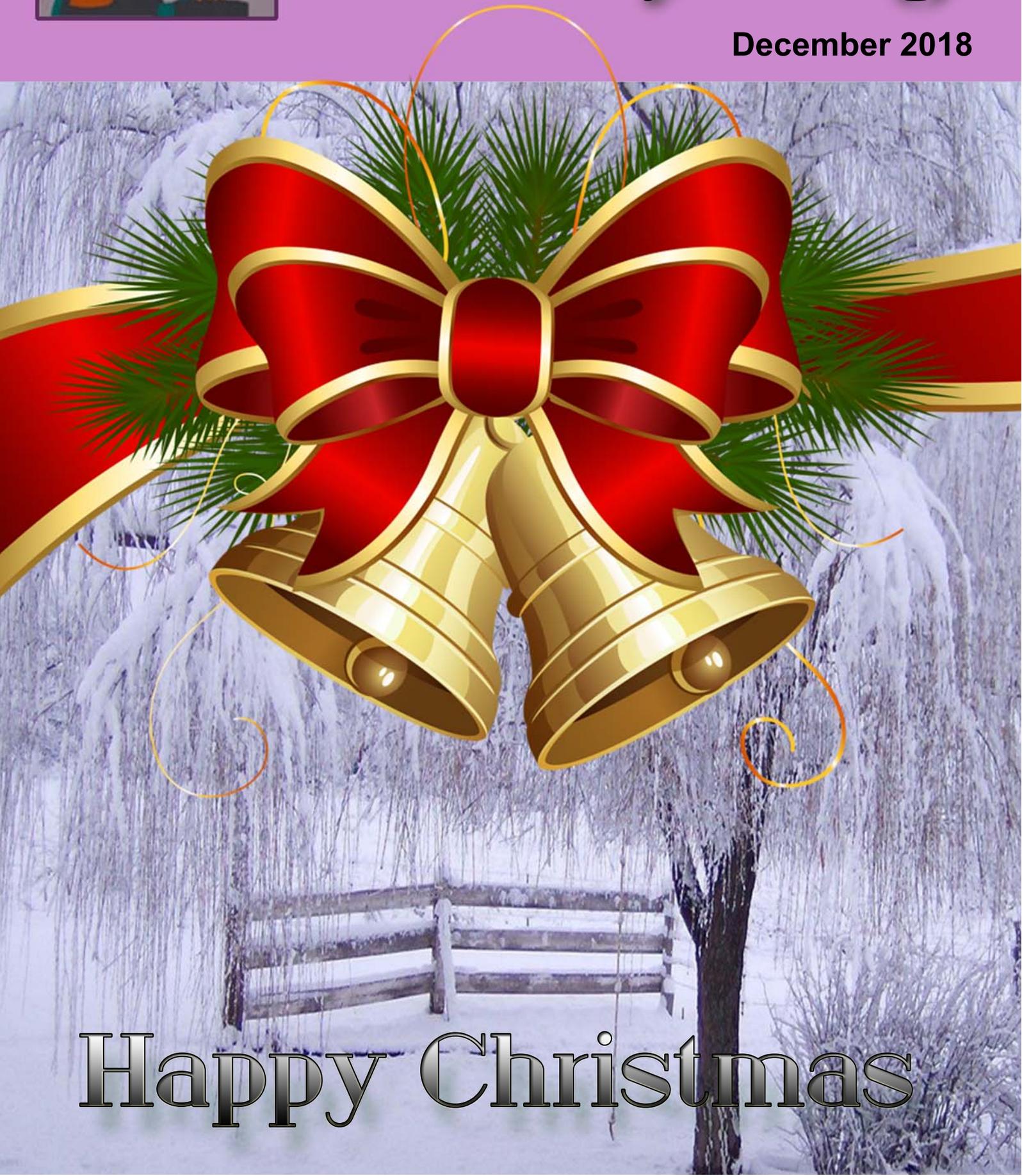




# *Blackwork Journey Blog*

December 2018



Happy Christmas

## Reflections on another year!



Ischia, Italy

Looking for Inspiration!



