



# *Blackwork Journey Blog*

July 2017



**Blackwork Journey  
'New Stitches' E-Book 8**

**ALL NEW DESIGNS!**



**Two new patterns:  
Blackwork  
Pulled thread work**

# Blackwork Journey Blog, July 2017

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## Looking for inspiration!

When I first started Blackwork Journey my aim was to produce some simple geometric and Islamic blackwork designs to embroider because there were very few blackwork patterns on the market that I wanted to stitch.

Having produced a number of designs I approached some of the craft magazines around the world with my designs and fortunately they liked what I produced and many of them now invite me to provide work for them, which is a real honour and pleasure. When a magazine or book drops through the door containing one of my designs it gives me a real buzz!

The Blackwork Journey website was set up in 2008 after I had gone back to college to learn how to create a site and then taking various Adobe Photoshop courses to present the work. Going 'live' was one of the most frightening thing I have ever done knowing that what was on the internet was there forever and so it had to be correct.

I wanted to produce charts that would be easy to see, with clear instructions, good diagrams and photographs. My husband was enlisted to check the charts and take the photographs, so it has become a team effort. When we go anywhere in the world, George will often say, "That would make a good embroidery" and he was usually right. I have hundred of photographs on the computer and the i-Phone just to remind me of a possible future design.

I have travelled across the Far and Middle East, to Asia and India, to Australia and New Zealand and many places in Europe looking for new ideas for the site. Finding inspiration and developing ideas has been interesting and time consuming and has taken me into palaces, mosques, museums, back streets and people's homes, where I have often picked up ideas which I have stored, sometimes for years, before being transformed into a design.

I have met some very interesting men and women in the Middle East, Japan, India who make their living from embroidery and established contact with many people from across the world who have worked my designs. I also teach day schools and classes in the UK where I am based and in occasionally in other countries as well as working with readers through my Facebook groups which gives people an opportunity to discuss their work with me.

Like Topsey, Blackwork Journey has grown from a simple site to where it is today with 400 different patterns and e-books covering a range of different techniques. As I have grown in confidence, so has my website and in 2016, I introduced a closed Facebook group to support a free project called 'Save the Stitches' which has since been joined by two other Facebook groups with over 3,000 active members.

Meeting readers in person, through teaching and Facebook groups has been one of the highlights of what I do. To receive feedback on my designs and see the finished work and sometimes the prizes won in national and local shows has been a bonus I certainly did not expect when I started!

