



Blackwork Journey Blog

July 2018

Art & Embroidery



Create a Chatelaine!
Part 5 Notebook Pouch



Chatelaine

Louvre, Abu Dhabi

Long, lazy days of summer!

I love this time of year and this month is proving to be exciting. We celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary in July and will be sharing it with our daughter and her family in the Yorkshire Dales and our son and his family in San Francisco later in the month. It has been a very eventful 50 years and I have been fortunate enough to visit many corners of the world and meet some amazing people.

Many readers have contacted me with beautiful pictures of their work. I have recently been to several very interesting textile exhibitions and seen the most beautiful collection of handmade Japanese dolls, all of which I will share with you in due course.

New charts are ready to go online, preparations have been made for a number of day schools and talks and another chart has been published in 'Just Cross Stitch' August 2018.



'Just Cross Stitch' August 2018

My aim over the past few months has been to finish off some long overdue projects and collate them ready for publication. As needlewomen, we all have projects tucked away waiting to be finished and since some have been almost completed I thought I would make the effort and make them up. I find the stitching really enjoyable, but the finishing off.....!

Kogin embroidery continues to fascinate me and there are a number of different designs in the pipeline. It has been a very popular subject for talks and day schools now well into 2020. When I fill the booking forms in for 2020 it seems so far ahead, but in reality it comes round very quickly.



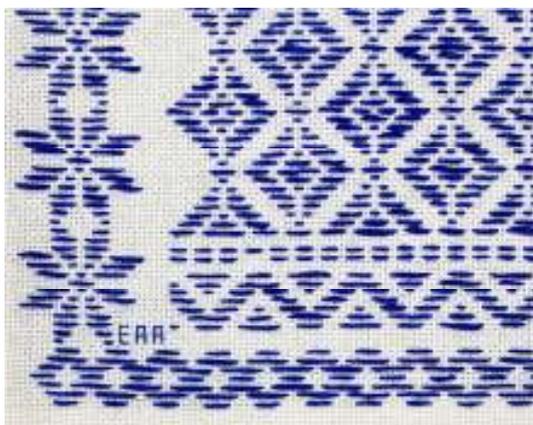
New Patterns for July

CH0378 'Kogin Band Sampler'

I really enjoyed creating this design and was looking at using the pattern in two ways. I have a coffee table that was calling out for a runner and I also wanted the design as a wall hanging when I give talks and day schools, so I made the embroidery into both by adding a simple fabric sleeve on the back so I can slip a rod through it if needed for a display.

The design area is 9.43 x 30 inches
Stitches: 139 x 420 stitches
and Fabric: 16 x 36 inches.

