



Blackwork Journey Blog

June 2017



'Sublime Stitches' Part 6 - Evenweave



Sampler 6

Blackwork Journey
'New Stitches' E-Book 8

Two new patterns:
Blackwork
Pulled thread work

Blackwork Journey Blog, June 2017

June marks the half way point in the year and the half way point in 'Sublime Stitches'. Part 6 is posted in Freebies this month and pictures of work in progress have been posted in the Facebook group. It is very satisfying to see how many people are working the design and the different colour schemes they are using.

Starting an on-line project such as this is a real responsibility for a designer like me! If people want to work a Blackwork Journey design, then I do all in my power to ensure that they are pleased with the finished result and that the instructions and charts are as clear as possible.

My aim is to encourage people to try new techniques and ideas and start to take decisions about how they want their work to look. I am delighted when people use different threads, change colour schemes, add or change motifs. However, it is essential that the instructions are read carefully **before** a design is started. By reading carefully many basic errors can be avoided and if there are still queries I am always on the end of an e-mail or available through the Facebook groups to give practical help.

As experienced embroiderers we make assumptions that everyone knows the basics, but for someone new to embroidery nothing is that simple and there are a number of PDFs in 'Techniques' in Blackwork Journey which will help. No question is too small if it causes uncertainty and asking first can save a lot of unpicking later on.

Choosing the right fabric, lights and frames needs careful consideration and help is there if needed. With the wide range available, making the right choice of fabrics can be difficult and what suits one person will not necessarily be suitable for someone else. I know as I have got older and my eyesight less sharp that I need to use a magnifying lens and good lighting. My choice of fabric has changed from 28 count evenweave to 25 count Lugana, especially for larger projects where many hours are spent stitching the samples for the site.

Being comfortable in the way you work, see and sit makes embroidery more enjoyable even if you only have fifteen minutes to spare. You can get a lot of stitching done in a short space of time if your work is set up correctly and readily available. I try to keep each project in a see through bag so I can take the right one with me wherever I go, knowing it has a small embroidery ring, scissors and spare needles and thread all in one place.



My travelling kit consists of a small flexi-hoop, scissors, packet of needles, threads and project packed into a mesh nylon bag. Each project has its own bag complete with scissors. This saves time looking for threads and materials and keeps everything together.

Make a list of the threads used in each project because if the project is left for a period of time then skein numbers get forgotten!



Part 6 'Sublime Stitches' Evenweave and Aida can be found in 'Freebies'

Sampler 6

Associated with Part 6 is Sampler 6 and this month I have made some changes to the format. The design this month is in three parts: a small sampler and matching card design, a scissor keep and pincushion and a little rabbit picture. These use the stitches found in Part 6 and are suitable for both evenweave and Aida fabric.

Where pulled thread work stitches are used in 'Sublime Stitches' many of them can be worked as embroidery stitches without 'pulling' the stitches and they still look very attractive.

Take an extract from the main sampler, add a border and create a new design!

