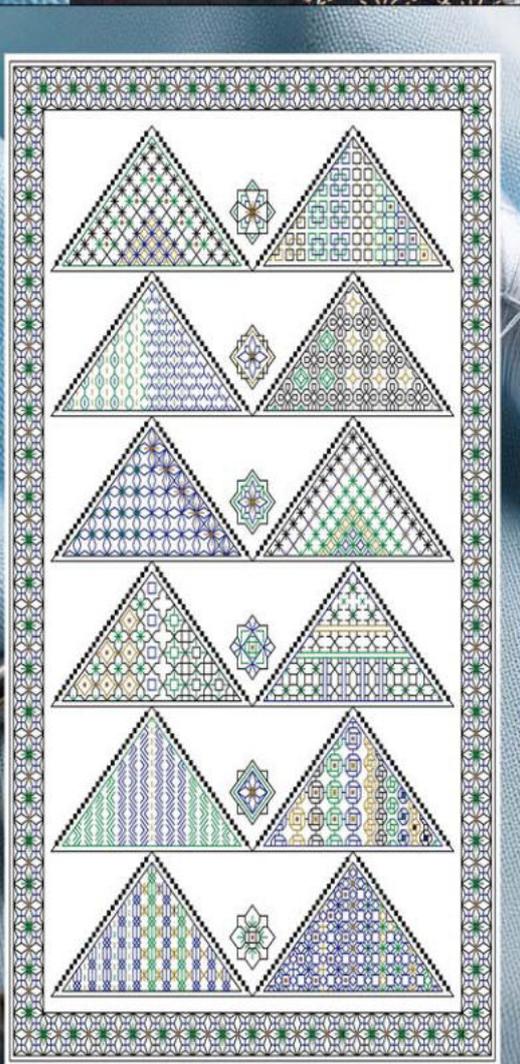


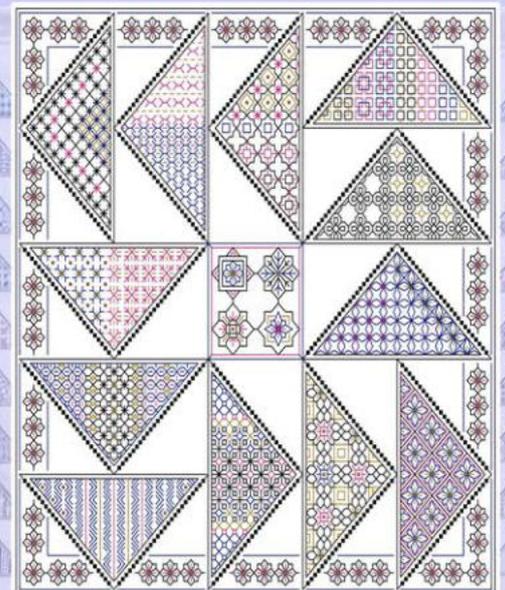


# *Blackwork Journey Blog*

August 2024



## Flying Geese Part 6



based on  
EB0029 Triangle Trail

# KEEP CALM and ?



## **Summer months and lazy days**

August is the one month of the year when I can relax, catch up on my reading and think about new designs for the coming months. The two free projects for the 'Box of Delights' Facebook group have been completed and Part 6, the conclusion of the 'Flying Geese' project has been added to Freebies on the Blackwork Journey website. Many members are working both designs and posting pictures on the Facebook groups for everyone to enjoy.

I also need to think about my forthcoming talks and workshops, buy the fabrics, print the charts and pack the kits. Some of the groups I will be meeting for the first time, but many of the groups are old friends who I meet on an annual basis. There is something very satisfying about a row of boxes all containing finished packs ready for distribution though my worst nightmare is going to a workshop only to find I have picked up the wrong box! I check and double check before I drive off and always take spare fabric, threads and needles. The days of saying to students "Go to the local shop and purchase..." are long gone and it is essential to take all the basics for the day. Shopping via the internet is not as satisfying as going into a shop feeling the fabric and choosing the threads.

I also use the summer months to prepare samples and experiment with different techniques, fabrics and threads. With a number of 'Embroidery into Quilting' day schools over the next few months it has been a good excuse to use some of the fabric I purchased in Hawaii to make a small sampler quilt with many different textured stitches, sashiko and plenty of hand stitching. It has been an exercise in slow stitching and mindfulness which I think, we all need to practice in an increasingly hectic world.

