



Blackwork Journey Blog

July 2013

**Threads:
Metallic & variegated**

Motto for Life



Motto for
Life!



**New threads
and charts**

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Summer is finally here in northern England after one of the coldest Spring's we have experienced for a long time. Everything in the garden was at least a month late coming into leaf and the bluebells, which should have flowered in early April, have only just finished flowering, but what a joy to see the fresh green leaves and hear the birds in the trees around the house. However, our maple tree has provided some fresh new leaves and inspired my latest project, CH0308 'Maple Leaf Wreath' and been an inspiration for several others.



CH0308 'Maple Leaf Wreath' - a free style counted thread design worked on 28 count evenweave

I took my sewing into the garden knowing that this year, my accident prevented me from weeding the borders or pruning the bushes! This provided me with time to think about the things that really matter in my life and to take stock and I came to the conclusion that life can get so busy and hectic that we often don't have time to really think about what we want out of life and when we do find what we want, it can seem impossible to achieve it.

With this in mind, I made a checklist of what was important to me. Family came first, a husband, children and grandchildren who mean so much and have been so supportive, not just over the past few months since my accident, but through the many different stages of our lives and then the many friends who give their love and support without question and I include in this, the many friends I have made through 'Blackwork Journey' and not least, good health, something we often take for granted, until it is challenged!



CH0309 Do what you Love.....

What makes me happy other than my family and friends?

The joy I gain through needlework, both creating it and sharing it with other people and the attraction of a new project, beautiful embroidery threads, a fresh piece of linen just waiting to be stitched, an exciting new book to explore, are all things I have experienced recently.

A very dear friend sent me a large parcel of Dinky Dyes Australian hand dyed threads. They have delicious names such as Strawberry Ice, Tutti Frutti, Cloudy Sky, Kalamunda, Mango Tango etc. The beautiful, blended colours are a source of inspiration in themselves!

There are 200 beautiful colours in the Silk range and 71 in the stranded cotton and perlé 5, 8 and 12 ranges. Each stranded skein of cotton and silk is approximately 8m in length and the 5, 8 and 12 perlé skeins are 15m in length. I have purchased skeins individually from craft shows, but to be presented with the full range is a needlewoman's dream and I look forward to using them for some of my new designs. Thank you so much Banu and Jo, it was a really wonderful gift!



Threads by Dinky Dyes – delicious colours!

Working with variegated threads.

Working with hand dyed threads in variegated colours needs careful planning before starting a new project.

- a. Decide how many colours are needed and where they will be placed on the design before starting to stitch.
- b. Work a small sample first to see exactly how it will appear on the chosen fabric.
- c. Use a single ply for very fine work, or as many plies as necessary to suit stitch and ground fabric. If working cross stitch in two or more strands, assemble the strands so that the colours lie in the original direction or the effect of the variegations.
- d. Paler threads will not have the same depth of colour in a blackwork design, especially if worked on a white or pale background, but they can be very effective on a coloured fabric where they will stand out dramatically. They will work on lighter fabric if they have a darker outline and they are used as a diaper pattern.
- e. Balance the number of colours used, too many may be overwhelming and detract from the design.
- f. Hand dyed threads may not be colourfast. Bear this in mind if the embroidery has to be washed and test first!



Subtle colours contrasting with bright solid colours require careful planning to achieve the maximum effect

DMC has also introduced 24 NEW Colour Variations colours to the Colour Variation line of specialty threads. These are available in six strand divisible embroidery cotton skeins and Pearl Cotton skeins size 5. DMC Colour Variations are beautiful multi-coloured threads designed to give the look of hand-dyed thread whilst being colourfast and fade resistant.



DMC new additions to the Colour Variations range

Additionally each Colour Variations colour is guaranteed to be consistent from one skein to the next. DMC's Colour Variations threads offer a wide range of colours in each skein. These are widely available and are a pleasure to work with.

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Metallic threads

Metallic threads are not easy to work with so when a new range of threads came on the market recently, I purchased some to experiment with and I have been delighted with the results. The Diamant range is from DMC.

These spools of thread are available in 6 rich metallic shades and are very easy to use. This Japanese thread is made out of viscose wrapped with a metallic polyester coating and treated with silicone, which means it passes smoothly though the fabric without the constant chaffing that normal metallic threads experience. It is equivalent to two strands of DMC stranded cotton and is used straight from the reel, unlike DMC Light Effects precious metals metallic thread which comprises 6 strands and is available in silver, gold and bronze and three other metallic shades.

Use short lengths of thread and a needle with a large enough eye to pass the thread through comfortably.

Diamant is widely available in the UK, but in many parts of the world it is still only available via the internet.

