



Blackwork Journey Blog

November 2017





October ended with a visit to **Kraków, Poland** and some interesting ideas to explore.

Exterior of the Basilica of Saint Mary seen from Sukiennice Kraków Cloth Hall

Although we were on holiday, I wanted to find examples of traditional costume and embroidery representative of the region. The national costumes of Poland vary by region. They are not worn in daily life, but at folk festivals, folk weddings, religious festivals, harvest festivals and other special occasions. The costumes may reflect region and sometimes social or marital status.

The woman's costume includes a white blouse, a vest that is embroidered on the front and back, a floral full skirt, an apron, a red coral bead necklace and lace-up boots. Unmarried women and girls may wear a flower wreath with ribbons while married men wear a white kerchief on their head.



The men wear a blue waistcoat with embroidery and tassels, striped trousers, a krakuska cap ornamented with ribbons and peacock feathers and metal rings attached to the belt.

Man's Kraków coat (zupan)

Modern wedding costume



Black vest with embroidered back and front



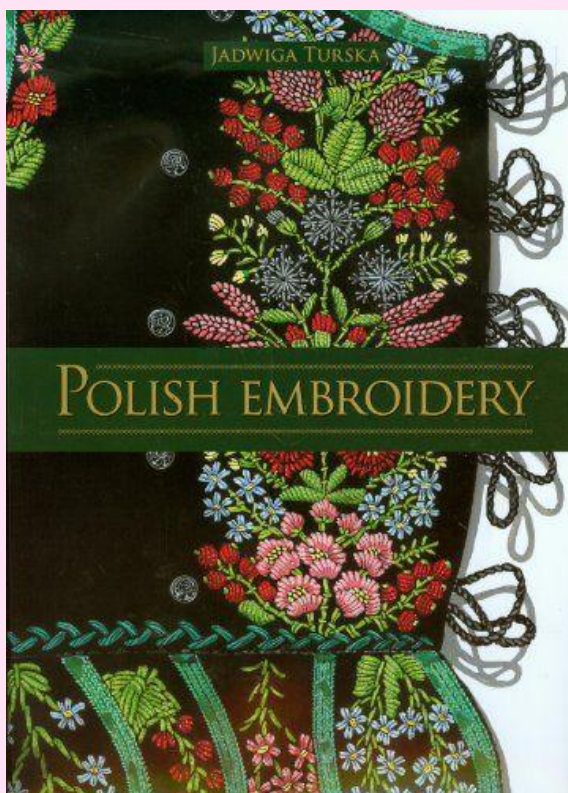
Embroidered jacket for married woman

To read more about Polish costumes:

<http://patternsofeurope.pl/traditional-design-of-the-lublin-region-clothing-decoration/>



A visit to the **Seweryn Udziela Museum of Ethnography** in Kraków is a must if you are interested in Folk Art.



'Polish Embroidery' by Daunta Buczkowska Dec 2013

The album that she has prepared is the result of many years of painstaking research and constitutes a document of authentic folk art. The author studied items in various ethnographic collections, notably the State Ethnographic Museum in Warsaw. Her basic sources were the folk costumes worn until the first half of the twentieth century and still used in some parts of Poland. Embroideries appeared on women's bonnets, kerchiefs, chemises, bodices, aprons and skirts and on men's overcoats, jackets, waistcoats, shirts and trousers.

There will be more on Polish embroidery in 2018.

With the night drawing in and winter fast approaching, Kraków gave us an indication of the next few months to come. I do not relish the dark nights and cold temperatures, but it is a good excuse to turn the heating up, sit by the fire and stitch!

New designs for November

Since many of my readers start preparing for winter well in advance, I have designed a series of four charts based on some English wartime posters which I thought would make quick presents for friends and family.

CH0356 Keep Calm and....

The 'Keep Calm and Carry On' posters were created by the Ministry of Information in late 1939 when England was at war. They were designed to boost morale and there were three in the original series 'Your Courage, Your Cheerfulness, Your Resolution will Bring Us Victory' and 'Freedom is in Peril' produced by His Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO) and the final one 'Keep Calm and Carry On' was to be displayed if the country was invaded.

A few of the original posters still survive and they have become very popular in recent years. There are four in this series designed for the modern needlewoman, 'Keep calm and Stitch', 'Keep calm and Knit', 'Keep calm and Quilt' and 'Keep calm and Cook'

*Each 'poster' has a different blackwork border and they can be worked on evenweave or Aida to suit everyone.
Work in progress!*





Work in progress!

CH0356 Keep Calm can be found in 'Charts' in Blackwork Journey.