## **'S' is for slow stitching.**

### **So how do I slow stitch and will it help me to relax?**

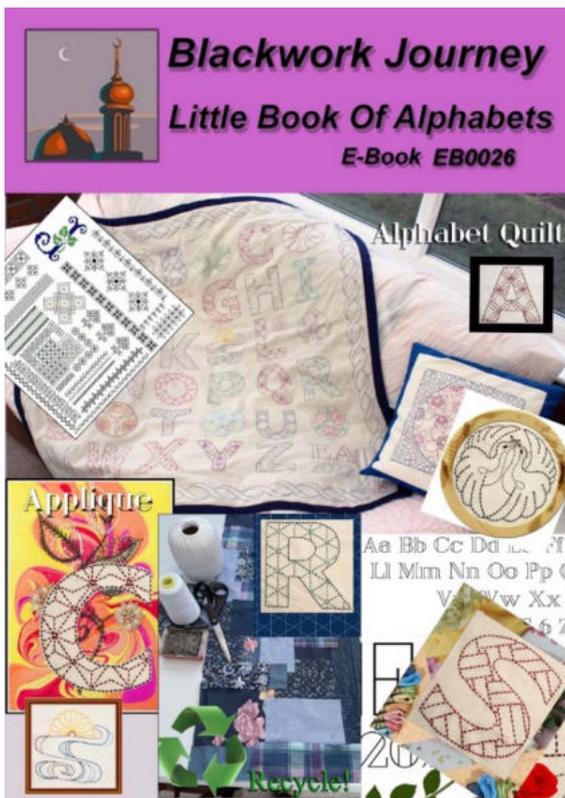
First, create a personal space to relax and stitch! The last few years have been very painful for everyone. Difficult circumstances, not seeing family and friends has been distressing and lonely for many, which is why it is so important that you take the time to look after your own physical and mental wellbeing. Try to create a quiet corner somewhere where you can be comfortable. A good light, cosy blanket or throw, coffee and music or an audio book, then just relax and enjoy stitching!

I find that stitching by hand helps me focus. I use the time to think about the day, plan my next projects and just wind down. The pressures drain away and I sleep better at night! This is my time and my space even if it is only 30 minutes or so.



There are many studies that show it helps to promote relaxation, relieve anxiety and in some cases reduce blood pressure. The terms ‘mindfulness and slow stitching’ have been used many times throughout the pandemic to encourage people to slow down, perhaps meditate and think about what they are doing rather than the demands of the world around us. There are courses on the internet that you can follow, but if you already stitch on a regular basis, you will be aware of the many benefits it can bring.

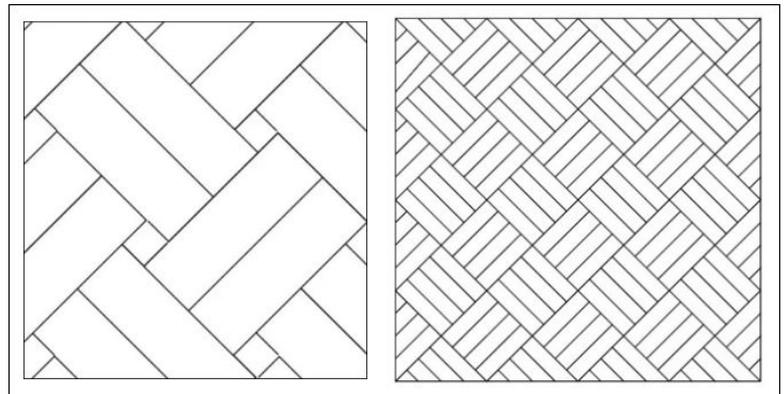
My stitching goes everywhere with me and when I can, I take it out and do a little bit more. Five minutes here and there and the piece grows very quickly. You don’t need to spend a lot of money on materials and equipment to create slow stitching projects and at the end of the process you will have something to enjoy or give as a gift and in the process, you will have helped your own wellbeing.



**EB0026 Little Book of Alphabets** is a sashiko alphabet quilt which consists of all the letters of the alphabet and a number of motifs traced directly onto the fabric. Some of the patterns are traditional Japanese designs and others that have been created especially for this project. The project is ‘in the style of’ rather than a completely traditional interpretation.

This makes a perfect ‘slow stitching’ project which can be used in many other ways. The only limit is your imagination!

The wickerwork pattern used for the letter ‘S’ is called Ajiro. Each rectangle is divided into two sections. There are many different variations, but they are all simple to draw and stitch.



I used the concept of mindful stitching to create a small quilt over the summer to use in workshops and to explore how textured embroidery and quilting could be combined. This was the result!



