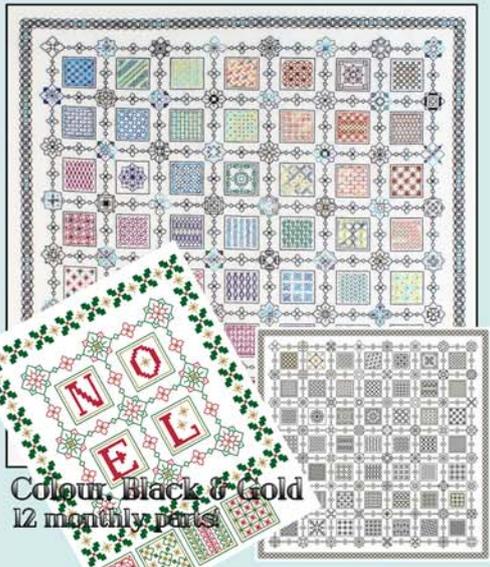




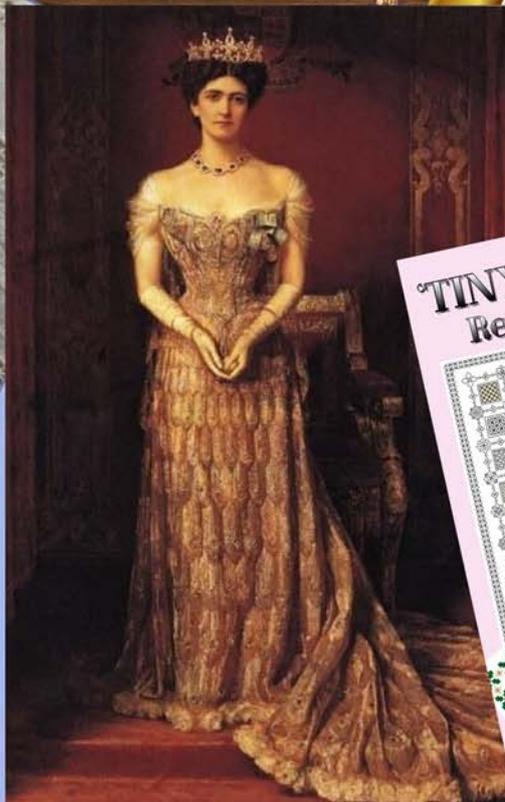
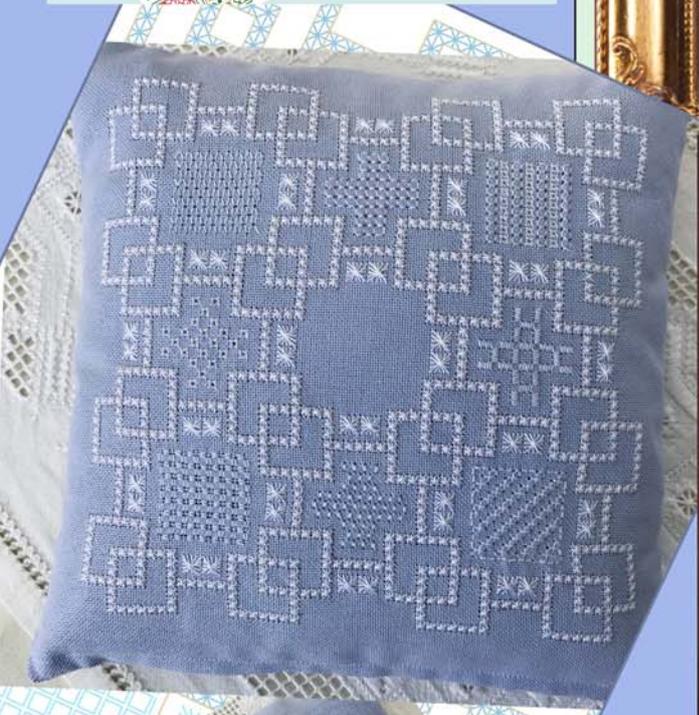
# Blackwork Journey Blog

