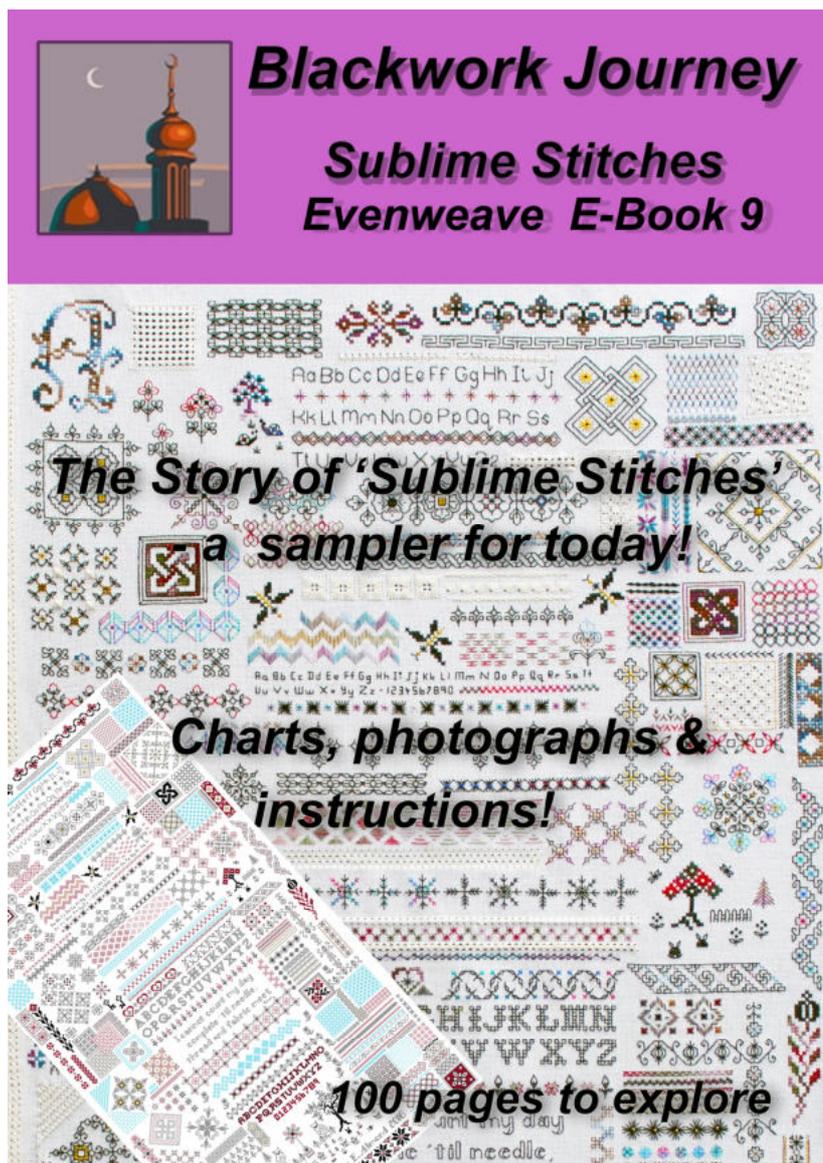
[The Stole Royal and Girdle - Royal School of Needlework \(royal-needlework.org.uk\)](http://royal-needlework.org.uk)

Image credit: Prudence Cuming Fine Art Photography courtesy of The Girdlers' Company

Meaningful embroidery

Creating embroidery for our own special occasions does not need to be as complicated as those for a state occasion, but if you do stitch a special piece, why not add initials and the date so that one hundred years from now it can be identified and admired.

We look at samplers from bygone eras and wonder about the embroiderers who created them. What materials did they use, what conditions were the needlewomen living in? Where did they get their patterns, what was the lighting like? In the same way people will look back over our lives and wonder.



I not only design for Blackwork Journey, but I also create pieces that have special memories for me.

EB0009 “Sublime Stitches” is one such project. It reflects my personal journey exploring stitches and techniques. The patterns are scattered across the fabric as a “spot” sampler that would have been popular during the Elizabethan era. The alphabets reflect the school room of the 18th century and a reference to some old samplers in my collection and the different techniques which I have explored and developed over my years of teaching.