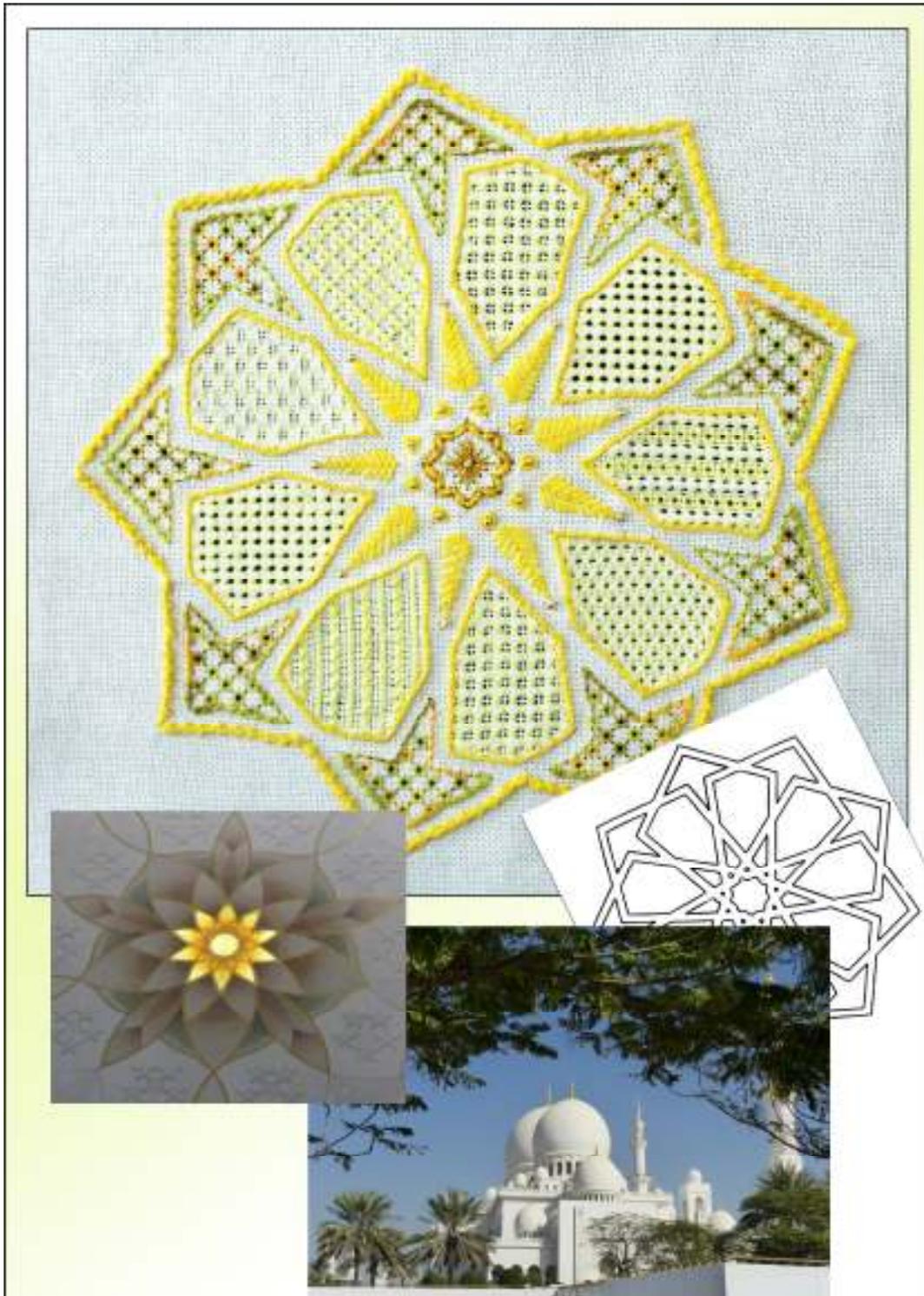
There are 22 different Kogin patterns to explore. Two large motifs pull the design together and it could be worked in different colours rather than the traditional blue on white.



Extract from the Kogin band sampler

Think about working the border in a solid colour and using variegated threads such as DMC Coloris for the bands.

I used Zweigart 28 count evenweave 'Linda' for the runner leaving two threads between each row. The pattern built up quickly and was a practical way of using a pattern. I added initials and the date at the bottom following the tradition of naming and dating a sampler.



PR0043' Islamic Spring'

Design Area: 9.00 x 9.00 inches worked on Zweigart 28 count evenweave fabric 28 threads to the inch.

Islamic architecture has had a great influence on my designs and this pulled thread and blackwork embroidery is based on windows and floor decorations from the sheik Zayid Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi. Of the many impressive buildings I have seen worldwide this building has had the most impact on me!

FR0158 Notebook Pouch – the final part of ‘Create a Chatelaine’ has been uploaded this month.



Many more tools can be added, but these are the ones I find most practical. I hope you have enjoyed working them and it makes a useful addition to your needlework box.

Art in Abu Dhabi - Part 2. The Louvre - A floating dome of light and shade

Last month I wrote about the Sheik Zayid Mosque in Abu Dhabi, but this is not the only unusual building in this amazing city. One of the reasons I wanted to go back to Abu Dhabi was to visit the iconic Louvre Museum which was designed by international architect Jean Nouvel and opened in 2015.



The centrepiece of the museum is a huge silver dome that appears to float above the entire museum. In fact it weighs 7,500 tonnes (the same as the Eiffel Tower in Paris). The dome is a complex, geometric structure of 7,850 stars, repeated at various sizes and angles in eight different layers. As the sun passes above its light filters through the perforations in the dome creating a 'rain of light'. This was inspired by the way light passes through the palm trees and filters through to the ground.



The Louvre at night and the view towards the skyline of the city

Just like the narrow streets of an old Arabian town there are 55 different buildings and 23 galleries built on this off shore manmade island.