Writing the final blog for yet another year makes me realise just how fast time passes and how much I have managed to cram into 2018. In February, I was in Kenya teaching in Nairobi. In July, we were in the United States and in November we were in Italy and then Scotland.

I have also taught day schools and given talks all over the UK and had visits from readers from Canada, the USA and China, including two highly successful weekend courses held at my home for four ladies from Kendal in Cumbria, England.

Initially, they came to do a blackwork course, but were so enthusiastic that we did far more work than I had originally planned. I designed some flower motifs as part of their work and from that developed 'Tiny Treasures', the latest on-line project. One of the ladies had never done any blackwork before and after some initial hesitation launched into the embroidery with great gusto!

*Margaret's floral sampler*

## Blackwork Journey Blog, December 2018



The ladies were Margaret, Anne, Janice and Tanya each of whom worked really hard and we had great fun working on their designs!

The first weekend course produced some very interesting work which they bought with them when they came later in the year on the second course. Margaret used the floral motifs to create a rather special design which I will be adding to 'Tiny Treasures' in 2019.

I drew a 'Liver Bird' for Anne to stitch as her first piece of blackwork and Janice produced a lovely sampler along with Tanya's fan.



*Margaret, Anne, Janice, me and Tanya working on the samplers*

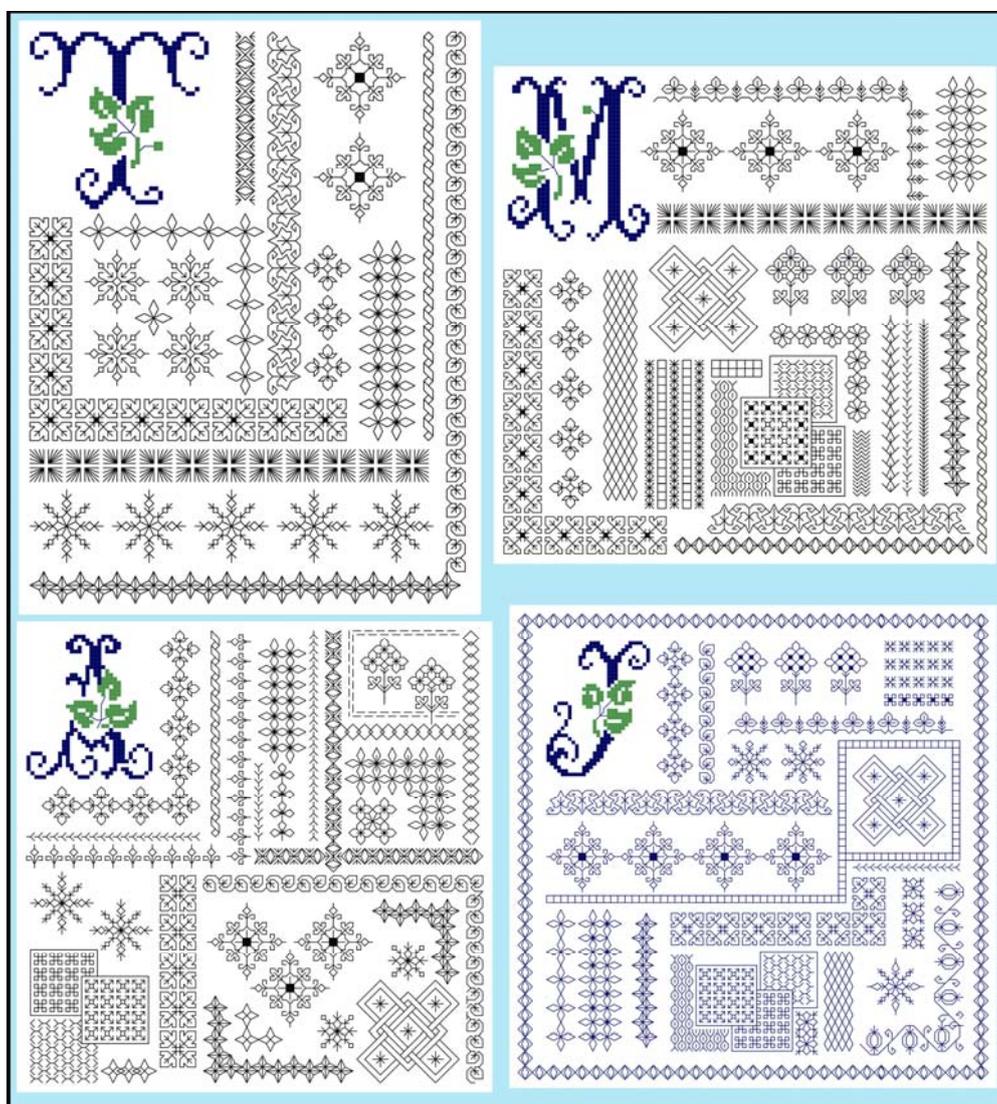
## Blackwork Journey Blog, December 2018

