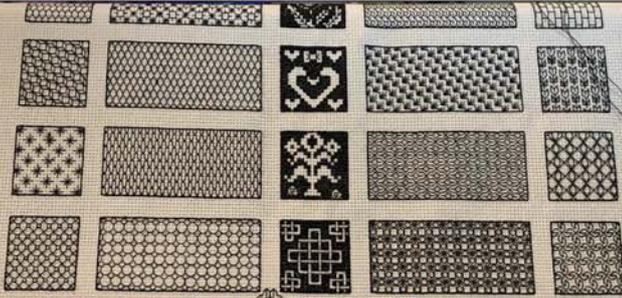




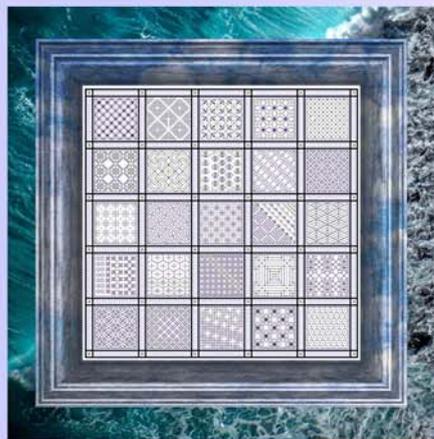
Blackwork Journey Blog

June 2022



**Blackwork Journey
Pick and Mix**

EB0022



Take the Challenge!





June and the start of summer

The day started at 4am this morning with two wood pigeons cooing on the branch immediately outside our bedroom window and since it was a beautiful morning I thought it would take some quiet time and start the Blog and do some work on the two e-books I am working on.

I love the quiet of early morning when no-one else is around. It is a time to reflect, think about what the day will bring, to look back over the previous month and perhaps do some stitching!

Noisy neighbour!

May was a month for catching up with family, seeing our son and family in San Francisco for the first time in three years and marking our granddaughter's 18th birthday. She has finished school, bar exams and is looking to take up a place at university to study veterinary science. It doesn't seem five minutes since she was a tiny baby!

The years fly by and it is not until you look back that you realise how much you have actually achieved, how many places you have visited, the different experiences, people you met and worked with, careers that you have followed and the changes that have made you into the person you are today. Looking back helps to put some of the crises in life into perspective and makes you appreciate family, friends, what you have and what you have achieved.

Blackwork Journey started in 2008 from a chance remark by my son. I had retired from college with the vague idea of starting a website and designing my own patterns. 'You will never be able to design a website!' was the challenge I needed. I went back to college as a student part time for three years. Learned how to use a computer, work Adobe Photoshop, set up and launch a website and keep it running for 14 years. I sent some of my early designs to publishers around the world and I have been working with them ever since.

Looking back I didn't really know what I was doing or getting myself into. I underestimated how much of my time it would take or how important a part of my life Blackwork Journey would become. Yes, if I was started now I would do things differently, but when I think of the wonderful people I have met, the talks and day schools I have given in the UK and overseas and the members of the Facebook groups, especially Banu and Lori who help me with the groups, I do not regret any of it.

Along the way I have learned different techniques, explored new ideas and been inspired and encouraged by what I have seen and the craftsmen and women I have encountered across the world. The internet has made the impossible possible by opening up new areas for research and development, especially the museums who offer up their treasures through their online galleries when we are unable to visit them in person.

What does a 19th-century court dress have in common with a sassy pair of Christian Louboutin boots? San Francisco Asian Art Museum

