



# *Blackwork Journey Blog*

July 2023



*Star of the month!*



### Summer in Lancashire, England

There are benefits in travelling round the UK teaching groups and giving talks, not least the countryside and the wildlife. Whilst sitting in the car waiting for a hall to be opened for a workshop, a tiny rabbit sat on the stone wall immediately in front of the car totally ignoring its occupant!

*An added bonus to a very successful workshop and a potential subject for embroidery?*

### *Motivation*

*- the driving force behind our actions*

Over the last few months I have been considering what motivates me and drives me to design and stitch and also to look at what more I could do to inspire and motivate the many people I work with. Motivation comes from the Latin word “movere” meaning “to move”. It is the driving force within a person to

achieve a goal, to fulfil needs or expectation.

This applies as much to learning a craft skill as it does to academic studies. Most students are highly motivated and whilst they may have never tackled a subject or developed certain skills, they enjoy the challenge and quickly gain confidence as they progress. However, others may find it more difficult and will need to be guided through a learning process at each stage, but once they have mastered these, their level of satisfaction and motivation increases tremendously.

When exploring any new needlework skill it is essential to learn the basic techniques and about the fabrics and threads which can be used to achieve a successful result. It is always better to start with a small project. Try the stitches out, experiment with different threads and fabrics. Carefully read and follow the instructions. Ask for help if you need it. No question is too small or insignificant!

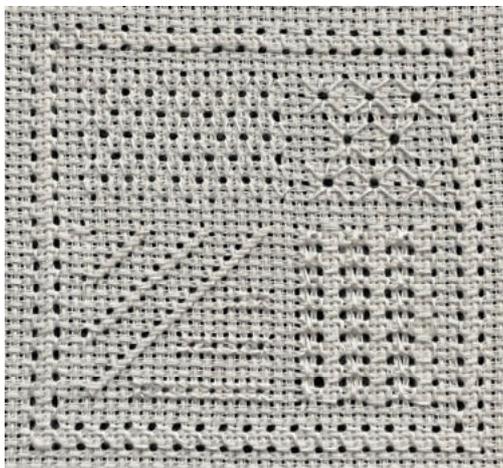
Success with a small design will help to develop confidence and motivate people to try a more advanced project, but the desire to achieve success has to be there. If the design does not interest the student she will have no interest in either working or finishing it and it will be placed a drawer full of unfinished projects which is not ideal.

I find it really satisfying when a student who has never worked a technique before produces their first piece and is thrilled with the result. It does not have to be perfect, but is a progression to the next stage. It is helpful when students come to workshops with an open mind. Often they are apprehensive, but gentle persuasion, lots of worked examples and time spent actually showing how a stitch works builds confidence and motivation to the point of saying “I can do that!”

By setting small targets rather than launching into a complicated project where the student could become discouraged, I am building a base where students can aspire to progress, can see a way forward and look at it with fresh eyes. They may not achieve a finished piece in the course of a day, but they should have enough information to go away and complete the project at home. When someone says that the technique is totally different than they expected it to be and that they have enjoyed it and want to learn more, then I know I have

