



Blackwork Journey Blog

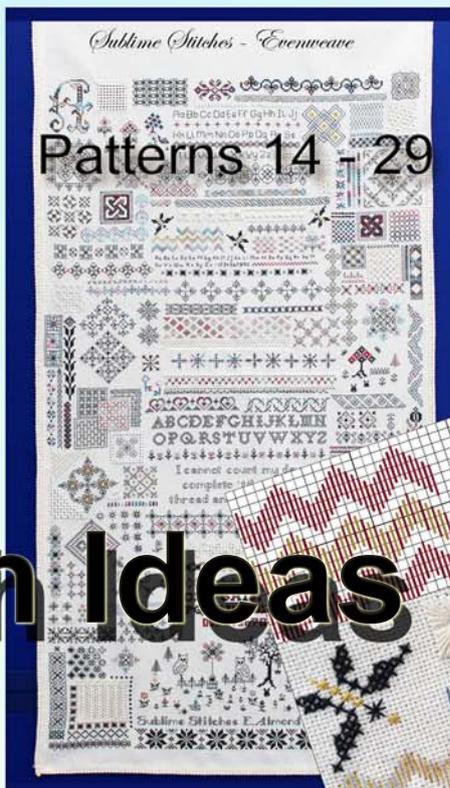
February 2017



New Challenges!



'Sublime Stitches' Part 2 - Evenweave



Fresh Ideas

'Sublime Stitches' Part 2 Evenweave and Aida

I cannot believe how fast January has gone and that I am writing about Part 2 already. I have been delighted with the response to the project and have already received a number of photographs of Part 1 that have been posted on the Facebook group:

Sublime Stitches - Elizabeth Almond Designs

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1695785137378480/#>

Because the chart is offered in two different fabrics, it has enabled readers to choose fabrics they enjoy working with and when a project is as large as this one, is that is very important.

A number of people are also working on the first sampler of the series and have been posting pictures of their work in progress.

'Sublime Stitches' Fabric and Fabric Sizes:

Evenweave Sampler

Zweigart 28 count Evenweave Sampler or Zweigart 14 count Aida Sampler, not including border 225 x 414 stitches.

THE EXACT AREA OF EMBROIDERY, NO BORDER IS: 16.07 x 29.57 inches

Recommended Fabric size - **28 x 40 inches** to allow for embroidery, possible border and mounting

LUGANA Evenweave Sampler

Zweigart 25 count Lugana, white or cream. THE EXACT AREA OF EMBROIDERY, NO BORDER IS: 17.50 x 31.50 INCHES, 225 x 414 stitches

Recommended Fabric size - **28 x 40 inches** to allow for embroidery, possible border and mounting.

Decide whether it is to be worked as a wall hanging, in which case it would be placed lower on the fabric with more at the top.

The evenweave sampler was worked on Zweigart 25 count Lugana. Over dyed or space dyed fabrics may detract from the design - select carefully!

Aida Sampler

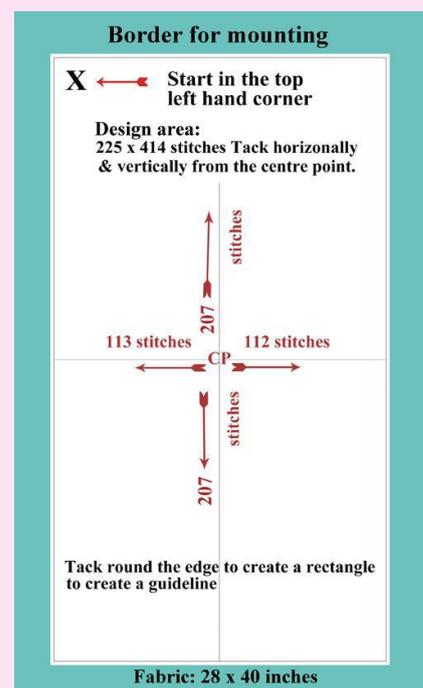
Zweigart 14 count Aida, white, antique white or cream.

THE EXACT AREA OF EMBROIDERY WITH NO BORDER IS 16.07 x 29.57 inches, 225 x 414 stitches.