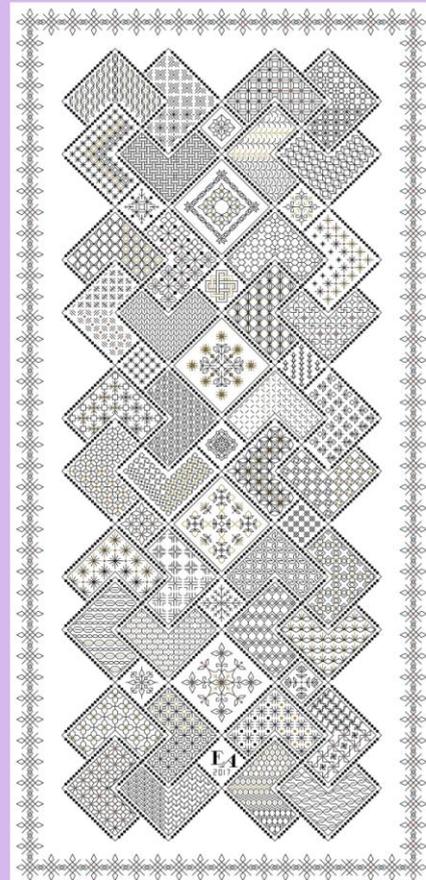
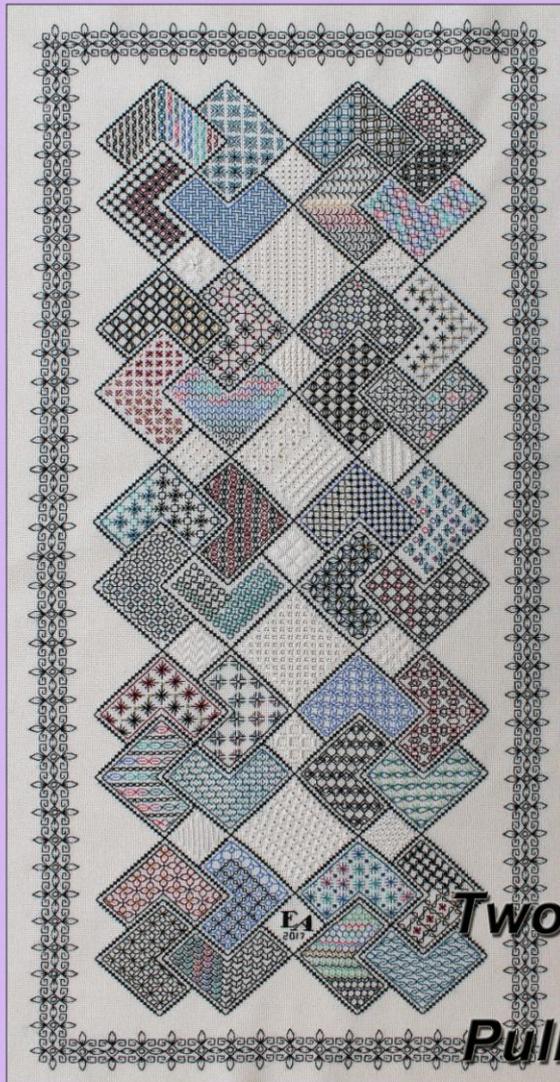
When I began in 2008, I thought I might run out of ideas, but in fact the exact opposite has happened and I have more ideas for the future than time to stitch them in. Creating new designs, compiling E-books and running the Facebook sites and answering e-mails takes up most of my time, but I gain real satisfaction from selecting threads and fabrics and actually stitching the designs and watching them come to life. Watching what other people do with the designs is a bonus and a joy, so please keep sending your pictures into Blackwork Journey.

**NEW! E-Book EB0008 'New Stitches'**

By popular request, my new E-book is launched today. This is a new, smaller version of 'Save the Stitches' consisting of 51 pages of charts and information for two different designs. 'Colour New Stitches' and 'Blackwork New Stitches' which are worked on evenweave and Aida fabric so the reader has a choice of fabric and technique. All the stitches and designs are new, interchangeable and different from the original design.

