



Blackwork Journey Blog

January 2011



Alphabets



Elizabeth Laidman 1760



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Happy New Year, peace and happiness to all the readers of Blackwork Journey!

2010 ended in a flurry of snow and freezing temperatures here in the UK, which was the ideal excuse to hibernate for a while, consider new designs and actually complete some stitching projects. As usual, I made some resolutions which will probably be broken by the end of the month, but amongst these, I decided to be more organised with my needlework supplies and not buy so many silks and books when I go to craft fairs and shows. The temptation of just one more book, one more piece of material is often hard to resist, especially when there are so many gorgeous threads on the market, but more of that in later blogs!

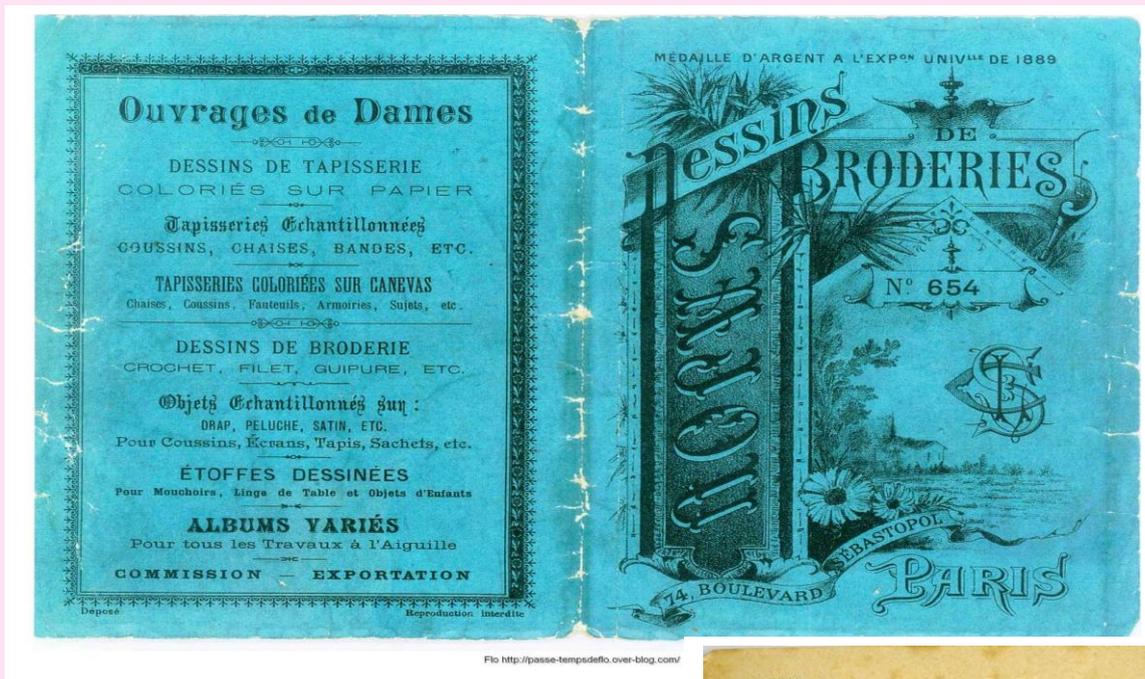
Old alphabets provide an interesting insight into historical needlework and I have been looking at the designs from the 1800's, with a view to creating modern designs with a historical twist. The letters are often very ornate and can be worked individually as a gift or incorporated into a sampler.



www.antiqpatternlibrary.org

This site provides free access to a wide range of patterns including alphabets. The charts may be downloaded for personal use but may not be sold.

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Flo <http://passe-tempsdeflo.over-blog.com/>

<http://patternmakercharts.blogspot.com>

The Encyclopedia of Needlework
Therese Dillmont
Project Gutenberg

Jacobean Embroidery
Ada Wentworth Fitzwilliam and A.F. Morris H
Project Gutenberg

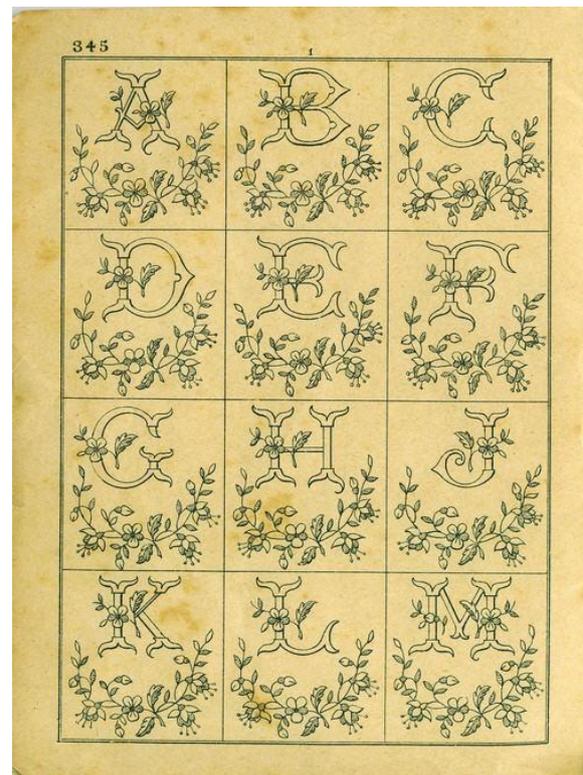
Beeton's Book of Needlework
Isabella Beeton
Antique Pattern Library