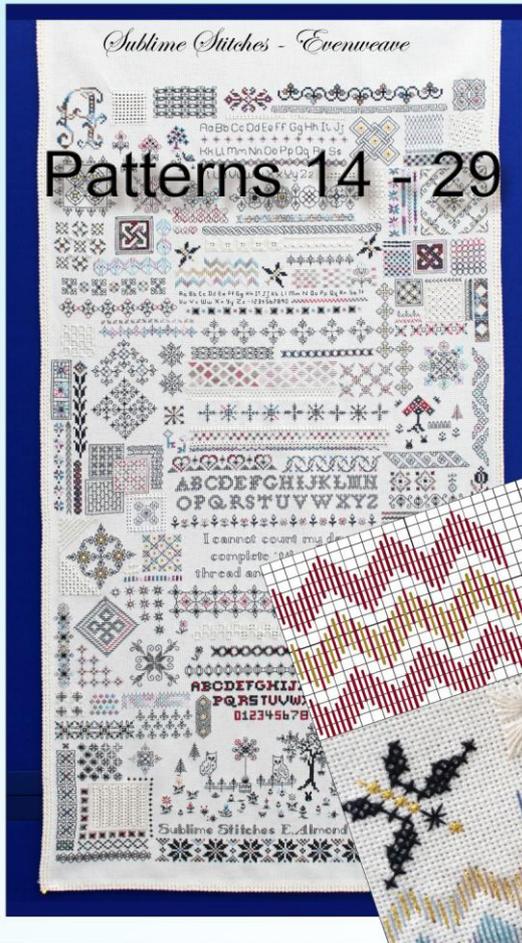
Recommended fabric size - **28 x 40 inches** to allow for embroidery, possible border and mounting.

The Aida sampler was worked on Zweigart 14 count Aida.

For those of you who like the idea of working smaller versions of 'Sublime Stitches' there will be a number of samplers based on different pages from the main chart. The second one has been added to 'Charts' in Blackwork Journey this month.



'Sublime Stitches' Part 2 - Evenweave



Fabric layout and Pages. Part 2 is included in Freebies this month for both FR0131 Evenweave and FR0132 Aida

FR0131 Part 2 'Sublime Stitches' Evenweave and FR0132 Aida

Choose the fabric you are comfortable working with!



Page 1	Page 2	Page 3
Work across from 1 - 3		
→		
Page 4	Page 5	Page 6
Work across from 4 - 6		
→		
Page 7	Page 8	Page 9
Work across from 7 - 9		
→		
Page 10	Page 11	Page 12
Work across from 10 - 12		
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CH0349 Sampler 2

The design area is 10 x 10 inches, so the fabric required will be 14 x 14 inches. The design can be worked on evenweave or Aida fabric, but does involve some split blocks and half stitches.

Which fabric should I use if I want to use evenweave for the first time?

I have been asked which fabric I should choose when working with evenweave for the first time and my response has been that Zweigart 25 count Lugana makes an excellent transition fabric. It is made of 52% Cotton & 48% Rayon. It is woven with the same number of threads in warp and weft and is well suited for most embroidery techniques. It comes in a wide range of colours, but I prefer working on antique white as there is less 'glare' from the fabric. It handles well and the holes are easy to see and it does not crease easily.

Previous projects

Embroidery is more than just a hobby. It gives everyone the chance to discover themselves and give their own creativity free rein. Readers are still joining 'Save the Stitches', 'Pandora's Box' and 'Box of Delights' and the Facebook groups have over 3,000 active members. It gives them a platform to display their work, to ask questions and communicate with other embroiderers around the world. If embroidery is to thrive, then all aspects of communication need to be explored.



Some of the Blackwork Journey 'family' who are working 'Save the Stitches'!



*'Pandora's Box' being worked by Simone, Emmerentia, Debbierose, Kai and Corinne.
One pattern with many variations!*

New charts and future plans!



Two new designs have been added to Blackwork Journey this month - CH0348 Sweet Valentine and PR0038 Lily

'Sweet Valentine' is a pulled thread work and blackwork sampler worked in 28 count evenweave or 25 count Lugana.

The outline is drawn onto the fabric using a water-soluble pen or an HB pencil. The outline is worked in double knot stitch and then the filler patterns are added.

Change the colours to suit your colour scheme. If the design is worked on pastel fabric with white thread it could be used for a wedding sampler.

PR0038 Lily is a Mountmellick style whitework design worked in white threads of different thicknesses on a white matt cotton sateen.

'Lily'- suggested stitches:

Stems - Double knot stitch, Mountmellick stitch

Leaves - outlines - stem stitch or back stitch
whipped, chain stitch

Veins - cable chain stitch or fly stitch

Flower Outline - Three lower petals knots on stalks veins double knot stitch, three upper petals colonial knots, veins back stitch whipped.

