



Blackwork Journey Blog

June 2014

The Gardens of Villandry

**Blackwork Journey
Inspirations
Lady Margaret 1533**



From brass to
embroidery -
the story of Lady
Margaret Bellingham

**'Save the
Stitches'**



May was a very mixed month. I spent a week in France visiting the chateaux in the Loire Valley and then underwent an operation on my foot which has confined me to the house for the next six weeks and whilst it is giving me extra time for designing and stitching, I do not appreciate not being able to get out and about!

However, the visit to the Loire was a great source of inspiration and was particularly impressed with the magnificent gardens at Chateau Villandry. If you visit their webpage, you can take a virtual tour round the gardens and see how they have developed over the centuries.

The gardens at Villandry...

The Villandry gardens are laid out in a succession of terraces and each one has its own strong identity and aesthetic principles:

At the lowest level is the decorative vegetable garden, which provides food for the household and is situated next to the castle. It is made up of nine squares of identical size, each with a different motif and covers an area of almost one hectare. There are two planting schemes per year, the Spring scheme from March to June and the Summer one from July to October.



The vegetable gardens originate way back in the Middle Ages when the monks planted the vegetables out in geometric patterns. The many crosses in the garden remind us of this affiliation, as do the roses which symbolise the monks digging their vegetable squares. The garden was also influenced by the Italians and gives the garden its decorative elements of fountains and pergolas.



The vegetable gardens in May are just being planted out.

On the intermediary terrace are the ornamental rooms designed as outside reception rooms. These form a natural extension of the castle rooms and are planted with tall boxwoods and flowers whose motifs are the timeless subjects of conversation, love, music and religion.



Spring flowers at
Chateau Villandry





Formal knot gardens abound, planted out with tulips and forget me knots and could be a source of an embroidery design - knot gardens in the making?





On the third terrace, I found the water garden, herb garden and the maze. The water garden, surrounding a fine pond intended to be the mirror reflecting the sky, is designed as a place for meditation, although it also forms a reserve for watering the gardens.

The maze, with its long, winding paths, symbolises man progressing serenely and smoothly towards God.

The herb garden, just like the vegetable garden, supplies all the plants necessary for the family to enjoy and includes medicinal and aromatic plants and a variety of herbs.

Finally, on the last level is the brand new sun garden which has inspired me to design some knot gardens for publication later in the year. I like knots, especially

colonial knots and look forward to creating some new embroideries to remind me of this tranquil haven.

"Soaring silk at Villandry" Exhibition by Brigitte Chappaz

15 March to 10 June 2014

Brigitte Chappaz is an enthusiast of ancient and precious silks, which she seeks out at flea markets. For the last 20 years, she has been using them for her virtuoso embroidery, creating motifs, large-format tapestries, small pictures and even bound books. Crouching patiently and always passionately over her work, she is hardly aware of time passing.

Nature is her principal subject. Embroidered on pieces of silk with painted backgrounds, roses, butterflies and sweet briars are picked out with antique beads, giving them a timeless quality.

In this exhibition, Brigitte Chappaz presents her new creations featuring the birds of Villandry, inspired by a series of photographs taken in the gardens, including a remarkable work "of feathers and silk".