The dome links all the galleries and open spaces together and by looking at the size of the people in this picture you can get some idea of the sheer scale of the building. The sea comes into the building and the breeze off the Gulf is a welcome relief from the heat of the day. The museum can be approached from both sea and land.



Light filters through the dome to light the metal tree below and creating constantly changing patterns on the walls and floor

This is the first universal museum created in the Middle East, a region at the crossroads of civilizations.

Its collection of old and contemporary works from different countries has been gradually growing since 2009 with each new acquisition.

The galleries are very minimalist and for me, the impact was made more by the building and the changing light patterns than by its contents.



Detail of the dome structure. The columns holding the dome are hidden so the dome really does look as though it is 'floating'

One of the exhibits, an owl of course!



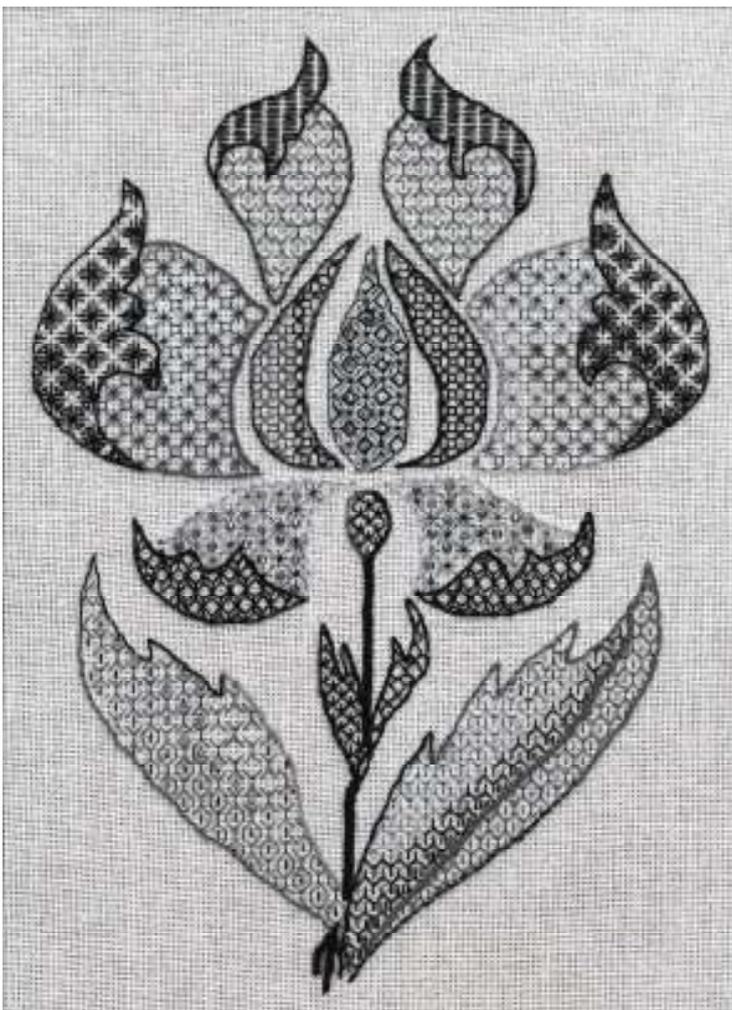


Architect Jean Nouvel, the genius behind the dome – his inspiration for Louvre Abu Dhabi came from the Arab world’s low-lying settlements and medinas. It is described as a museum city floating in the sea. A man of many talents He has designed many other iconic buildings including the Philharmonie in Paris, France, the Guthrie Theater in Minnesota, USA and the Arab World Institute in Paris, France.

To be creative requires imagination and to have the passion and ability to take an idea and develop it though from initial thought to final creation. We all aspire to be creative in our own ways whether it is designing and stitching a pattern to cooking a special meal, but to develop an idea and produce an iconic building such as the Louvre requires imagination and tenacity on a scale that I can only admire but never aspire to.

What is free style blackwork?