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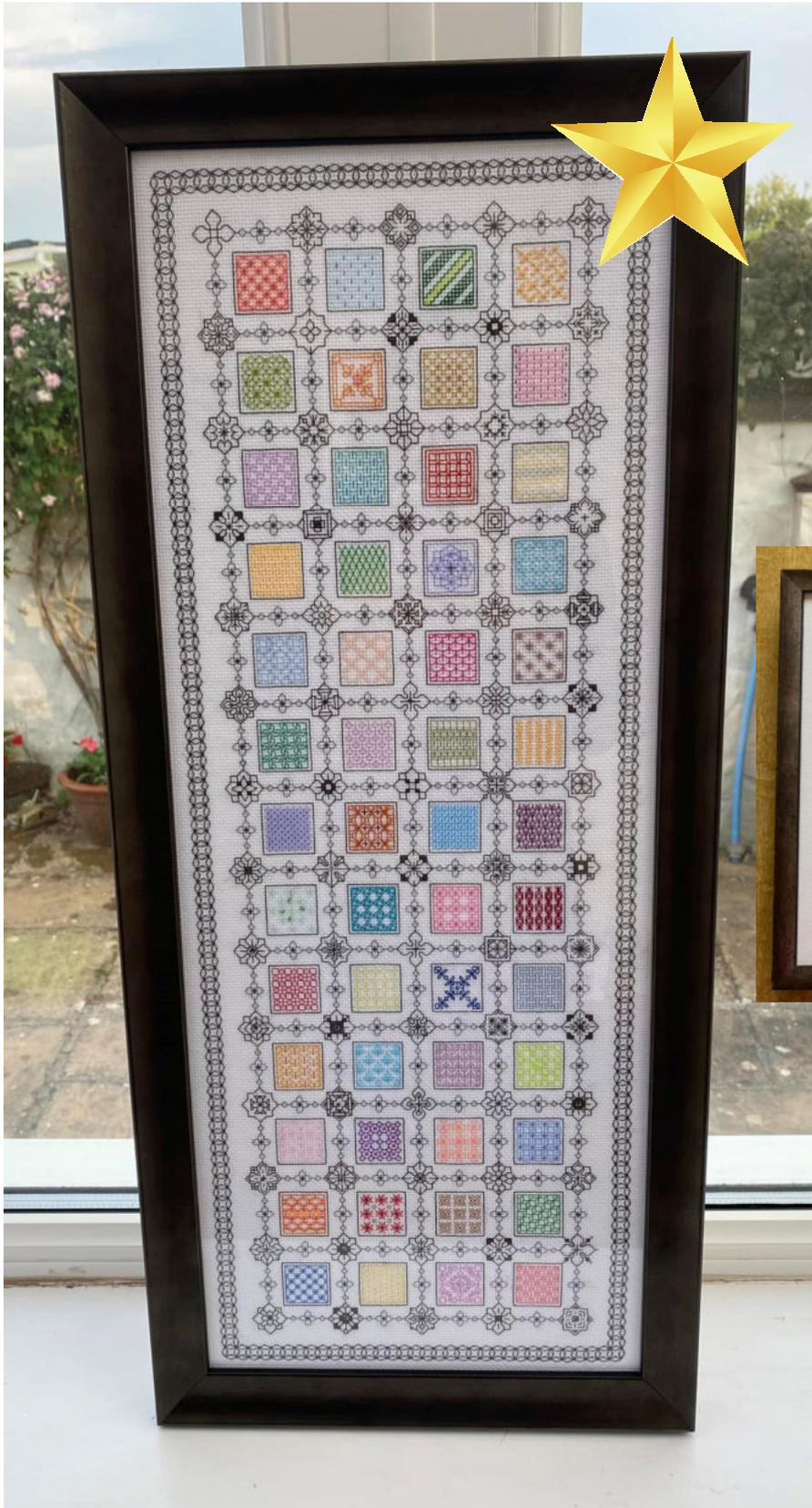
achieved what I have set out to do. After a workshop, I encourage students to send me photos of their finished work and there is always a point of contact if they need further help.



*Some of the ladies from  
Alsager Creative  
Stitchers*

Katherine experimented with a small square of pulled stitches worked on Aida fabric. Lyn added her own interpretation of a small blackwork design.





**Star of the month!**

Jackie Tardive created a beautiful version of EB0013 Tiny Treasures using her own choice of colours.

The dark frame enhances the embroidery. A real heirloom for the future!

Jackie is not new to Blackwork Journey designs. She worked EB0004 Box of Delights some time ago.



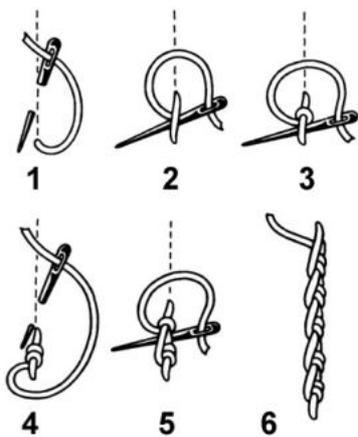
**New designs for July**

Summer is a time to sit quietly and stitch, but with a hectic teaching schedule this is not always possible and this year has been a juggling act, - designing for the website, preparing kits and teaching. However, it is a great time to try out new stitches and explore new techniques

**PR077 Lily White**

**Material:** Zweigart 28 count evenweave, white, 12 x 12 inches

**Note:** This design is not suitable for Aida.



Portuguese knotted stem stitch takes a little practice, but is perfect for outlines. On PR077 Lily White the edge of the flower is worked in this stitch. The textured stitch sits well on the fabric and is interesting to work.

