



Blackwork Journey Blog

May 2017



Blackwork Journey Blog, May 2017

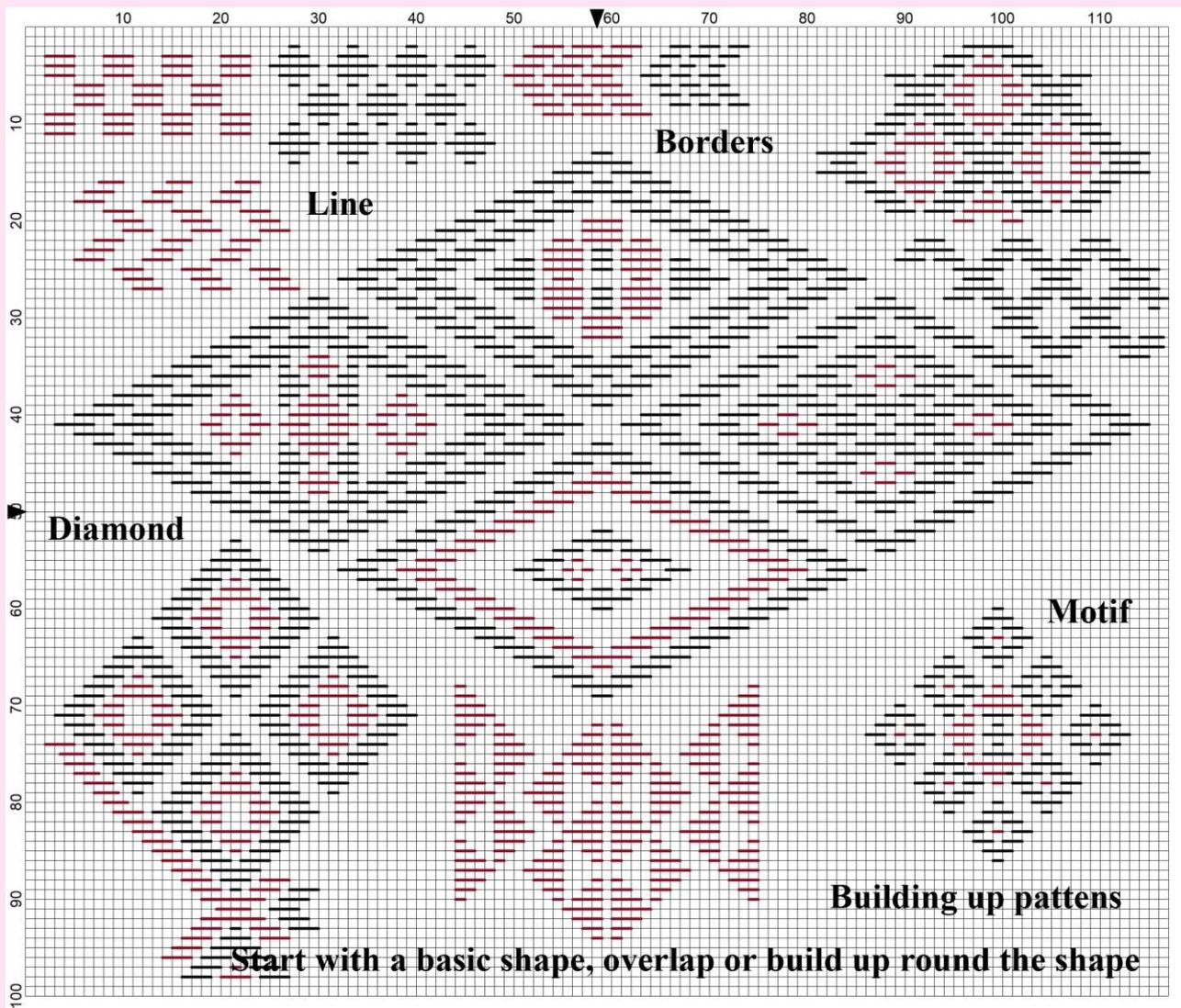
May is my favourite time of year! The winter is just a distant memory, the trees are in leaf and the flowers are blooming. I can take my embroidery into the garden along with a cup of coffee and stitch to my heart's content. The weather makes a huge difference to the way I feel. If the sun is shining, I feel more positive and creative and ideas seem to develop more easily.