Bud - fly and back stitch.

Large open areas can be seeded with small stitches, French knots or beads

All the stitch instructions and diagrams are included with this free style design. It can be used as a picture, added to a placemat or embroidered on a table runner.



Kogin style designs

I have been working on future Kogin style patterns and really enjoying the challenge! I will be adding further patterns in the next few months, including bags and needlework accessories.



Whilst Kogin is a form of pattern darning, the patterns consist of horizontal running stitches worked in rows along the weft of the fabric and across the full width of the pattern. The designs were usually geometric and often diamond shaped. It was worked in the hand without using a frame and with a number of stitches on the needle at any one time, making it faster to stitch.

Generally the stitches were worked over uneven numbers of threads 1, 3, 5, 7 which is much easier to work, but there are occasions where stitching is worked over even numbers of threads 2, 4, 6, 8.

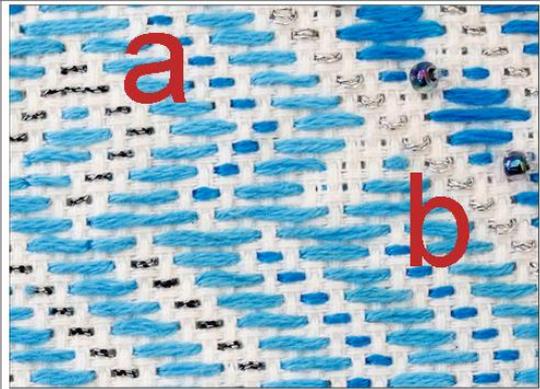
Because the pattern works across the full width of the fabric, it is essential that the foundation row is correct. The first row is worked from right to left and once the first row has been completed the work is turned and the second row worked. The work is then turned again for every row leaving the last stitch of each row loose to avoid pulling and distorting the work.



I have also been adding some variations to the patterns by adding beads and metallic threads. This would not have been found in traditional Japanese Kogin embroidery, but I wanted to see what different effects I could achieve.

Beaded Kogin diamond

The beads were added after the embroidery had been completed. The most suitable materials I have found to work on are 25 count Lugana using three strands of floss, or for easier counting, 16 count Aida and three strands of floss.



I used two shades of DMC metallic threads to create a brocade effect and to see which one was most effective on the ground fabric.

- a. DMCE415 Light Effects Pewter was much stronger than
- b. DMC E618 Silver.



Light Effects

<p>Jewel Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> E130 Gemstones E135 Golden Dawn E155 Amethyst E316 Pink Amethyst E321 Red Ruby E334 Blue Topaz E699 Green Emerald E3837 Purple Ruby E3843 Light Blue Sapphire E3849 Aquamarine Blue E703 Light Green Emerald E718 Pink Garnet E815 Dark Red Ruby E825 Blue Sapphire 	<p>Precious Metal Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> E168 Silver E301 Copper E317 Titanium E677 White Gold E3821 Light Gold E3852 Dark Gold 	<p>Pearlescent Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> E211 Lilac E746 Cream E966 Lime E818 Soft Pink E747 Baby Blue E967 Soft Peach E3747 Sky Blue B5200 White
<p>Antique Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> E898 Dark Oak E436 Golden Oak E3685 Rosewood E310 Ebony E415 Pewter 	<p>Fluorescent Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> E980 Neon Yellow E990 Neon Green 	<p>Glow-in-the-Dark</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> E940 Glow-in-the-Dark

E3852 Dark gold makes more impact than E3852 Light gold, so I generally use the darker gold.

DMC Light Effects Floss is comprised of 6 size 25 easily separated strands. Light Effects uses a colour numbering system that easily corresponds to the popular cotton DMC Embroidery Floss. You can add a subtle highlight to your stitching by combining one strand of cotton Floss with one strand of Light Effects. For a more vibrant look, you can substitute Light Effects for its matching shade in Cotton Floss.



DMC Diamant and Rainbow Gallery Treasure Braid 4 and 8 are also good metallic threads to use and there are many other manufacturers.

Experiment until you find a metallic thread you are comfortable working with. They add an extra dimension to embroidery and are worth including in your work.