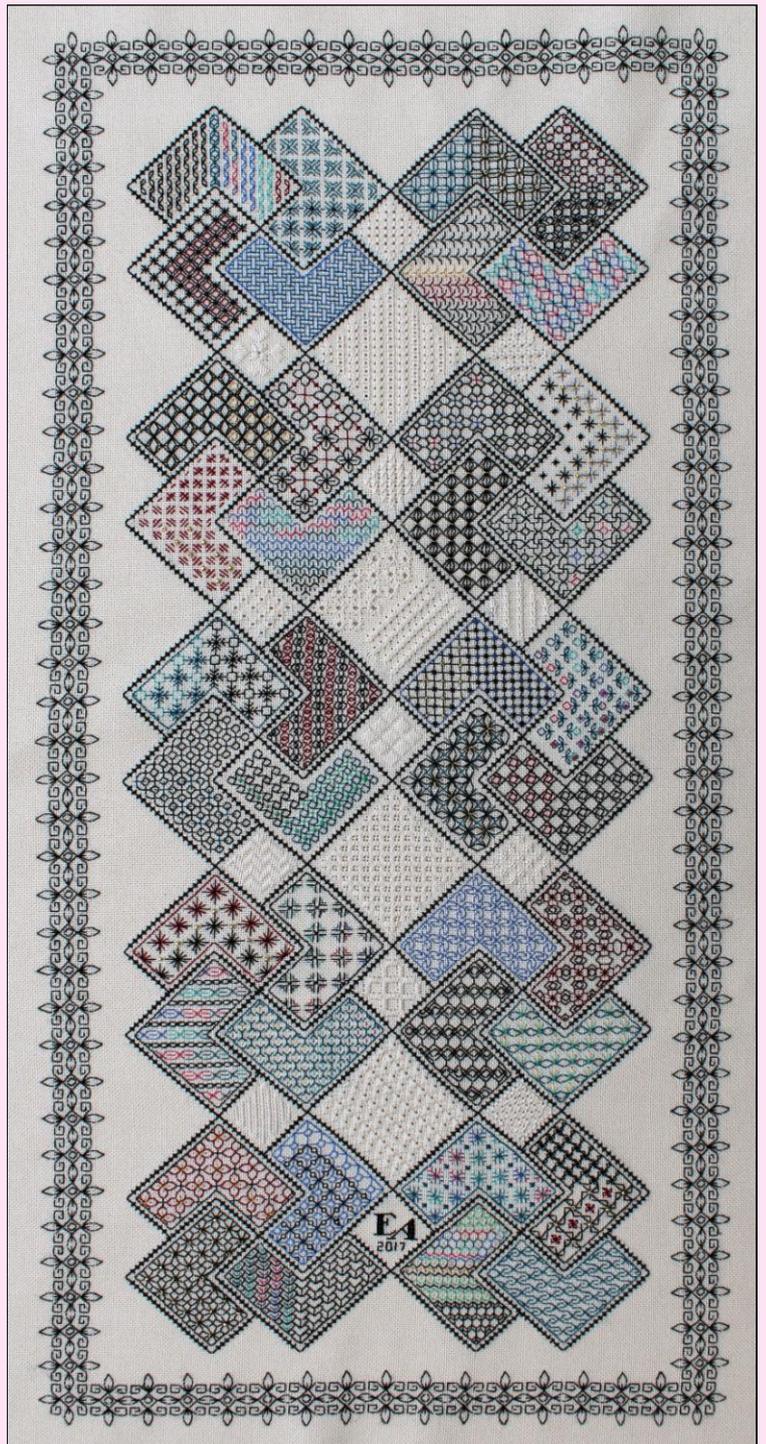
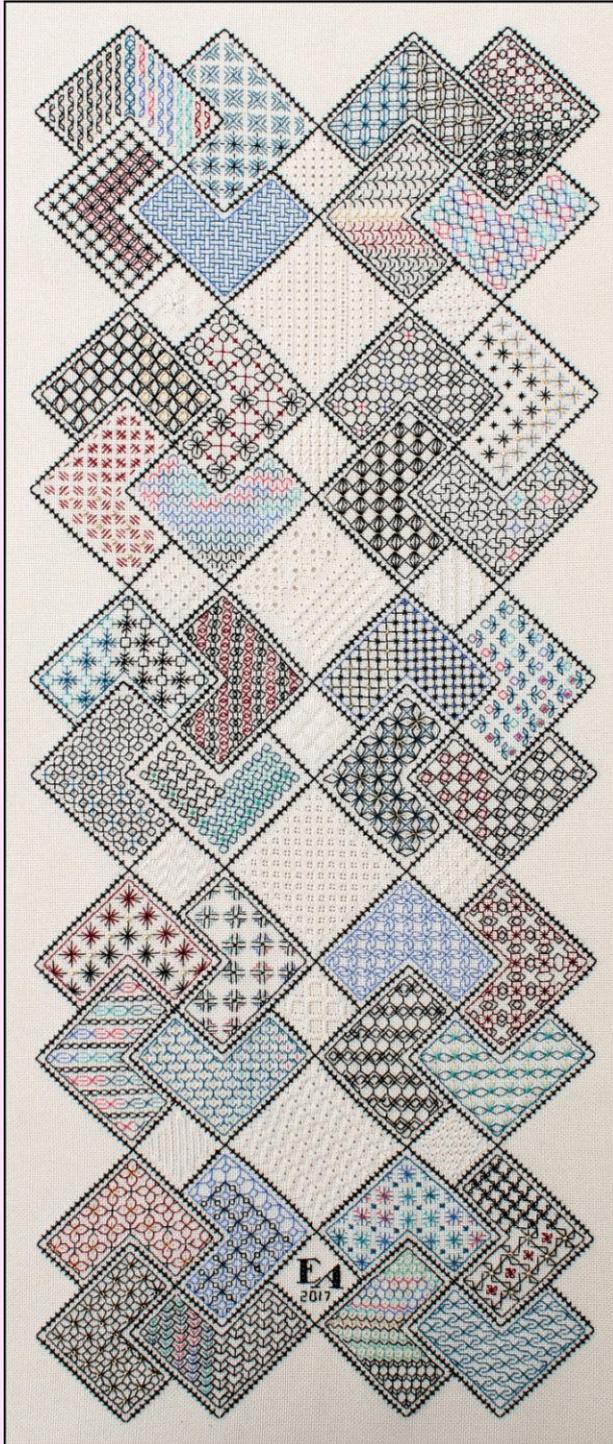


