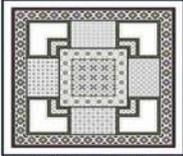




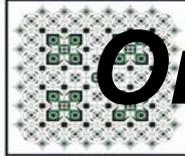
# Blackwork Journey Techniques

TQ0012

## Organisation



CH0264 - Lindsfame  
Suggested Retail: \$ 14.99



CH0265 - Hartwood  
Suggested Retail: \$ 13.00



CH0266 - Cast  
Suggested Retail: \$ 14.99



CH0268 - Ciara Rose  
Suggested Retail: \$ 14.99



CH0269 - Selangor  
Suggested Retail: \$ 12.00



CH0270 - Black Beaumont  
Suggested Retail: \$ 14.99



CH0271 - Black Beaumont  
Suggested Retail: \$ 14.99



CH0272 - Black Beaumont  
Suggested Retail: \$ 14.99



The Working Environment by Liz Almond

## Organisation - Tying up loose ends!

This series of articles has been designed to help embroiderers make informed choices about the most suitable equipment and materials to use to achieve the best outcome. However, given the wide range of equipment and materials that are likely to be accumulated over the years, it is important that they are properly organised and stored, if they are to be readily available for use and in kept good condition.

Nowadays, there is a wide range of storage facilities and containers available and whether you have a lot or little space to store everything, it is well worthwhile having some logic to your storage and keeping the items you use most often located within easy reach in warm, dry conditions.

Let us start with threads.

### *a. Threads*

Collect together all the threads in one place and if necessary, put time aside to detangle and sort them out once and for all. Separate the threads by manufacturer and then subdivide them again. For example, keep Madeira threads together along with their associated specialist threads and do the same with DMC and Anchor threads.



*Fig1. Threads can be packaged in a variety of ways*

Wind small amounts of thread left at the end of a project onto a plastic or card winder and store them in a plastic box with the number and make of the thread clearly written on the winder to avoid confusion. Winder bobbins are a cheap and popular way to store incomplete skeins and by winding them onto bobbins and storing them in specially designed boxes will not only save space, but keep them tangle free and make it easier to find the right colour.



