



Blackwork Journey Blog

February 2025



Band Sampler 1

Simple Stitches

**New for
2025!**

Keep calm
and stitch.

ABCDEFGHIJK
LMNOPQRSTU
VWXYZ

Blackwork
Journey
Blog



Winter sky - a wonderful colour palette for embroidery!

Looking back over January and looking forward to a new month

The Festival of Kumbh Mela, India

Blackwork Journey has members all over the world and this month Bhuvana, who now lives in Montreal, sent me some photographs of some of her relations preparing for the festival which is held every 12 years in Prayagraj as a source of inspiration for embroidery. They were so interesting that I thought I would share them with you.

Millions of people have taken a holy bath at the Hindu festival of Kumbh Mela (also known as Mahakumbh) - described as humanity's biggest gathering in northern India's Prayagraj city on Monday.

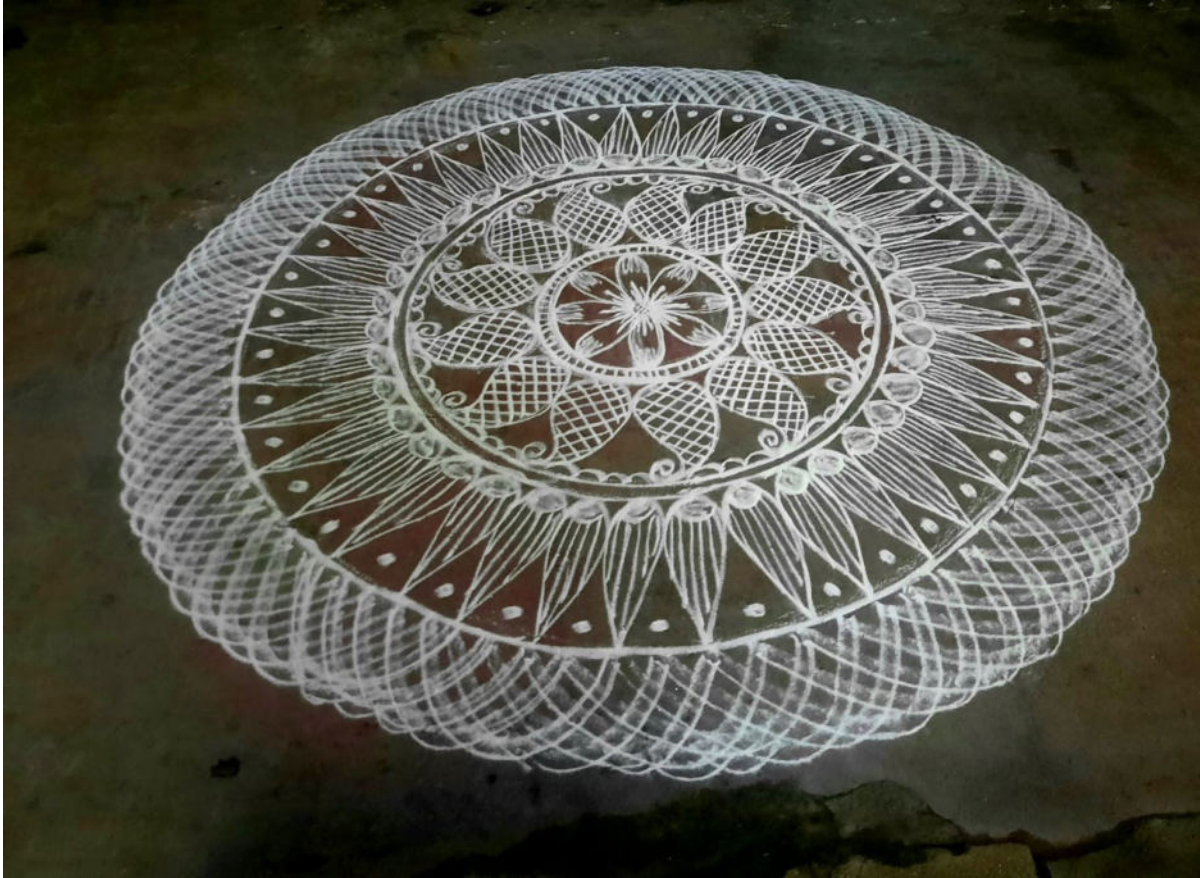
The event - held once every 12 years - starts on Monday and over the next six weeks, the devout will bathe at Sangam - the confluence of India's most sacred river Ganges with the river Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati. Hindus believe that taking a dip in the sacred river will cleanse them of sins, purify their soul and liberate them from the cycle of birth and death, as the ultimate goal of Hinduism is salvation.