***Blackwork Journey***  
***'New Stitches' E-Book 8***

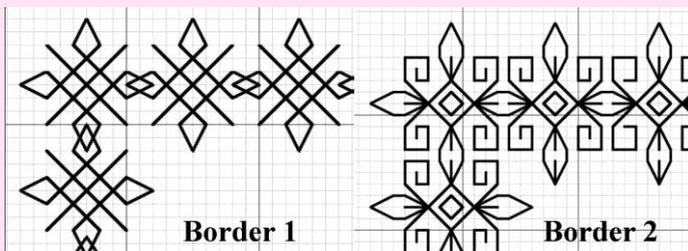


***Two new patterns:***  
***Blackwork***  
***Pulled thread work***

*'Colour New Stitches'*

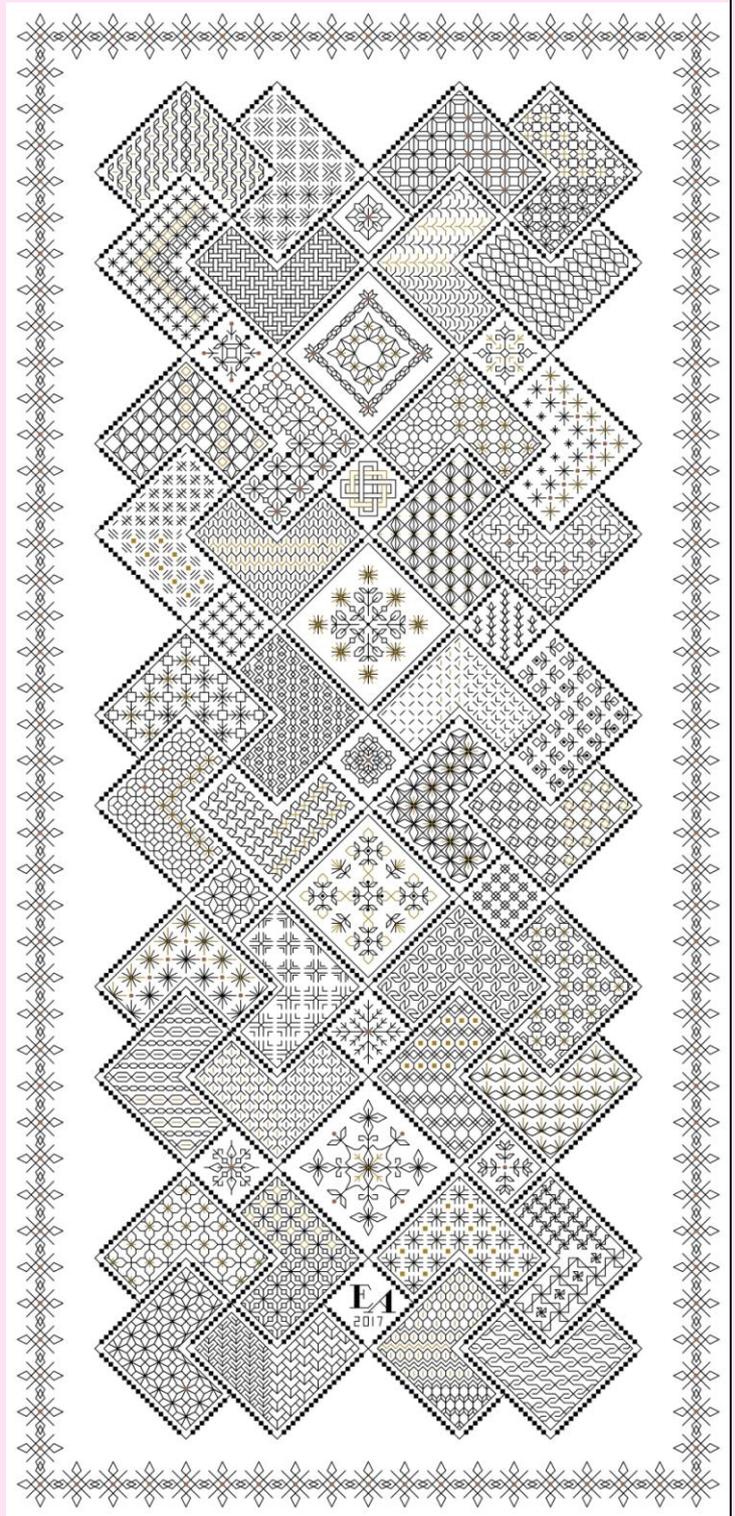


*'Colour New Stitches'*



The evenweave 'Colour New Stitches' shown above, can be worked with or without a border. I have used Border 2 for the evenweave design.

'Blackwork New Stitches' can also be worked without a border, but I have used Border 1 for the Aida design



*'Blackwork New Stitches'*

It has been great fun to create and stitch with 57 different pattern areas. It reminds me of the advertisement for Heinz Baked Beans 57 varieties



"While riding a train in New York City in 1896, our founder Henry J Heinz saw a sign advertising 21 styles of shoes, which he thought was clever. Although Heinz was manufacturing more than 60 products at the time, Henry thought 57 was a lucky number. So, he began using the slogan '57 Varieties' in all his advertising".