Creating Kogin style designs

I know a number of my readers also feel more creative when summer comes and I have had a lot of interest in the Kogin style designs including a request.

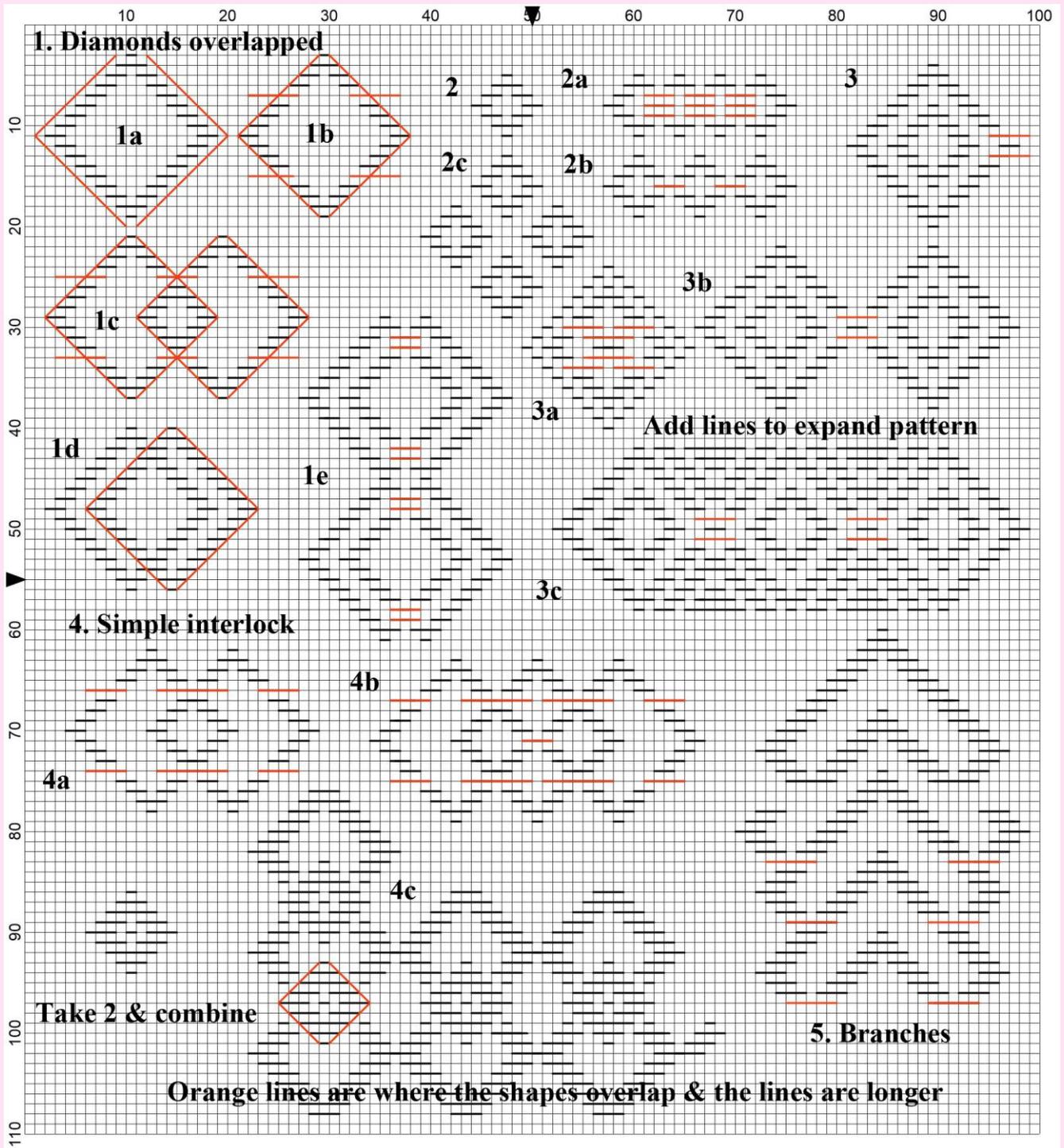
"I like the idea of designing my own Kogin style designs. How do I start, is it difficult and could I do it?"