*Fig.2 Thread winder and bobbins*

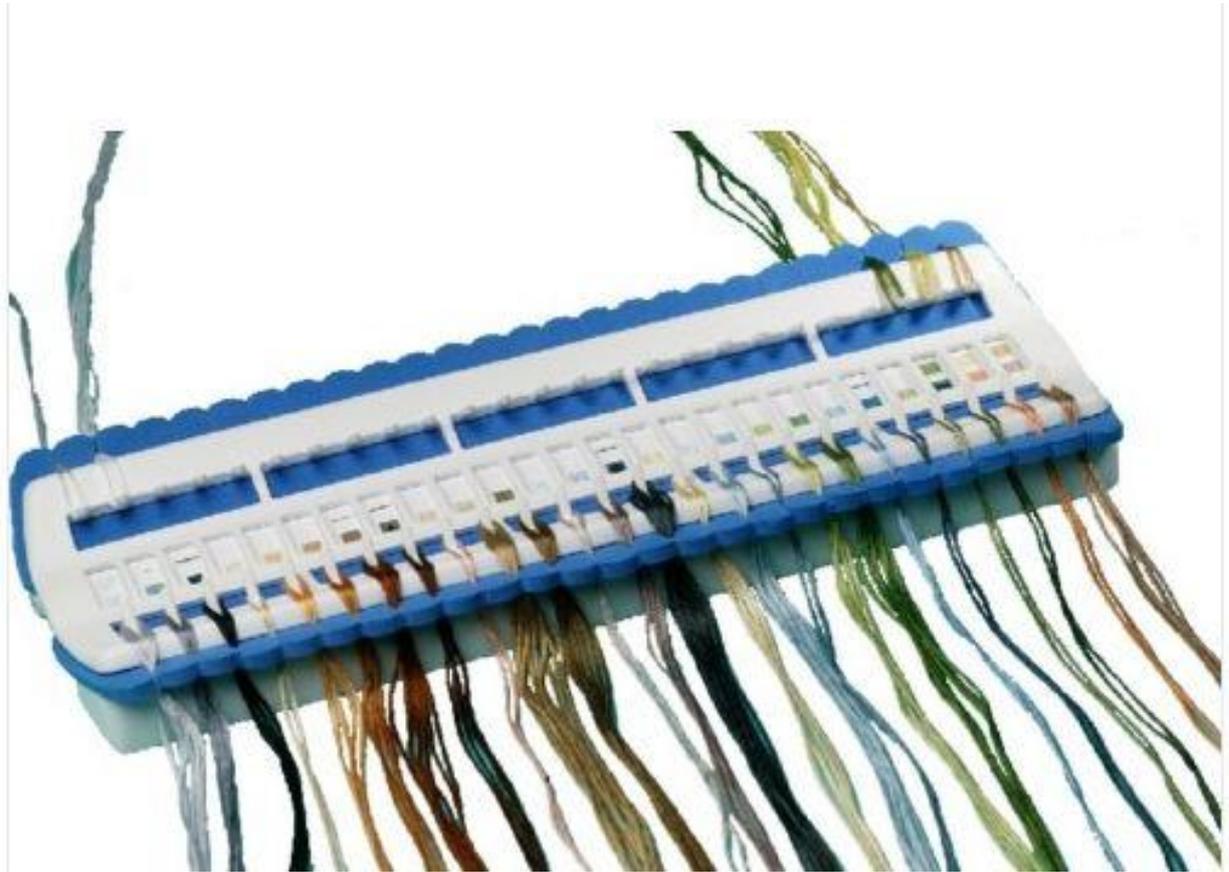
Winding a complete new skein onto a winder is not always necessary as this can often add kinks to the thread, which can be a particular problem with delicate or silk threads and damage the surface.

For projects that only require a limited numbers of threads, metal rings threaded with small zip-lock bags will often suffice.

*Thread storage for larger individual projects*

Specific storage methods can save time and effort for example, a Pako thread and needle organiser enables several needles to be pre-threaded and saved. The

needles are placed in small blue foam squares next to their chart symbol and the number of the colour can be written on the re-usable code cards, which is especially useful when working on a larger project.



*Fig.3 Pako thread and needle organiser*

### *Projects cards*

Wood, plastic or card holders can be threaded up as appropriate for individual projects and stored with the chart and material in a zip-lock bag



*Fig.4 Thread holders range from wood to card*

#### *DMC Stitch Bow Organiser*

Stitch bows are an ingenious way of storing individual skeins. The bow has two small arms, each of which holds a complete skein without unwinding it. The thread label slips on and off a small plastic tab, enabling the colour to be clearly identified. The stitch bow fits into a plastic wallet with enough pouches to hold 15 stitch bows. The wallet can be clipped into a ring binder which is stronger and more practical than the one actually designed for the purpose.

The stitch bows and wallets are quite expensive, but are a convenient way of keeping several hundred threads in one place for easy reference.



*Fig.5 DMC Stitch Bow Organiser with plastic folders in a ring back file*

### *Specialist threads*

These are usually more expensive and need to be stored with particular care. Whilst there are ways of making storage and identification of threads more practical, remember that different dye lots can vary, so when starting a project, always ensure you have enough threads to finish it.

### *Gold and metallic threads*

These are packaged in a variety of ways, including reels, skeins and cards. Try to keep fine blending filaments together and group other threads according to their thickness. Plastic boxes containing all the gold, copper and silver threads can be easily identified for specific projects.



*Fig.6 Gold and metallic threads are organised in clear plastic boxes*

### *Storing large numbers of threads*

Complete skeins should preferably be stored by colour groups, in small labelled zip lock plastic bags which can then be contained in larger labelled bags.

Lists of colours can be printed from the Internet for each manufacturer and ticked off as the bags are sorted and labelled. Any missing numbers can be identified easily and replaced as required.