About 400 million pilgrims are expected to attend the 45-day spectacle, which is so large it can be seen from space.

As part of the festival, a series of mandalas or kolam are often painted on temple and other floors using white flour.

Work in progress in Tamil Nadu.





This kolam has been created with rice flour on the floor in front of Bhuvana's home. She probably did it in about 30 minutes. However, as it was done in front of her home, it would probably have been walked over by pedestrians and destroyed by noon!

Bhuvana says the woman on the left of this picture is her cousin Uma Chandrasekar. She volunteers at the temple with her two friends. This would have been painted or filled in with colour powders.

Thank you for sharing your images Bhuvana and I hope you all enjoyed the festival!!

Want to learn more? This is a youtube link for creating kolam:

https://youtube.com/shorts/PbS_WLkUjDc?si=L6B1bsWR84MPdI_I



Exceptional embroidery by Sarita Gingell



Last year I gave a workshop on Elizabethan blackwork embroidery and as a result Sarita, one of the members, created a beautiful, embroidered book cover from one of the designs from **CH0435 Elizabethan Blackwork**.

Sarita has been studying book binding for some time and told me that she was thinking about creating a special box to contain the book. Last week she sent me some photographs of the finished box as shown below which are exquisite!

It takes imagination and skill to create such a beautiful project and I am sure that we all appreciate her outstanding efforts.

Thank you, Sarita, and well done!!

I look forward to working with you again later in 2025.





*Embroidery and book binding combined!
by Sarita!*



New ideas for February

CH0441 Kogin Plus

Design Area: 8.06 x 7.88 inches

Stitches: 129 x 126.

I always enjoy combining different embroidery techniques and this month I have a new design in 'Charts' that combines traditional Japanese Kogin and some textured embroidery stitches. I think they have worked well together and so I have included two small practice pieces. The design has been stitched on Zweigart 14 count Aida as a counted thread design.

If you are new to counted thread work the blocks are easy to count. The pattern is worked across the fabric in rows and the border is added after the Kogin pattern has been worked.

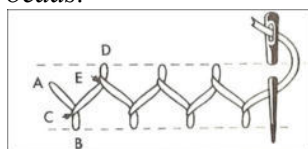
The two small practice pieces can be used for cards or gift tags, but I am going to incorporate them into a piece of Japanese Boro.



What is Japanese Boro?

Boro can be defined as the mindful Japanese art of mending textiles, while Sashiko is a form of sustainable embroidery to strengthen the fabric. Boro textiles are restored by overlapping and stitching spare or waste scraps of fabric together, essentially using a sashiko stitch, to reinforce the material.

Example of Japanese style boro using remnants of cotton embellished with sashiko running stitch, wheatear stitch, chevron stitch, colonial knots and beads.



Chevron stitch



Band Sampler 1



Simple Stitches



**‘Stitch Along ‘2025’
Create your own unique
stitch band sampler over 12
months!**

Before the introduction of printed designs and pattern books, embroiderers and lacemakers needed a way to record different designs and stitches. The answer was to create a band sampler – a reference piece featuring patterns and stitches developed or copied from others, to use again in new designs.

So, by following in the traditions of the past you can create your own band sampler!