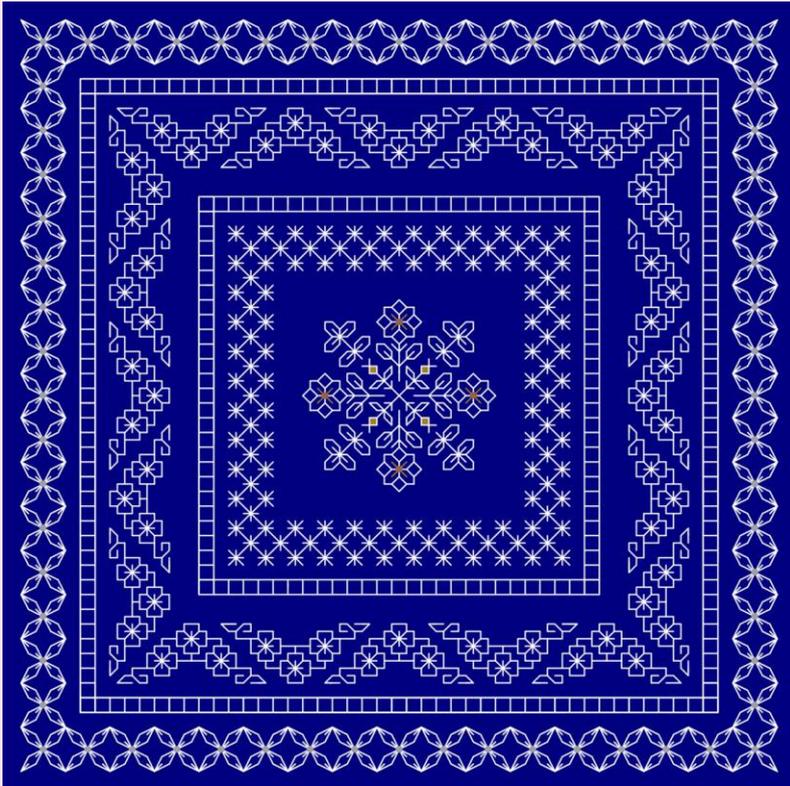




Sampler 6

If you find working white thread on white for pulled thread work difficult use a pale pastel thread and you will be able to see the stitches more clearly. Pale pink or dove grey would have worked well for the pulled thread work in this project.

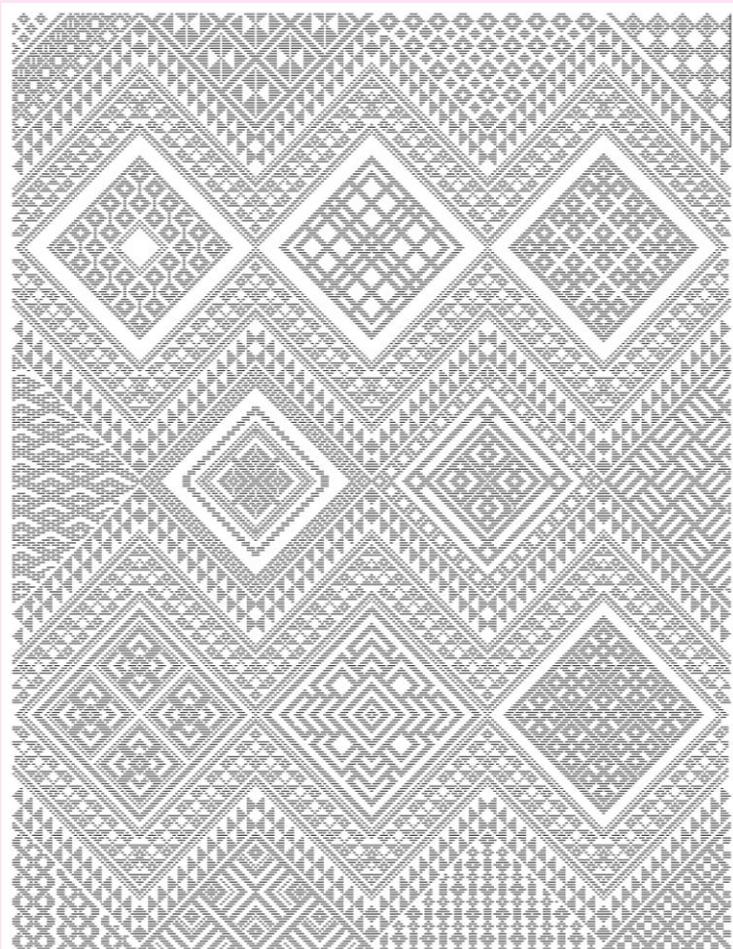




If your eyesight is good and you enjoy working on darker fabric this design would work well in white threads on a coloured background creating a different effect!



Last but not least, the tiny rabbits have come out to play.



Kogin continued

My love affair with Japanese style Kogin work continues and I have been working on a really challenging design where I am bringing all the elements I like together in one statement piece.

Whilst this will not appear on the site I will produce a number of smaller samplers from it at a later date.