November 2018

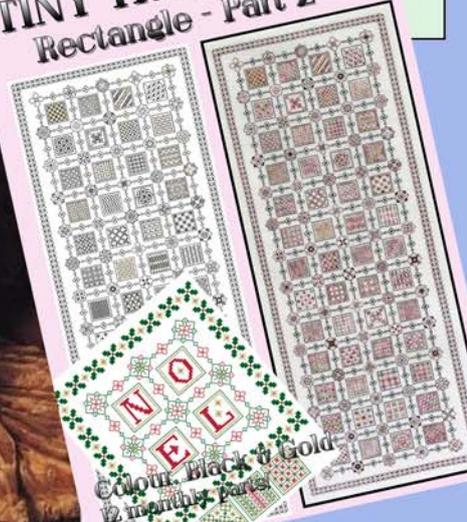
**'TINY TREASURES'**  
Square - Part 2



Colour, Black & Gold  
12 monthly parts



**'TINY TREASURES'**  
Rectangle - Part 2



Colour, Black & Gold  
12 monthly parts

## Blackwork Journey Blog, November 2018

The nights are drawing in and Winter is fast approaching, so what better time to get your needlework out, look at unfinished projects and start new ones, just in time for Christmas!

In 'Tiny Treasures' Part 2 this month you will find a Christmas Sampler developed from the flower motifs in the project. If you do not want to add the word 'Noel' just insert the blackwork blocks which can be found in the pattern or blocks from Parts 1 and 2.

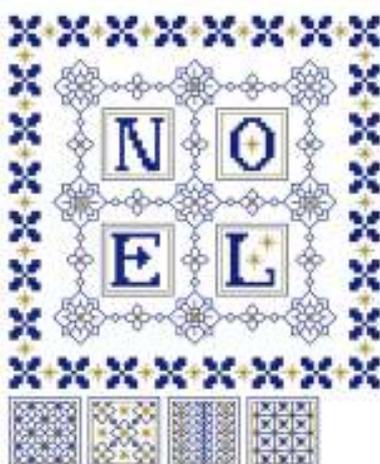


*Taking threads across open spaces is not a good idea in needlework because they will show through on the front of the work when it is framed. Always complete each motif in turn before moving on to the next one and trim off all loose ends.*



*Christmas Sampler from Part 2 of 'Tiny Treasures'. This chart can be found in Freebies FR0162 and FR0163.*

**I do not want to use Christmas reds and greens. What other colours could I use to make an elegant Christmas decoration?**



As an alternative I would suggest using vibrant royal blue and gold metallic or emerald green and gold. Metallic threads are not easy to use and I would recommend Rainbow Gallery Petite Treasure Braid PB01 Bright Gold or DMC Diamant which comes on a reel. Always use a short length of metallic thread to reduce fraying and a larger needle than usual to reduce friction.

*'Noel' worked in DMC 796 Royal blue.*





CH0380 Smyrna Christmas

CH0381 Smyrna Cross can be found in 'Charts' this month

Last month I added a Christmas decoration to 'Charts' worked in Smyrna stitch. This is a simple textured embroidery stitch outlined in back stitch to emphasise the texture. I enjoyed stitching the design so much that I decided to experiment with variegated threads and add a four-sided pulled thread work and Smyrna stitch border. The thread I used was DMC Colour Variations:



DMC Variations 4050 Roaming Pastures, two skeins



DMC Variations 4060 Weeping willow, one skein

This is a very subtle shade shifting six strand embroidery floss which creates some quite delicate tonal patterns, especially in the lighter colours. There are 35 different shades to explore and I was pleased with the result.



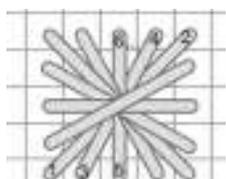
I also added a cross stitch interlocking design to the pattern to be used for a card or small box top in DMC Variations 4240.

I then decided to see whether I could introduce pulled thread work into a Smyrna stitch pattern to make a double sided cushion on 25 count Lugana fabric and so create PR0046 Smyrna Sparkle.



PR0046 Smyrna Sparkle

This design was worked in Cotton P rle No.12 white, one ball but two strands of floss could be used in place of the P rle and instead of using gold or silver to outline the Smyrna stitch I used Rainbow Gallery Petite Treasure Braid PB27 which has an iridescent sheen. I also added Rhodes stitch which is another textured stitch, simple to execute and very effective.