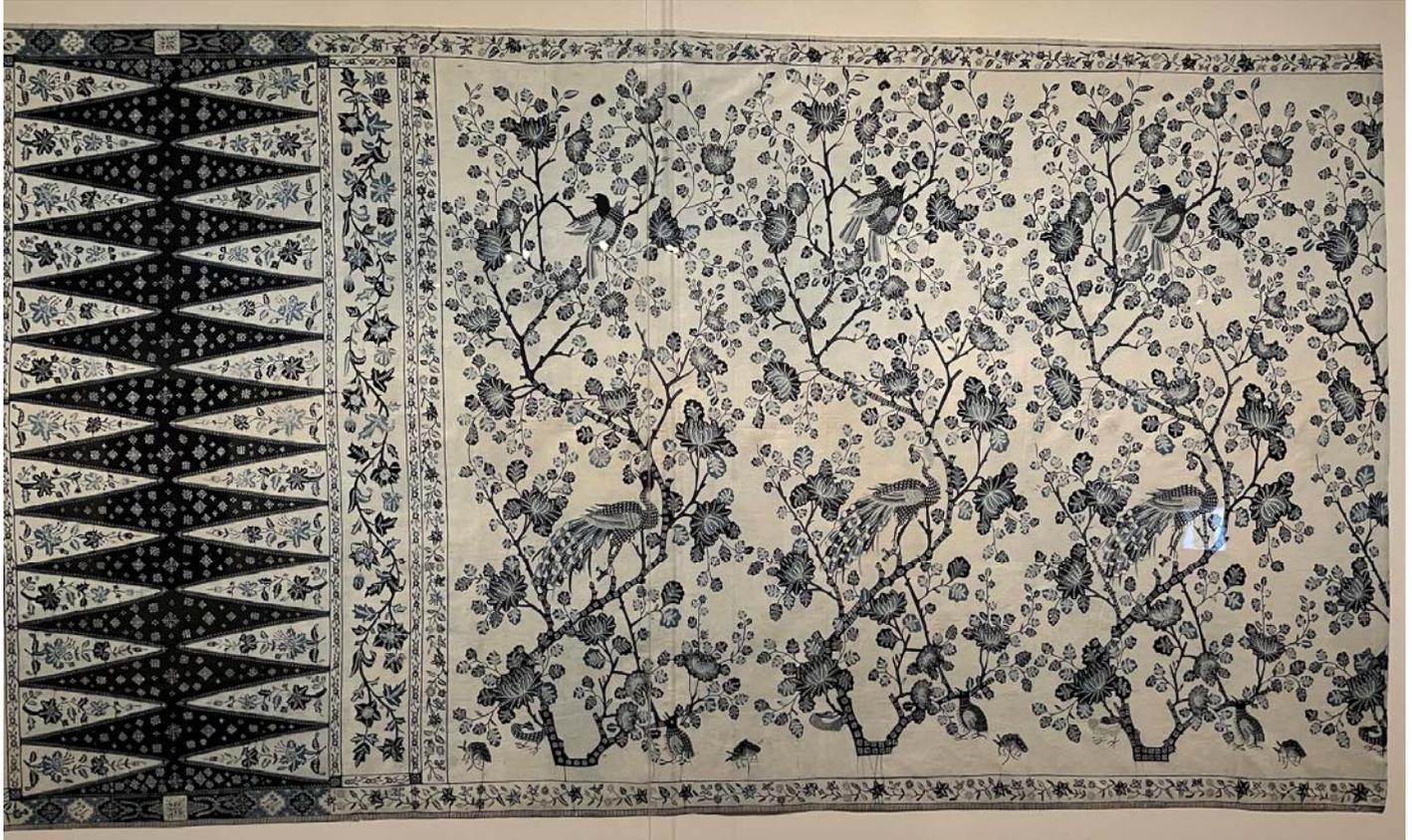
If I get the opportunity to visit museums and galleries on my travels I do and I recently visited the

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Asian Art Museum in San Francisco which is a favourite of mine. Whilst I cannot take you to the actual museum they do have some excellent videos on their recent exhibitions which you can access such as Cranes, Peonies and Attitude and Traditional Japanese Motifs in Fashion.

<https://exhibitions.asianart.org/exhibitions/kimono-refashioned/>

Wandering round one of the galleries I found a piece that inspired me for a possible future project. It was a cotton dyed kain panjang or lower garment from Indonesia about 1905



Like many pieces of clothing it can tell a story about its wearer. In many parts of Indonesia, especially before the twentieth century, colours and styles of garments, as well as modes of wearing them, might tell you the age, marital status, social status, wealth, and even the village of the wearer. Dark blue and white batik textiles like this were worn by women in the Chinese Indonesian community, especially in times of mourning, periods which could last up to three years. They also might be worn by a bride as she left her family to move to her husband's, symbolising mourning for the loss of her parental home.