When I went to teach a day school in Audlem in Cheshire, UK on Kogin recently, I unrolled the design and told the ladies this was what they were working on that day to their great consternation, but in fact they did work some of the elements from the design and enjoyed a really successful day.



Some of the ladies from South Cheshire Embroiderers Guild working on their Kogin designs



One of the ladies made a bag from denim to mount her Kogin design and I thought this was a really good way of using her sample.



CH0357 Kogin Harmony

The latest design to be added to 'Charts' this month is a pretty design using nine different Kogin style designs.

This design can be worked on evenweave or Aida and a variety of different threads and thicknesses can be used.

My sampler was worked in a combination of Cotton P rle No 8 and three strands of floss on 28 count evenweave.

Traditional Kogin patterns work to certain rules, but my designs are 'in the style of' and may deviate from what may have appeared in the Aomori Province many years ago.

This is a form of pattern darning and the different elements appear in several different cultures and countries. It differs in that the patterns are worked along the weft of the fabric horizontally.



"New Stitches"

I have almost completed a new e-book which should go on-line in July.

'New Stitches' is a unique project comprising 40 different blackwork patterns, 15 pulled thread work patterns and one 'initials' block. There are variations within each pattern. Each pattern is set within a cross stitch framework. Two optional borders are included. There is also a Blackwork version included for readers who do not want to work the pulled thread work designs. Different colours may also be introduced into the design and the charts used to create a Stitch Dictionary

Why was 'New Stitches' designed?

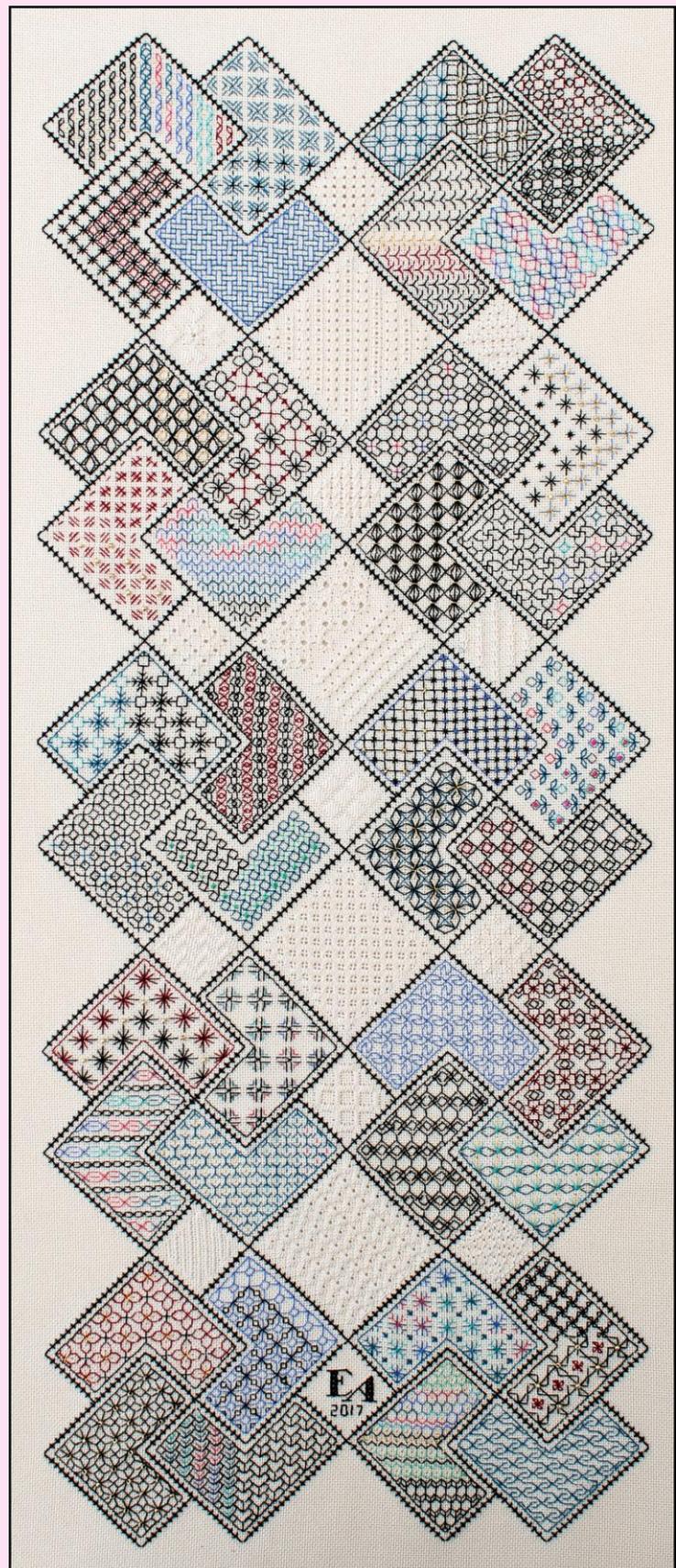
'New Stitches' has been designed as a smaller version of the very popular 'Save the Stitches' which was published in parts in Blackwork Journey in 2015 and as an E-book EB0002. People worldwide are still working this design and they are supported by a closed Facebook group where they can receive help and post pictures of their work.