Before the first weekend was over, the ladies decided that they would like to come back again and spend the weekend creating samplers. After sending me some ideas which they wanted to incorporate into their designs, I created four individual samplers for them to stitch.

This was not the only thing I had in mind for them, though little did they know what I had planned!

When they arrived they were given a glue stick, scissors, a sheet of graph paper with their initial in the top left hand corner and three patterns sheets with different types of embroidery designs and techniques, linear, rectangular, alphabets and a verse and from that information they had to create their own samplers. This is not as easy as it sounds, but the incentive was that I would then chart up their designs as printed charts for them to stitch.

Many cups of coffee, lemon drizzle cake and biscuits later, I was presented with four very different designs for me to work on later that evening. Next morning, they were presented as a printed chart of their design ready to stitch.



*Four different designs created from the same pattern sheets*

## Blackwork Journey Blog, December 2018

The interesting thing was to see just how different the designs were, considering that they were all given the same pattern sheets with samplers to reflect their personalities. Of the four samplers that I created for the ladies, all of them will appear on-line at some point during 2019.

The next weekend has already been booked for May 2019 to enjoy an Islamic design weekend – watch this space! Requests have already been made for an elephant and an Islamic chessboard!

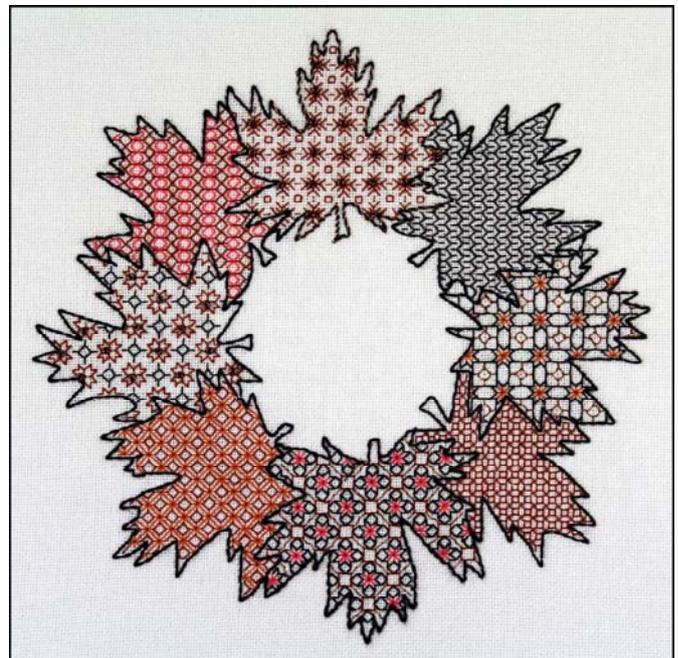
### Inspiration from Nature.

The autumn colours this year have been really vibrant and what better source of inspiration than the countryside and woodland around you. Look at the colours within a single leaf to help you choose the right shades for an autumn design.