*Fig.7 Organise silks in plastic bags by colour, number and manufacturer*

Where hundreds of silks require storage, then labelled plastic storage boxes stored in drawers may be the best answer.

(Note: The range of threads available nowadays is vast. Very few manufacturers will claim that their threads are 100% colourfast so, if in doubt, check for colourfastness before using the thread.)

Avoid selecting threads under artificial light, unless a daylight simulation bulb is available. Natural daylight is always preferable!

### *Thread conversion charts*

These can be downloaded from the Internet and are very useful when looking for alternative colours. Keep these in plastic pockets in a binder, along with shade cards for both threads and beads. A colour wheel will help when sorting colours into groups.

(Note: The resolution of a computer screen will sometimes distort the actual colour of threads and beads and it has been found that thread shade cards provide the most accurate guide)

### *Conversion charts*

These can be used to convert one manufacturer's threads to another.

DMC to Anchor conversion chart	J&P Coates to DMC conversion chart
DMC to J&P Coates conversion chart	J&P Coates to Anchor conversion chart
DMC to Madeira conversion chart	J&P Coates to Madeira conversion chart
Anchor to DMC conversion chart	Madeira to DMC conversion chart
Anchor to J&P Coates conversion chart	Madeira to Anchor conversion chart
Anchor to Madeira conversion chart	Madeira to J&P Coates conversion chart

### *Thread colour charts*

Thread colour charts provide detailed information about each thread colour

DMC Colour chart	J&P Coates colour chart
Anchor Colour chart	Madeira Colour chart



*Fig.8 Thread shade charts are helpful when checking thread colours*

### *Thread checklists*

Check out printable lists of the thread ranges from manufacturers and use them to list your own supplies and identify items which need replacing.

DMC checklist	J&P Coates checklist
Anchor checklist	Madeira checklist

Use this list to mark off how many skeins of each DMC colour you need. The box for each colour is on the left of the code.