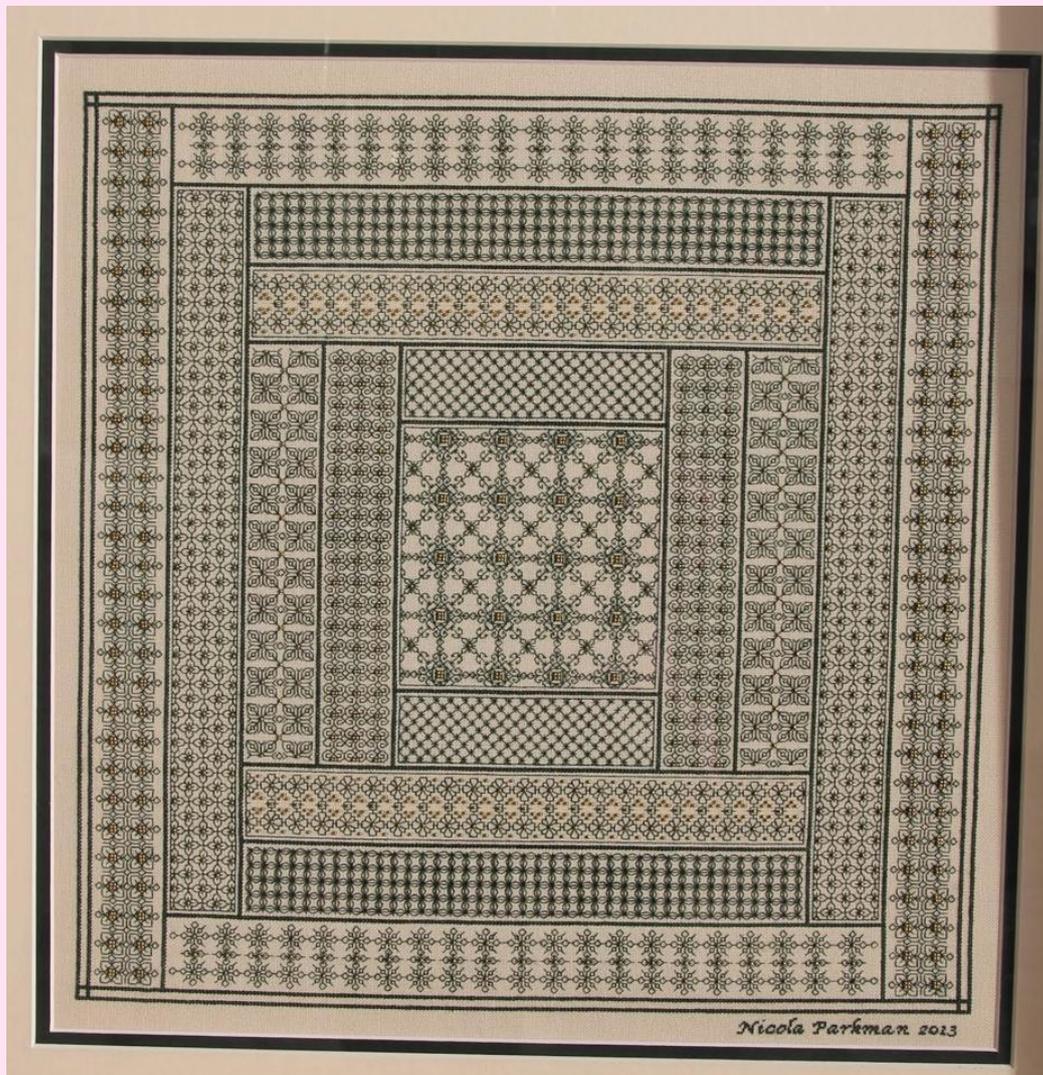
Silk embroidery worked by Brigitte Chappaz was an unexpected treat!



To explore Chateau Villandry further go on-line to:
<http://www.chateauvillandry.fr>

Readers Projects

It is always very special to receive your photographs and e-mails and especially when the work that you have done has been recognised elsewhere.



Nicola entered CH0115 Keystone and won 'Best in Show' so congratulations and thank you for sharing your embroidery with us. It really is a beautiful piece of stitching.

Keystone is stitched on 32ct evenweave using DMC green floss and Mill Hill, Petite gold beads.

‘Save the Stitches’

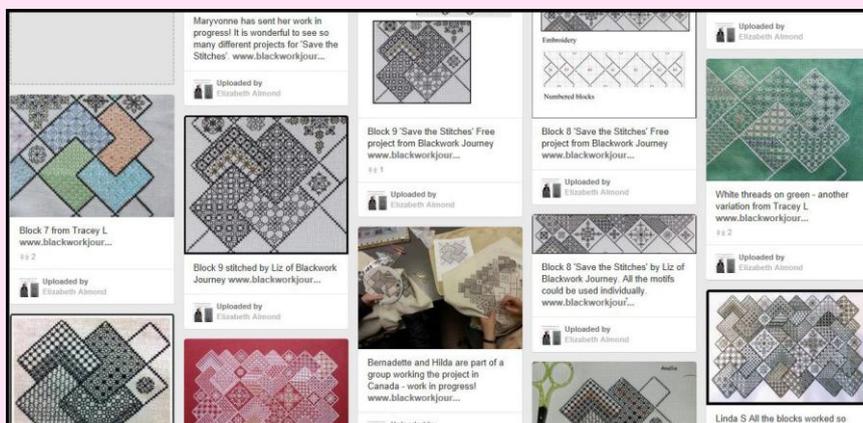
Blocks 10 and 11 have been added this month.