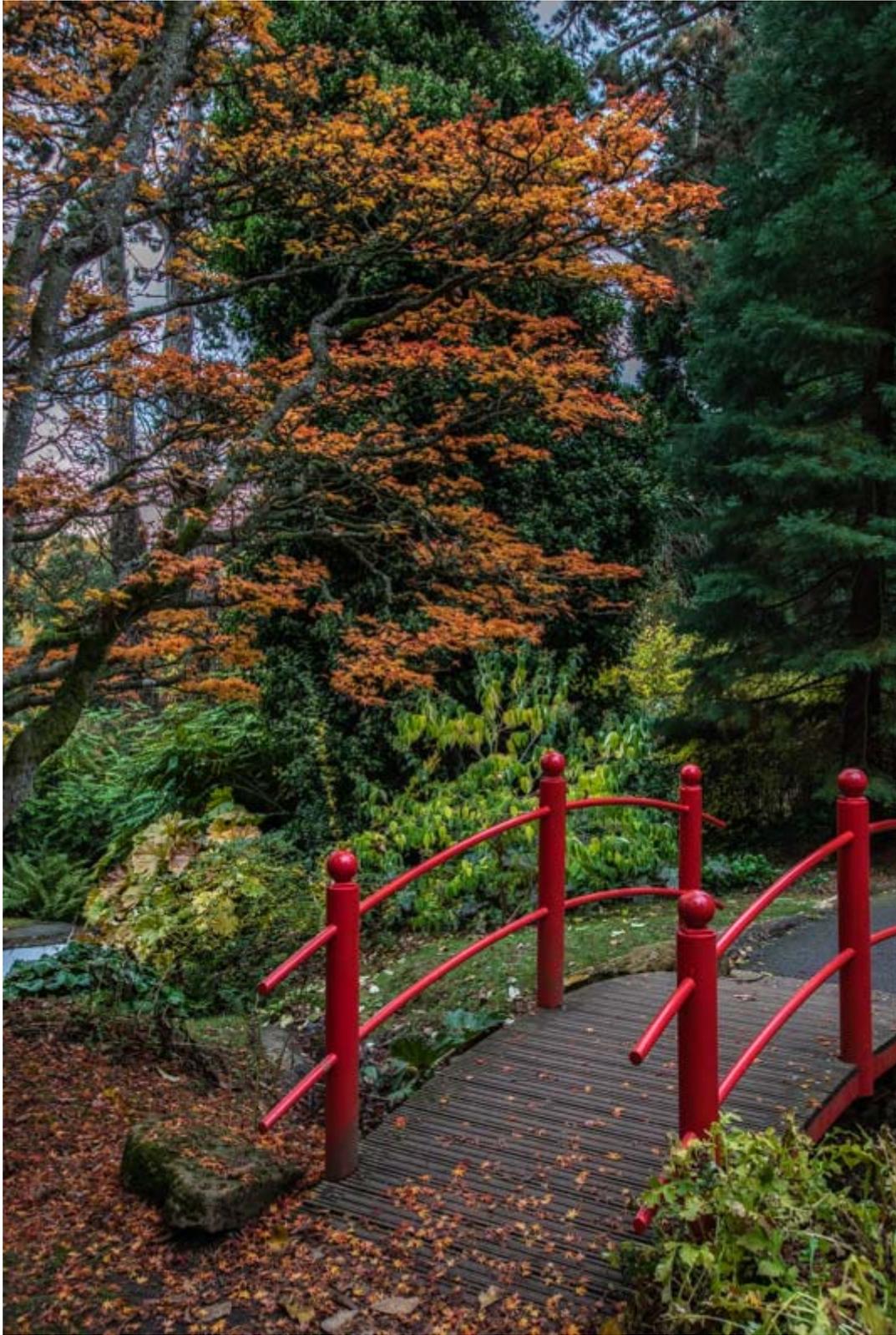


*Maple leaf*

CH0328 Colour Maple



CH0312 Acer leaf *Reds, golds and browns reflect the glory of the season before the winter sets in!*



*Martin Reece, a superb photographer and friend took this picture recently in the Cotswolds in the UK. This photograph would make a wonderful embroidery with the bridge enhanced by the vibrant greens and browns.*