<input type="checkbox"/>	85200	<input type="checkbox"/>	224	<input type="checkbox"/>	351	<input type="checkbox"/>	469	<input type="checkbox"/>	597	<input type="checkbox"/>	702	<input type="checkbox"/>	760	<input type="checkbox"/>	818	<input type="checkbox"/>	899	<input type="checkbox"/>	937	<input type="checkbox"/>	987	<input type="checkbox"/>	3325	<input type="checkbox"/>	3722	<input type="checkbox"/>	3787	<input type="checkbox"/>	3827	<input type="checkbox"/>	3856
<input type="checkbox"/>	BLANC	<input type="checkbox"/>	225	<input type="checkbox"/>	352	<input type="checkbox"/>	470	<input type="checkbox"/>	598	<input type="checkbox"/>	703	<input type="checkbox"/>	761	<input type="checkbox"/>	820	<input type="checkbox"/>	900	<input type="checkbox"/>	938	<input type="checkbox"/>	988	<input type="checkbox"/>	3326	<input type="checkbox"/>	3726	<input type="checkbox"/>	3790	<input type="checkbox"/>	3828	<input type="checkbox"/>	3857
<input type="checkbox"/>	ECRU	<input type="checkbox"/>	300	<input type="checkbox"/>	353	<input type="checkbox"/>	471	<input type="checkbox"/>	600	<input type="checkbox"/>	704	<input type="checkbox"/>	762	<input type="checkbox"/>	822	<input type="checkbox"/>	902	<input type="checkbox"/>	939	<input type="checkbox"/>	989	<input type="checkbox"/>	3328	<input type="checkbox"/>	3727	<input type="checkbox"/>	3799	<input type="checkbox"/>	3829	<input type="checkbox"/>	3858
<input type="checkbox"/>	150	<input type="checkbox"/>	301	<input type="checkbox"/>	355	<input type="checkbox"/>	472	<input type="checkbox"/>	601	<input type="checkbox"/>	712	<input type="checkbox"/>	772	<input type="checkbox"/>	823	<input type="checkbox"/>	904	<input type="checkbox"/>	943	<input type="checkbox"/>	991	<input type="checkbox"/>	3340	<input type="checkbox"/>	3731	<input type="checkbox"/>	3801	<input type="checkbox"/>	3830	<input type="checkbox"/>	3859
<input type="checkbox"/>	151	<input type="checkbox"/>	304	<input type="checkbox"/>	356	<input type="checkbox"/>	498	<input type="checkbox"/>	602	<input type="checkbox"/>	718	<input type="checkbox"/>	775	<input type="checkbox"/>	824	<input type="checkbox"/>	905	<input type="checkbox"/>	945	<input type="checkbox"/>	992	<input type="checkbox"/>	3341	<input type="checkbox"/>	3733	<input type="checkbox"/>	3802	<input type="checkbox"/>	3831	<input type="checkbox"/>	3860
<input type="checkbox"/>	152	<input type="checkbox"/>	307	<input type="checkbox"/>	367	<input type="checkbox"/>	500	<input type="checkbox"/>	603	<input type="checkbox"/>	720	<input type="checkbox"/>	777	<input type="checkbox"/>	825	<input type="checkbox"/>	906	<input type="checkbox"/>	946	<input type="checkbox"/>	993	<input type="checkbox"/>	3345	<input type="checkbox"/>	3740	<input type="checkbox"/>	3803	<input type="checkbox"/>	3832	<input type="checkbox"/>	3861
<input type="checkbox"/>	153	<input type="checkbox"/>	309	<input type="checkbox"/>	368	<input type="checkbox"/>	501	<input type="checkbox"/>	604	<input type="checkbox"/>	721	<input type="checkbox"/>	778	<input type="checkbox"/>	826	<input type="checkbox"/>	907	<input type="checkbox"/>	947	<input type="checkbox"/>	995	<input type="checkbox"/>	3346	<input type="checkbox"/>	3743	<input type="checkbox"/>	3804	<input type="checkbox"/>	3833	<input type="checkbox"/>	3862
<input type="checkbox"/>	154	<input type="checkbox"/>	310	<input type="checkbox"/>	369	<input type="checkbox"/>	502	<input type="checkbox"/>	605	<input type="checkbox"/>	722	<input type="checkbox"/>	779	<input type="checkbox"/>	827	<input type="checkbox"/>	909	<input type="checkbox"/>	948	<input type="checkbox"/>	996	<input type="checkbox"/>	3347	<input type="checkbox"/>	3746	<input type="checkbox"/>	3805	<input type="checkbox"/>	3834	<input type="checkbox"/>	3863
<input type="checkbox"/>	155	<input type="checkbox"/>	311	<input type="checkbox"/>	370	<input type="checkbox"/>	503	<input type="checkbox"/>	606	<input type="checkbox"/>	725	<input type="checkbox"/>	780	<input type="checkbox"/>	828	<input type="checkbox"/>	910	<input type="checkbox"/>	950	<input type="checkbox"/>	3011	<input type="checkbox"/>	3348	<input type="checkbox"/>	3747	<input type="checkbox"/>	3806	<input type="checkbox"/>	3835	<input type="checkbox"/>	3864