I have stitched the design on two fabrics so that if you choose to create a sampler of your own, you will find a fabric you are comfortable working with.

EB0010 “Sublime Stitches” Aida has been designed for Aida blockweave fabric.

How do I create my own samplers?

Creating your own design is not difficult.

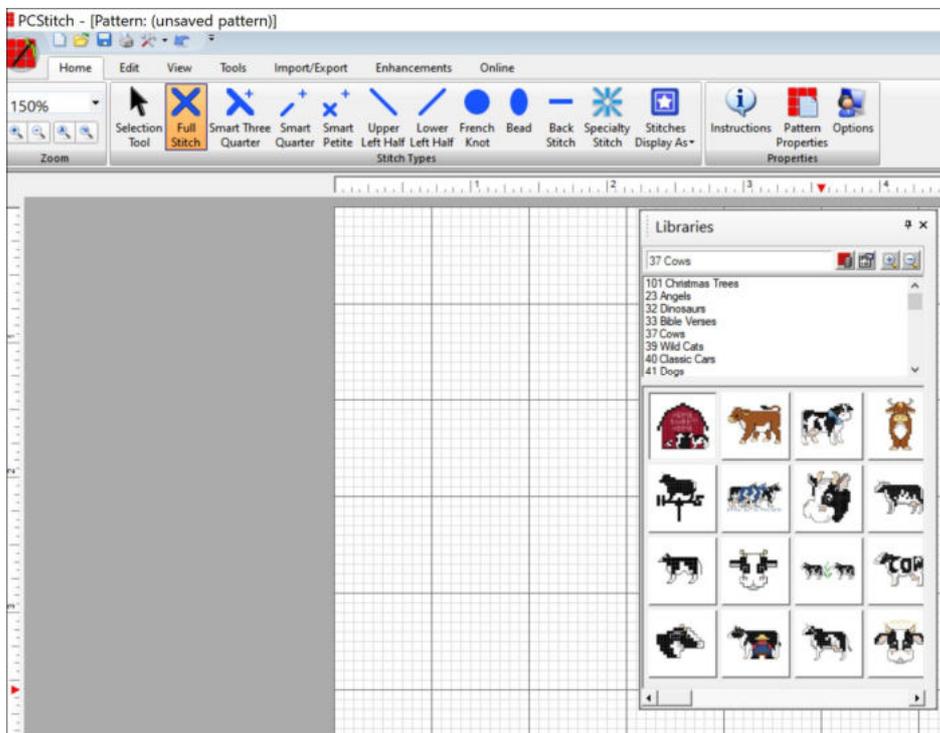
1. First of all, consider what the sampler is designed for – is it a family tree, a special occasion or a reminder of things that are important to you and your family.
2. Write all your initial ideas down in a notebook. Additional ideas can be added to the list at this stage but once the sampler has been planned out this can be difficult to do later on. For example, my grandson is an excellent swimmer and my granddaughter is training to be a vet. Can I find a motif to represent their interests?
3. Consider what fabric and threads will be used as this can determine what other techniques can be incorporated.
4. Do you want to add a saying, a quote or deliver a message? Write it down and count the number of letters involved. This is usually the largest section.
5. What techniques do you want to include? This can vary from simple cross stitch to the addition of pulled thread work, whitework embroidery or kogin.
6. Having thought through what is to be included in the sampler, how can the design be graphed?



7. Graph paper and a pencil can be used for small designs, but if the pattern is more complex consider investing in some computer software. There are a number of software programmes designed for creating your own embroidery. One of the most reasonably priced software is PC Stitch.

There is a free trial version which can be downloaded and used to try out your initial ideas. PC Stitch also includes a very comprehensive library of motifs and alphabets which are easy to use.

PCStitch: Premier Cross Stitch Software,
<https://www.pcestitch.com/>



PC Stitch cannot be used on an Apple computer and I understand that they have no plans to create an Apple version at the moment.