*Rhodes stitch*

Eight different pulled thread work patterns were added and space was left on the back of the cushion to add an initial to personalise the design:

1. Wave stitch
2. Four-sided stitch
3. Four-sided and eyelet bands
4. Detached eyelets
5. Satin stitch
6. Cobbler stitch
7. Coil stitch over 4
8. Diagonal raised band

PR0046 Smyrna Sparkle can be found in this month's 'Projects'.

The thicker the thread the more textured the effect, so I am considering a fourth design using textured stitches on canvas to keep me out of mischief over the winter months!

### Tiny Treasures Part 2

**One question that comes up regularly is: How many threads do I use when stitching on evenweave?**

On evenweave fabric you stitch over TWO threads unless the pattern states otherwise.

On Aida blockweave fabric you work over ONE block unless the pattern states otherwise.

The next part in the series can be found in this month's 'Freebies'.

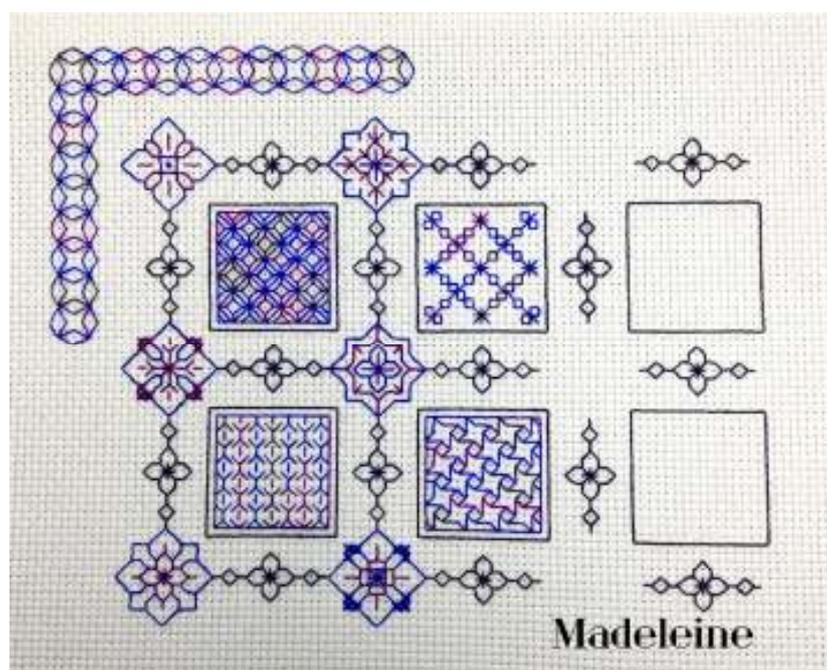
Many readers have already started their designs and there have been some very lively discussions on Facebook about colour schemes and fabrics. What I did not expect was the very large number of readers who are working both designs! I should have known from past experience with other projects that people seem to find room for 'just one more' even if they already have a number of unfinished projects. I love the enthusiasm that readers have displayed and their willingness to share their information about the threads they are planning to use. I have been made aware of threads that I did not know existed or are unable to

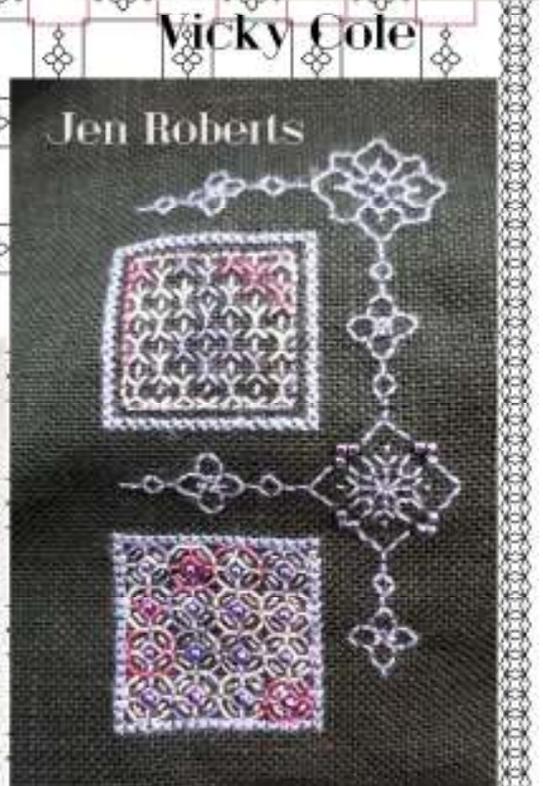
purchase easily in the UK which is always helpful.