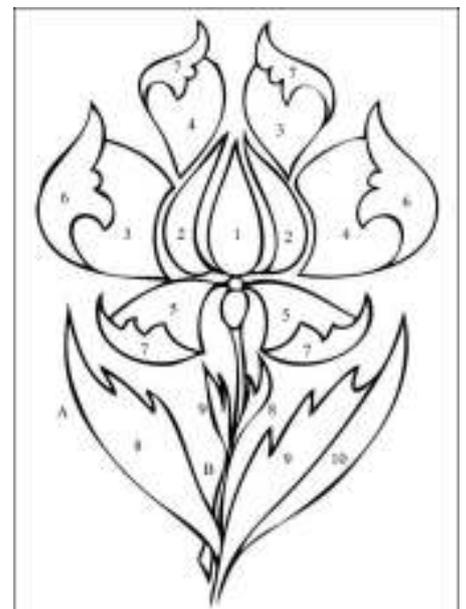
If I buy a chart such as CH0354 ‘Blackwork Iris’ what can I expect and how is it different from a standard chart?



I was asked this question recently and from my personal point of view I see blackwork as falling into two groups:

Counted, where everything is followed to the letter and there is no opportunity to put a personal stamp on the design or, **Freestyle** where an outline is provided, a number of options are given and the reader has decisions to make.

I always provide a very detailed photo of the work and usually extracts from the design so if the reader wants to follow exactly what I have done then they can!



Blackwork Journey Blog, July 2018

No two readers doing the same piece of free style embroidery will ever produce identical pieces because they make different choices as the embroidery develops.

Take 'Blackwork Iris' for example, the photo on the front page indicates which patterns I have used and where, but there are alternatives that can be substituted. The small numbered pattern sheet gives an idea where patterns could be used but there are options and 4 and 3 can be used diagonally and work just as well.

Detailed instructions are given as a guide –

“Match the numbers and letters on the drawing and the pattern sheet”. I would expect the reader to draw the full size design onto the fabric and refer to the numbered sketch to help place patterns.

"It is not essential that they are placed exactly because additional stitches are added as required. Work the filler patterns carefully following the pattern sheet using ONE strand of DMC 310 or chosen thread. A shaded effect can be created by changing the threads when working through a pattern from dark to light".

This type of design is a good way of exploring shading, some will add a lot others will choose less complicated patterns.

Outlines:

Three potential stitches could be used to outline the design where the curves have to be smooth. They are: A back stitch, or back stitch-whipped and B Trailing stitch. These are embroidery stitches and not blackwork filler patterns.

Again you have choice as to which outline stitch to use:

"For a delicate outline back stitch and whip the outline, use ONE strand of floss and whip with ONE strand.

For a heavier outline use TWO strands and whip with TWO strands

Trailing stitch for stem - lay 4 strand of floss and satin stitch over the laid threads in two strands.”

There are no hard and fast rules, each method creates a different weight of outline.

There are 11 patterns blocks to give you alternatives so that you can choose what you like and explore the different fillings to see how they work. In this way you can create a unique design and many readers who regularly do free style charts appreciate the choice.

The blocks are not numbered. Each block contains variations to show how patterns develop rather than just giving a standard block. By looking at the photo you can see what block patterns have been used, but you can change them round.

The possibilities are endless and from one outline pattern many different flowers could be stitched. Other designers may take a different approach, but where possible I encourage readers to move away from a standard pattern and to take the next step into creating their own unique pieces of work.

I would be very interested to hear reader's points of view on this subject and welcome any comments.

Readers Contributions in July

This month I have received a number of photographs of readers and their work and my congratulations go to Cheryl Slater who won second prize at the 2018 Sydney Royal Easter Show with her embroidery of 'Delhi Mosque'. Well done Cheryl!

Jean Woodward's 'Old Sarum' has been hung in her local church. She is a talented and prolific embroiderer and I am very proud to have her as a member of my group. Well done Jean!

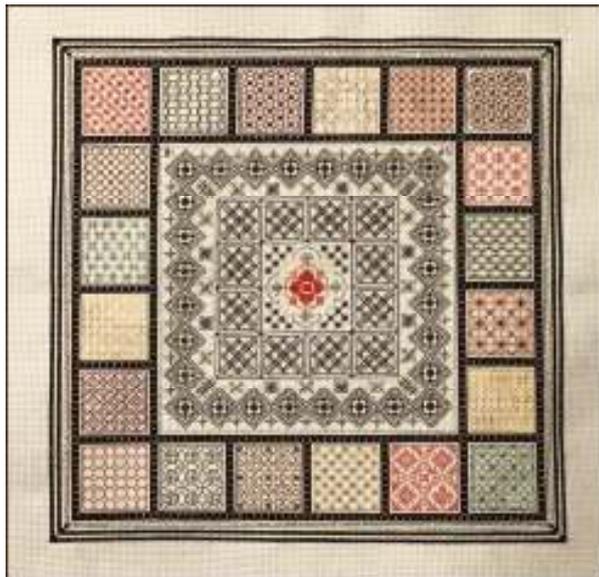


Cheryl Slater CH0047 Delhi Mosque
Congratulations!