The white background is particularly difficult to achieve, because the entire surface needs to be covered with wax to protect the textile from absorbing the indigo dye. These blue and white batiks may have been inspired by Chinese blue and white ceramics.

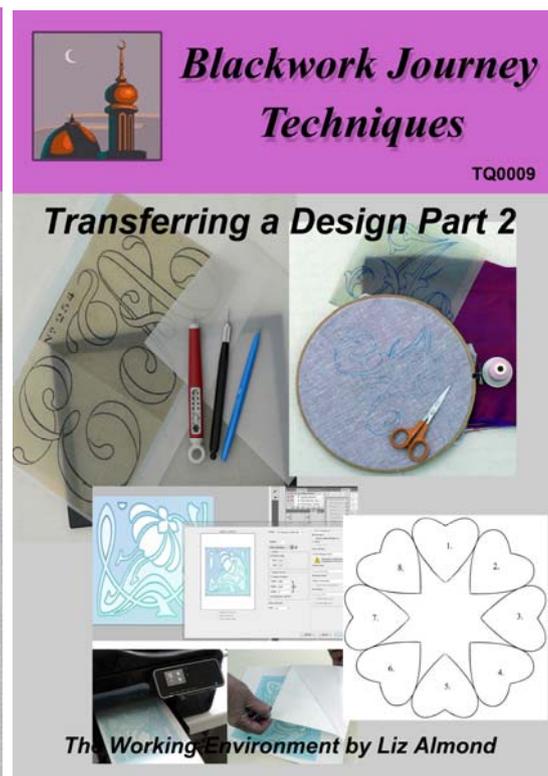


Reuse, recycle!

As we all know, the emphasis nowadays is to recycle what we have, so following up this idea I took a plain denim shirt which was destined for the charity shop and added embroidery to liven it up.

Adding embroidery to clothing is not difficult. Decide which areas will benefit from embroidery – yoke, cuffs, pockets, back or front. Consider how dominant the embroidery is to be. Does it blend into the garment or will it be dramatic and vibrant? If the garment is to be washed regularly which threads will wear well and are the threads colourfast?

Once these questions have been answered, transfer the design to the fabric using transfer paper, prick and pounce or one of the other methods outlined in TQ0008 and TQ0009 in ‘Techniques’ on the website.



Denim is one of the most popular fabrics used for clothing, but it comes in different weights, may leach colour and ranges from very stiff to soft and pliable. The style of embroidery used will be determined by the thickness and weave of the fabric. Use a sharp needle to piece the fabric and if using thick threads use a needle with a large eye to allow the threads to pass through the fabric without fraying.

Denim is a sturdy cotton warp-faced textile in which the weft passes under two or more warp threads. This twill weaving produces a diagonal ribbing that distinguishes it from cotton duck. While a denim predecessor known as dungaree has been produced in India for hundreds of years, denim as it is recognised today was first produced in Nîmes, France.

Denim is available in a range of colours, but the most common denim is indigo denim in which the warp thread is dyed while the weft thread is left white. As a result of the warp-faced twill weaving, one side of the textile is dominated by the blue warp threads and the other side is dominated by the white weft threads. Jeans fabricated from this cloth are thus predominantly white on the inside.



Areas to embroider



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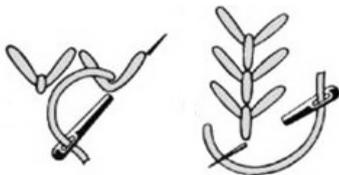
Thread used: Matt variegated crochet cotton, DMC embroidery floss

Crewel needle

Stitches used: Running stitch, fly stitch



Full size design on the bottom front of the shirt



Fly stitch will follow a curve and add weight without bulk.

If a heavier stitch is needed Wheatear stitch works well especially worked in a matt cotton floss.



Fly stitch

Wheatear stitch



Running stitch can be worked in double rows or it can be laced

**New for June EB0022 'Pick and Mix'
Take the Challenge!
Create something special for 2022**

This 41 page e-book is designed for readers who may be new to the technique of Blackwork through to experienced embroiderers. It is a blackwork sampler consisting of 36 different block patterns set in a cross stitch and pulled thread work border.