Blackwork Journey - Elizabeth Almond Designs

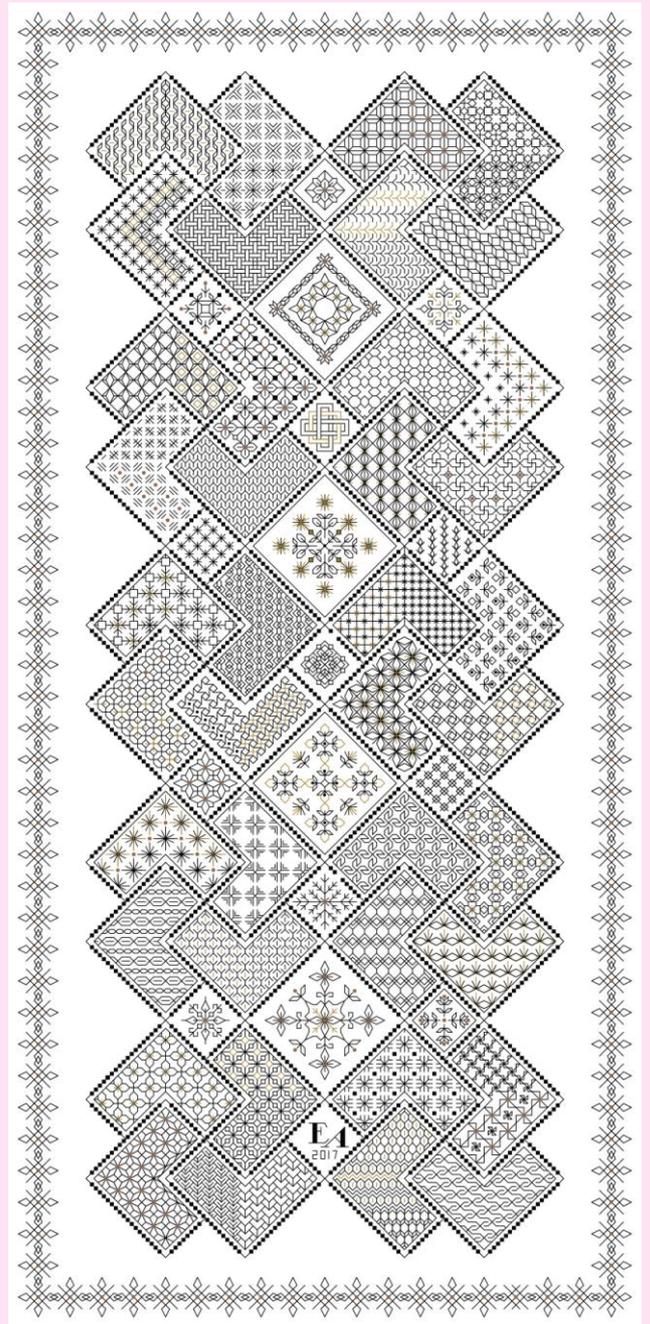
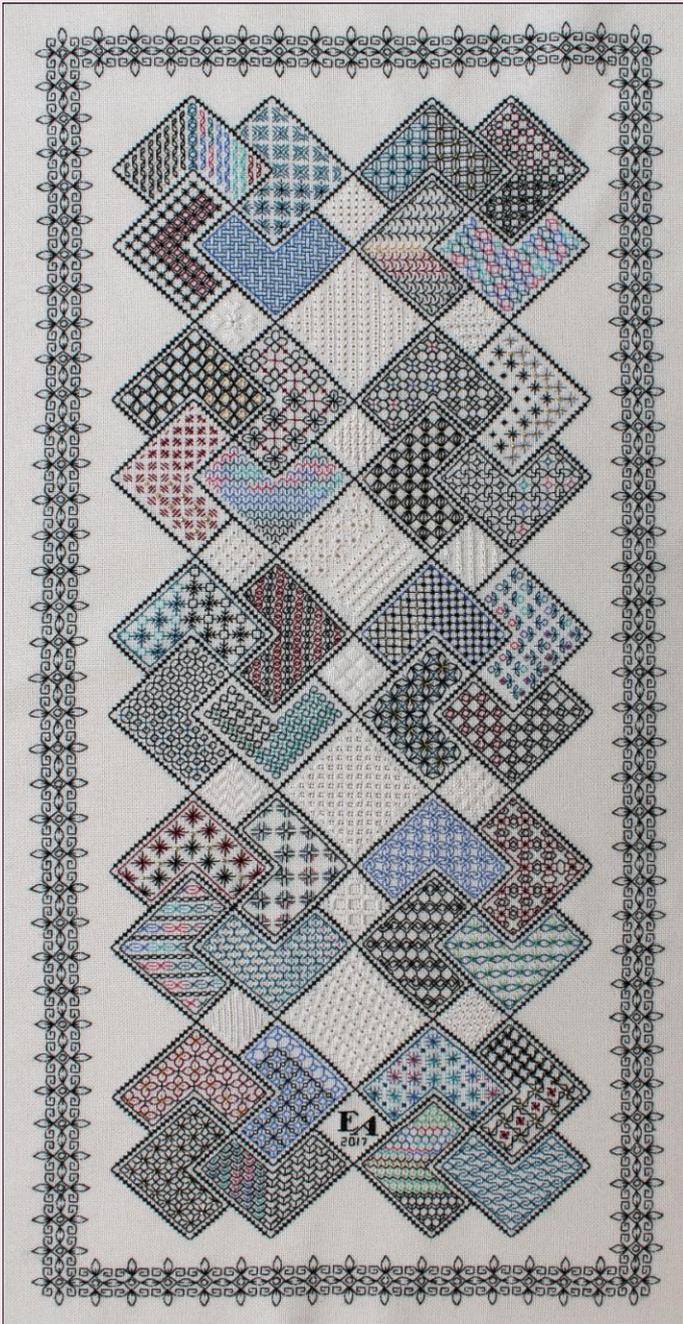
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/blackworkjourneydesigns/>



Border 2



'New Stitches' - no border



'New Stitches' - Border 2 'New Stitches' Blackwork - Border 1



EB0008 will be posted in E-books in Blackwork Journey on July 1st, 2017

Creating e-books is great fun, but takes time to think it through and anticipate all the questions that readers ask, especially about fabric sizes. I have calculated for a number of different types and count of fabric so there will be a size and fabric suitable for everyone.

The information is displayed on a chart outlining clearly all the information required including stitch count and needle size. If you still have any queries please contact me.

1. Graphed Size: stitches wide by stitches high
 Fabric Count: threads per inch
 # of threads each X covers? (Aida is 1, linen is usually 2)
 Extra fabric on each side for border? inches
 Extra fabric on each side for finishing? inches

The stitched area will be inches wide by inches high
 The fabric should be inches wide by inches high
 I suggest using a size tapestry needle
 I suggest using strands of floss for stitching
 For backstitching, I suggest strands of floss

Use the Tab key to move between fields.
 Extra fabric for border is the distance between the stitching and the edge of the frame.
 Extra fabric for finishing is the amount of fabric allowed for mounting or sewing.