### 'Colour New Stitches'

The evenweave version of 'New Stitches' has 16 Pulled Thread work and Pattern darning stitches presented in a Stitch Dictionary with full instructions and photographs

Stitches included are:

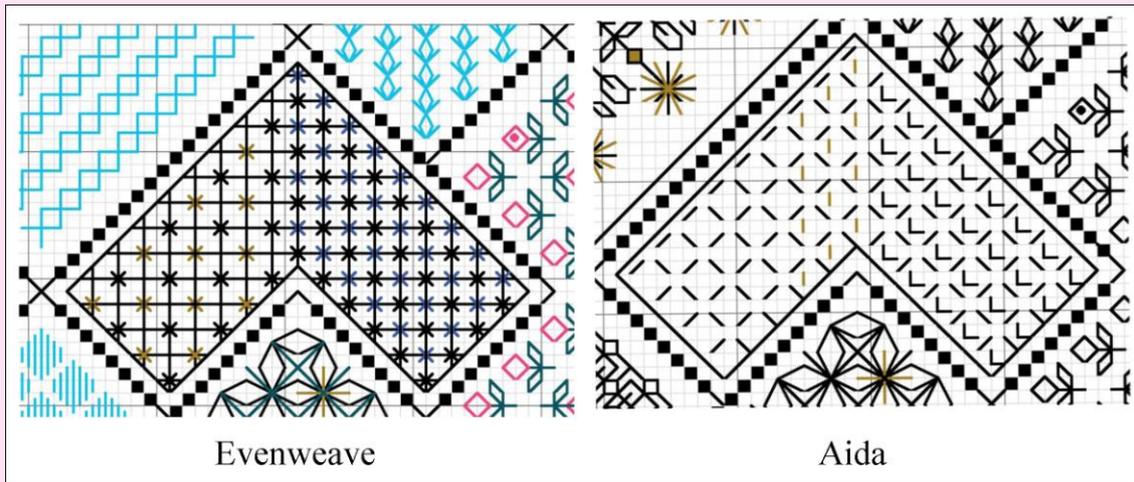
1. Four-sided stitch
2. Pattern darning heart and triple cross over 6 threads
3. Eyelet and four-sided stitch bands
4. Three-sided stitch
5. Smyrna cross
6. Detached eyelets
7. Star stitch over 4 and diagonal raised bands over 4
8. Wheatear stitch
9. Pattern darning diamonds over 2,4,6,8 threads
10. Pattern darning zigzag stitch
11. Cobbler stitch
12. Rice stitch
13. Mosaic stitch
14. Satin stitch columns over 2
15. Leaf stitch
16. Coil stitch



*Threads and fabric used for 'Colour New Stitches'*

### 'Blackwork New Stitches'

For those of you who do not wish explore pulled thread work, an Aida blackwork pattern has been included. The coloured threads from used in 'Colour New Stitches' can be used for the blackwork version very successfully. There are some changes in the Aida pattern where it is not possible to work half stitches easily and a different filler has been substituted. (See Patterns A and B)