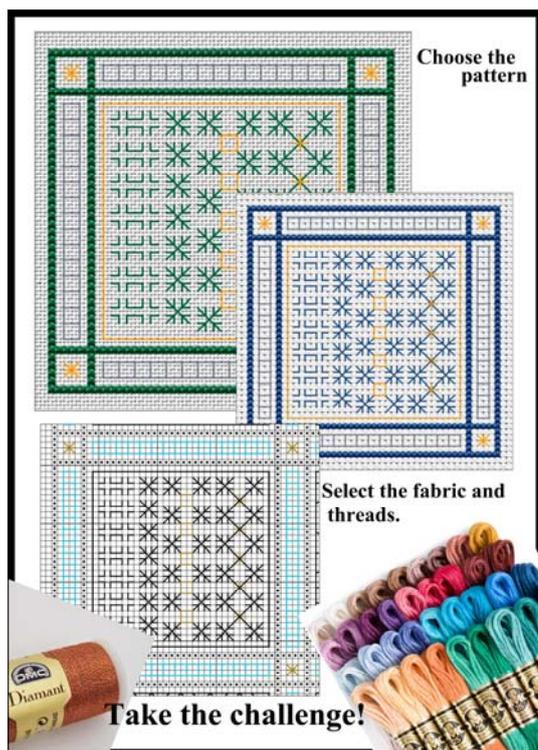
Each block can be worked individually or, eight projects can be created in different combinations of blocks from a single block to all 36 blocks.

Readers taking the challenge have to make choices and decisions of their own from which fabrics can be used, to threads, colour, arrangement and size of project. No two pieces of embroidery will be the same.

However, for readers who want to follow the designs as they have been worked just follow the instructions for each project. All the fabric sizes have been included and advice about different types of fabric and worked examples are included. All the projects are worked in the same way as the first block pattern.



If this is your first piece of Blackwork embroidery work one of the smaller projects and make it into a card or small picture or stitch it to a tote bag.



The projects included are:

1. Block and border
2. 4 blocks and borders
3. 9 blocks and borders
4. 12 blocks and borders
5. 16 blocks and borders
6. 25 blocks and borders
7. Master Chart 36 blocks and borders
8. 36 block runner and borders

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9
10	11	12
13	14	15
16	17	18
19	20	21
22	23	24
25	26	27
28	29	30
31	32	33
34	35	36

Runner

Only print off the chart you will be using. Keep the PDF on your computer or i-pad for reference.



Inspiration for the design came buying Pick and Mix sweets with my pocket money as a child and choosing all the different varieties from wine gums to gob stoppers and sherbet dabs. Do you remember the sweets of your childhood?

If you are new to embroidery and need a little help:

Knowing that you can ask for advice if you are uncertain about your Blackwork Journey projects is one of the benefits of being a member of the closed Blackwork Journey Facebook groups. I am always here to help if it is needed and available through e-mail.

Closed Facebook groups set up for 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/#>



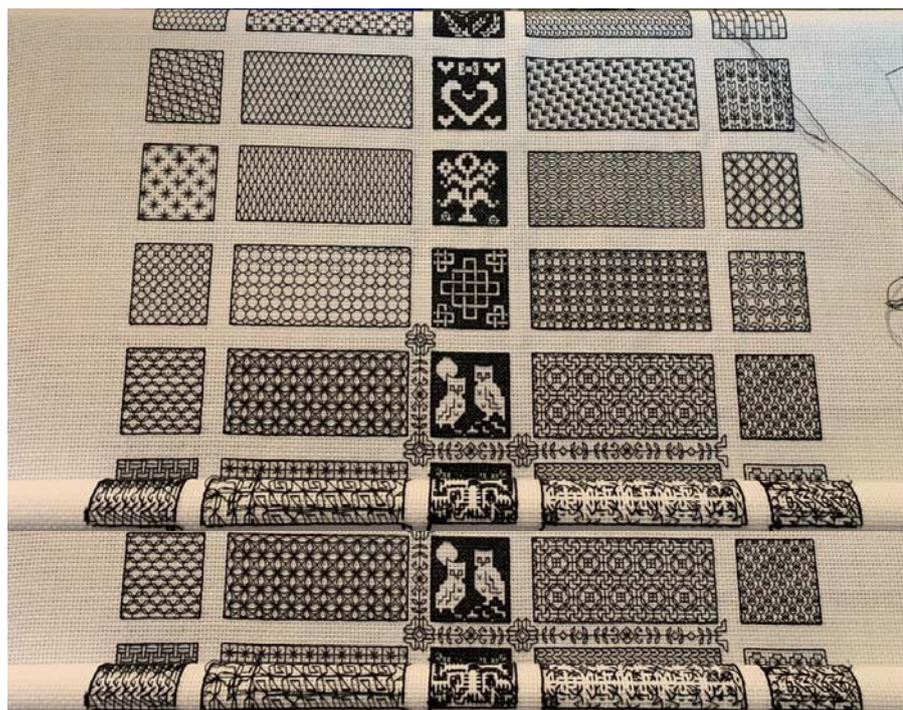
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On the Blackwork Journey website you will find two sections called 'Techniques' and 'Inspiration'. Open the pages and you will find PDF's on many different topics which are there to help with some of the basic topics.