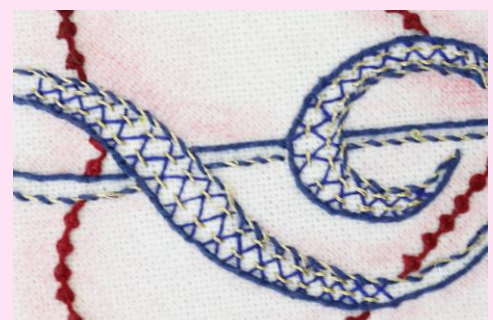
Music, Music, Music!

Music plays a large part in our family life. My son is a professional horn player in the US and we all played instruments at some point in our lives. I met my husband when we both played in a local orchestra over 50 years ago and it gives me great pleasure to see my granddaughter following in the family footsteps, so designing musical projects was just a matter of time!

PR0041 Music Magic is based on a treble clef. 'Candlewick Clef', 'Christmas Clef' and 'Country Clef' are larger designs and 'Love Music' was made into an ornament. These are free style designs where the patterns are drawn onto the fabric and then embroidered. If they are worked on evenweave fabric, pulled thread work and blackwork stitches can be added. To use embroidery stitches the designs can be drawn onto linen, cotton or damask. I intend to enlarge the 'Country Clef' and quilt it for a cushion.

I posted some pictures of Facebook of the work in progress and received a request for a bass clef design so there will be two more music designs later in the year.

*Herringbone stitch couched down with gold metallic thread
Detail from 'Love Music'*





PR0041 Music Magic can be found in 'Projects' in Blackwork Journey



Extract from 'Candlewick Clef' worked in DMC stranded floss Ecu

Stitches used:

- Back stitch, two strands
- Double knot stitch, four strands
- Colonial knots, six strands (used for candlewicking)
- Stem stitch, two strands
- Wave stitch - pulled thread work, two strands

'Sublime Stitches' FR0150 Part 11 Evenweave and FR0151 Part 11 Aida



'Sublime Stitches' has enabled me to explore many different types of embroidery and to look at their history. Cross stitch has been used in some of the patterns in the sampler, for example, Hungarian Cross stitch border. The humble cross stitch is taken for granted but it has so much more to offer.

Cross-stitch is one of the oldest form of embroidery and can be found all over the world. Many folk museums show examples of clothing decorated with cross-stitch, especially from continental Europe, Asia, and Eastern and Central Europe. Its origins are not known, but hand woven linen and its potential for counting the threads and cross stitch go hand in hand.

Cross-stitch is often used together with other stitches and comes in a variety of forms. It is sometimes used in crewel embroidery and is often used in needlepoint. A specialised historical form of embroidery using cross-stitch is Assisi embroidery which has been included in 'Sublime Stitches'.

There are many stitches which are related to cross-stitch and were used in similar ways in earlier times.



The best known are Italian cross-stitch, Celtic Cross Stitch, Irish Cross Stitch, long-armed cross-stitch, Ukrainian cross-stitch and Montenegrin stitch. Italian cross-stitch and Montenegrin stitch are reversible, meaning the work looks the same on both sides. These styles have a slightly different look than ordinary cross-stitch.

*Detail of floral border pattern in cotton.
Small tablecloth Hungary mid 20th century.*

These more difficult stitches are not often used in embroidery, but they are still used to recreate historical pieces of embroidery.

To reintroduce them to the modern needlewoman would be an interesting development. The double cross-stitch, also known as a Leviathan stitch or Smyrna cross stitch, combines a cross-stitch with an upright cross-stitch. This has been used many times in this project to add texture and interest.

Cross-stitch is often combined with other popular forms of embroidery, such as Hardanger embroidery or blackwork embroidery and may also be combined with other work, such as canvaswork or drawn thread work. Beadwork and other embellishments such as paillettes, charms, small buttons and specialty threads of various kinds may also be used.

Berlin wool work and similar petit point stitchery used cross stitch to create rich and colourful designs I saw it being worked in Eastern Europe, India and the Far East, from a girl stitching on a market stall in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia to a tribal hill village in Thailand.

Have fun with Folk Embroidery!

Hearts and flowers are common motifs in Folk art and can be used to build simple and attractive designs.