However, if your computer is an Apple Mac different software is available;

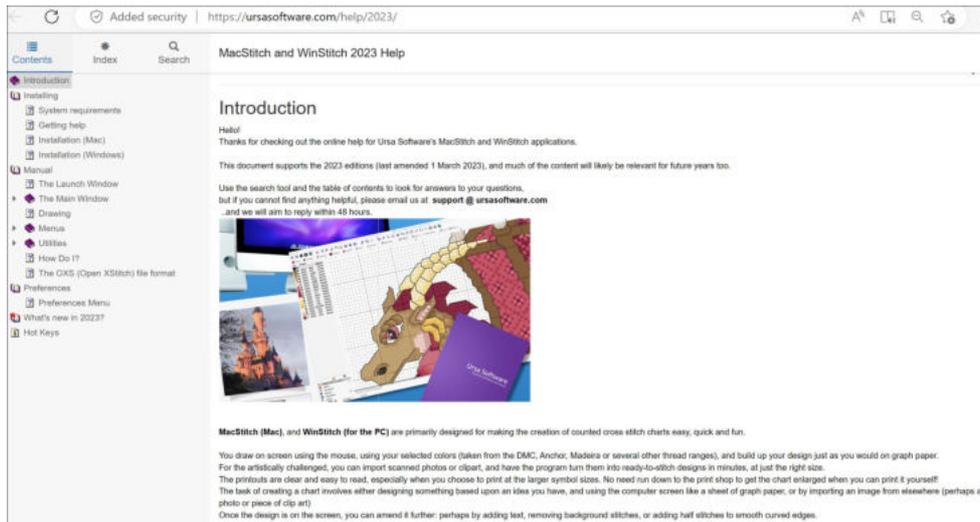
MacStitch – for Apple Macs

Current Version: 2023

Mac works on all OSX from 10.9 onwards including Catalina/Big Sur/Monterey/Ventura and M1 / M2 devices.

The Manual can be downloaded and studied. There are demo versions available for MacStitch (Apple) and WinStitch (Windows 7 upwards, including Windows 10 and Windows 11).

<https://www.ursasoftware.com/macstitch>



Both programmes allow the designs to be turned into PDF's for printing and the chart needs to be clear enough to work from easily. I use PC Stitch for most of the Blackwork Journey designs.

There are other and more expensive software programmes available, but unless you are going to create and sell your designs they are not necessary and can be very complicated to use. Be aware that all programmes have some disadvantages and work in different ways. There are trial versions available.

8. Planning the design layout for 'Sublime Stitches':

I designed three different versions of Sublime Stitches and moved the patterns around until I was satisfied that the balance was right!



Full size patterns to alter as necessary

Two versions of "Sublime Stitches" were worked. EB0009 was worked on Zweigart 25 count Lugana and the EB0010 was worked on Zweigart 14 count Aida.

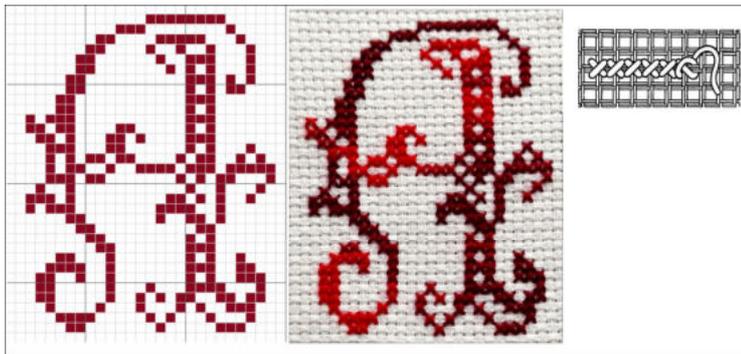




EB0009 was worked on Zweigart 25 count Lugana using DMC Coloris, cotton Pêrle No.12 and Rainbow Gallery Petite Treasure Braid and Mill Hill glass beads.

EB0010 was worked on Zweigart 14 count Aida using DMC floss and Petite Treasure Braid

9. Once the chart has been created select the threads and fabric. Choose threads that will show up clearly on the fabric especially if you are using only one strand of floss.



10. Frame the fabric up so that the fabric is “drum” tight. Use a No.24 tapestry needle. Start from the centre of the design and work outwards finishing each section in turn or, count carefully and start in the top left hand corner and work the first motif.

All the projects on the Blackwork Journey website are planned in the same manner. All aspects are thought through carefully before the first stitch is added to the fabric. This initial

planning saves a lot of unpicking later on!