Kogin is a type of pattern darning with a long history, but many of the designs however complicated, start from simple patterns which are well documented in kimonos, padded jackets and garments that have been preserved, mostly in museums. With all traditional embroidery techniques the same motifs appear again and again with different variations. The motifs and techniques cross countries and cultures and are rooted in history which makes them so appealing to research. Often they are handed down from generation to generation, preserved and treasured.



Pattern Sheet 1

The first two pattern sheets (below) show how simple shapes can be developed. It is important to decide how the patterns will overlap. When the two patterns are overlapped some of the lines will be longer as shown in orange on the design.



Pattern Sheet 2

Whilst the same designs appear frequently, the difference between Kogin patterns and other pattern darning is that the stitches are horizontal worked along the weft of the fabric and cross the pattern in complete rows from right to left, turning the work at the end of each row.

How to create your own patterns:

If you decide you do want to create your own designs you will need:

Squared paper. 1cm squared paper can be downloaded free from a number of sites on the internet

A black felt tip pen

Tracing paper

One block on Aida = 2 threads on evenweave

Method:

Start with a **simple** shape such as a diamond.

1. Draw the basic design onto the squared paper using a black felt tip pen.

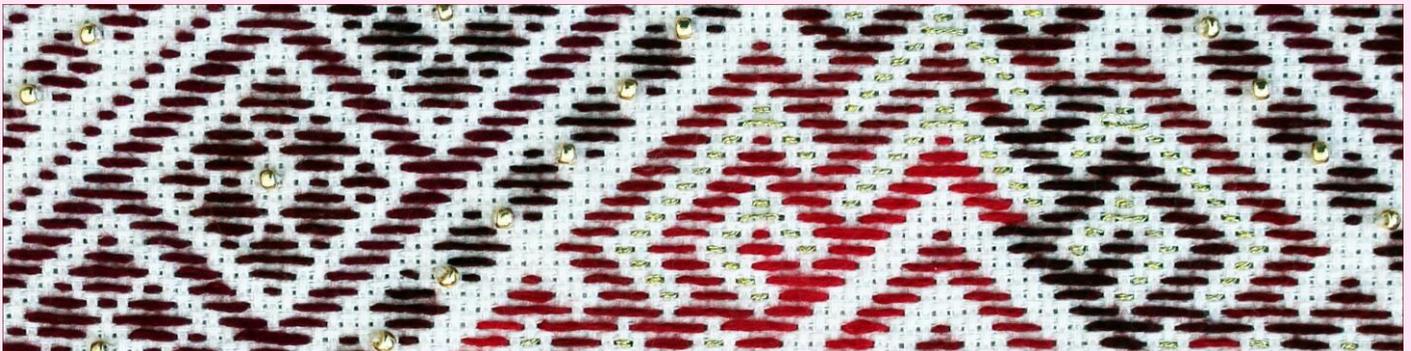
2. Trace the diamond onto the tracing paper.

3. Take the tracing and move it over the diamond on the squared paper to see how the patterns can be overlapped and to see how they interlock. When the shapes are overlapped some of the lines will be longer for example, 5 blocks in length rather than 3. These overlapping lines are indicated in orange on the two design sheets.

4. Draw the full design out onto your squared paper. Is it even, are all the stitches the correct length? Where do the lines overlap? Branches move out from the longer lines.

5. Count the stitches carefully looking at the length of each stitch. The foundation row must be accurate because the design builds out from that row.

6. The drawn pattern can then be translated into embroidery to create your first design.



Extract from PR0040 Kogin, Kogin, Kogin

Whilst it is not difficult to do, it does require careful counting and double checking of the foundation row. There are many variations and the more you do the more ideas you will develop. The design can be as simple or as complicated as you choose to make it!

Exploring new techniques can be very satisfying as it is so easy to just use the stitches we are comfortable with and ignore the many avenues that open up when taking a fresh look at our stitching. The readers who have tried pulled thread work as part of 'Pandora's Box' and 'Sublime Stitches' have enjoyed trying out small samples and some have gone on to use what they have gained in their own projects.

Confidence is the key and that comes with practice!

There are three new charts online in May!



New Charts - PR0040 Kogin, Kogin, Kogin

This was developed from three expanded diamonds with branches growing out of the diamonds and interlocking with each other. Bands were used to separate the diamonds and filler patterns were added to the corners.