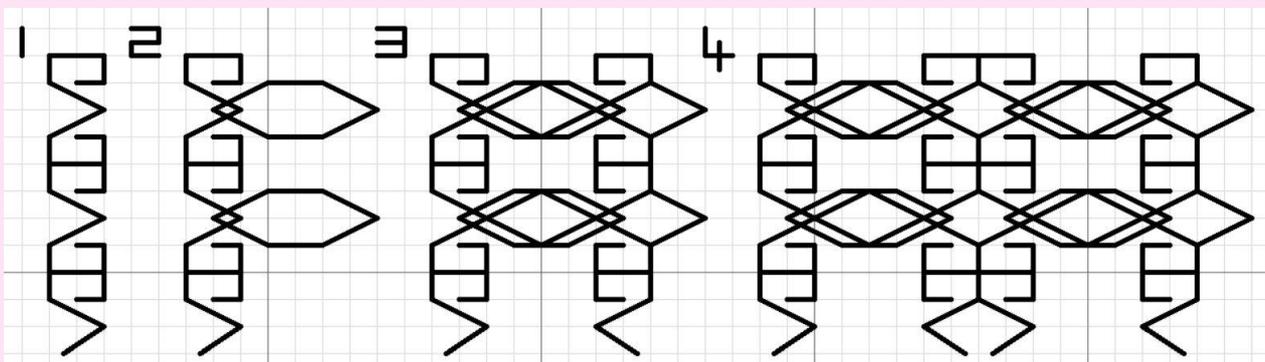
Like all metallic threads, use short length of reduce fraying and a larger needle than usual!

Rainbow Gallery Treasure Braid 4 and 8

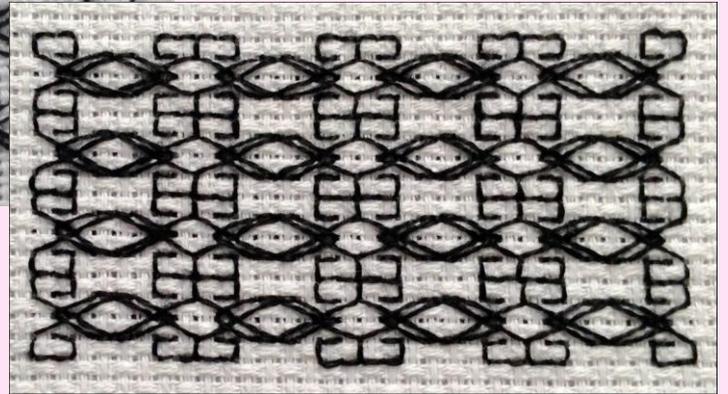
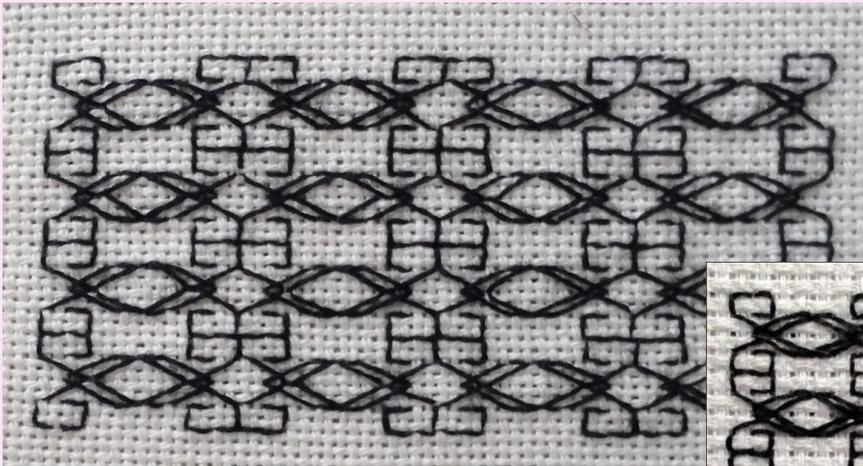
Tackling a difficult pattern

Blackwork patterns can appear very complicated at first sight, but if the pattern is broken down into different parts it becomes easier to understand. Adding or removing stitches in blackwork changes the dynamics of the pattern.

An example of this is the ironwork pattern from 'Sublime Stitches' Part 1. Several readers found this very complicated to stitch, so I broke it down into columns showing how each column related to the next. This made it much easier to see and stitch.