New projects for June



Much of the last month has been spent preparing kits, talking to groups and teaching workshops so my own stitching has been on hold. However, I did finish the companion to CH0433 “Applefest” and CH0434 “Pear Time” has been added this month.

I love seeing the blossom on the fruit trees and this year Spring has been very late arriving so when we visited Nunnington Hall, near York in the UK in late April I took a picture of the pear blossom.



Nunnington Hall is a country house situated in the English county of North Yorkshire. The river Rye, which gives its name to the local area, Ryedale, runs past the house, flowing away from the village of Nunnington. A stone bridge over the river separates the grounds of the house from the village.

Above, a ridge known as Caulkley's Bank lies between Nunnington and the Vale of York to the south. The Vale of Pickering and the North York Moors lie to the north and east.

Nunnington Hall is owned, conserved and managed as a visitor attraction by the National Trust.

CH0434 “Pear Time” is an introduction to the Japanese art of Kogin embroidery, a form of counted pattern darning which originated in the Aomori Prefecture of Northern Japan.

This design is easy to count and the pattern can be used to make a section of gifts from cards to needle cases and pin cushions.



Design Area:

8.64 x 9.14 inches

Stitches:

121 x 128

Fabric:

Zweigart 16 count Aida, 12 x 12 inches

Aida: one stitch = 1 block with one row of blocks between each row

Zweigart 18 count Davosa evenweave and Zweigart 20 count Bellana are also suitable fabrics but they are worked over ONE thread with one thread between each row.

*“Two pears” have also been included
For cards and small gifts*

Nostell Priory, near Wakefield, West Yorkshire, England.



Visiting National Trust properties when we are travelling round the country for talks and workshops is a passion of mine. I love looking at the portraits, especially ones that depict costumes. Much of the knowledge we have gained about early blackwork designs has come from the paintings of artists such as Hans Holbein. *The detail on the gowns is typical of early Tudor designs.*



I could find very little detail about two of the paintings, but I was delighted to see a work by Rowland Lockey who painted this portrait of Thomas More and his family between 1593 and 1594. It is a copy of an earlier painting by Hans Holbein completed in the 1520's, which no longer exists.

Sir Thomas More (1478 –1535), was an English lawyer, judge, social philosopher, author, statesman and noted Renaissance humanist. He also served Henry VIII as Lord High Chancellor of England from October 1529 to May 1532. More also opposed Henry VIII's separation from the Catholic Church, refusing to acknowledge Henry as supreme head of the Church of England and the annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. After refusing to take the Oath of Supremacy, he was convicted of treason and executed. On his execution, he was reported to have said: "I die the King's good servant, and God's first".

The large portrait of Thomas More and his family was painted in 1592. The medium was oil on canvas. The dimensions were: Height: 249 cm (98 inches); Width: 343 cm (11.2 feet).

National Trust Collection



Unusually all the family members are named in the painting.

From left to right:

1. **Margaret Clement**, née Giggs (1505 - 1544), adopted daughter of Thomas More and wife of Dr. John Clement;
2. **Elizabeth Dauncey**, née More (1506-1564), second daughter of Sir Thomas More and wife of Sir William Dauncey;
3. **Sir John More** (c.1450-1530), Thomas More's father;
4. **Anna Cresacre** (1511-1577), fiancée of John More II;
5. **Sir Thomas More**, the saint (1478 - 1535)
6. **John More II** (1510-1547), More's son;
7. **Henry Patenson** (*Patterson?*) (More's "Fool")
8. **Cecily Heron**, née More (b. 1507. Death unknown), More's youngest daughter and wife of Giles Heron

- 9. An unmarked man, reading in a back room;
- 10. Margaret Roper, née More (1505-1544), More's eldest daughter and wife of William Roper;
- 11. Mystery man, the subject of some speculation,
- 12. Lady Alice, née Middleton (b. 1471. Death unknown), second wife of Sir Thomas More).



The original sketch, one of several by Holbein can be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. This is a preparatory sketch for Holbein's portrait of the family of Thomas More, now lost. The painted work was copied several times, by the artist Rowland Lockey (c. 1565-1616), among others.

The detail was fascinating especially the blackwork embroidery round the neck and the patterns on the bodices.

I hope you have enjoyed this month's Blog.

If you have any queries please contact:
lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk

Happy stitching,

Liz