**CH0435 Elizabethan Blackwork**

**Fabric:** Zweigart 28 count evenweave or 14 count Aida, 11 x 11 inches to fit a frame 10 x 10 inches

**Design area:** 7.57 x 7.57 inches

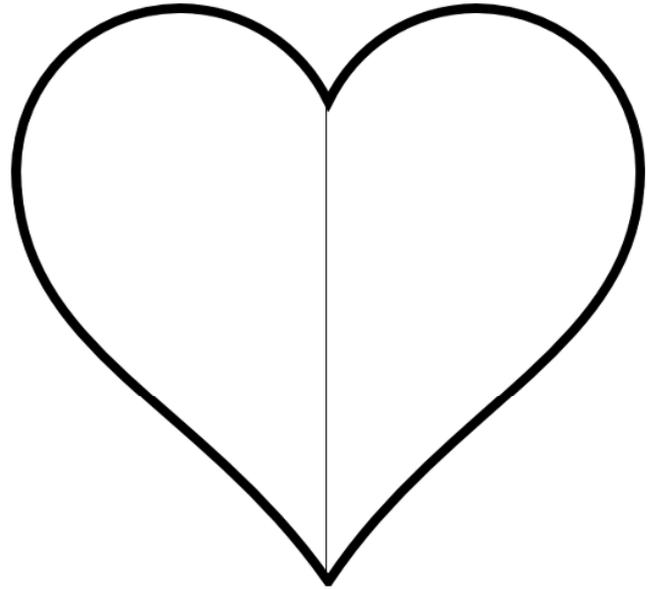
**Stitches:** 106 x 106



*After a number of requests I have printed the chart as a separate design from EB0025 Jane Seymour which is a detailed e-book containing a number of different projects.*



Experimenting with stitches



Heart outline

**Recycle your old cd or dvd discs** - Pulled work heart mounted over two cds.

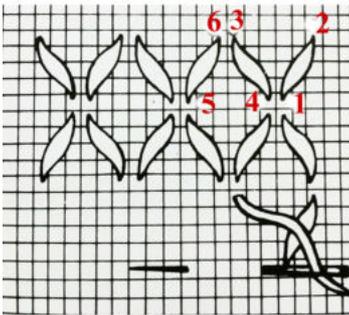
**Fabric:** Square of 14 count evenweave or Aida, 9 x 9 inches. **Back:** Cotton fabric. Wadding glued to both discs before mounting. Designed and stitched in an afternoon! **Cost:** Felt sunflower 30p

**Fill with stitches of your choice. Pulled stitches used:** window filling and cobbler stitch. However, there are many blackwork patterns in Freebies on the Blackwork Journey website which can also be used.

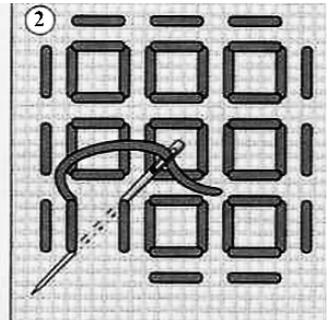
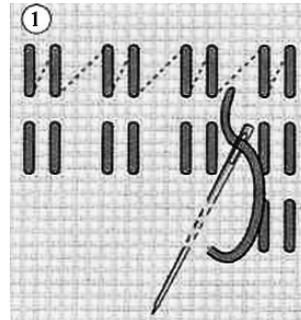
**Threads:** DMC stranded floss

**Outline:** Double knot stitch (4 strands) interwoven with orange (4 strands)

Tapestry needle No.24 Small embroidery ring.

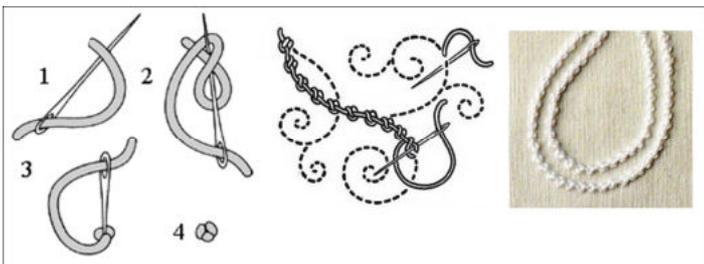


Window filling



Cobbler stitch over 4 threads

Wave stitch



Double knot stitch

Adding just a few new stitches to your stitch dictionary opens up new ideas.



The elephant was traced onto calico using a water-soluble pen and stitched with a wide range of textured stitches in different thicknesses. Beads and gold metallic floss was added for texture and sparkle.

*A special memory of Southern India was seeing a mother and baby elephant emerging out of the jungle.*



**How many stitches can you identify?**

In contrast, a piece being worked at the moment for a practical stitch workshop on white cotton using random colours, threads of different thickness and many textured stitches.

Consult The RSN Stitch Bank which aims to digitally conserve and preserve every stitch in the world, becoming the biggest repository of stitch in the world. It was launched with the first 150 stitches to kick off celebrations for the 150th anniversary and have continued to add stitches. There are now a total of 300 stitches, with more coming later in the year!

[RSN Stitch Bank - Royal School of Needlework \(royal-needlework.org.uk\)](http://royal-needlework.org.uk)

Experiment with stitches over the coming months whether is a slow stitching project or a more complicated design. Choose threads that you enjoy using and have fun creating your own designs. I am always here to help if you need advice.

If you have queries please contact:  
[lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk](mailto:lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk)

Happy stitching,

*Liz*