Art in Needlework
Lewis F. Day
American Libraries Internet Archive

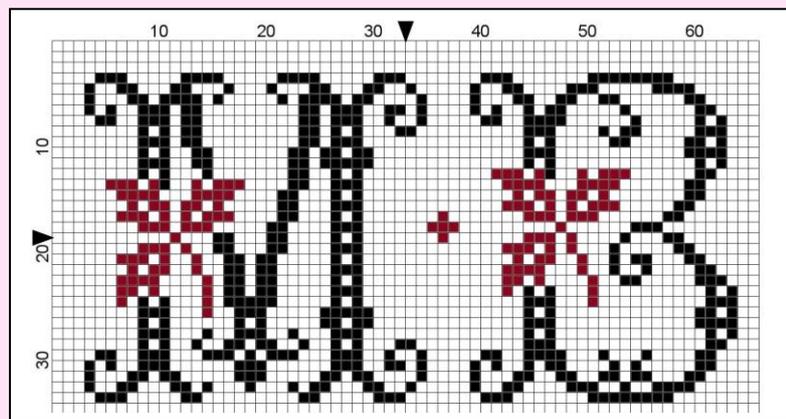
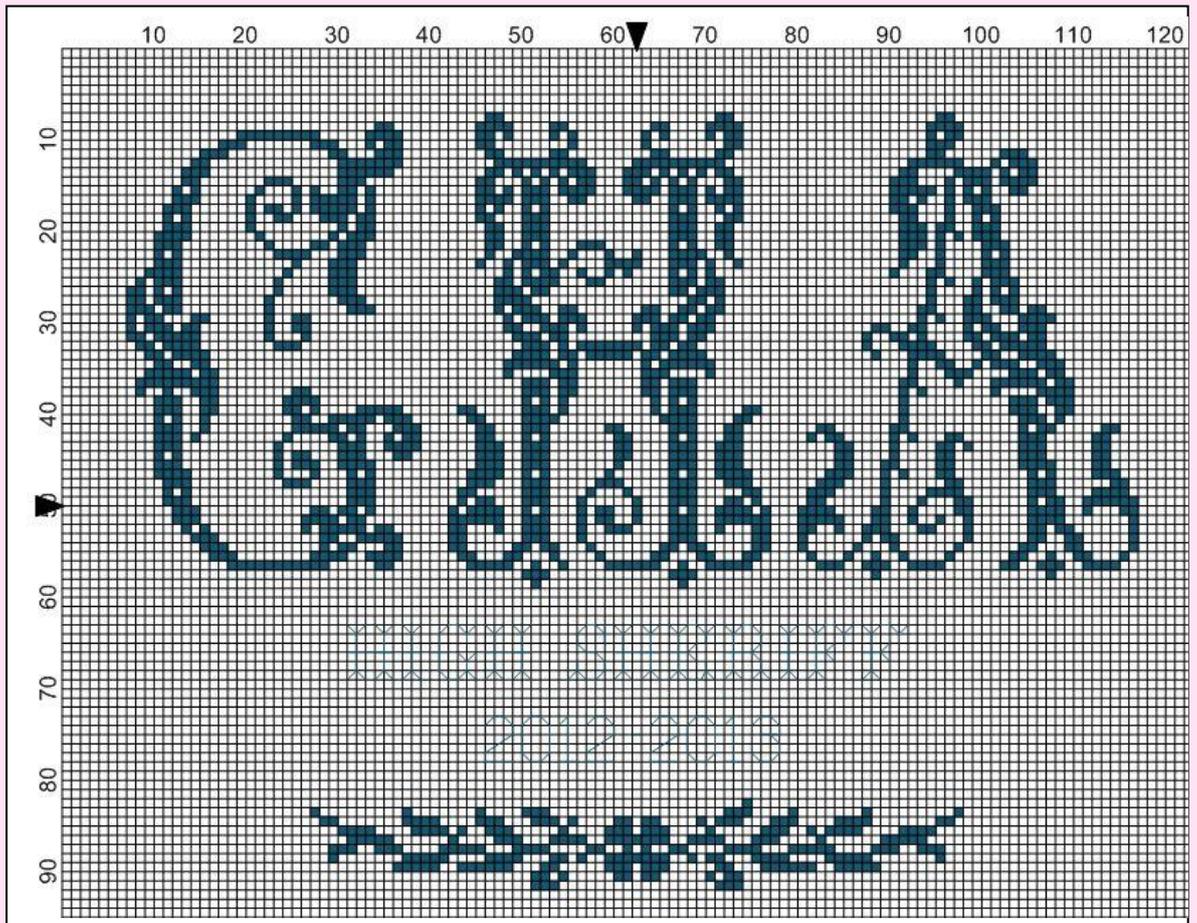
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Other publications by Therese Dillmont
Antique Pattern Library

Embroidery and Tapestry Weaving
Mrs. Archibald Christie
Project Gutenberg

There are many more treasures to find by looking on the Internet.