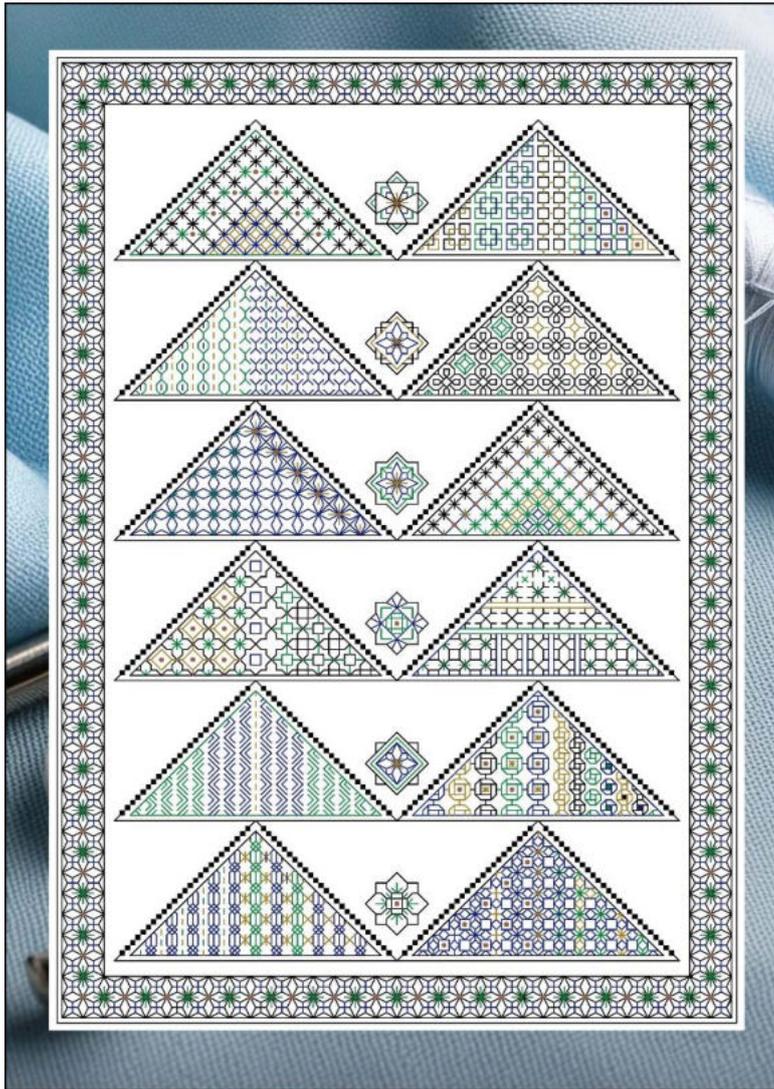
*Project for mindfulness created over the summer to explore textured stitches and embroidery into quilting.*



Stitches used:

Back stitch, Back stitch whipped, Cable chain stitch beaded, Colonial knots, Fly stitch, Lazy daisy stitch. Fly stitch whipped, Herringbone stitch, Mountmellick stitch, Reverse chain stitch, Reverse chain stitch whipped, Sashiko running stitch, Wheatear stitch and many more textured stitches across the quilt.

I enjoyed the stitching and didn't worry about whether it was perfect. The idea was to relax and enjoy the process!



### Charts and Freebies for August

Two new designs have been added this month. They have been developed from EB0029 Triangle Trail. This is a large project and I received a number of requests for smaller versions so readers could experiment.

#### CH0439 Blackwork Band Sampler.

For all the readers who are not on the Blackwork Journey Facebook groups I have assembled all the parts of the SAL together as one design.

**Design Area:** 9.25 x 13.25 inches.

**Stitches:** 130w x 186h

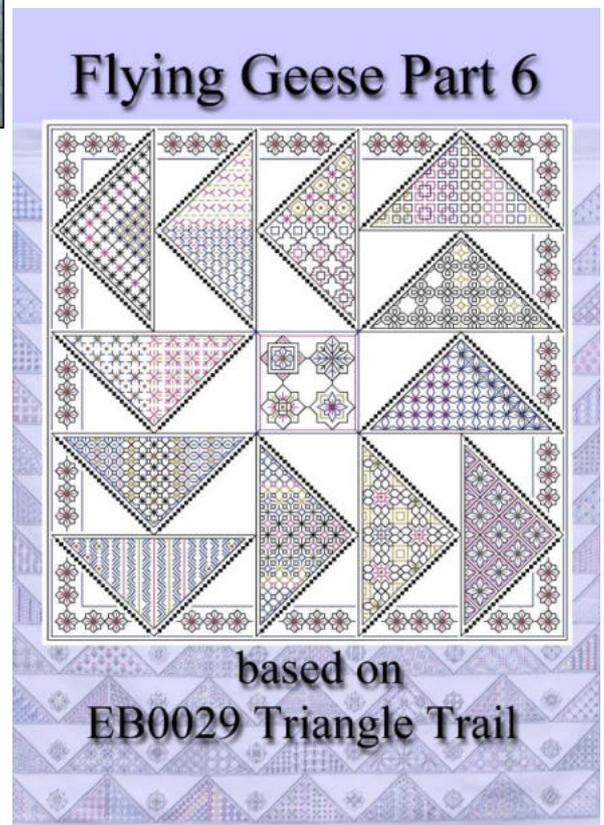
**Fabric:** Zweigart 28 count evenweave, or 14 count Aida. 18 x 22 inches

### FR0196 Flying Geese Part 6

The final part of the free project in Blackwork Journey has been added this month. I hope you have enjoyed working the design and exploring the beauty of blackwork.

