

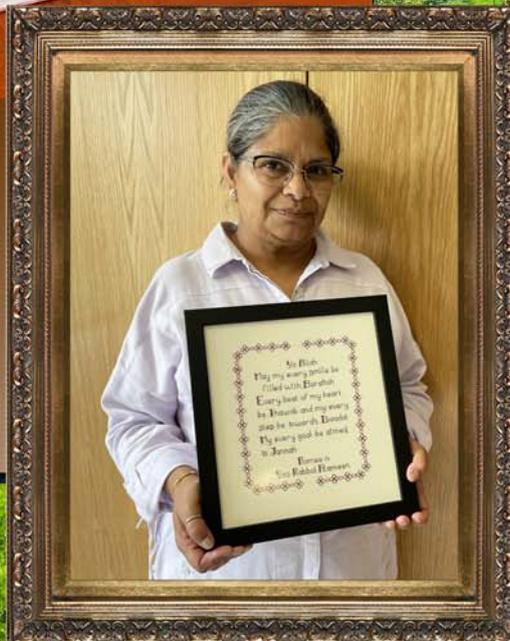
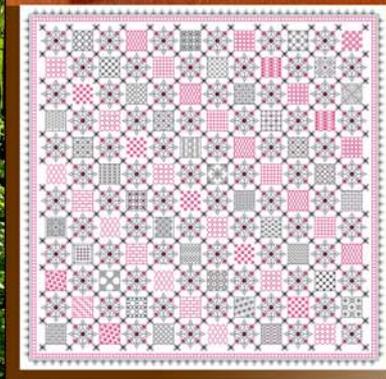


Blackwork Journey Blog

August 2022



Blackwork Journey Diagonal Dance EB0023



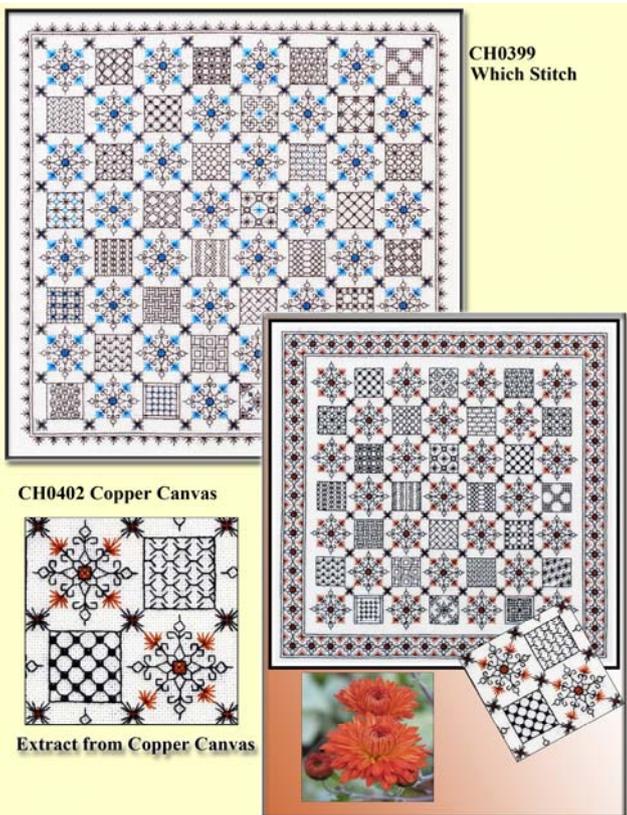
Happy
stitching!

August, a time for reflection and summer stitching!



Lancashire in the sunshine, an idyllic scene!

July ended with a heat wave and temperatures never seen before in the UK. It was far too hot to venture far from home and I used the opportunity to complete some unfinished projects, work on some magazine commissions and investigate textured stitching on clothing.



Rising to the challenge - From little acorns mighty oak trees grow!

Some time ago I produced two designs: CH0399 Which Stitch and CH0402 Copper Canvas. These proved to be very popular designs, but one group of ladies that I work with on a regular basis decided that they wanted more!!

“Could I please use the basic design and add pulled thread work blocks? We would really like the challenge of working small areas of pulled work as well as the blackwork. Could I also make the blocks the same size and with lots of variety? Oh, and could you please make it large enough to make a table centre flexible enough to make smaller pieces as well!”