One reader e-mailed me to check how many parts there are? There are 24 blocks in all and two are added every month to ‘Freebies’. They will remain there so if for some reason you miss a month, you can download them at any time.

The other query was in connected with the garnet lines on some of the charts. These are tacking lines just for reference and to help to line up the blocks which can be useful on a big project. These lines are NOT stitched!



Bernadette and Hilda in Canada are really making progress!



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New members are joining the project every week and the Pinterest 'Save the Stitches' board is filling up with all your photographs



Jacqueline in France is working the design along with her daughter and some friends. I really like the idea of working in white on a coloured background and Jacqueline has included details of the fabric and threads she has used. I especially like the idea of using antique beads. It adds a very personal touch!

'Fabric Zweigart Belfast red-cherry (as DMC 815)

Threads: DMC perlé 12 white

DMC mouliné spécial white

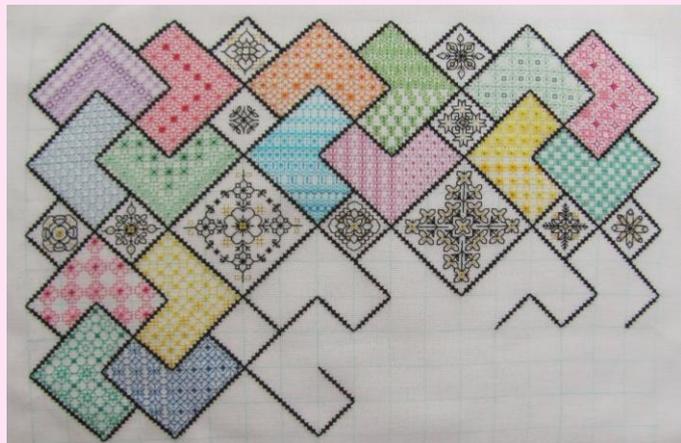
DMC metal effects: E 3852 ; E 3849 ; E 168

Beads: very old beads (about 100 years) gold and turquoise;

Mill Hill petite white-silver 42010

Jacqueline has made some small changes to blocks 4 and 7.

Tracey is working one of the most complicated variations. She is using 28ct Antique White Jobelan and 13 colour pairs. She loves the difference in texture between the #8 perle for the edges and the single strand of cotton for the fillings. See her work on the Pinterest page

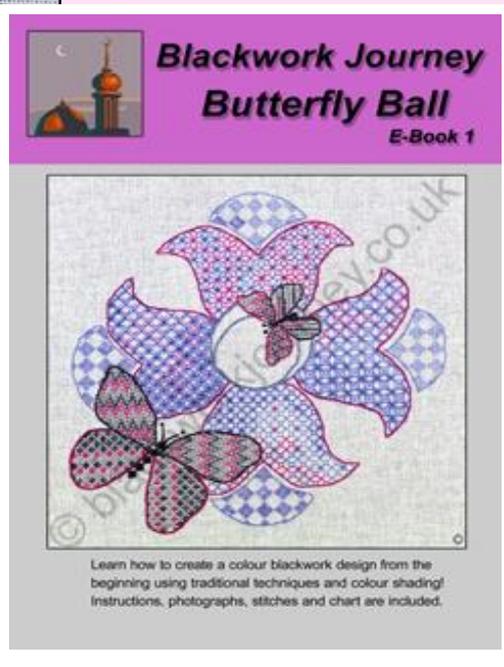




Blocks 10 and 11 embroidery



The new e-book EB0001 Butterfly Ball is now available for PDF download.



Lady Margaret Bellingham

A very large blackwork project has just been completed in time for my visit to Canada in October. She is a companion piece to Sir Hugh Starkey, a gentleman usher to Henry V111. (See my Blog, October 2012)

Her story is told in 'Inspirations' SP0003 this month. She has been a pleasure to embroider and I hope you enjoy her story.



Blackwork Journey Inspirations

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*I could not resist this sign which I saw in a gallery in Los Angeles!
At least as artists we try!!!!*



May 10 – 16th, 2015 I will be teaching Blackwork Embroidery on this course in Spain, the home of this wonderful technique.

If you would like to join me on this adventure, details of the week can be found on the website “Crafts in Spain” or by contacting the address below.

Get in touch

Craft making activities

For more information on any of our courses or prices, please do not hesitate to get in touch; we are always here and happy to help as best we can.

TEL : 01527 69100

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Happy stitching!

Liz