*October gave a party;  
The leaves by hundreds came,—  
The Ashes, Oaks, and Maples,  
And leaves of every name.  
The sunshine spread a carpet,  
And ever thing was grand;  
Miss Weather led the dancing;  
Professor Wind, the band....  
The sight was like a rainbow  
New-fallen from the sky....*

*~George Cooper (1840–1927), "October's Party," c.1887*

### Visitors from Overseas



*Maureen, Chudi and Iris, Little Moreton Hall*

William Moreton 111 was imprisoned, furniture sold off and the land was sold or let out to tenant farmers. This change in fortunes helped preserve the house as it is today, as they stopped making modifications to keep up with the latest fashions.

*The glass windows, uneven floors, slanting walls all add to the charm of this very special building.*

Meeting readers and showing them where I live and the wonderful historic houses in my area is always great fun and when Maureen and her friends, Chudi and Iris from China came to stay I could not resist taking them to Little Moreton Hall near Congleton in Cheshire, England. It is a 16th-century half-timbered house built between 1504–1610 and is now owned by The National Trust.

The house was built when Henry VIII was ruling England. Land prices were low and the Moreton's took the opportunity to expand their estate. Advantageous marriages added to their wealth and influence. The house was not just the family home, but the symbol of their social status.

However, if you followed the wrong faith or monarch you could be heavily punished and this happened to the Moreton's who supported Charles 1 during the Civil War 1642-1651. Cromwell's Parliamentarians confiscated the estate in 1643 and demanded an extortionate fee for its return.



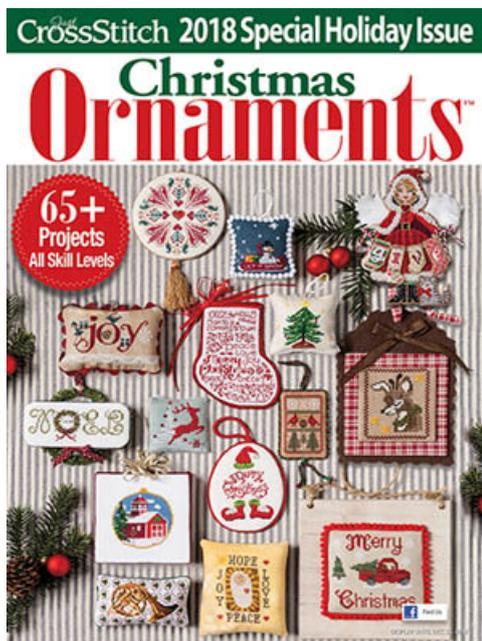


*Little Moreton Hall near Congleton, Cheshire, England.*



*In one of the bedrooms there was a bed with a beautifully embroidered quilt, but the redwork cushion with it with its free style drawing and diaper patterns was especially pleasing!*

**Latest Publications containing Blackwork Journey designs:**



Christmas Ornaments - Kogin ornament  
A Cross-Stitch Christmas, Craftways – ‘Copper and Sapphire’, tray and coasters

### 'Tiny Treasures' – the next instalment

When I decided to create 'Tiny Treasures' I did not expect quite the reaction that I have received. All the different variations are being worked by readers all round the world in every colour combination imaginable and the pictures of the parts worked to date are flooding into the Facebook group. Some readers are also creating their own designs based on mine and adding their own special touches.