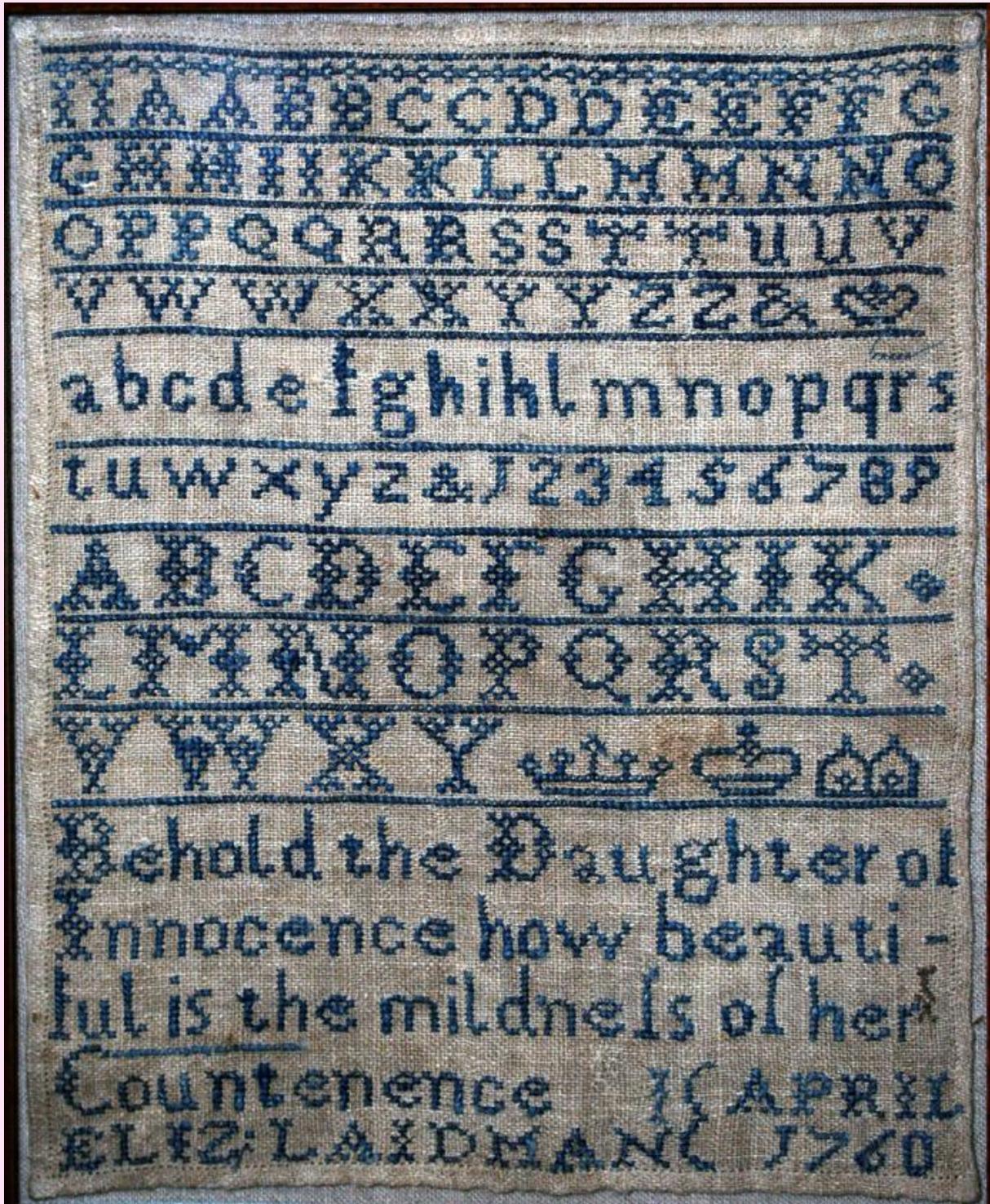
Flo <http://passe-tempsdeflo.over-blog.com/>



Charting letters for someone special?



I have used letters in several of this month's charts and hope to produce some samplers worked in both cross stitch and blackwork over the coming months.



This English sampler (above) was created by Elizabeth Laidman in 1760 and is a good example of how alphabets were used. It contains both upper and lower case letters and if you look carefully you will see that there is no letter 'j'. This was not uncommon in samplers as 'j' was not yet considered a separate letter.

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It would be a simple matter to chart the alphabets used in this sampler and create a modern version.

The Victoria and Albert Museum in London has a collection of samplers which can be viewed online, including the earliest dated British sampler to have survived. Its maker, Jane Obstacle, created it in 1598. Its inscription commemorates the birth of a child.

'Alice Lee was borne the 23 of November being twesday in the after noone 1596'

One of the most attractive features of these samplers is the name and date, as these give an identity to the needlewomen.

Any new sampler should also be named and dated so that one hundred years from now someone will look at it and wonder about its creator.

I hope this gives an insight into a really interesting aspect of historical embroidery.

Happy stitching,

Liz