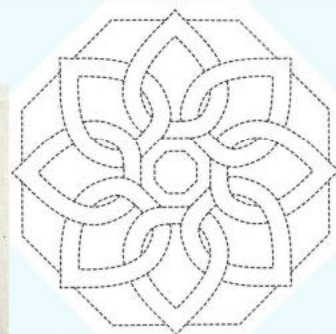




# *Blackwork* *Journey Blog*

March 2026



**One design  
two techniques!**





The month of February appears to have disappeared in a flash and as the days become longer there are welcoming signs that Spring is on its way.

Preparation for my talks and workshops over the Summer months are now well underway and it is also the time of year when I try to declutter my workshop. Deciding what to use and what to discard is not always easy as any keen craftsperson will know. However, there is an answer!

Recycle and reuse is a very popular trend nowadays and I have incorporated this approach in my teaching and website for many years. We all collect a significant “stash” over the years and we know that we will not use all that we have. However, it can often be difficult to decide what to do with it. Often the goods are too good to throw away so where can any surplus materials be recycled and reused?

Every area has charity stores that welcome donations, so one way of disposing of your surplus craft items is to donate them to one of these stores or possibly attend a car boot or similar sale!



I work as a volunteer in the Scrap Store for an international charity called Emmaus. They have over 300 communities worldwide with 29 in the UK. The charity offers a home, training and work opportunities to formerly homeless people in a residential community setting where people can live and take part in a variety of productive roles, sharing a life together, but retaining their own dignity and independence. At Emmaus, everyone is accepted for who they are now and not judged on what they might have been in the past.

For many people who have experienced homelessness, losing their self-esteem can be the most damaging part of their experience. Being on your own, with no support around you can be soul destroying, leaving you feeling worthless. Finding your way out of that situation is not easy, particularly when the only options available are temporary fixes, offering a bed for the night but little to occupy your days.

Emmaus is different because it provides a stable home in a supportive community, alongside meaningful work and opportunities which enables people to build a better future for themselves by providing them with the chance to take stock of their lives, deal with any issues they might have and move back into the outside world and often re-establish their relationship with loved ones.

## Blackwork Journey Blog, March 2026

Through a range of social enterprises Emmaus generates revenue that pays for the home, food and upkeep of the members of the community as well as providing them with a small weekly allowance. This is key to restoring their feeling of self-worth and showing that their actions make a real difference, both to their own life and the lives of others.

Emmaus is all about reusing or recycling items that people no longer want. They collect and receive a wide range of items including household furniture, equipment and clothing. Once received items are sorted, cleaned and refurbished before being sold in our shops. Not only does this prevent hundreds of tonnes going to landfill but provides our customers with affordable and sometimes unique items.

For myself, seeing what comes into the Scrap Store can be great fun and often surprising. You never know from one day to the next what will appear. For example, 200 rolls of furnishing fabric were recently donated as was quilting fabric from a local quilt shop, a stash of unused embroidery threads and surplus paper from a craft shop. Whether it is sewing, knitting, crochet, paper crafting, die-cutting or printing there is something for everyone!

Members of the local community regularly come into our store to hunt for materials or some advice on aspects of craft work, as do children's play group leaders and students from the local university. We also make items to sell ranging from hats, gloves and bags to draught excluders, all of which use items that would otherwise be sent to landfill.

Volunteers play an important role in charity work and welcome new members. I have found that new friendships and interests are made which benefits everyone involved.

### Using remnants

Last month I looked at using fabric and threads left over from other projects, but rather than throw them away I reused them. I have continued along this line with some more small projects which you might find useful.

### You will need:

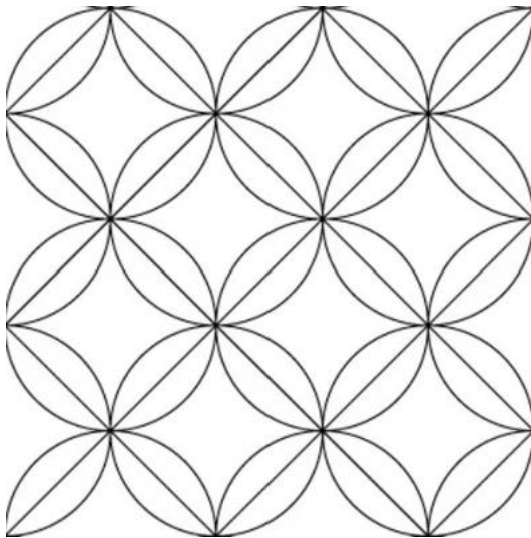
2 CDs, fabric for front and backing, cotton hexagons, squares, or circle shapes. Threads: cotton p erle No. 8, matt crochet cotton, or embroidery floss.



The edges of the hexagons can be left as raw edges or the edges can be slip stitched under to prevent them fraying. Iron-on interfacing could also be used.