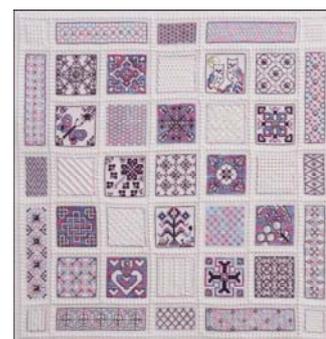
Some of the PDF's to read online or download to your computer.

A rather special reader with a good idea - Terrie Renison



Terri was been working on her version of EB0006 Pandora's Box, but with a different approach by making rectangles and extending some of the patterns.

I love this approach and her stitching on Aida is beautiful. Well done Terri!



EB0006 Pandora's Box

Exhibition at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, UK 21st May – 29th August 2022

A new exhibition is opening in Liverpool at the Walker Art Gallery and if you live in the North West of England and can visit this exhibition on the Tudors I am sure you would find it interesting. Many of the portraits have come from the National Portrait Gallery in London.



The Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool

The Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool has one of the most impressive collections of fine and decorative art in Europe and is renowned for the depth of its Renaissance and Pre-Raphaelite collections. It is home to outstanding works by Rubens, Rembrandt, Poussin, Gainsborough and Rossetti.



● Opens in 2 days

The Tudors: Passion, Power and Politics

21 May 2022 – 29 Aug 2022

Presenting the five Tudor monarchs, Henry VII, Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I, some of the most familiar figures from English history and instantly recognisable in the portraits that have preserved their likenesses for five hundred years.

📍 Walker Art Gallery

The Tudors: Passion, Power and Politics presents the five Tudor monarchs, Henry VII, Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I, some of the most familiar figures from English history and instantly recognisable in the portraits that have preserved their likenesses for five hundred years. The dynasty's reign over sixteenth century England from 1485 to 1603, encompassed the tumultuous years of the Reformation; a literary renaissance; conflict with Scotland, France and Spain and conquest and colonisation in Ireland and America

The exhibition at the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool, will feature around one hundred objects. This includes sixty-eight works from the National Portrait Gallery, a selection of additional loans, and paintings from the Walker Art Gallery's collection. Portraits on display will include the Tudor monarchs, alongside their counsellors and courtiers, Thomas More, Thomas Cromwell, Robert Dudley, William Cecil and Francis Walsingham.

The exhibition features some of the most famous works in the National Portrait Gallery Collection, some of which have never been shown outside of London, including a portrait of Jane Seymour, after Hans Holbein the Younger and the highly unusual Sir Henry Unton portrait.



Queen Elizabeth I by Unknown continental artist circa 1575



King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery in cavalry-style full dress uniform London, UK There are similarities in both the dress and the uniform.

Detail from the portrait showing the heavy ornamentation across the bodice and round the tiny waist.





Portrait of Henry VIII after Hans Holbein the Younger, c. 1537–1562 King of England



London Fashion Week 2016 from the catwalk. Where did the inspiration for this design come from? Fashion often looks to the past for its inspiration.

Blackwork and goldwork detail from the portrait also show the showing the "jags" (i.e. cuts) in the body and sleeves of the doublet, through which "puffs" of the shirt have been pulled through.

I hope you have enjoyed this month's Blog. If you have any queries please contact: lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk



Happy stitching, *Liz*