For readers who are new to blackwork and have questions or just lack in confidence, the Facebook group has been able to answer the questions and give support. No question is too insignificant if it worries the reader and it is dealt with quickly and easily.

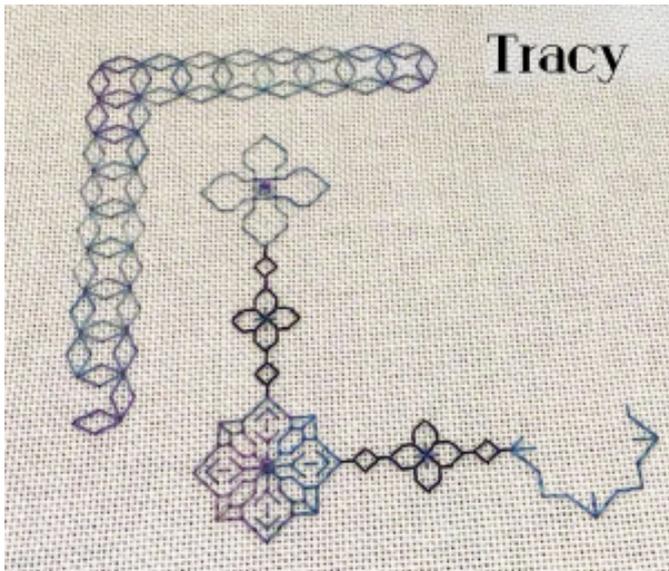
Looking at the different photographs sent into the group can also help when deciding which colours to use.

Madeleine is using 16 count antique white Aida with DMC variegated 4245 and solids 550, 796 and 939. The links and block outlines are worked in black.





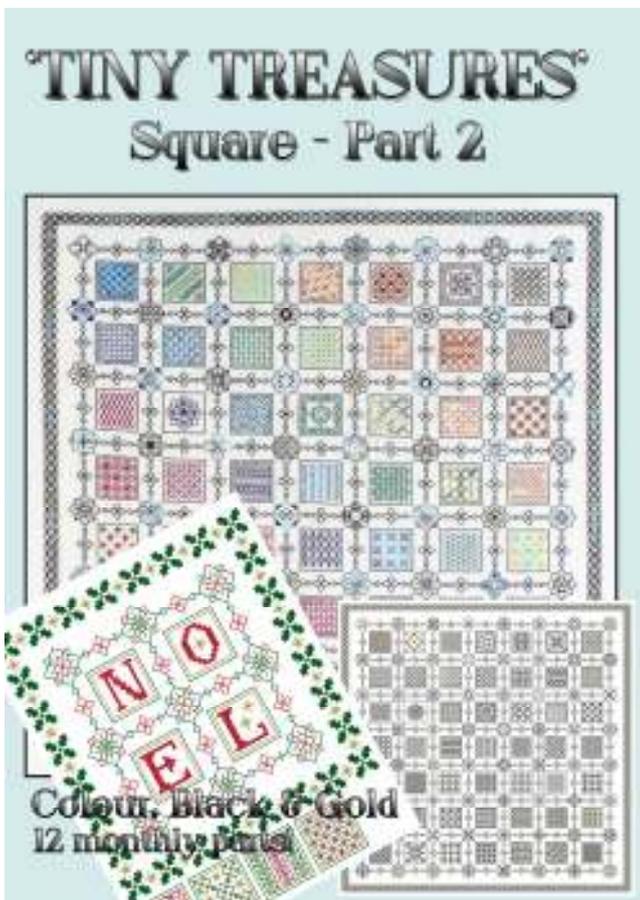
One basic design – so many variations!



Tracy is doing the rectangle version of Tiny Treasures using 27ct Linda Evenweave using DMC 310 and silks4U variegated silk and Petite treasure braid to match.

Silks4U is a thread I had never heard of before, but the colour is very subtle and effective and I will certainly look them up on their website.

Please keep sending me your photographs so I can share your progress and thank you very much for sharing your work.