This design has been worked as a wall hanging and measures:

15.36 x 25 inches 215 x 350 stitches

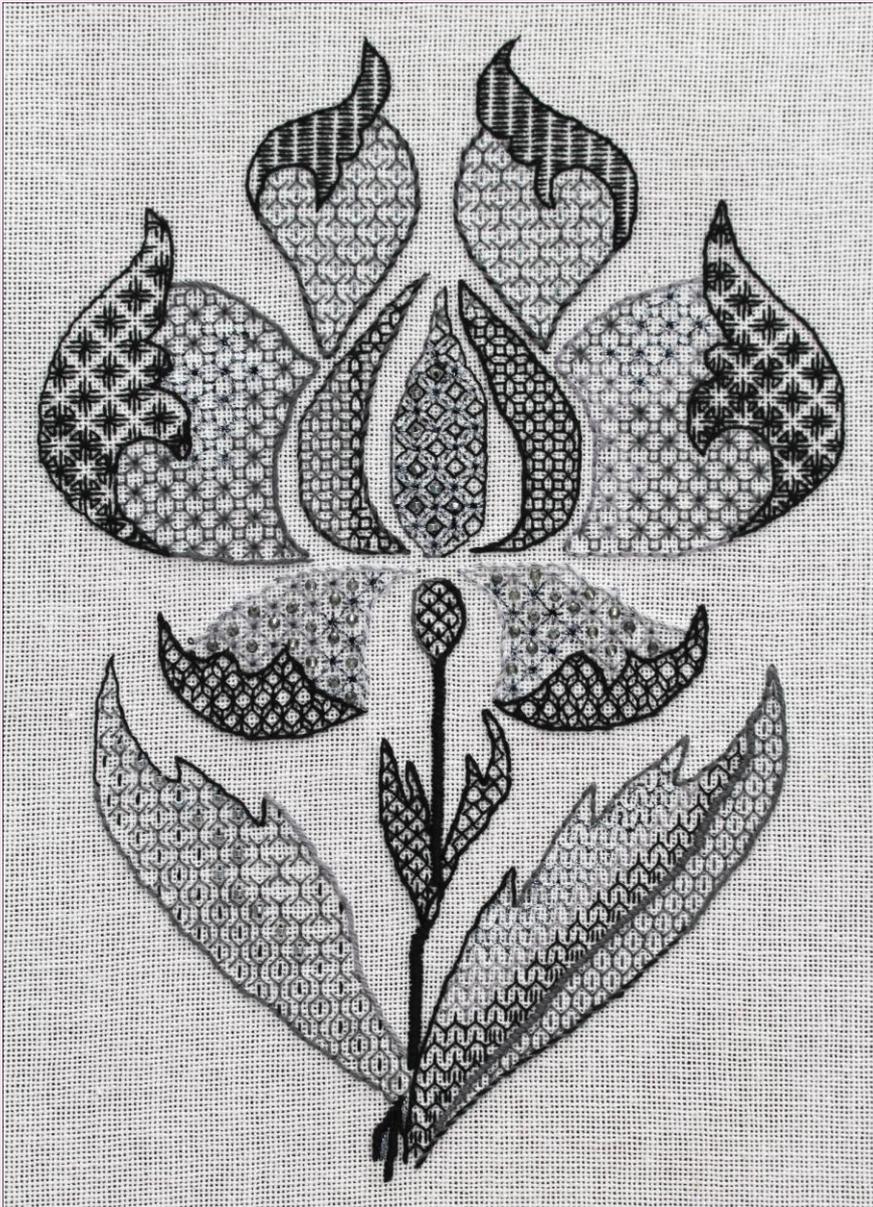
Fabric:

Zweigart 28 or 32 count evenweave or, 16 count Aida blockweave, 20 x 30 inches minimum.

Threads:

DMC stranded cotton in two shades of red, metallic gold thread and Mill Hill gold beads

New Charts - CH0354 Blackwork Iris and CH0355 Sampler 5



Blackwork is such a versatile technique as shown in Blackwork Iris which is a free style design where the flower is drawn onto the fabric and Sampler 5 where the stitches are counted.

