



Blackwork Journey Blog

April 2026



Stitch Along 2025

I am starting to receive photographs from around the world of the twelve-part 'Stitch Along 2025' project and whilst many of you are still working on your projects it is really encouraging to see the work that has been completed and the thought and variety that has gone into them. Many members of my own 'Bolton Stitch and Textile Group' and other local groups have also participated and brought their work along to our last meeting to show everyone.





Anna's embroidery is framed and on the wall!

Janet has personalised her design by adding a verse from Ezra Pound.



The English word 'sampler' derives from the Latin 'exemplum' or the old French term 'essamplaire', meaning 'an example'. Before the introduction of printed designs, embroiderers and lacemakers needed a way to record and reference different designs, stitches and effects. The answer was to create a sampler – a personal reference work featuring patterns and elements that the

owner may have learned from others to recreate in new pieces.

The thinking behind 'Stitch Along 2025' was to follow in the path of the earlier embroiderers, not only to learn new stitches, but to explore new ideas and create something that is personal to you and to explore the different ways in which your projects can be used.



Two beautiful table runners!

The Victoria and Albert Museum in London has an interesting article: 'Embroidery – the history of samplers'.

<https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/embroidery-a-history-of-needlework-samplers>

I would like to thank all the readers who have participated and shared their work with me. As a designer and embroiderer, it is heartening to see so many people taking part and enjoying the process and I look forward to seeing many more photographs in the coming months. Thank you so much!

New design for April

CS0016 Mindful Stitching Design 5 and Mini Sampler

The pattern for April is a continuation of the cross-stitch series for mindful stitching from 'Cross Stitch' on the website and just for interest I asked AI what the definition of mindful stitching was?

The results were interesting and having taught embroidery and design for over fifty years I generally agreed with the conclusions.

"Mindful stitching, or slow stitching, is the intentional, meditative practice of hand-sewing, focusing on the rhythmic process rather than the final product. It uses repetitive motions - often simple running stitches - to reduce stress, lower heart rate and encourage a 'flow' state, making it a tactile form of mindfulness for calming the mind."

In a hectic and unsettled world, I feel mindful stitching is even more essential today!

Key Aspects of Mindful Stitching.

Process Over Perfection: There is no 'wrong' way to stitch; it focuses on enjoying the sensory experience (texture of fabric, colour of thread) rather than creating a flawless piece.

Slow Movement: It encourages unhurried, deliberate movements as a counter to fast and busy lifestyles.

Simple Techniques: It typically involves basic hand stitches (like Sashiko or running stitches) and does not require complex patterns.

Accessible Creativity: Anyone can do it; it often involves repurposing fabric scraps or mending clothing. Japanese Boro, Indian Kawandi and Kantha stitching. Recycle - Reuse and Make do and Mend are just a few examples!

Benefits and Purpose.

Stress Reduction: The tactile, repetitive nature of stitching lowers blood pressure and anxiety.

Mental Clarity: It functions as a moving meditation, allowing the mind to rest, focus, or process emotions.

Connection to Self: It provides a creative outlet to 'play' often encouraging people to disconnect from technology.



How to Start.

1. **Gather Materials:** Collect your fabric scraps, needle and embroidery thread.
2. **Focus on the Sensation:** Pay attention to the feeling of the needle passing through the fabric.
3. **Embrace Imperfection:** Let go of expectations and enjoy the creative freedom.
4. **Breathe:** Align your stitches with your breathing to enhance the meditative effect

CS0016 Mindful Stitching Design 5

This is a stylised Japanese design worked in orange and brown 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

The cross stitch mindful stitching patterns can be found in the cross-stitch section on the Blackwork Journey website.

Take your time to stitch and enjoy every step!

Easter project - Candlewicking for today!



Adding new stitches to your stitch library and experimenting with different threads can widen the scope of your embroidery. Be prepared to explore new ideas and incorporate them in your own designs.

Hearts and Flowers

Practise your Colonial knots first!



This simple design is mounted on two old CDs. The front of the disc is four hearts worked in six strands of floss or matt crochet cotton using colonial knots, lazy daisy stitch and guipure lace flowers.

The back of the disc is covered in patterned cotton and finished with a double Suffolk puff. The pattern sheet can be found at the end of this PDF.

Making a Suffolk puff

Decide what size the puff is to be. I suggest a 4-inch circle for the larger puff and a 3-inch circle for the smaller puff. If a button, decorative knots, beads or sequins are going to fill the centre, it is not necessary to turn a narrow hem.

Place the fabric circle right side down on a flat surface. Fold a hem 1/4" (5mm) and using a strong thread work a running stitch around the outside of the circle. Leave the knot on the outside of the circle so that that the two ends can be drawn up tightly and tied off.

I hope you have enjoyed this month's Blog. If you have any queries, please e-mail me at:

lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk

Happy stitching,

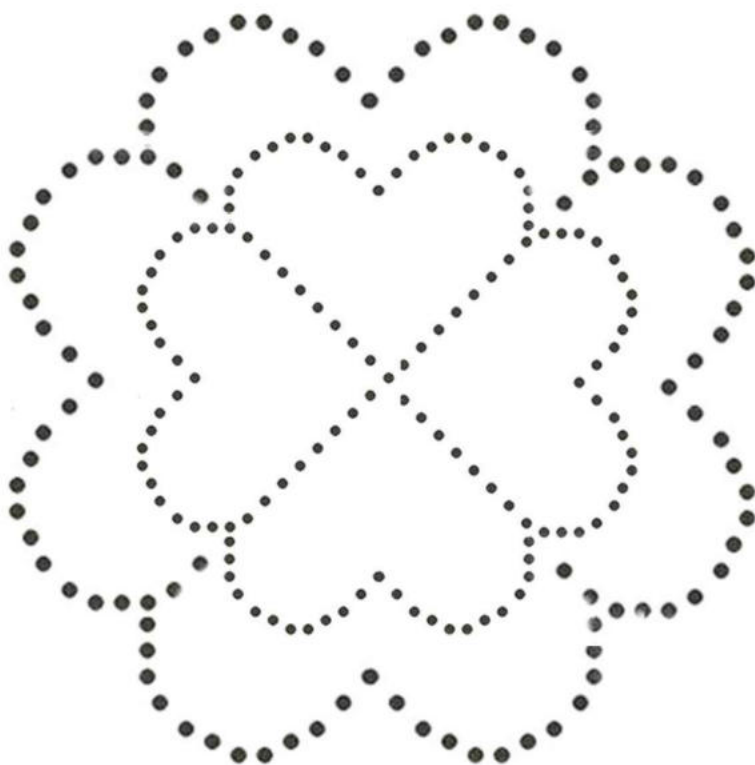
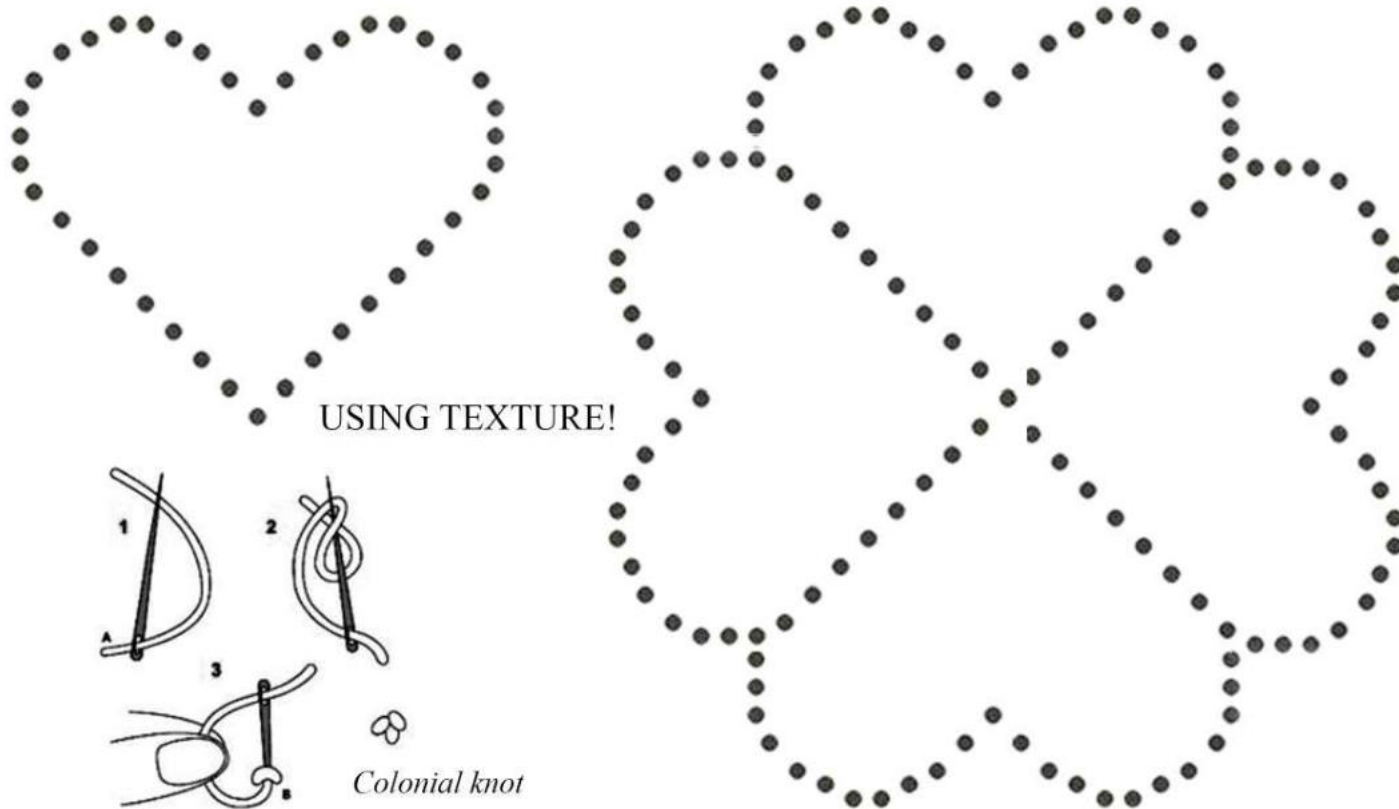
Liz



Using Texture in Embroidery - Candlewicking for today! Quilting, Calico gardens and whitework.

Candlewicking is a traditional form of whitework embroidery that creates a raised, textured effect, usually by stitching colonial knots and stem stitches with thick, soft white cotton thread onto white muslin. Originating in the 18th century American colonies, it uses thick unbleached cotton threads – originally used for candle wicks, to create simple, durable geometric or floral designs on pillows and bedspreads.

Take a straightforward design, one heart or more!



Fabric: Cotton twill, medium weight cotton, pre-washed calico, 9 x 9 inches

Threads: white or cream. Soft cotton, cotton *pérle*, DMC floss, matt crochet cotton, Coton Á Broder or any threads from your stash, Crewel needle – big eye, sharp point. Small embroidery ring.

Method: Mark each knot with a dot. 1 dot = 1 knot or bead. Once the knots have been stitched use it as a base for other designs – flower sprays, applique, Suffolk puffs etc.

PR0074
Perception

Double heart
Outside – knots
Inside – beads



Suffolk puff – double