*This month's charts can be found in Freebies on the site.*



Lady Curzon's Peacock Gown



*Kedleston Hall, Derbyshire, UK*



Just occasionally, I find something really intriguing which I want to explore further and when I visited Kedleston Hall, the National Trust property in Derbyshire recently, one of the exhibitions featured an exquisite, magical evening gown made of gold and silk thread on chiffon circa 1900 - 1902. It had belonged to Lady Mary Curzon who sadly died at the young age of 36.

Lady Mary was the Vicereine of India and since that country has always held a fascination to me after visiting it several times and being familiar with Delhi the capital, I decided to find out as much as I could about her.

The Peacock gown was made of gold and silver thread and designed by Jean-Philippe Worth for Mary Curzon, Baroness Curzon of Kedleston and it was designed to celebrate the 1902 Coronation of King Edward VII at the second Delhi Durbar in 1903.

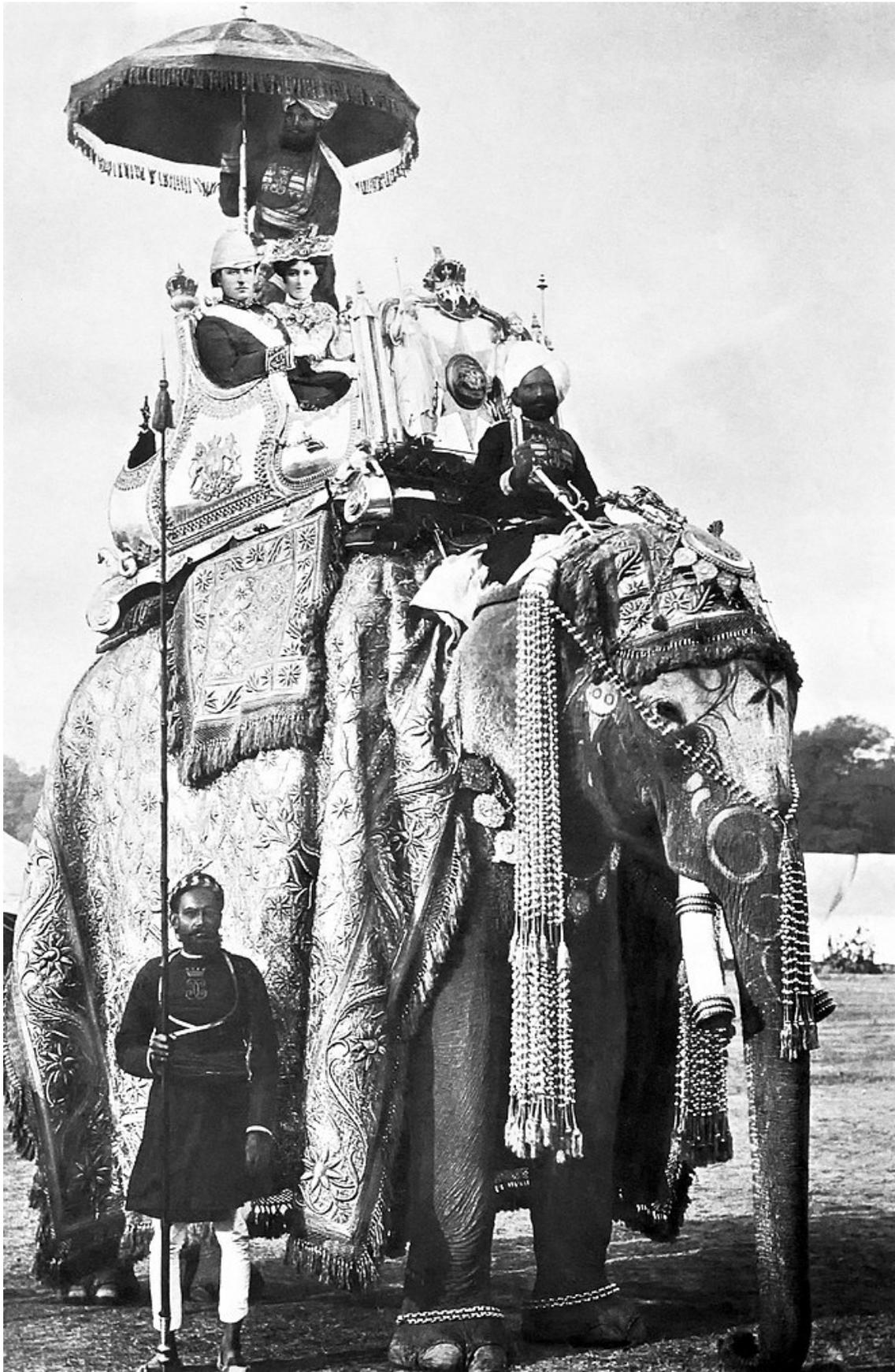
Her husband, the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, organised the Delhi Durbar and it was described as 'the grandest pageant in history' and created a tremendous sensation.