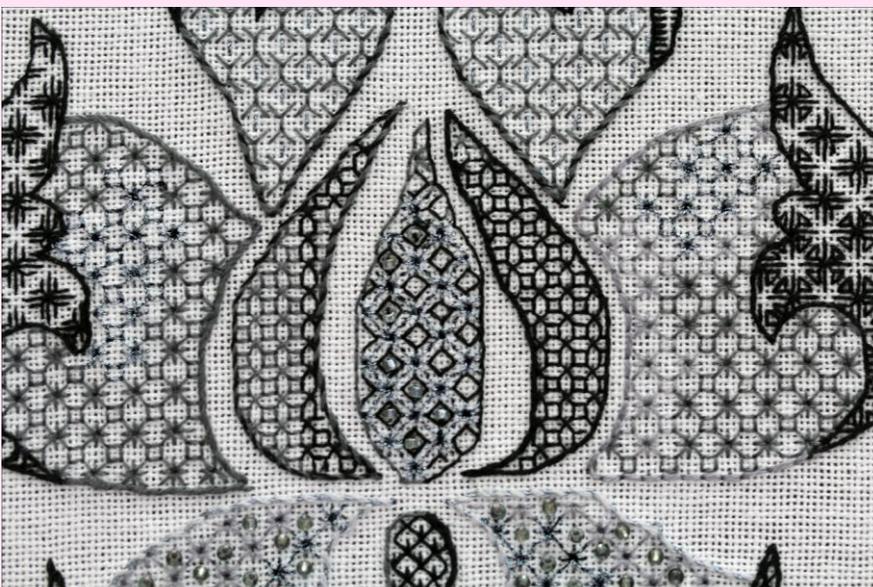
Once the iris is drawn onto the fabric using an HB pencil or a water-soluble pen, the outlines are worked in back stitch whipped and then the different pattern areas are filled.

When starting a pattern in petal or a leaf, start in the middle of the section and work outwards. Add compensating stitches when you reach the edge of the section so there are no gaps

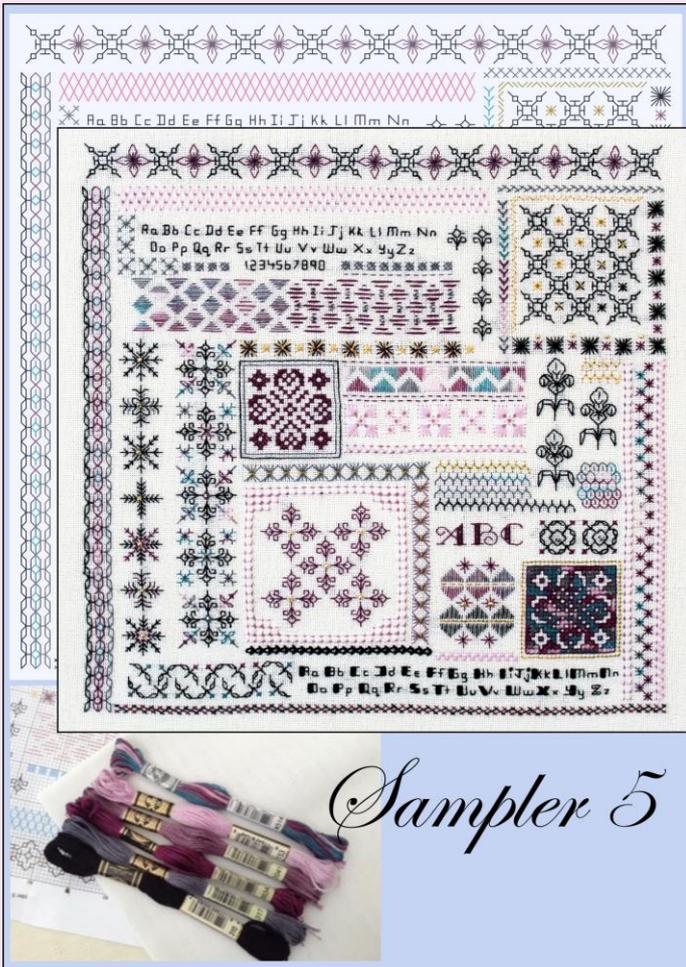
PR0039 Whitework Iris is a pulled thread and whitework version of this design and can be found in 'Projects'.