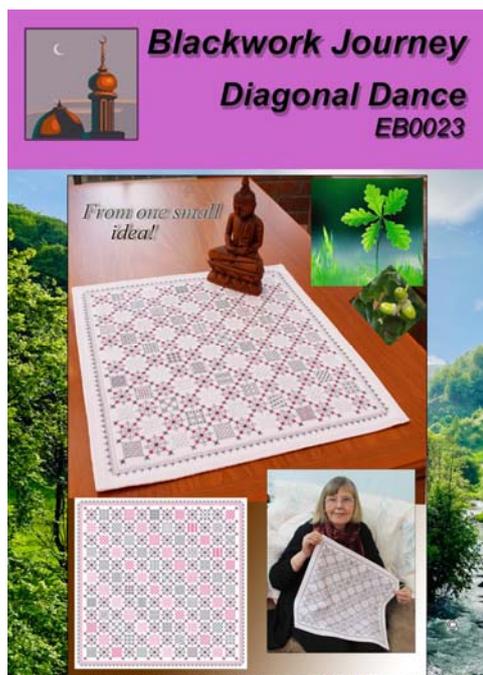
I thought about the idea for some time and decided that it would work. Designing it was straightforward, but stitching it took a little more time.

This is the final result - **EB0023 Diagonal Dance**.



From one small idea!

EB0023 Diagonal Dance – the pulled thread blocks have been shown in pink on the chart for clarity



EB0023 'Diagonal Dance' consist of 144 patterns in two different techniques, blackwork and pulled thread/fabric work. There are 72 motifs: 36 blackwork blocks - each block is a different pattern and 36 pulled thread blocks.

The table centre has been backed with cotton to match the Zweigart 25 count Lugana. The design can be worked in any colour combination, as a block, diagonal or horizontal bands. Each blackwork pattern is complete. The narrow back stitch border outlines the design and is also used to finish the edging. Finishing instructions are included.

Design area: 17.86 x 17.86 inches

Stitches: 250 x 250 stitches

Material: Zweigart 25 count Lugana or, Zweigart 28 count evenweave, 22 x 22 inches minimum to allow for working in a frame and finishing.

Note: If 14 count Aida is used, the pulled thread patterns would be worked as embroidery stitches and not 'pulled'. A number of the pattern blocks would have to be split, so a sharp needle is advisable.

What is pulled thread work?

Pulled thread work is a counted embroidery technique, worked on a loosely woven evenweave fabric. Stitches are worked around groups of threads in the fabric and pulled, using the tension of the stitches to form gaps, creating lacy, open fillings, bands, border and hems. It is usually worked in white thread on white fabric, but can also be worked with coloured threads.

No threads are cut or removed from the fabric in this technique.

The e-book can be found in 'E-books' on the Blackwork Journey website. I hope you like working it ladies as much as I have enjoyed creating it.



Extract from EB0023 Diagonal Dance

Border:

Four-sided stitch

Back stitch and blackwork

Two rows of back stitch to form the edging.

The pulled areas were worked in pale grey DMC Cotton P rle No.12

Working with textures stitches

Taking a few simple stitches and using them in different ways can lead to some interesting results. Whether the pattern is a simple line design or a more complicated design, the approach is still the same. I have been working on two designs for a day school in textured stitching.

One is based on a simple mandala design. A mandala is an abstract design that is usually circular in form. 'Mandala' is a Sanskrit word that means 'circle'. They usually have a centre point and worked out from the centre. They can be geometric or organic and are found in many countries. To work with textures stitched the mandala shape needs to be simple.

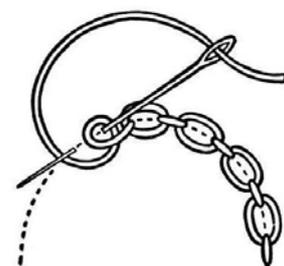


The embroidery is worked on cream calico in a selection of cream threads of different types and thicknesses ranging from DMC stranded floss to crochet threads and cotton P rle No's 5 and 8.

The stitches ranged from double knot stitch, fly stitch Mountmellik stitch to back stitch whipped and cable chain stitch. None of them are difficult to do, but if you are new to this type of stitching it is handy to have a 'doodle' cloth to try the different stitches out first.

Beads and metallic threads can be used to embellish the design further.

The mandala can be mounted in a round frame or it can be expanded further



Cable chain stitch

Cable chain stitch is a pretty stitch to work and can be embellished with beads or metallic stitches.