*Lady Mary Curzon, the Vicereine of India wearing the Peacock gown*

A picture of Lady Mary wearing the dress was taken in 1903 by Albert Edward Jeakins and published in an article in the Chicago Tribune in September of that year because Lady Mary was from Chicago.





*The arrival of the Viceroy and Vicereine on a decorated elephant going to the magnificent Delhi Durbar!*



*Lady Mary Curzon in the Peacock gown*

She was 5'8" tall and very beautiful and as the wife of George Nathaniel Curzon she became a prominent figure as Vicereine. She attended many functions in the Peacock gown that became one of her most famous fashion statements.

Sadly, her responsibilities abroad along with the Indian climate took a toll on her health and when she returned to England in 1905, her health was already failing. She died in London at the age of 36 and her dress was given to Kedleston Hall by her daughter Lady Alexandra Metcalf in 1997 where it is preserved, together with the Logsdail portrait.



State portraits were ordered from the artist William Logsdail, but Lady Curzon's portrait was completed in 1909 after her death in 1906.

### Creating a Masterpiece

The Peacock gown is a fusion of Indian embroidered fabric from Delhi and Parisian 'Haute Couture' by Lady Curzon's favourite designer 'House of Worth' to create a striking fashion and political statement.

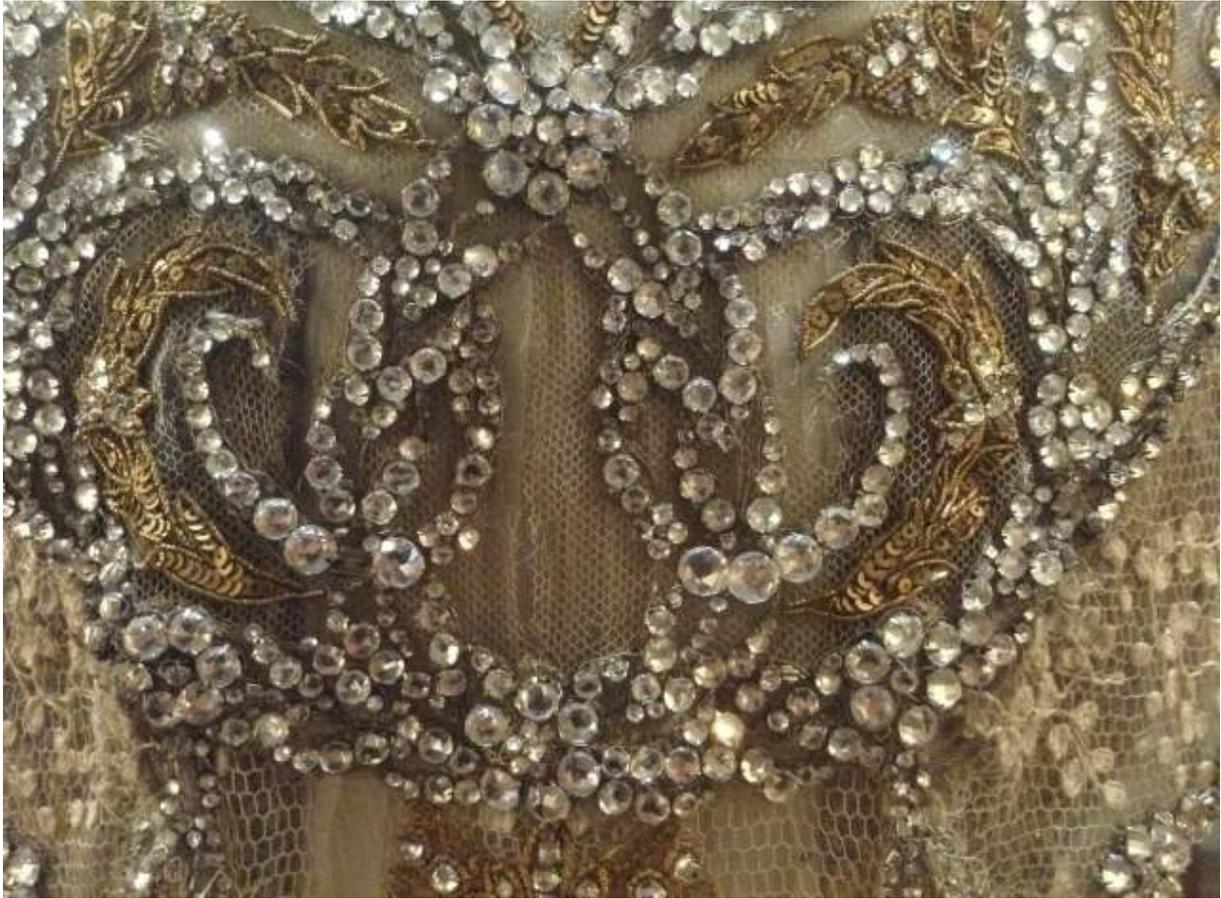
The material features a repeated design of overlapping peacock feathers, the outline of each 'feather' being created with intricate metallic embroidery sewn onto an ivory silk cloth. There are subtle colour changes in the feathers, some appearing more pink or coppery, others silver or gold. This effect was achieved by hand sewing different colour metallic threads between the outlines.