Extract from CH0354 Blackwork Iris



CH0355 Sampler 5



Sampler 5



Extract from CH0355 Sampler 5

'Just Cross Stitch' June 2017

Many embroidery magazines are now available as digital downloads which means they can be accessed worldwide! Looking to see how the magazines present the embroidery other than pictures can be helpful for your own needlework.

Old picture frames from a charity shop can be repainted and if the frame is solid enough, handles can be added and the picture made into a tray as shown opposite!

Tray from:
Sudberry House, LLC 323 Boston Post Road #3
Old Saybrook, CT 06475 USA
Email: sales@sudberry.com

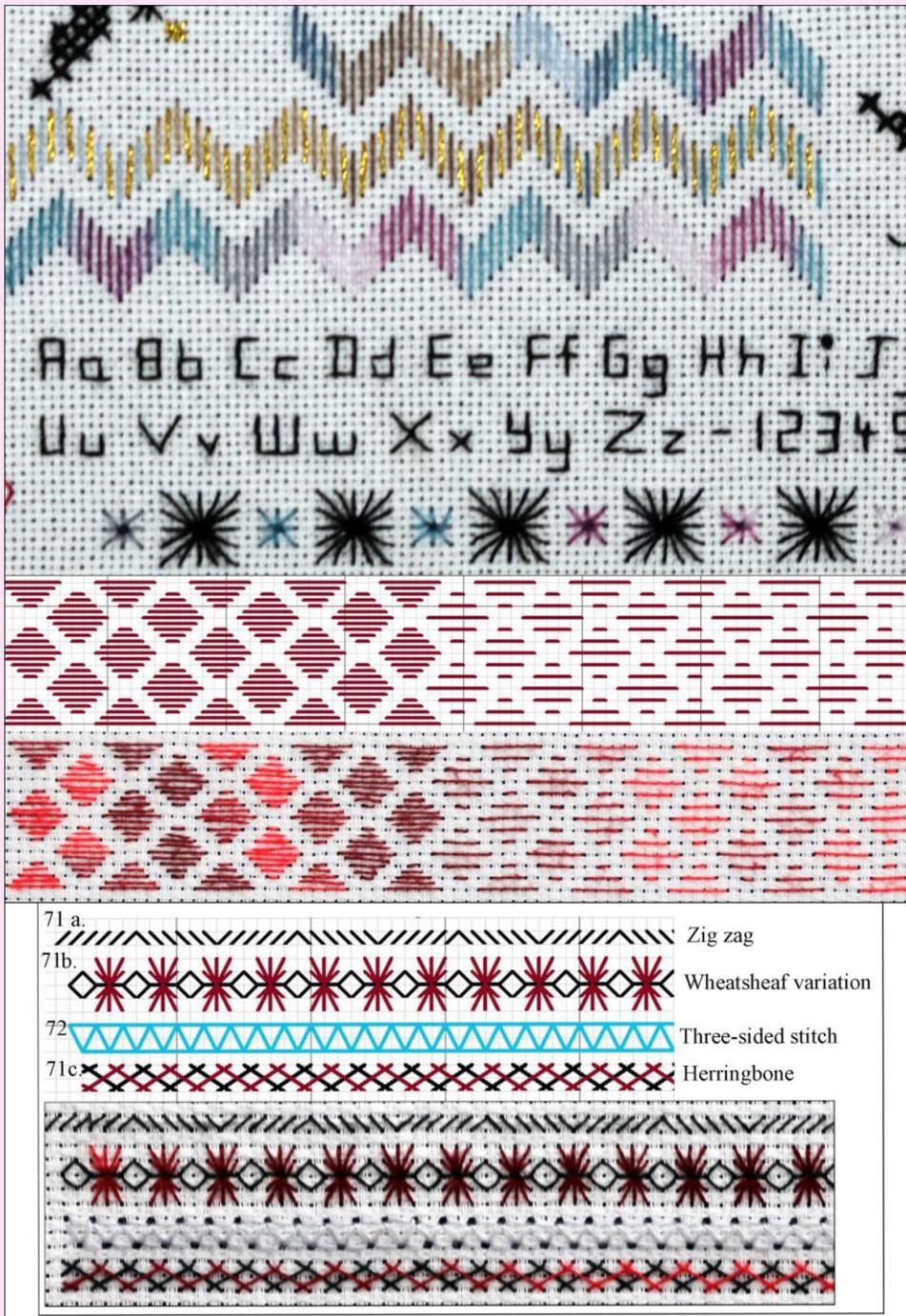


'Sublime Stitches' Part 5 Evenweave and Aida



Following on from April Part 5 Evenweave and Part 5 Aida the series of monthly designs continues. 'Sublime Stitches'. It is being worked by readers right round the world and many of them are using the new

Coloris threads to work their evenweave designs and sometimes I am fortunate enough to meet readers and see their work in progress.