2. **Cross Stitch Calculator**
 Graphed Size: stitches wide by stitches high
 Fabric Count: threads per inch
 # of threads each X covers? (Aida is 1, linen is usually 2)
 Extra fabric on each side for border? inches
 Extra fabric on each side for finishing? inches

The stitched area will be inches wide by inches high
 The fabric should be inches wide by inches high
 I suggest using a size tapestry needle
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 For backstitching, I suggest strands of floss



1. 28 count Evenweave - no border
 2. 25 count Lugana - no border

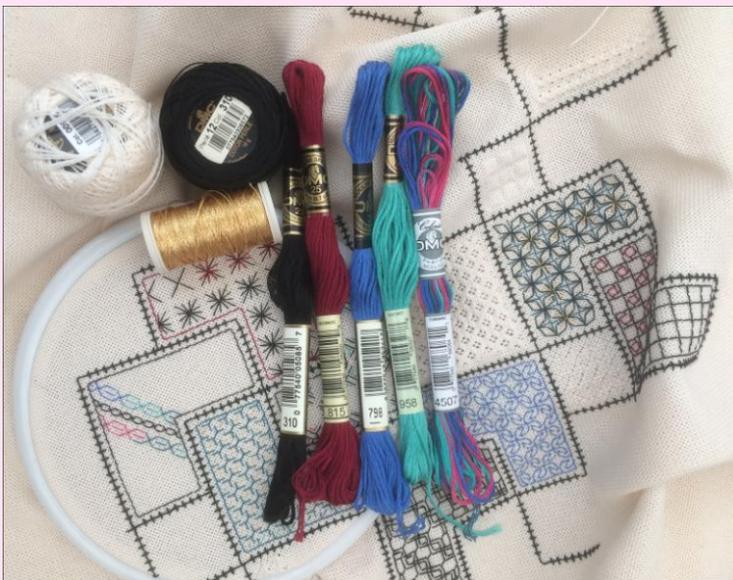
Cross Stitch Calculator

Graphed Size: stitches wide by stitches high
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 # of threads each X covers? (Aida is 1, linen is usually 2)
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Use the Tab key to move between fields.
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These are examples of some of the charts about fabric types and sizes.



There are two versions of 'New Stitches', one in colour and one in traditional blackwork. Choosing colour to use on a large project can be daunting. Lay the colours you think you will use on one side and leave them for a few days. When you come to look at them again add or remove any colours that you are not certain about. Colour is very personal, but the colour thread must be bold enough to stand out on the fabric when stitching with only one strand.

"I love crayons - especially new crayons with no broken tips. I love how they smell and how smooth they feel between my fingers. I love imagining what marvelous pictures the crayons will create, but what I love most of all are the colors - so many colors." ~ Mary Wince

Take Mary Wince's quotation and substitute silks for crayons and that is how most needlewomen feel about their threads. Give me a piece of fabric and a selection of threads and I am happy!

Purple is the soul-lifter
 Red, the flame of passion
 Yellow, the light of warmth
 Green, the vibrant stem of life
 Pink, a whisper of beauty
 Orange beckons, take a chance
 Blue is the sea tide in us all.
 ~Terri Guillemets



Judy's Quaker Ball

Some time ago I wrote a short piece about Judy and her mathematical efforts to create a Quaker Ball. She has kept me updated with her progress and all the problems she has encountered whilst working out how to fit patterns into limited spaces. This week she sent me a picture of her ball and a letter about the complications she encountered on the way.