There are two band samplers: Band Sampler 1 and ‘Simple Stitches’ which is easier to do. Each month you have the choice of which block to follow. New stitches will be introduced with many variations and by working the stitches, you can expand your knowledge, use diverse types and thicknesses of threads and experiment! The introduction to the project and information for Block 1 is included at the end of this Blog. Every month for 10 months a new block will be added. The border will be added in month 11 and the making up in month 12.

I hope you have enjoyed the Blog. If you have any queries, please contact me at: lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk

Happy stitching,

Liz

‘Stitch Along ‘2025

Create your own unique stitch band sampler over 12 months!

Before the introduction of printed designs and pattern books embroiderers and lacemakers needed a way to record different designs and stitches. The answer was to create a band sampler – a reference piece featuring patterns and stitches developed or copied from others, to use again in new designs.

So, follow in the traditions of the past and create your own band sampler! Every month a new colour from the colour wheel and new stitches will be introduced with numerous variations. By working the stitches you can expand your knowledge, use diverse types and thicknesses of threads and experiment!

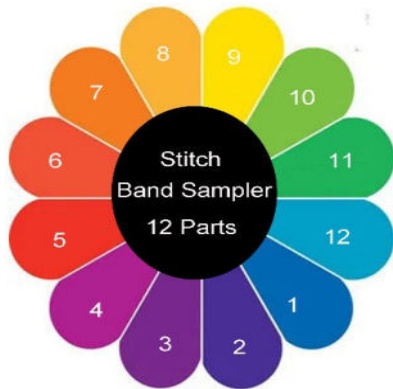
Fabric and threads:

Zweigart 14 count Aida, 8 x 24 inches, or Zweigart 28 count evenweave or Zweigart 25 count Lugana, 8 x 24 inches. The fabric includes the seam allowance for the sleeve and making up. The length of the band can be reduced if desired. Backing fabric: cotton, 9 x 24 inches.

Finished embroidered band: 5 x 20 inches plus border

Method:

Based on the colour wheel, eleven blocks will be added plus a border. Each block will contain three or more stitches worked in the colour of the month. You will receive a printed sheet via e-mail with the ‘Block of the Month.’ This contains a worked photograph of the stitches, stitch diagrams and explanations. **Please use the information in the diagrams and photographs when working the stitches.**



Explore your stash and find all the threads, colours, types and thicknesses that you would like to use. Try thicker threads - cotton P erle No's 5 and 8, crochet cotton, DMC stranded floss, variegated threads, and tapestry wool. The colours used in the chart are a guide to help you choose your colours.

Check that the threads are colourfast. Metallic threads, beads and embellishments can also be added. Use tacking cotton to define the

outline.

Equipment: Tapestry needle No.24 and tapestry needles with larger eyes for thicker threads. Beading needle or quilters 'between'. Small embroidery ring (optional). Tacking cotton to define outline.

Help will always be available if you need it from Liz Almond.

lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk

Stage 1 Preparing the fabric:

1. Zig zag or overlock the edges.
2. Fold the 8 x 24-inch fabric into half, lengthways. Work a vertical line of tacking the full length of the piece. 1.5 inches from the bottom edgework a horizontal line of tacking.
3. Count 36 blocks to the left of the centre line and work a vertical tacking line. Do the same 36 blocks to the right. There are 72 blocks across the width of the stitched band excluding the border. CP marks the centre point. Add the border after the stitch band has been stitched.
(See Diagram 1 Pattern Layout).

Simple Stitches Alternative simple patterns are included from Blocks 2a onwards.

Block 1a Simple Stitches is the same as Block 1. Follow the chart as printed.












Colour Guide.

The DMC colours can be used as a guide. Any colours of your choice can be used for this project but you need two/three shades of each colour – light, medium and dark to mix and match. Gold and silver metallic threads and Mill Hill beads are used.

The sampler is worked in two strands unless otherwise indicated.