The eye of each peacock feather was believed to be emeralds, but are in fact the wing casings of an iridescent green beetle like the Scarab beetle.

The cost of the gown is unknown, but a dress from the 'House of Worth' could often cost as much as US \$10,000.

Was the dress as spectacular in real life as the portrait, judge for yourself?





The gown was assembled from panels of chiffon that had been embroidered and embellished by Delhi and Agra craftsmen using the zardozi (gold wire weaving) method. It was then shipped to Paris, where the 'House of Worth' styled the dress with a long train edged with white chiffon roses.



The worked panels were overlapping peacock feathers that had a blue/green beetle wing at the centre. Over time, the metal thread in the dress has tarnished, but the beetle wings have not lost their lustre.

Due to the weight of the metal thread, along with the corsets and support underneath, the dress actually weighs over 10lbs.

*Silk flowers adorned the hem of the dress.*

Lady Curzon was instrumental in promoting the use of Indian embroidery in Western fashion and many of her friends ordered gowns from the 'House of Worth' using such decorations, though they generally used much less metal threadwork which weighed her dress down.

### Preserving the dress

The coiled metal thread embroidery is known as *Zardosi* which is applied to a base fabric such as cotton and features copper, gold and silver thread. This makes the dress very susceptible to damage if the environment is not controlled appropriately. If kept in conditions where the relative humidity is too high it will be very damaging to both the textiles and metal, resulting in tarnishing of the silver or mould on the textiles beneath. Textiles with heavy beading or decorative detail can be difficult to display without gravity putting a strain on areas of the fabric. The display case is monitored for temperature and relative humidity 24 hours a day. The more stable the environment, the less damage is likely to occur and this also reduces the need to clean the dress.

The dress has its own custom made, silk covered mannequin which fits the form of the dress and plays a key role in preserving it, offering the hidden support needed to protect delicate areas such as the waistband and train from being damaged under the weight of the heavy fabric.

### Changes in Fashion

There are many instances of gowns being altered over the years and this dress was adjusted in order to be worn by one of Mary's daughters, Lady Alexandra Metcalfe. As fashions changed through history, so did the female shape and the tiny waist favoured in the Edwardian era meant that the corset needed adjustment. The corset top now has a cream coloured, pleated section down the centre and some additional support round the rhinestone decoration on the bust.



If you want to see more about the conservation used on the Peacock gown there are a video on YouTube

<https://youtu.be/WRZitxr9HSQ>

I hope you have enjoyed this month's Blog and the story behind the Peacock Gown.

Happy stitching!

*Liz*