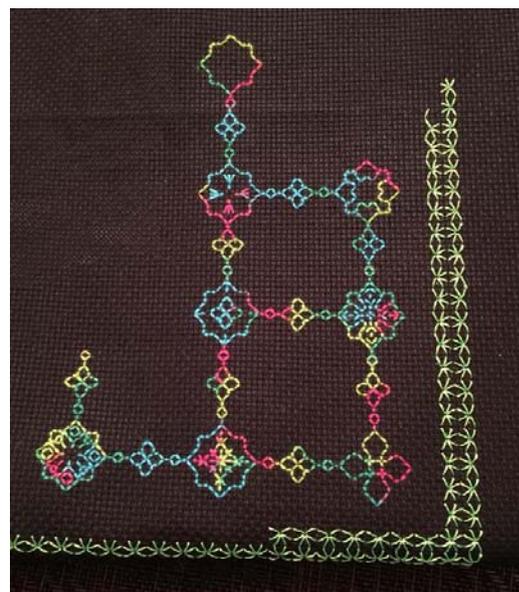
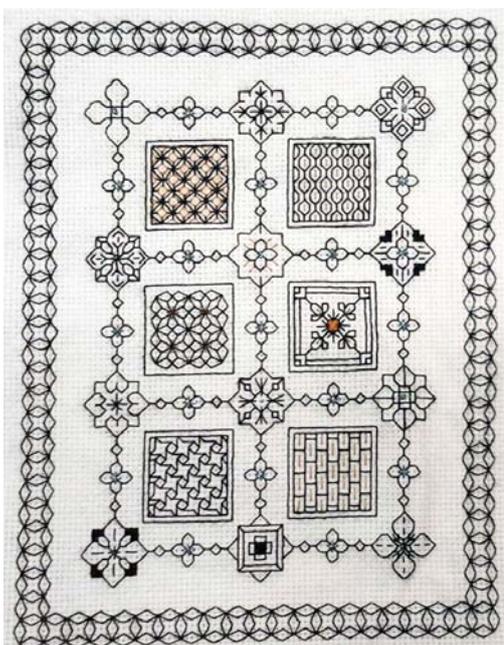


I was delighted to receive a picture from Madeleine where she has used the framework and added 'Shalom' in Hebrew meaning 'peace'. This seems so appropriate for today's world where there is so much conflict.



I added a different variation of 'Noel' to the Facebook group and Vicky has already worked the design adding a very pretty blue and gold braid to compliment the embroidery. If you want to stitch the design, I have added it to this month's 'Tiny Treasures' charts as a little extra for Christmas 2018.

Elizabeth has taken Part 1 Rectangle and created a mini sampler in black and gold which has worked well. Laura and Jen are working on black fabric using very vibrant threads which really make an impact. Working on dark fabric is not easy, so use a good light and if necessary, a magnifying lens to reduce eyestrain.



## Blackwork Journey Blog, December 2018

Choosing materials and thread can be fraught with problems as Barbara found out when she bought material for her square design

*“I purchased evenweave on internet, thinking 28 count to do the square. Couldn’t get it to work out. Eventually counted and discovered it’s 24 count. So now doing rectangle one. Just found other packet of evenweave and found it’s 25 count. Writing smaller than weave, no wonder it was difficult to read!”*

### 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

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.  
This table requires [JavaScript](#). Designed by [Yam Tree](#).  
Add this [calculator](#) to your web site or use it in your store.

I would check very carefully that you are using the correct count of fabric for the design. If you have bought fabric and are not certain what count it is, use a ruler and a pin and count each stitch or block. Cheap fabrics are not always what they say they are and it pays to check first.