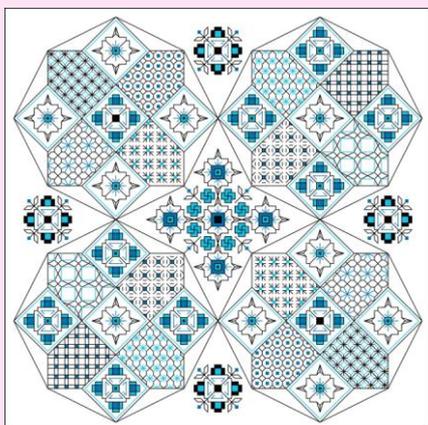
"Another Quaker ball story. Firstly, I had absolutely no intention of ever stitching another ball. Some weeks back on a Pinterest email I noticed some Quaker balls and so decided to have a look at them. I found some patterns, so I decided to purchase one and see if could learn a bit more about making them .

The patterns looked interesting, mainly Blackwork so I decided to start one . It was a larger ball so I used Aida 16 instead of Aida 14 to make it a bit smaller . I stitched about 5 pieces and sewed them together and I did not like it at all. It was going to be too big, I preferred Aida 14 and although some patterns were interesting there were a few I didn't like . So I gave the idea away.



By then I wanted to do another ball, I don't know why. I decided to use 'Pandora s Box' Blackwork for the octagons and that is as far as I got. I couldn't decide on a colour, then one day I noticed Octavia on my wall and thought the two blues and the black looked good . Why not try those colours and use the patterns from Octavia for the hexagons? The squares I stuck with one pattern only. The pieces looked good before I stitched them together but I'm not sure they work well together on the ball."

Thought I'd send you a photo and Liz I am definitely not going to stitch another ball !!!!



*Happy stitching,
Judy*

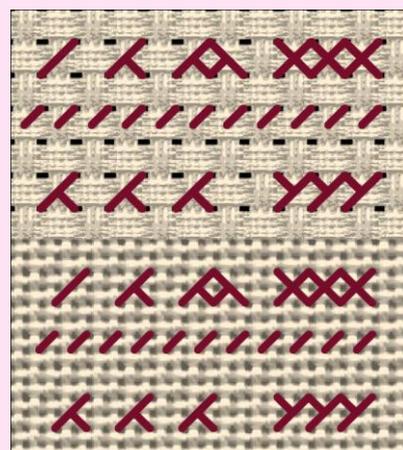
CH0142 Octavia

I like Judy's ball and the story that went behind its creation. It is very easy to just copy a chart and stitch a design, but Judy has learnt so much more by working it out for herself and making it happen even if she never wants to make a ball again. This will carry across into other aspects of her embroidery when she has to make decisions about how she works. So, well done Judy and thank you for sharing your story and your ball!

Part and Compensating Stitches

Many designs contain part stitches and they are not always easy to work. Aida blocks have to be split using a sharp needle whereas evenweave is much easier to use. The stitches are worked over threads, no splitting is required and a tapestry needle can be used.

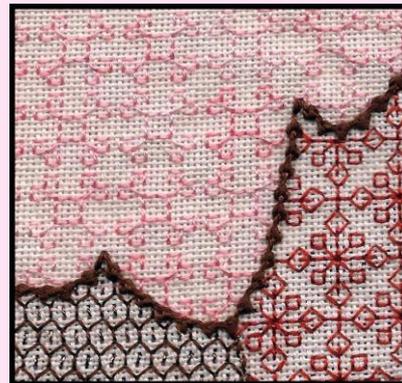
Part stitches on Aida and evenweave fabrics



If the design is a free style one where the design has been drawn onto the fabric, compensating stitches will have to be added at the edges to fill the designs correctly.



For example, CH0312 Acer Leaf needs additional stitches to complete each section ensuring that no gaps are left round the edges.



A textured background in pale pink was worked round the leaf and many compensating stitches were used to complete the design.

Where do you start to stitch in a free style design?



There are two ways of working:

- To start in the corner of a shape and to work across the design or,
- To start in the middle of a shape, complete a full part of the pattern and then work from the centre of the pattern outwards.

This is the method I would choose when working a design such the acer leaf or CH0325 Duette where there is no definite outline.

I hope you found this month's Blog enjoyable!

Happy stitching!

Liz