The website: <https://yarnfree.com/> has a free printable DMC shade chart on their website which you can download.

It can also be found on the January2025 Blackwork Journey Blog www.blackworkjourney.co.uk

Legend:	DMC-798	ANC-147	DLE-	JPC-7022	delft blue - dk
	DMC-800	ANC-159	DLE-	JPC-7020	delft blue - pl
	DMC-718	ANC-89	DLE-	JPC-	plum
	DMC-603	ANC-52	DLE-	JPC-3153	cranberry
	DMC-909	ANC-230	DLE-	JPC-6228	emerald green - vy dk
	DMC-666	ANC-46	DLE-	JPC-3046	christmas red - br
	DMC-815	ANC-44	DLE-	JPC-3000	garnet - md
	DMC-606	ANC-333	DLE-	JPC-2334	burnt orange-red
	DMC-740	ANC-925	DLE-	JPC-2327	tangerine
	DMC-973	ANC-290	DLE-	JPC-2290	canary - br
	DMC-433	ANC-889	DLE-	JPC-	brown - md
	DMC-742	ANC-303	DLE-	JPC-2302	tangerine - lt

Call Outs:

	[2] DLE-E3852	Dark Gold	DMC Light Effects
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Backstitch Lines:

	DMC-820	royal blue - vy dk	DMC-603	cranberry	DMC-815	garnet - md
	DMC-798	delft blue - dk	DLE-E168	Silver	DMC-606	burnt orange-red
	DMC-800	delft blue - pl	DLE-E3852	Dark Gold	DMC-740	tangerine
	DMC-550	violet - vy dk	DMC-909	emerald green - vy dk	DMC-973	canary - br
	DMC-553	violet	DMC-320	pistachio green - md	DMC-433	brown - md
	DMC-718	plum	DMC-666	christmas red - br	DMC-742	tangerine - lt

French Knots:

	DMC-800	delft blue - pl		DMC-603	cranberry		DMC-433	brown - md
	DMC-718	plum		DMC-606	burnt orange-red			

Beads:

	MHG-557	Mill Hill Glass Beads-Gold		MHG-2022	Mill Hill Glass Beads-Silver
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Thread Colour Guide

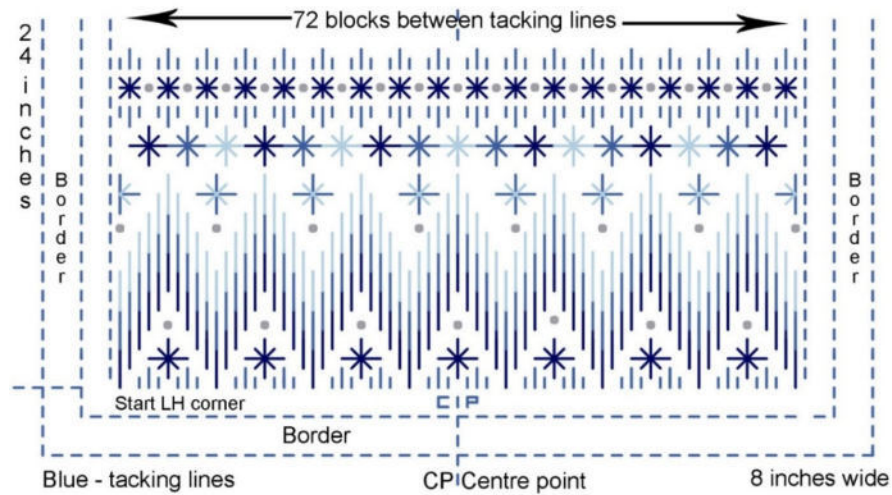


Diagram 1 Pattern Layout.

Block 1 and Block 1a. Threads: Three shades of blue thread. (DMC, Anchor, Pêrle No 8 or thread of choice).

Tapestry needle No.24, small embroidery ring or frame.