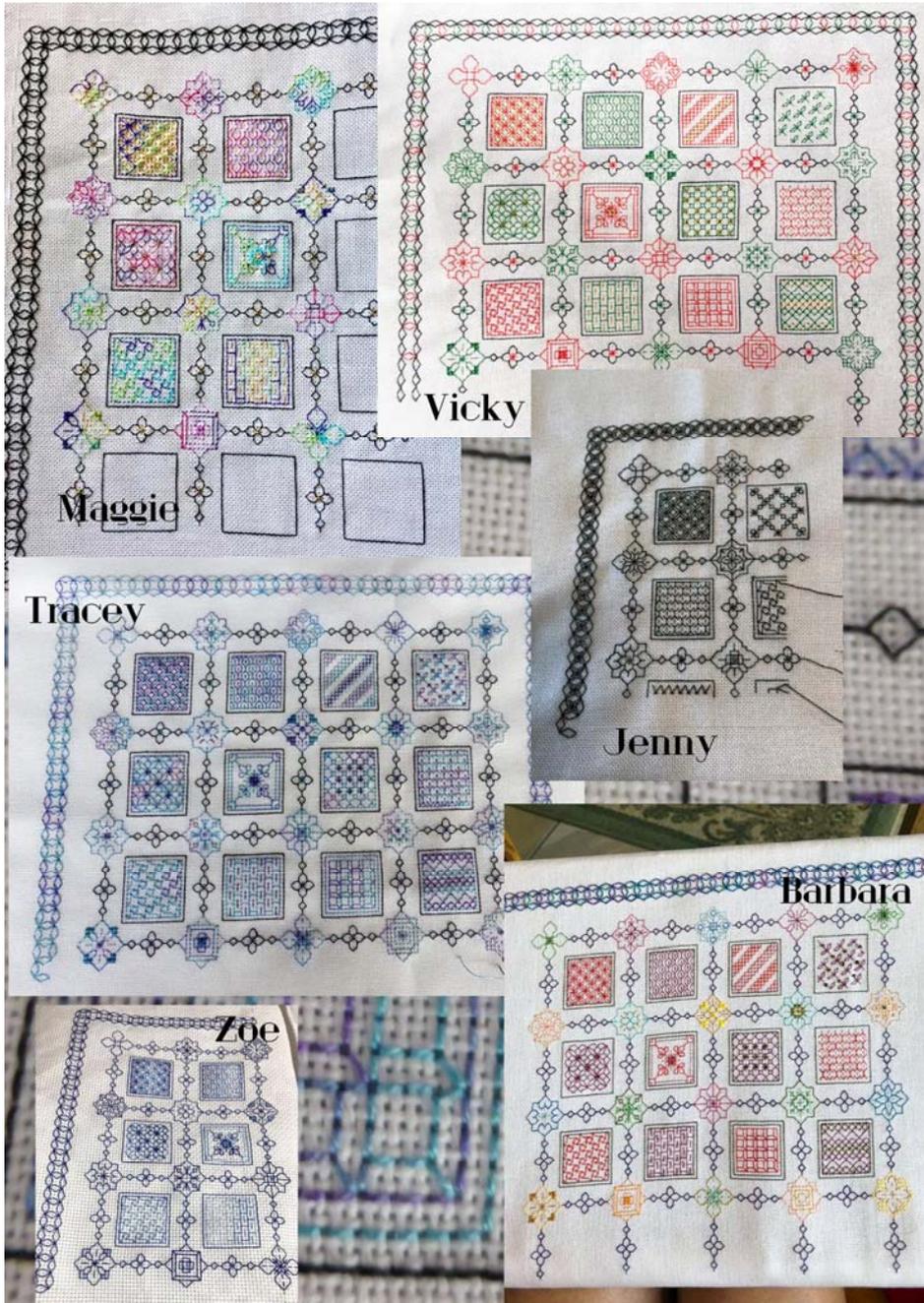
If the fabric is not even then your embroidery will not stitch to the exact size. If you are in doubt whether your design will fit the fabric use the Fabric Calculator on the Blackwork Journey home page. Add the information and it will bring up the fabric size required.



Maureen is using variegated threads and Jeanette has bought the full range of DMC Coloris which will give her plenty of choice.

If you choose to use variegated threads always include at least one solid colour to add weight to the design. I used black for the mini links and for some of the flower motifs.

# Blackwork Journey Blog, December 2018



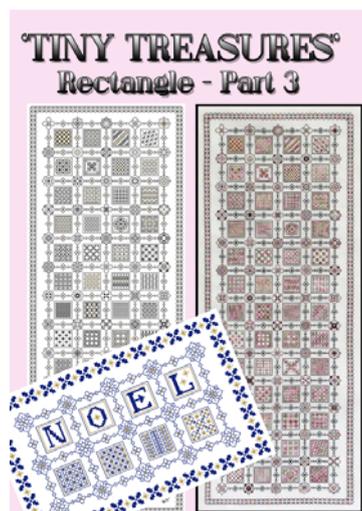
Work in progress by:  
Maggie, Vicky, Tracey, Jenny,  
Zoe and Barbara.