Whether you work a small triangle, or the full piece embroidery it is all about building confidence. The more you do, the easier it becomes and the more your confidence will grow.

Always choose a fabric you can see to work on comfortably, a needle you can see to thread and a pattern and technique that you will enjoy. Mistakes are part of the learning process and we all make them however experienced! Learn from them and move on to the next piece. Don't be frightened to try something different there is whole world of embroidery to explore!



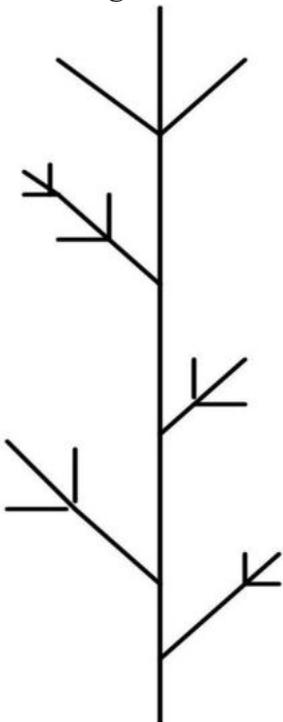


**New Magazine publication**

Just Cross Stitch '2024 Special Collector's Issue' 'Halloween' is in the shops now! It is always fun to work Halloween designs and owls are part of my life so what more appropriate than an owl design to celebrate October.



**Building borders in free style embroidery**

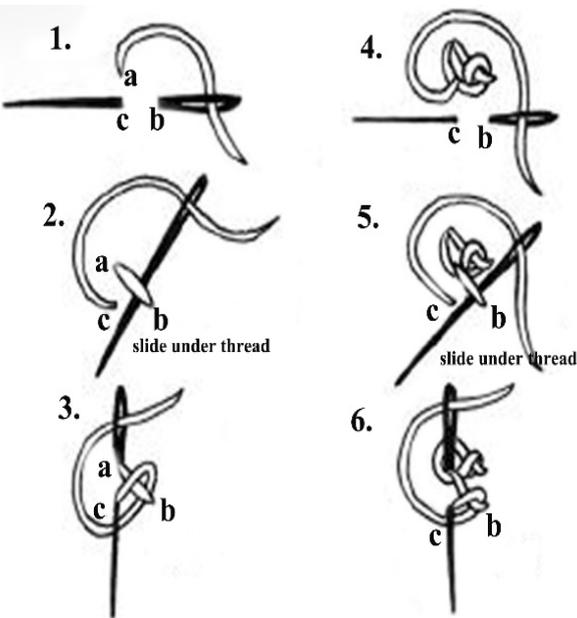


One of the most satisfying aspects of free style embroidery is that embroiderers create their own unique pieces. Building a border is a good example of how easy it is to do.

First, draw a straight line the length required and then add 'branches' and subdivide some of the branches into smaller ones. Select a medium weight thread, crochet cotton or floss and use simple stitches to build up the pattern.



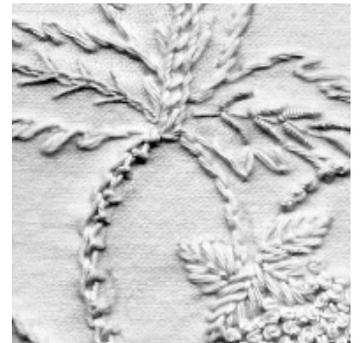
Lazy daisy stitch flowers and leaves can be embellished by adding a stitch within each petal in a different thread or colour or adding a bugle bead or metallic thread.



Straight stitches and colonial knots add texture and fill open spaces. Beads can also be added or used to replace knots.

The stem can be whipped with a thicker thread to add weight or a specialist stitch such as Mountmellick stitch can be used. This is an Irish textured whitework stitch which works well in free style embroidery. The thicker the thread the more effective the stitches will be.

*Mountmellick stitch used to create a stem.*



Learning a new stitch expands your library of stitches and opens up many opportunities, but all stitches need to be practised first before working on the man piece. Experiment with different threads and thicknesses to see how they sit on the fabric.

I hope you have enjoyed this month's Blog. If you have any queries, please contact: [lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk](mailto:lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk)

Happy stitching,

*Liz*