*Patterns A and B*

*Pattern A will work on evenweave, but will not work on Aida fabric because of the block construction of the fabric therefore Pattern B has been substituted in the blackwork pattern.*

*To split blocks on Aida fabric use a needle with a sharp point rather than a tapestry needle.*

### **Should I use metallic threads?**



Gold metallic thread has been added to the blackwork diaper patterns to 'lift' the design! A floss could be used in place to the gold, but it needs to be a strong enough colour to make an impact. Adding coloured or metallic threads to a large embroidery which has been worked in one colour changes the dynamics of the piece. If just one colour is used, a large piece can look very flat and rather bland. By adding beads and touches of colour it adds interest and texture.

Choosing the threads for a new project can be daunting, but with so many new threads to explore. choose your own colours or use the colour schemes I have included. If in doubt, have a look at the way readers working 'Save the Stitches' have used colour to create their embroideries. All the pictures are posted in the closed Facebook group

Blackwork Journey - Elizabeth Almond Designs

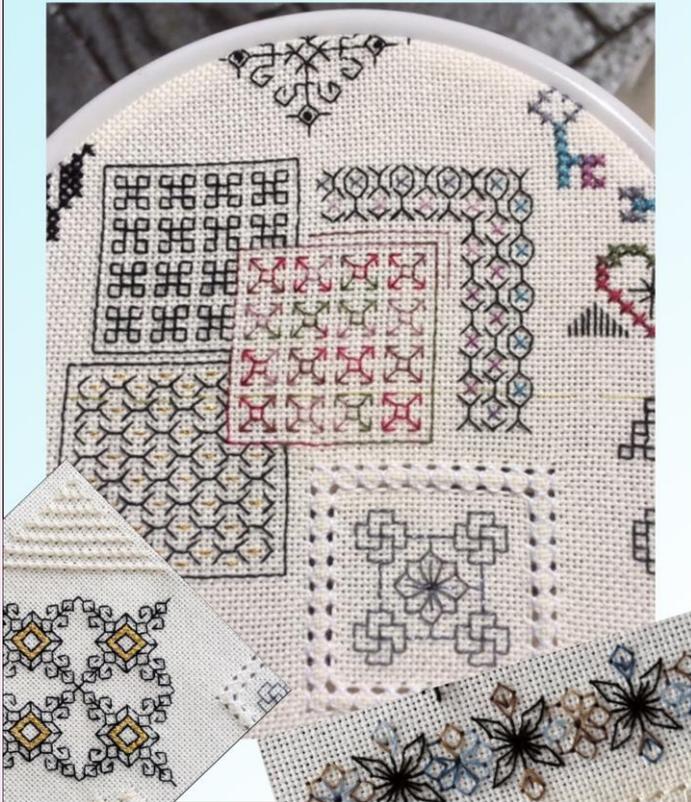
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/blackworkjourneydesigns/>

**'Sublime Stitches' Part 7 Evenweave and Aida**

The project is more than half way through now and the Facebook group pictures show that many readers are up to date with their embroideries. To see the way different colours have been used makes it very interesting for me and it is encouraging to see that people will step away from my guidelines and introduce their own colour schemes.



## 'Sublime Stitches' Part 7 - Evenweave



## 'Sublime Stitches' Part 7 - Aida



*'Sublime Stitches' can be found in 'Freebies' on the Blackwork Journey website*

Kogin features in Part 7 as well as pulled thread work patterns. If you are working the pulled thread patterns on the Aida do not 'pull' the stitches too tight, but consider them as embroidery stitches. I have taken the stitches from Part 7 to create the next sampler in the series.

I stepped out of my comfort zone to create this sampler using a pastel green/yellow for the pulled thread work patterns. DMC 3819 picked up the green in the DMC Coloris 4509 exactly so I was able to combine the two.

Creating a sampler using a limited range of stitches and getting the patterns to work together and flow through the design takes time and patience. Every area has to have a focal point and the pattern needs to move smoothly from one area to the next.