To expand the design further:

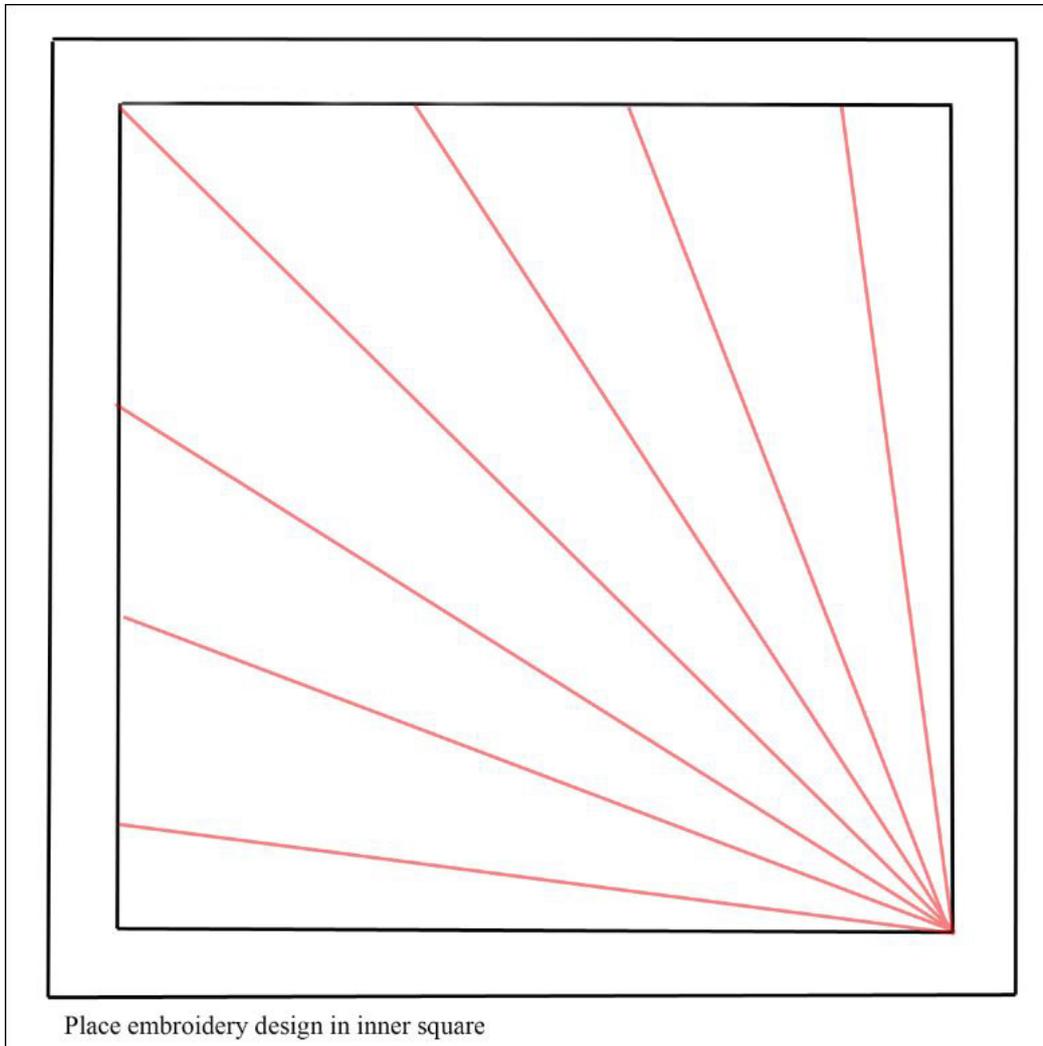
I drew some lines on a piece of Laura Ashley cotton and worked bands of the different textures stitches. I expanded, added and altered as I went, not planning, but just experimenting. Cream threads did not show up sufficiently on the pattern fabric so I introduced colour to make the impact.

Making up:

I cut a board 30cm x 30cm, glued a thin layer of wadding over the card and laced the embroidery over the card. I cut a plain piece of brown fabric for the backing, laced it over another piece of card and slip stitched the two pieces together. I then slip stitch the mandala design into position using a curved needle.

On reflection, I would have worked all the design on calico rather than using a patterned fabric and used all cream threads rather than adding colour, but I did enjoy playing with the different stitch combination.

Make your own textured stitch sampler:



Use the template below or draw a square the size you require. Select a variety of threads of different thicknesses.

Decide which stitches are to be used and start with the centre line. Work from the outside towards the centre.

About an inch from the centre where all the lines converge change to back stitch. Finish each line in turn. Place the embroidery face down on a soft towel and press lightly.

Experiment with colour, texture and stitches and consider whether you could use the different ideas on clothing or household linens.

Little changes make a big difference!

Extract from Itch to Stitch Quilt



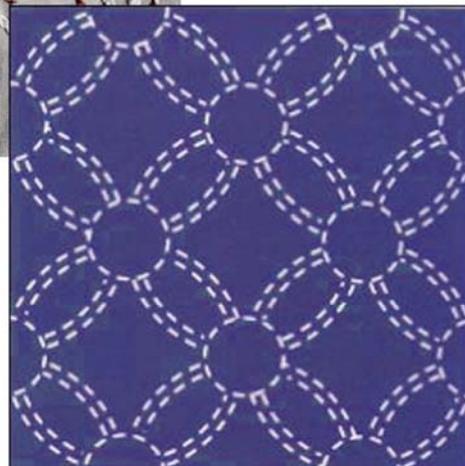
If you enjoy working the different stitches they can be added to clothing for a personal touch. This plain linen blouse was enhanced with a sashiko border drawn onto the fabric using a water soluble pen. The lines were then embroidered with three textured stitches and backstitch whipped in a different floss. This is both simple and effective. Thick fabric such as denim can be difficult to stitch through so choose your fabric wisely.