Row 1. Straight stitches (2 strands). Start from the Left-Hand corner and work across the fabric.

Row 2. Star stitches (2 strands)

Row 3. Florentine (6 strands) over 4 blocks. Grade the blues from dark to light.

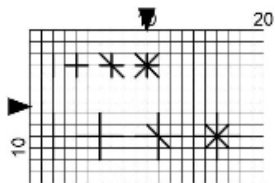
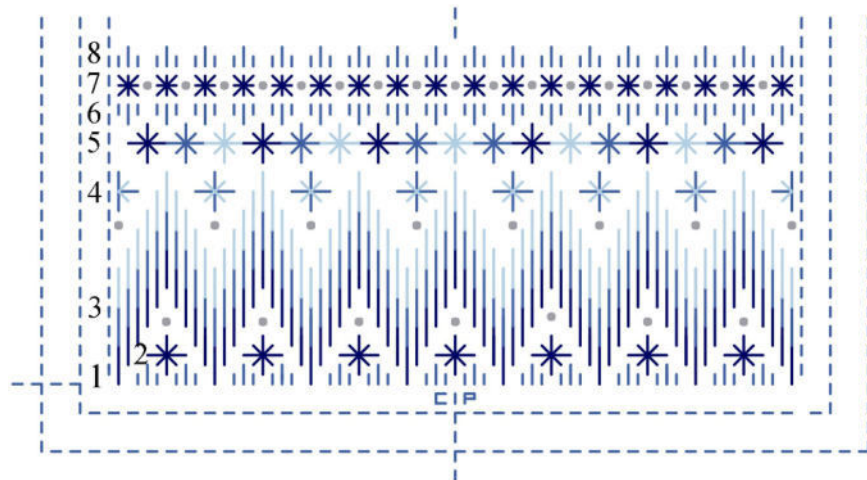
Rows 4 & 5. Star stitch variations

Row 6. Straight stitch (2 strands).

Row 7. Add the row of Leviathan stitch working the vertical cross first and then the diagonal stitches. Each top stitch lies in the same direction.

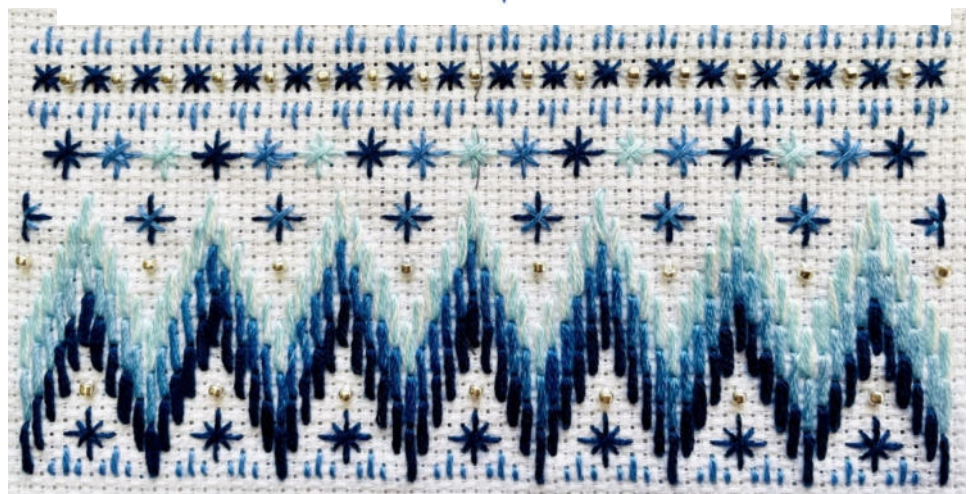
Row 8. Straight stitch (2 strands).

Add the silver beads (optional).