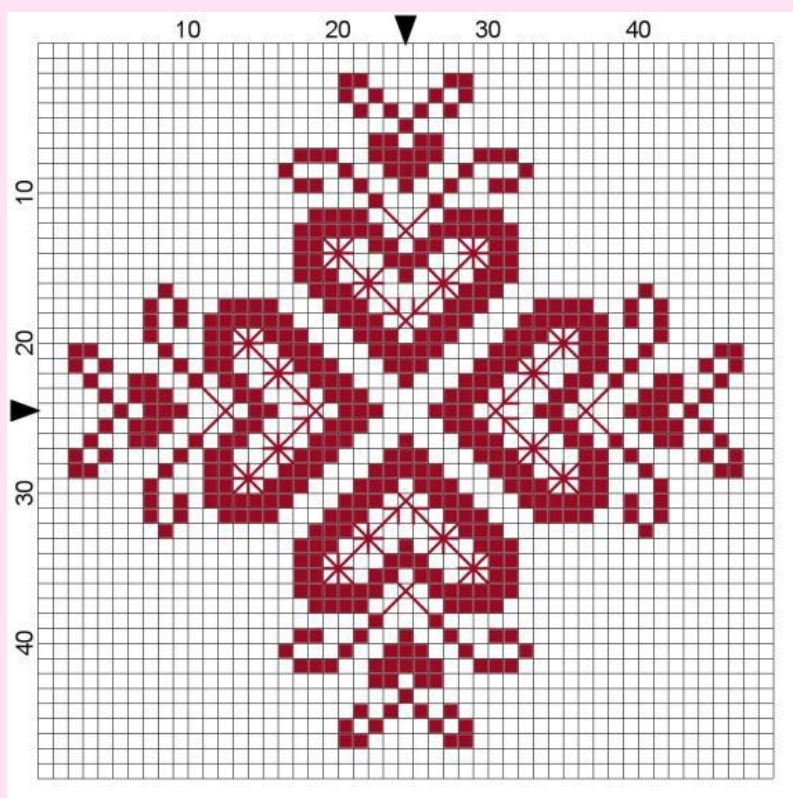
From one small motif I have built up a larger design which could be used for cards, table linen or soft furnishings.

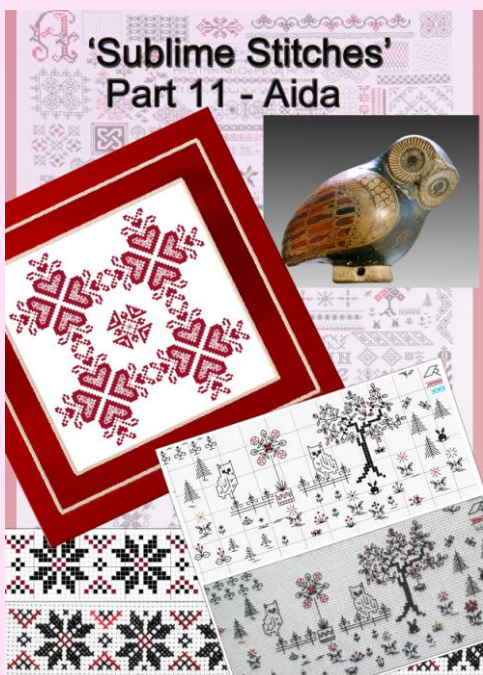
Stitches used:

Back stitch, one strand
Cross stitch, two strands

Fabric: Four motif block

Zweigart 28 count evenweave or 14 count
Aida, 8 x 8 inches.





Join four motifs to make a larger design or place hearts one underneath each other to make a border. Cross stitch and blackwork combine in these simple designs and it can be worked on both Aida and evenweave fabrics.

Not everyone is comfortable working on evenweave fabrics, so 'Sublime Stitches' has also been worked on 14 count Aida. The pulled thread work stitches are worked as embroidery stitches and are not 'pulled'.

Introducing traditional embroidery stitches into the samplers has added an extra dimension. However, unless these stitches are used on a regular basis a Stitch Dictionary would be helpful!

Childhood memories!

Do you remember the story of 'The Tailor of Gloucester' by Beatrix Potter?



Number 9, College Court, standing beside the ancient St Michael's Gate, was the building Beatrix Potter chose for the setting of her story, 'The Tailor of Gloucester.'



The inspiration for this story came in May 1894 when Beatrix Potter was staying with her cousin, Caroline Hutton. Whilst at the Hutton's home, Harescombe Grange, which lies five miles south of Gloucester, Caroline told Beatrix the curious tale of a local tailor. Closing his shop at Saturday lunchtime with a waistcoat cut out, but not sewn together, he was surprised to discover on the Monday morning when he opened the shop again, to discover that apart from one button hole, the waistcoat had been sewn together. A tiny note was pinned to the button hole which read, "no more twist". Beatrix requested that they visit Gloucester the next day when she saw the tailor's shop and sketched some of the city's buildings.

Presumably, Beatrix Potter had already formed the story in her mind, but it was not until 1901 that the tale was committed to paper as a Christmas present for the daughter of one of her tutors, Freda Moore. Potter later reworked the story and this became the edition Frederick Warne published in October, 1903.

Booklet of embroidery and drawnwork

<https://www.metmuseum.org>

Accession Number: 25.92 The Metropolitan Museum of Fine Art in New York is a great source of inspiration and every so often I find a treasure I want to share with you.