The thinking behind 'Sublime Stitches' was the create a project where every pattern used had a personal memory for me.

It was also designed to take a fresh look at embroidery stitches which have often not been used for years and to integrate them along with pulled thread work, Assisi work, cross stitch and Kogin embroidery into a larger project to show how they can be used and to encourage people to try them out in their own work.

Trying new ideas, stitches and techniques takes confidence and as I have said previously, confidence comes from practice.

There are two quote on confidence I would really like to share -

"When you have confidence, you can have a lot of fun. And when you have fun, you can do amazing things."

Joe Namath

"Don't wait until everything is just right. It will never be perfect. There will always be challenges, obstacles, and less than perfect conditions. So what? Get started now. With each step you take, you will grow stronger and stronger, more and more skilled, more and more self-confident and more and more successful."

Mark Victor Hansen



Yvonne's 'Sublime Stitches'

Whilst teaching a day school in Harrogate, Yorkshire, I met Yvonne who bought her 'Sublime Stitches' to show me. Yvonne has worked a number of the big projects before and is a member of the Facebook group. She is using Coloris threads and her work was much admired by her group, the Brigants Lacemakers.

It gives me enormous pleasure when I see pictures of Blackwork Journey designs that have been worked and encourages me to keep designing. Thanks Yvonne and all the ladies for a very special day!

I received a request from Joke recently and I have had a number of similar requests.

*"My name is Joke van S and I give embroidery workshops.
I teach different stitches and with those stitches we make a band sampler.
Since January I follow your Sublime stitches and I showed it to my students.
They want to do your Sublime Stitches in a monthly workshop with my help"*

I am delighted if readers want to work any of the projects as group projects and it would be lovely if they would post pictures of their work in progress so that I can see what they are doing. I am always here to help and all members of groups are welcome to join the Facebook groups set up for their projects.

I know a group of ladies of the Lakeshore Creative Stitchery Guild, which is a part of the Embroiderers' Association of Canada, are working hard on their 'Sublime Stitches' project under the leadership of Maureen. I have had the pleasure of meeting and working with the group and look forward to seeing how they are getting on!

Right place, right time! Stumpwork Casket, Sudberry Hall, Derbyshire, England

On a recent visit to Derbyshire, we visited Sudbury Hall which is a country house in Sudbury, Derbyshire, England.



Sudbury Hall is one of the country's finest Restoration mansions and has Grade I listed building status. The house was built between 1660 and 1680. The building is now owned and maintained by the National Trust, to whom it was gifted by the Vernon family in 1967. Parts of the building are being restored and I knew that somewhere in the building was an embroidered stumpwork casket.

Stumpwork is a style of embroidery where the stitched figures are raised from the surface of the work to form a 3-dimensional effect.

Stitches can be worked around pieces of wire to create individual forms such as leaves, insect wings or flower petals. This form is then applied to the main body of work by piercing the background fabric with the wires and securing tightly. Other shapes can be created using padding under the stitches, usually in the form of felt layers sewn one upon the other in increasingly smaller sizes. The felt is then covered with a layer of embroidery stitches.

Used as a way of displaying the skills of the needlewoman, it was both time consuming and expensive.

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The casket had been stored whilst the building was being restored, but after asking the Curator she took me to see the casket and removed its cover and allowed me to photograph it in great detail. It was a unique opportunity to study such an item and was an inspiration and a tribute to **Hannah Trapham** who created her Stumpwork Casket around 1671.