*Hand dyed wool by Glennys*

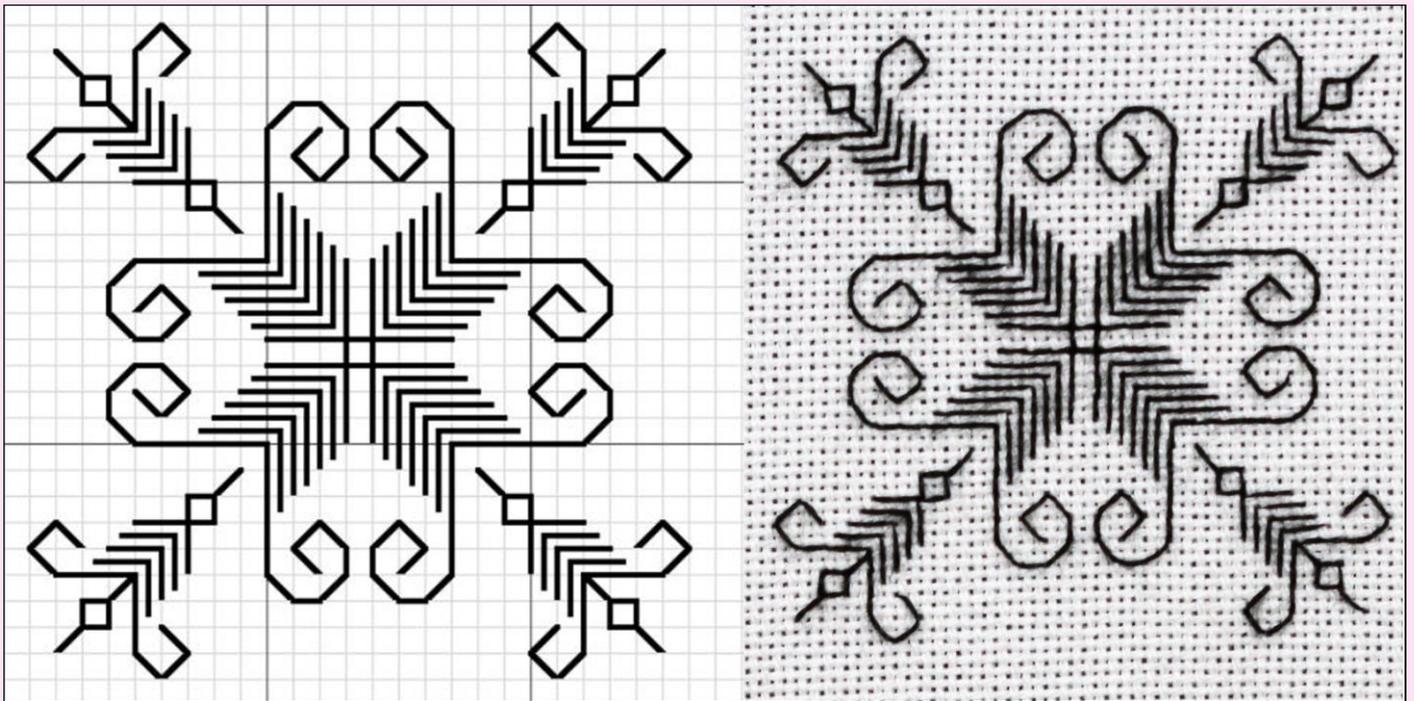
*A friend dyed some wool for felting which gave me the idea for the colours in Sampler 7*



*CH0358 Sampler 7 can be found in 'Charts' in Blackwork Journey*

It was also interesting to add **Lagartera** embroidery to the sampler.

Again, like Japanese Kogin embroidery, this is a little known Spanish counted thread technique with a long history. Lagartera in the province of Toledo, in the area known as Castilla-La Mancha is famous not only for its cuisine, art, needlework and culture, but for the tales of Don Quixote. This is where a centuries old embroidery tradition, unique to the area, was developed and still thrives.



Traditionally, Lagartera Embroidery is worked on even-weave linen in satin stitch and double running stitch and is characterised by bright colours, an absence of animal motifs and the use of geometric motifs, suggesting a strong Arabic influence.

The women of Lagartera used to meet in groups to embroider and make their own dresses and house linen, and it still is the custom for brides to have a large dowry of this work.