### Method:

1. Stitch the shape to the centre of a square of fabric. Use a ruler to mark lines round the shapes or draw a simple sashiko line pattern onto the fabric. Keep the design simple.



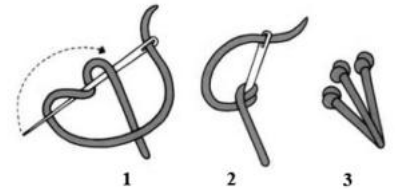
Learn to draw your own patterns. Most of the patterns are easy to create using a ruler and a circle.

*Shippō tsunagi (linked seven treasures).*

Make a one-inch grid and use a two-inch circle to mark the interlocking lines.

2. Use sashiko running stitch to work the pattern. Add flowers in pistil stitch (knots on stalks) to part of the pattern.

*Pistil stitch*



The back of the disc can be plain, embroidered or use patterned fabric.



3. To mount the embroidery. Glue some fine wadding to the CD. Cut the embroidery out one inch bigger than the CD. Using a strong thread work running stitch round the edges of the fabric and draw up over the CD and tie. Do this with both CDs and then slip stitch together.



*This pattern was used to back the ume plum blossom disc.*

### **Ume (plum blossom) embroidered disc.**

Trace the design onto pre-washed calico or medium weight cotton. Stitches: Back stitch whipped, sashiko running stitch and a needle turned applique circle.

**Needle turned applique** is a hand-sewing technique where fabric shapes are stitched onto a background by folding under the raw edges with a needle just before sewing, creating a seamless, invisible finish. It

requires using a matching thread, a sharp needle and slip stitch.

*Slip stitch*





Three hexagons of Japanese fabric were overlapped and stitched down using running stitch. A brass medallion was used to complete the design.

There are so many ways in which you can use this simple technique including on clothing in a jacket or blouse pocket.

## New designs for March

### PRO087 Interlocking Hearts

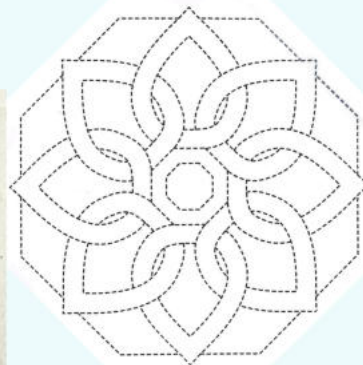
I wanted to create a new whitework design using interlocking hearts for Valentine's Day and for some whitework embroidery classes I am teaching later this month. The design was to be a stitch sampler using white threads and textured stitches to for in an 8-inch flexi frame.

Potentially there could be as many as 16 different whitework stitches, eight heavy stitches for the outside of the hearts and eight flatter stitches for the inside. A Stitch Dictionary is included so the student can choose stitches that appealed to them.

I then decided to resize the pattern as a Japanese style sashiko pattern for a calico bag and a cushion. Reduce the pattern and it could also be used on a jacket or blouse pattern.

Two pattern sizes are included, one for the whitework design and one for the sashiko pattern.

The chart can be found in 'Projects' on the Blackwork Journey website.



**One design  
two techniques!**





The second pattern for March is a continuation of the cross-stitch series for mindful stitching from 'Cross Stitch' on the website.

### CS0015 Kumiko

CS0015 Kumiko is based on the trellis sliding wooden shoji doors which are commonly found in traditional homes. It is a door, window or room divider used in traditional Japanese architecture, consisting of translucent (or transparent) sheets on a lattice frame.

This is a stylised variation of Kumiko worked in dark teal and green Cotton Perle No.8. on Zweigart 14 count Aida.

The border is a variation of a pattern called Urokozashi (fish scale stitch).

### Large Pattern

Design Area: 9.36 x 9.36 inches.  
Stitches: 131 x 131

### Mini Sampler

Design Area: 5.50 x 5.07 inches.  
Stitches: 77 x 71

### 'Stitch Along' 2025



All parts of the project can be found on the Blackwork Journey Facebook group or at the back of the Blog starting in February 2025 if you wish to take part.

Many readers including my own Bolton Stitch and Textile Group have made good progress on this twelve month project and the photographs of work in progress are coming in all the time from round the world which is very satisfying to see.



When I recently went to teach Rochdale “Social Stitchers” four of the members brought their excellent work in progress to show me and as the designer it was really encouraging to see the work and hear their comments.

*Thank you very much ladies, for another satisfying workshop and the cake!*

### **An unusual way of working a Blackwork Journey design!**

Elisabeth has worked her design and mounted it as a box top which is a really clever idea and beautifully stitched. Thank you, Elisabeth, for sharing your idea.

The pattern is PR0077 White Lily which combines blackwork and pulled thread work together from 'Projects' on the Blackwork Journey website.



### *Elisabeth's Box*

I hope you have enjoyed this month's Blog.

If you have any queries, please e-mail me at: [lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk](mailto:lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk)

Happy stitching,

*Liz*