Materials: Silk, wood, silver



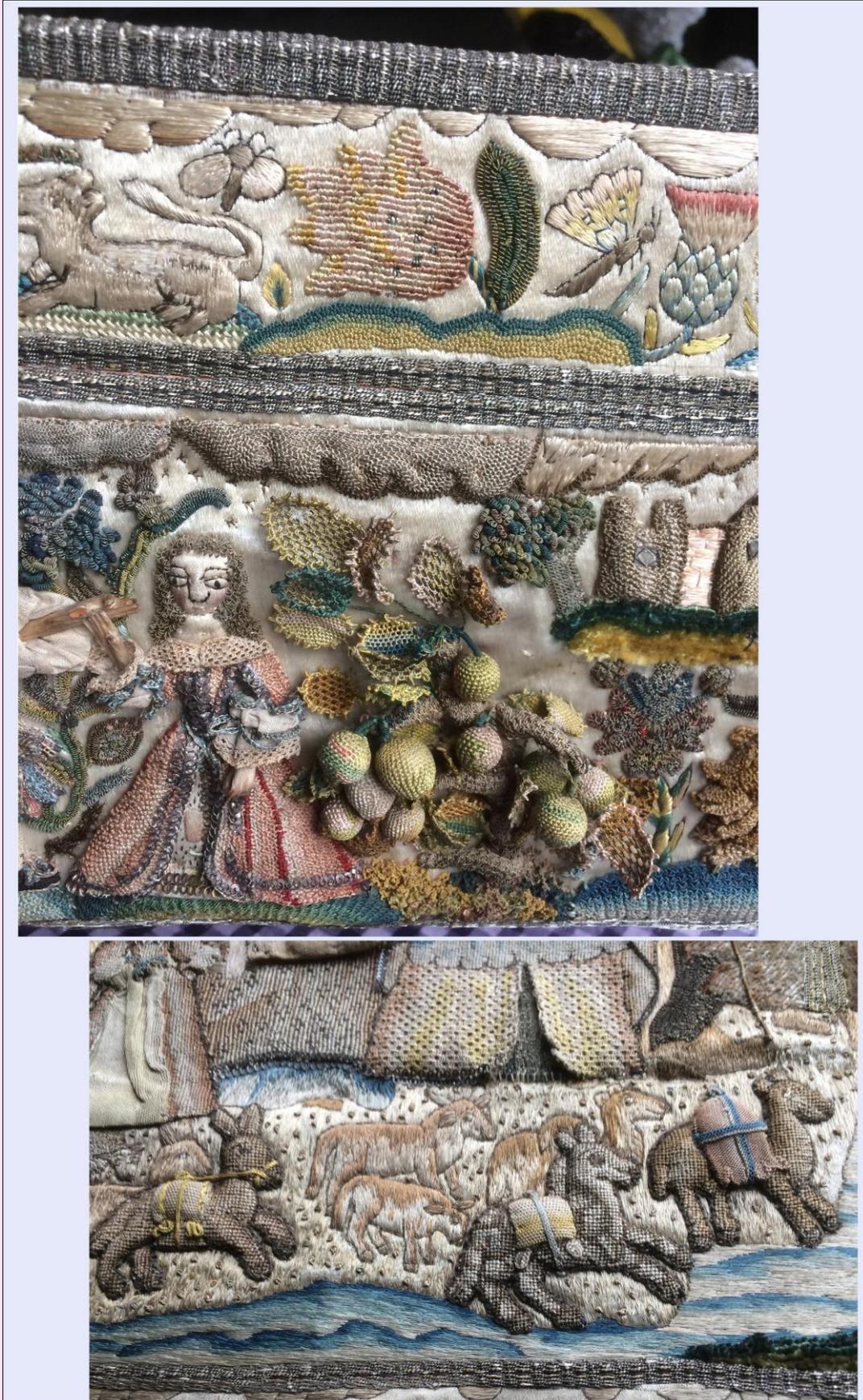
The stumpwork featured people, animals and plants and was typical work of that period, but the craftsmanship was exquisite and the expressions on the faces was fascinating.

I could find out very little about Hannah, but it was thought that she was the niece of a surgeon in London. She must have been wealthy to have been able to afford the materials for the box.

*The lock on the box read
'Hannah Trapham 1671'*



Where did Hannah find the leopard?



Amongst the cattle portrayed on the casket are camels and donkeys.



Casket interior lined with red silk



Stumpwork has recently undergone a revival and there are many authors now writing about the subject if you wish to explore it further. I hope you found this month's Blog interesting!

Happy stitching!

Liz