<input type="checkbox"/>	156	<input type="checkbox"/>	312	<input type="checkbox"/>	371	<input type="checkbox"/>	505	<input type="checkbox"/>	608	<input type="checkbox"/>	726	<input type="checkbox"/>	782	<input type="checkbox"/>	829	<input type="checkbox"/>	911	<input type="checkbox"/>	951	<input type="checkbox"/>	3012	<input type="checkbox"/>	3350	<input type="checkbox"/>	3750	<input type="checkbox"/>	3807	<input type="checkbox"/>	3836	<input type="checkbox"/>	3865
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<input type="checkbox"/>	158	<input type="checkbox"/>	316	<input type="checkbox"/>	400	<input type="checkbox"/>	518	<input type="checkbox"/>	611	<input type="checkbox"/>	728	<input type="checkbox"/>	791	<input type="checkbox"/>	831	<input type="checkbox"/>	913	<input type="checkbox"/>	955	<input type="checkbox"/>	3021	<input type="checkbox"/>	3362	<input type="checkbox"/>	3753	<input type="checkbox"/>	3809	<input type="checkbox"/>	3838	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	159	<input type="checkbox"/>	317	<input type="checkbox"/>	402	<input type="checkbox"/>	519	<input type="checkbox"/>	612	<input type="checkbox"/>	729	<input type="checkbox"/>	792	<input type="checkbox"/>	832	<input type="checkbox"/>	915	<input type="checkbox"/>	956	<input type="checkbox"/>	3022	<input type="checkbox"/>	3363	<input type="checkbox"/>	3755	<input type="checkbox"/>	3810	<input type="checkbox"/>	3839	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	160	<input type="checkbox"/>	318	<input type="checkbox"/>	407	<input type="checkbox"/>	520	<input type="checkbox"/>	613	<input type="checkbox"/>	730	<input type="checkbox"/>	793	<input type="checkbox"/>	833	<input type="checkbox"/>	917	<input type="checkbox"/>	957	<input type="checkbox"/>	3023	<input type="checkbox"/>	3364	<input type="checkbox"/>	3756	<input type="checkbox"/>	3811	<input type="checkbox"/>	3840	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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<input type="checkbox"/>	162	<input type="checkbox"/>	320	<input type="checkbox"/>	414	<input type="checkbox"/>	523	<input type="checkbox"/>	640	<input type="checkbox"/>	733	<input type="checkbox"/>	796	<input type="checkbox"/>	838	<input type="checkbox"/>	919	<input type="checkbox"/>	959	<input type="checkbox"/>	3031	<input type="checkbox"/>	3607	<input type="checkbox"/>	3761	<input type="checkbox"/>	3813	<input type="checkbox"/>	3842	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	163	<input type="checkbox"/>	321	<input type="checkbox"/>	415	<input type="checkbox"/>	524	<input type="checkbox"/>	642	<input type="checkbox"/>	734	<input type="checkbox"/>	797	<input type="checkbox"/>	839	<input type="checkbox"/>	920	<input type="checkbox"/>	961	<input type="checkbox"/>	3032	<input type="checkbox"/>	3608	<input type="checkbox"/>	3765	<input type="checkbox"/>	3814	<input type="checkbox"/>	3843	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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<input type="checkbox"/>	166	<input type="checkbox"/>	327	<input type="checkbox"/>	433	<input type="checkbox"/>	550	<input type="checkbox"/>	646	<input type="checkbox"/>	740	<input type="checkbox"/>	800	<input type="checkbox"/>	842	<input type="checkbox"/>	924	<input type="checkbox"/>	964	<input type="checkbox"/>	3042	<input type="checkbox"/>	3687	<input type="checkbox"/>	3770	<input type="checkbox"/>	3817	<input type="checkbox"/>	3846	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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<input type="checkbox"/>	223	<input type="checkbox"/>	350	<input type="checkbox"/>	453	<input type="checkbox"/>	581	<input type="checkbox"/>	701	<input type="checkbox"/>	758	<input type="checkbox"/>	817	<input type="checkbox"/>	898	<input type="checkbox"/>	936	<input type="checkbox"/>	986	<input type="checkbox"/>	3078	<input type="checkbox"/>	3721	<input type="checkbox"/>	3782	<input type="checkbox"/>	3826	<input type="checkbox"/>	3855	<input type="checkbox"/>	