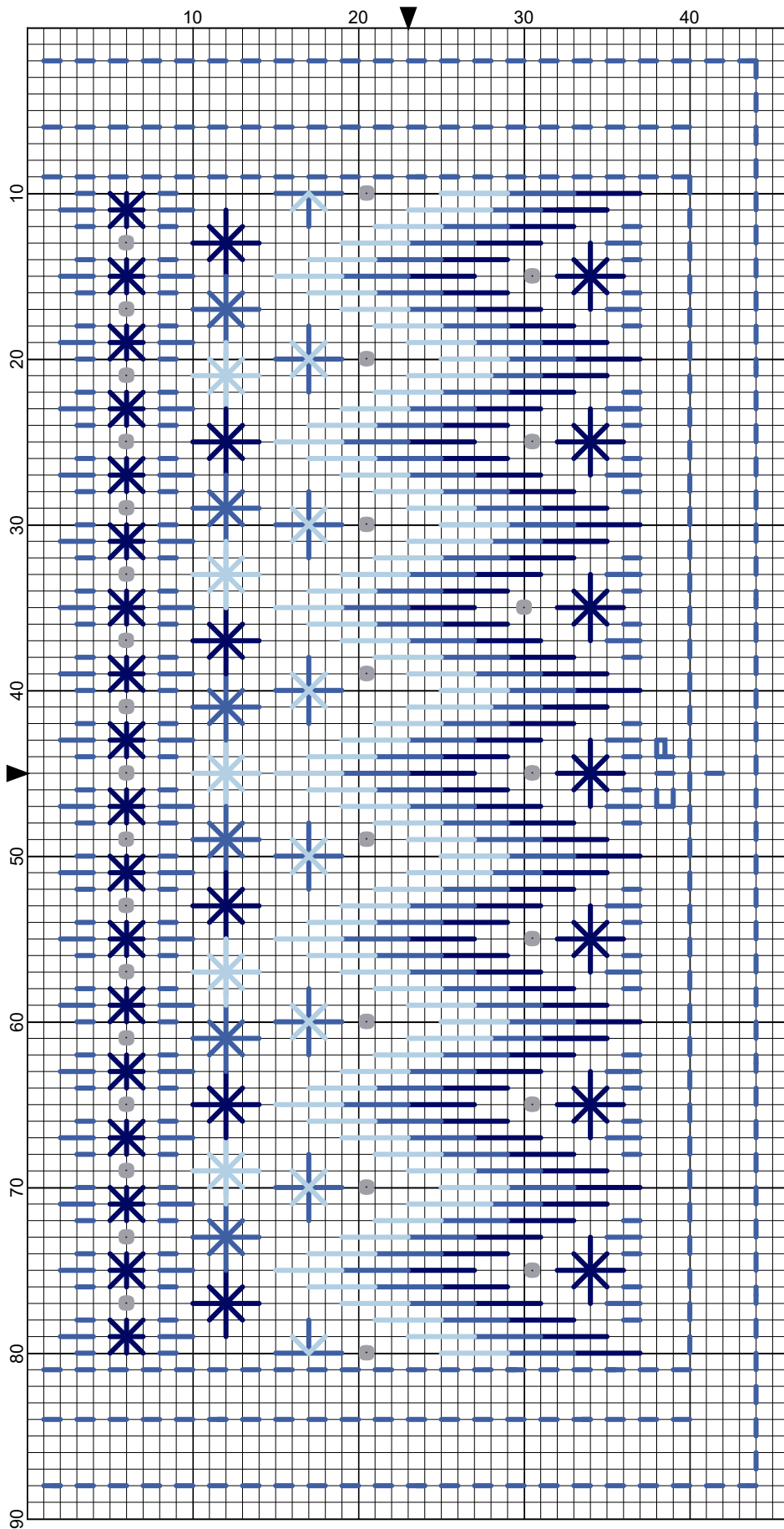


Leviathan stitch

Part 1 Numbered and embroidery



Block 1 & Block 1a



- Backstitches:
— DMC-820
— DMC-798
— DMC-800
- Beads:
● MHG-2022