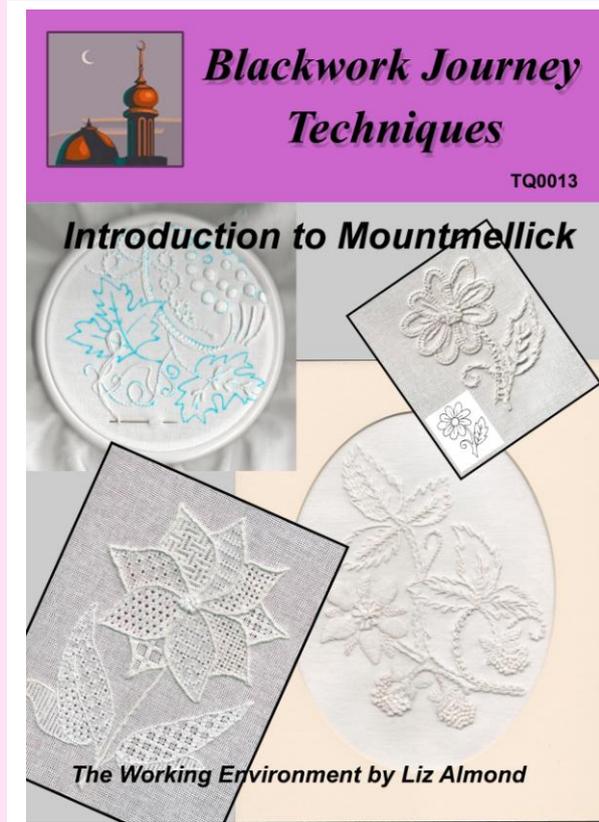


Extract from Copper Canvas using D301 Copper

Diamant thread comes in 6 different colours:-
Light Gold, Gold, Gold and Black, Light Silver, Silver, Copper
Length: 35m Spool
Composition: 72% Viscose & 28% Metallised Polyester
D140: 89% Rayon & 11% Metallised Polyester

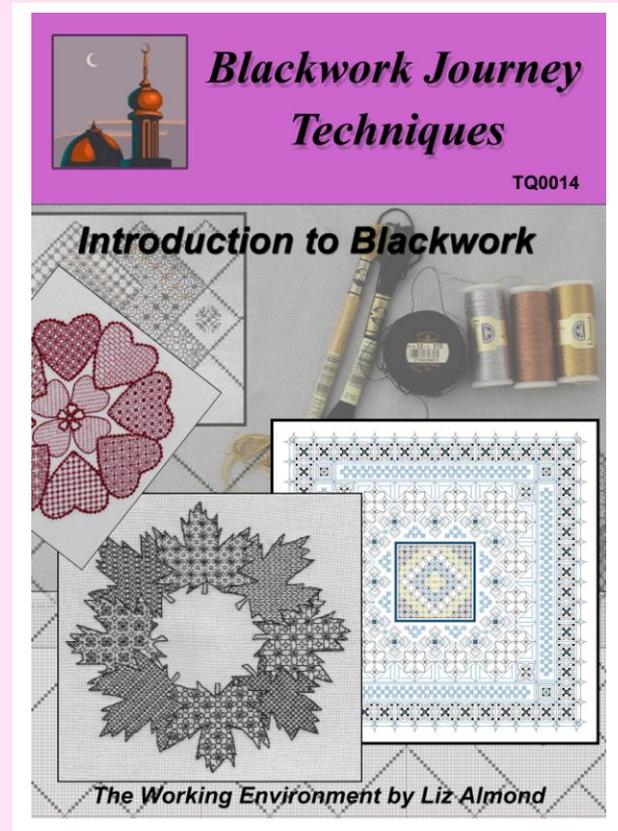
'Techniques'

Two new sections have been added to the 'Techniques' folder after requests from readers. They are TQ0013 Mountmellick and TQ0014 Introduction to Blackwork. These pdf's are designed to introduce different techniques and indicate the threads, fabrics and stitches which are most suitable, as well as a general introduction to the techniques themselves.



TQ0013 Introduction to Mountmellick
TQ0014 Introduction to Blackwork

I hope you enjoy looking at the new threads. They are available via the Internet if your local shop does not stock them. It is worthwhile experimenting with new threads, fabrics and stitches to step outside your 'comfort zone'.



I am always pleased to try to answer any questions that may arise. There are very few hard and fast rules in embroidery and experience will determine which methods work best for the individual. Be prepared to experiment and stretch the boundaries of your own knowledge by exploring new threads, fabrics and ideas. Whilst you will not always be successful, you learn a great deal from your mistakes and confidence will develop with every project you work!

Happy stitching,

Liz