*Variations of the Lagartera in Sampler 7.*



*Extract from Sampler 7 using DMC threads*

### New ways of presenting embroidery

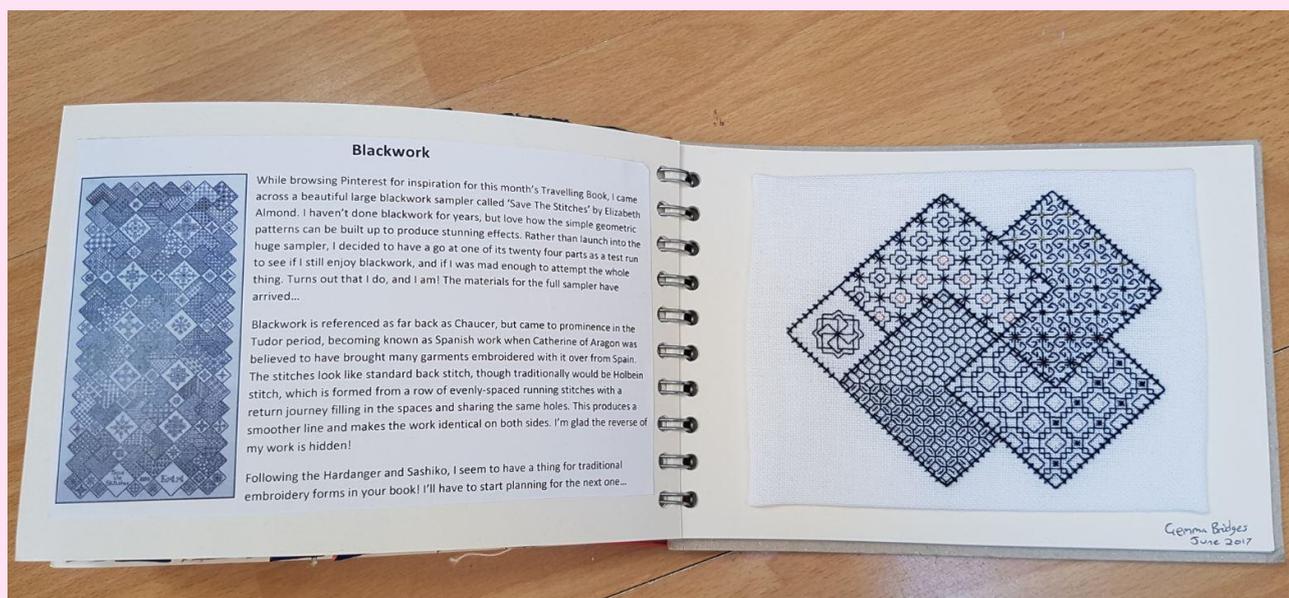
I am always looking at new ways of presenting embroidery and I could not resist this jute bag. It was crying out to be decorated and Kogin embroidery seemed to be just the thing.

I used a thick matt cotton thread in a vibrant red to embroider the main design and the border on the back. I then took the embroidery onto the handles to add some interest. The results were more dramatic than I had expected and I was pleased with the result. One thread was left between each row of stitches so the embroidery was quite dense, much as it would have been when the original Loggin designs were worked many centuries ago.



*Decorate a shopping bag with a simple Kogin design!*

Gemma B kindly sent me a photograph of a booklet she is putting together as part of her studies for the Embroiderers Guild. Not only has she embroidered a block from 'Save the Stitches' but written a short article about the history of blackwork. What a wonderful record she will have to treasure! Thank you Gemma for sharing such a good idea with us!



*Gemma's design book*



### New Kogin Design CH0359

A new design has been added to 'Charts' in Blackwork Journey based on Japanese style Kogin patterns. Create a picture, workbag and add a needle case, scissor keeper and pin cushion to complete the set!

Kogin is proving to be a very popular technique and whilst the designs are not ones that the Aomori fishermen would have worn in the Edo period when they lived in remote communities within Northern Japan and isolated from the rest of the world, I like the idea of bringing a forgotten technique to the attention of modern embroiderers.

### When was the Edo era in Japan?

The Edo period (江戸時代 Edo jidai) or Tokugawa period (徳川時代 Tokugawa jidai) is the period between 1603 and 1868 in the history of Japan, when Japanese society was under the rule of the Tokugawa shogunate and the country's 300 regional daimyō.

I hope you found this July's Blog enjoyable! There are many more ideas and wonderful readers in the August edition.

Happy stitching!

*Liz*