David Hoskins is one of a number of men on Blackwork Journey and it is delight to see his embroidery!

CH0270 Black Beaumont by **Bethany A Cahill** and **Sara Baker Partridge**
The same design appears totally different when worked in colour.

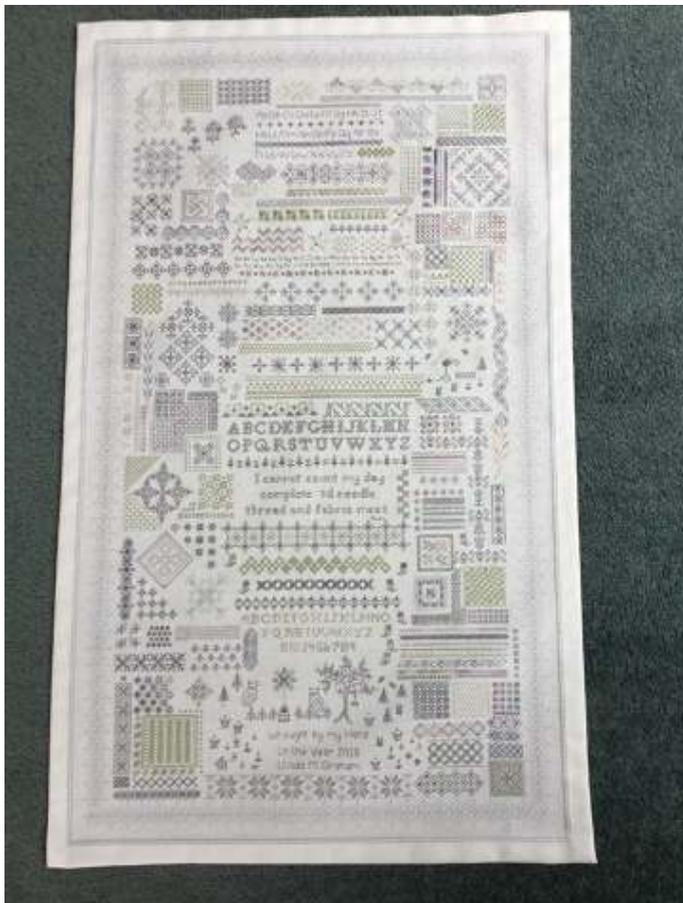


EB0010 'Sublime Stitches'

Many of the large designs in Blackwork Journey are being worked as group projects and it gives me enormous pleasure to see all the different variations being worked. I visited Lakeshore in Montreal and met many of their members, so it is a joy to see their latest venture.



Ladies from Lakeshore Creative Stitchery Guild Pointe-Claire, QC



Linda Graham has also finished her 'Sublime Stitches'. She has used very subtle colours and made it into a beautiful runner rather than a picture. I think this is a lovely way of displaying a piece of work and I am sure it will be appreciated by all who see it.

Last but not least, **Paula S** has finished her 'Save the Stitches'.

EB0002
'Save the Stitches'





Paula's 'Save the Stitches'

It was my first major Blackwork challenge and I have lost count of the number of different patterns I have seen over the years in a whole range of colours.

It is always good to see the embroidery mounted, framed and hung so well done Paula and thank you for sharing it with us.



Peggy P has mounted her embroidery on a cushion to great effect

Thank you for sending in all the photographs. They really do you credit and I love to receive them! I hope you have enjoyed this month's Blog and seeing the embroideries completed by readers.

On a final note, some thread manufacturers add or remove threads from their lists. Alternative colours are always given in Blackwork Journey charts but there is usually an up-to-date list available on the internet from the larger firms such as DMC.

<https://www.dmc.com/uk/stranded-cotton-500-colours-6.html>

If you have any queries please contact:
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Happy stitching,

Liz