‘Save the Stitches’ and ‘New Stitches’ are still being stitched round the world and the e-books are flying off the shelf.

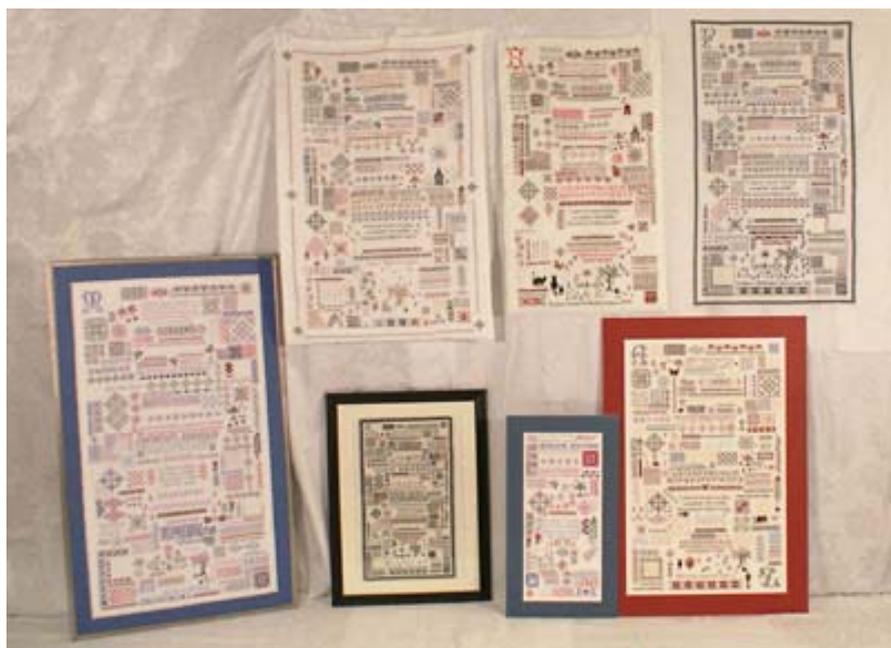


Oussayma has just sent me a picture of her ‘Save the Stitches’ hot off the needle!

All the monthly parts are posted in ‘Freebies’ in Blackwork Journey on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month.



Two different versions of Noel can be found in Parts 2 and 3 of ‘Tiny Treasures’



### **Congratulations to Lakeshore Creative Stitchery Guild! 2018 Group Project - 1st Place**

Lakeshore Creative Stitchery Guild was the first-place winner in the Seminar Group Project Award category with seven stitched 'Sublime Stitches' samplers.

Members who submitted projects are: Top left to right:

Diane Bertrand, Suzanne Petitclerc, Francine Bergevin;

Bottom left to right: Maureen Spira, Lisa Schofield, Maureen Spira, Eunice Turnbull

### **New Designs for December**

Two new designs have been added this month for you to enjoy.

#### **CH0382 Silver and Gold**



This design consists of two double-sided ornaments which can be personalised by adding an initial to make that special last minute Christmas gift.

Mounted over two card circles this design can be worked in different colours and is very effective in royal blue and gold. It can be worked on Aida or evenweave and is a good way of using the small pieces of material that are left over from larger projects.

There are a number of small projects in 'Charts' in Blackwork Journey which can be used in a similar way., including the individual 'sweets' in 'Box of Delights'

#### **CH0335 Christmas Ornaments**



Using different techniques within a design can be both challenging and satisfying.

**PR0047 Circle of Life** combines blackwork, pulled thread work and embroidery to create this circular mandala.

This is a free style design where the pattern is drawn onto the fabric using an HB pencil or a water soluble pen and the patterns are added after the outline has been worked. This is a good project for someone new to pulled thread work as the areas to be filled are clearly defined.

Full instructions for the specialist stitches are included in the design. It can be worked in any colour on evenweave fabric using stranded floss and DMC Cotton Pérole No.12. Floss can be substituted if Cotton Pérole is not available.



I hope you all have a wonderful Christmas and a peaceful New Year!

*Liz*