In their archives they have an early 17th century book worked on linen, silk, leather and paper. It includes the techniques of cross stitch, reticello, drawn work, satin stitch, knots and bullion stitch.

Date: early 17th century **Culture:** probably Portuguese

Medium: Linen, silk, leather, paper; techniques include cross stitch, reticello, drawnwork, satin stitch, knots, bullion stitch

Dimensions: 8 x 6in. (20.3 x 15.2cm)

Classification: Textiles-Embroidered

Credit Line: Gift of Miss Mary Parsons, 1925



Booklet of Embroidery and drawnwork



At some point fairly early in its history, the many small pieces of fabric included in this booklet were seamed together and loosely bound, to create a kind of glossary of coloured and monochrome openwork patterns.





Blackwork Journey Blog, November 2017

Scraps of silk, glove leather and writing paper with Portuguese text were employed to stabilise the pages. The recycling of materials and the compact nature of the booklet all suggest that this was a purely practical reference work for a professional seamstress and was not meant for display.

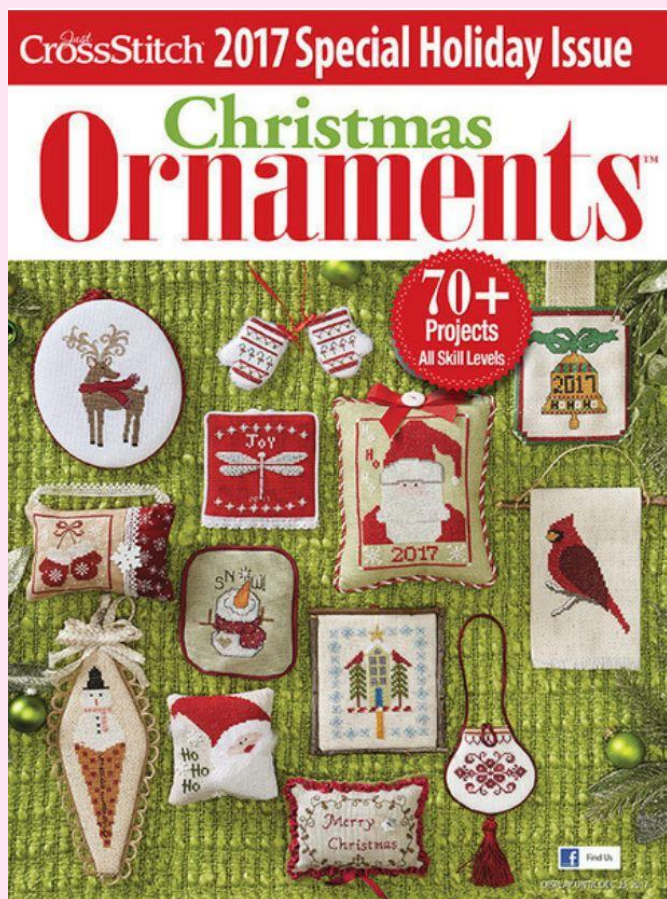
Some of the patterns are worked in double running stitch, also referred to as 'Spanish stitch,' reflecting its origin on the Iberian peninsula in the sixteenth century.

Note: Reticella (also reticello or in French point coupe), is a needle lace dating from the 15th century and remaining popular into the first quarter of the 17th century.

It would be wonderful to recreate this book in a modern format using the patterns from the original and reproducing them, perhaps a future project for Blackwork Journey?

New publications for November and December

I look forward to the Just Cross Stitch 'Christmas Ornaments' magazine every year. It is great fun to see what other designers create for Christmas and to learn a little about the names I hear so frequently.



I contributed two double sided blackwork ornaments for the Christmas edition and was very thrilled to see that they had published both designs.



The other magazine published in November was the December issue of 'Just Cross Stitch' with a redwork Christmas sampler 'Garnet and Gold.'

This sampler was fun to create and is a traditional band sampler. Gold metallic threads and gold beads add a little extra sparkle and texture to the bands.



Blackwork falls into three different groups - light, medium and dark, so placing the bands is critical. If two heavy bands come together it can unbalance the whole design. In the same way the light areas have to balance the with the other patterns, so if you decide to create your own samplers bear this in mind.

I hope you have enjoyed November's Blog and have gained some ideas for Christmas. If you stitch any of my Blackwork Journey designs I would love to see pictures of your work.

You can either e-mail them to me at:

lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk or send them to the Facebook groups for everyone to admire.

Facebook groups set up for free projects:

Blackwork Journey - Elizabeth Almond Designs

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

Pandora's Box - Elizabeth Almond Designs

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/425352680984872/>

Box of Delights Stitch-A-Long. Designs by Elizabeth Almond

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

Sublime Stitches - Elizabeth Almond Designs <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1695785137378480/#>

Happy stitching! Liz