*Fig.9 A thread checklist*

The Internet is useful to research the following websites for thread colour charts, conversion charts and thread checklists, including specialist threads such as Dinky Dyes and Caron Threads.

<http://www.dmc-usa.com>

<http://www.coatsandclark.com> Anchor Threads

<http://www.dinkydyes.iinet.net.au>

<http://www.caron-net.com/threads.html>

<http://www.stichtastic.com>

These web sites provide a wealth of information on all aspects of embroidery, including instructional videos, free patterns, historical information, needlework clubs, current threads and the latest shades.

Using the expertise provided by web sites such as these can broaden knowledge and help make informed choices.

## *b. Beads*

Adding beads provides an extra dimension to embroidery. There are a wide range of shapes, sizes and colours to choose from and a little research will identify exactly what is required.

### *Understanding bead sizes*

As a general rule, the higher the number size the smaller the bead, for example, Mill Hill beads:-

Size 15 petite seed: 2.0mm diam. - Size 8: 3mm diam. Hole: approx. 1mm

Size 12 Magnifica: 2.25mm diam. - Size 6: 4mm diam. Hole: approx. 1.5

Size 11 seed: 2.5mm diam. - Size 3: Pebble: 5.5mm diam. Hole: approx. 2mm

Bugles small: 6mm long; medium: 9mm long; large: 14mm long

All bugle bead holes approximately 0.61mm

Mill Hill beads have an excellent web site ([www.millhillbeads.com](http://www.millhillbeads.com)) listing their range of beads, colours and sizes along with a Bead to DMC conversion chart. They also have a bead inventory list.

Specific beads are available in economy packs. Transfer opened packets into plastic containers or glass tubes and label them with the bead number, size and make.

Cheaper beads may not be colourfast and if they have an applied finish, such as gold or silver, it may not be permanent. Washing the embroidery may affect the colours of the beads. Remember not to iron beads and embellishments directly, but place the embroidery face down on a soft towel and press lightly from the back.

Hint: keep beading needles and small betweens quilting needles with the bead containers.



*Fig.10 Organised beads in labelled plastic containers*

*c. Fabrics*

Where possible, keep the fabric in the original packaging or transfer it into a zip lock labelled bag with the fabric type and stitch count clearly marked. If in doubt, count the threads carefully to identify what it is and mark the bag to avoid any subsequent confusion.



*Fig.11 Smaller pieces of fabric can be kept in their original packaging or zip lock bags.*

Larger amounts of fabric should be carefully folded or rolled round cardboard tubes to prevent unnecessary creasing. Place all fabrics in a clean, dry plastic box or lined drawer.

*d. Transporting projects*

Tote bags can be used to carry work in progress from place to place and to store essential tools safely if storage space is limited. There are a number of different styles on the market but look for one that can be carried comfortably with a shoulder strap if necessary.



*Fig.12 Specialist totes with numerous pockets transport projects and equipment safely*

*e. Storing Charts on a computer*

Designs collected from magazines, leaflets and booklets take up a considerable amount of space. These can be stored in plastic sleeves in loose leaf ring folders or where possible, scan them into a computer and store them on an external hard drive where they can be printed off when required.

*f. Organising individual projects*

If more than one project is being worked, it is worthwhile keeping all the items relating to that project in a labelled, sealed plastic zip lock bag along with the chart and a copy of the chart for marking off the work as it progresses.

Write the name of the piece on the label and stick it on the outside of the bag. Make a shade card for each project with a list of the colours, their numbers and details of beads.



*Fig.13 Store unfinished projects in individual bags along with threads and beads*

There is nothing more annoying than to return to a project some months later and being unable to find the chart or some of the beads or threads. Guessing the shade or make of thread or beads can lead to some serious errors.

Remember, planning saves time and heartache. Avoid leaving needles in unfinished projects – they may rust and leave a mark on the fabric.

Good storage keeps projects in progress clean and tidy, even if left for years!

*g. Conclusion*

Many needlewomen do not have the luxury of a sewing room and space for hobbies is often at a premium, so be realistic about what is needed in the way of materials, threads and embellishments. Needlework shows with their lavish displays of threads and fabrics are always tempting, but do you really need it? Good supplies are expensive and need to be stored correctly if they are not to deteriorate.

For me, one of my greatest pleasures is taking a new piece of fabric, selecting the threads and beginning a new project. My resolution is to finish everything I have started before moving on but....!!

I hope you have enjoyed this series of articles and found some useful information which you can apply to your own work environment. Given the right equipment and information, needlework can be enjoyed for many years.

Happy stitching!

*Liz*

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