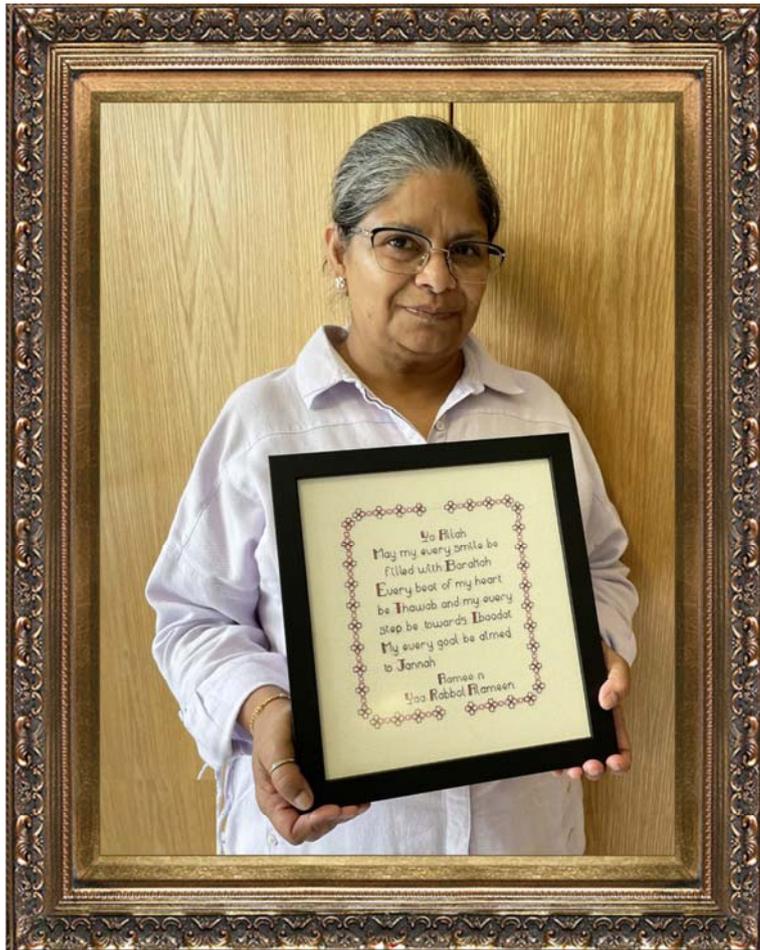


Textured stitching on a linen blouse.

The pattern is based on Maru shippo or circular seven treasures. It is not a difficult pattern to draw using a grid and two circular templates.

Stitches used:
Centre - double knot stitch
Circles - Chain stitch, back stitch whipped with coloured floss

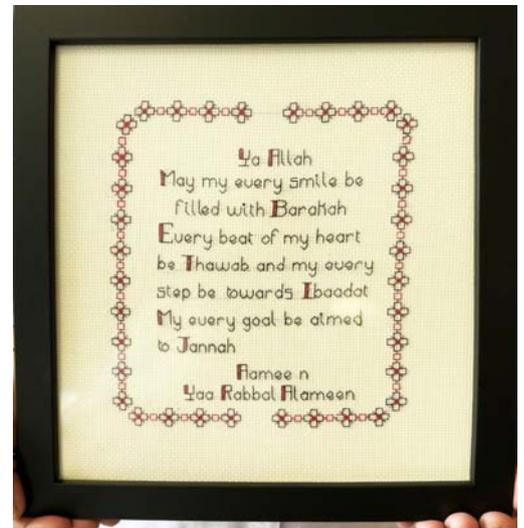




It's People that count!

Working with groups on a regular basis I get to meet the most amazing people and to share their stories, so when Shamin said she wanted to learn blackwork and embroider something special for her daughter I was very happy to help. Shamin wanted to stitch a prayer so I graphed out the design and showed her how to work the stitches. Once she has worked the lettering she added a very simple border to frame the letters.

This was her first piece of blackwork and she is really proud of her efforts!



Well done Shamin!



Daniela Gunz has taken EB0004 'Box of Delights' and worked out her own colour scheme in blue. However, rather than framing her work she has created a table centre with hemmed and mitred corners. Well done Daniela!



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

Happy stitching, *Liz*