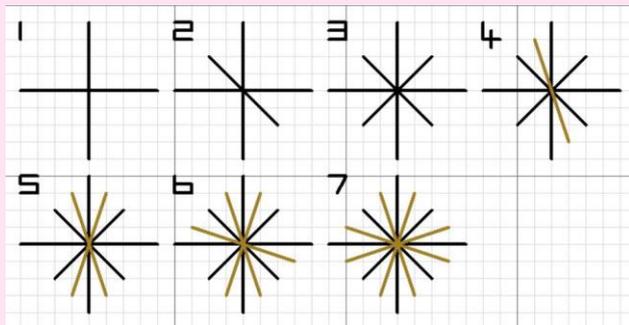


Pattern 3 from Part 1 'Sublime Stitches' on evenweave and Aida



Evenweave and Aida Pattern 3

The same theory applies to embroidery stitches where the stitch is built up in a specific sequence to ensure that all the stitches look the same.



Rhodes stitch construction

I recently used Rhodes stitch in a design using black and gold threads. The first two threads (1) were long stitches worked over 8 threads, followed by two diagonal stitches (2,3) over 4 threads. The stitches were added in a clockwise direction until all 8 stitches had been added. The last stitch always lying in the same direction. Each stitch in the design was completed in the same way so all the Rhodes stitches were identical.

If the stitch is one you are not familiar with, try it out first on your doodle cloth.

Judy's Quaker Ball

I recently received a letter from Judy with a picture of her embroidered ball. I loved the way she tackled it and have since set her a challenge to upsize the design and use pulled thread work patterns and blackwork from Pandora's Box.

Judy wrote:

"Some months ago I went to Melbourne to an Exhibition at the Embroiderers Guild where I saw an embroidered ball. My first thought was, I had to do that! When I got home I had lost interest in it. Then shortly after someone posted a Quaker ball on your Facebook site and that inspired me. I know knew what it was called.

I googled 'Quaker Ball' and there were lots and lots of photos of balls. I needed a pattern, a net. I couldn't find one . So I googled Polyhedra and looked for one with octagons, hexagons and squares. That took ages, but I found a truncated cube octahedron. I like the mathematical name, (that reminds me , I am also fascinated by Fibonacci. I was a maths teacher!)

Getting started also took me ages , I used inch sides on Aida 14. The octagon was easy, but the hexagon was tricky. I enjoyed doing it , working out what patterns looked good . Still think it's useless, but fun. Just thought you may like to see it ."

I look forward to seeing whether Judy takes up the challenge and will update you as to her progress.



Judy's Quaker Ball

Silk production in Southern India

On my recent travels in Southern India, I visited a silk egg production unit. I have seen similar units in China, but the way in which they collected and incubated the eggs was very interesting.

There are four stages in the lifecycle of a moth and the cultivation of cocoons for the production of raw silk is called 'Sericulture'.

Silk is a natural protein fibre obtained from the cocoons of the silkworm. The silk protein is called Fibroin and the silk gum is called Sericin.



In India silk is obtained from different species of silkworm;

- Mulberry silk
- Muga silk
- Eri silk
- Tussar silk

Each silk has different qualities, texture and appearance.

The sequence in which the eggs were produced was interesting. The adult moths mate with each other and the female is placed in a cup on a paper. She lays her eggs on the paper and these papers are either sold to other silk producers or allowed to develop into caterpillars.



The larval stage lasts for about 27 days and the silkworm goes through five growth stages called instars, during this time. During the first molting, the silkworm sheds all its hair and gains a smooth skin.

The cocoon is the stage in which the larva spins silk threads around it, to protect itself from its predators. The larva traps itself inside the cocoon in order to pupate. The colour of the cocoon varies, depending upon what the silkworm eats. It can range from white to golden yellow. The second molting occurs inside the cocoon, when the larva turns into a brown pupa. It takes about 2 - 3 weeks for the pupa to metamorphose into an adult moth.

The production workshop was very humid!



1. Adult moth
2. Moths mating
3. Each female is placed in an individual cup to lay her eggs
4. The female moth lays her eggs on paper rings. These papers may then be sold to other producers or allowed to develop through the different stages into cocoons
5. Egg papers



- 6. Cocoons varying in colour from white to yellow
- 7. Drying racks
- 8. Raw silk

Once the adult moth comes out of its cocoon, its only purpose is to find a member of the opposite sex and mate. Males are larger than females and more active. They flap their wings rapidly to attract the females. Within 24 hours of mating, the male moth dies, while the female lays abundant eggs, after which she dies as well. There on, a new life cycle begins.

I hope you have enjoyed this month's Blog. If you have any queries please contact me at:
lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk

Happy stitching!

Liz