



Blackwork Journey Blog

June 2026



**Mindful stitching!
Stitch in a garden.**

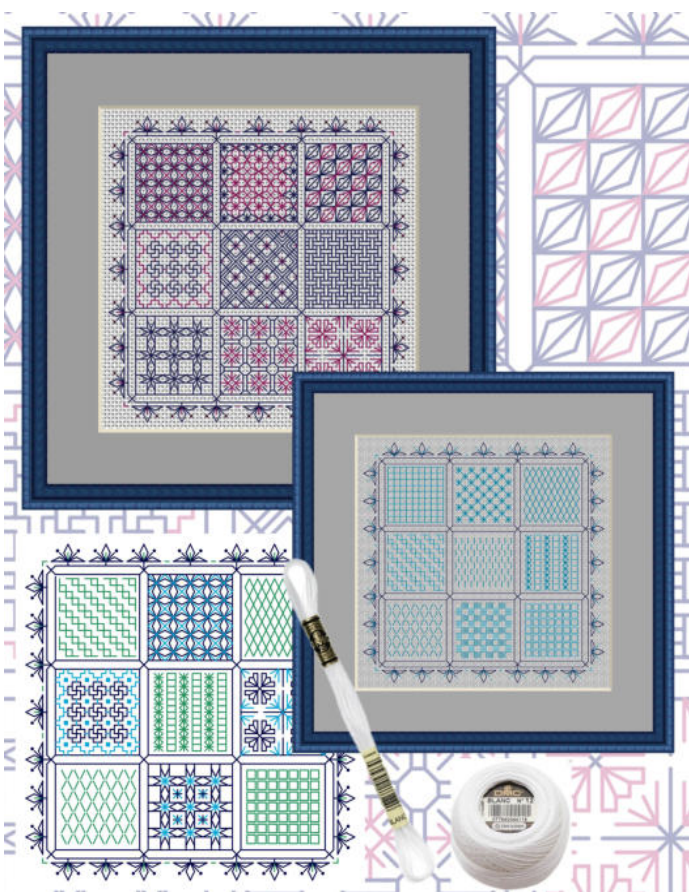
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Welcome to the June Blog. This month I have been reconsidering my preconceptions and taking a fresh look at how I work!

A “preconception” is a preconceived idea, opinion, or bias that you form before having the facts or personal experience of a situation. It is essentially an assumption made beforehand!

We all have certain expectations and how we propose to achieve those objectives, but life has a habit of intervening and often sends us off in different directions learning as we go. This has been brought home to me very forcefully over the past twelve months when I have needed to reassess the way I work and accept new challenges and which is not always an easy thing to do.

I have embroidered and taught all my adult life with all ages and abilities from children to adult classes in community education and embroidery groups in the UK and worldwide. I have enjoyed all the challenges this has presented me with as I have often found it necessary to adapt and work outside my comfort zone as demands change with more advanced technology and the apparent joys of AI.



PR0088 Choices

1. Look at the chart you are proposing to use.

Is it big enough to see clearly? Many modern charts are small and overcoloured with tiny symbols which are difficult even for a person with good eyesight to read.

If the chart is too small to read comfortably have it enlarged. Line designs such as blackwork may be easier to read than complicated cross stitch charts. If you cannot read the chart you obviously cannot stitch it!

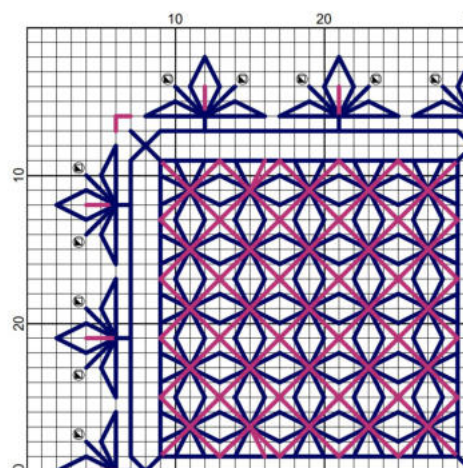
However, serious eyesight problems and a recent heart operation and pacemaker have forced me to take time out to recuperate, slow down and reconsider how I work.

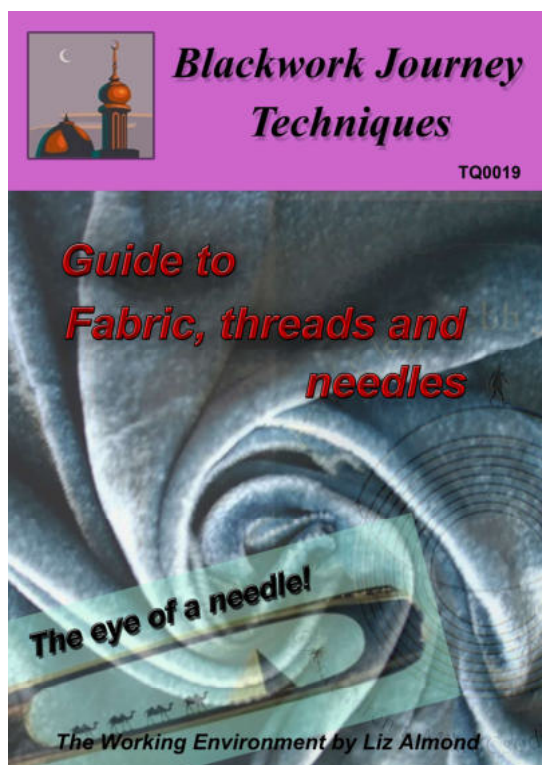
Some of my thoughts might help readers in a similar position.

Embroidering with eyesight problems is possible but may require a different approach. In my new design for June PR0088 “Choices” I stitched three different variations of one design. These were: a simple blackwork design on Zweigart 14 count Aida, a combination design of pulled threadwork and blackwork embroidery worked in Zweigart 28 count evenweave and a pulled threadwork design, again worked on 28 count evenweave.

However, if you have eyesight problems this type of stitching may present problems, so I offer the following thoughts on possible ways to overcome them.

Design 1 Blackwork





2. Choice of fabric.

This will determine how successful your embroidery will be, or will it lead to frustration and another unfinished project?

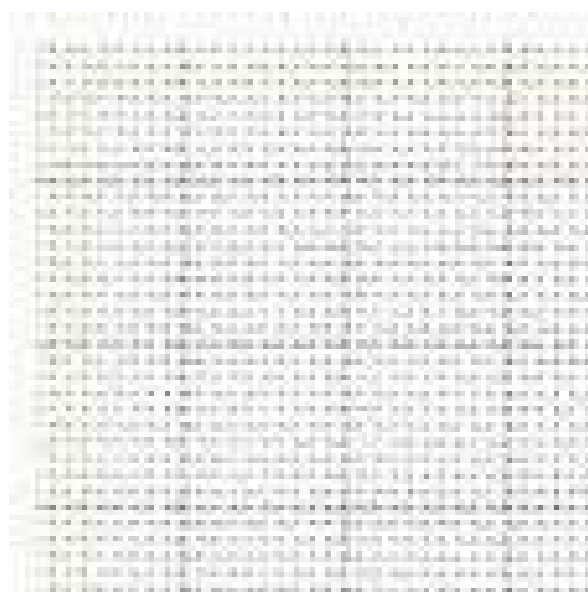
If the design can be worked on Aida blockweave this may be easier to count than an evenweave fabric. It comes in different sizes from 6 count Binca to a fine 16 count Aida or 22 count Hardanger. The smaller the count (blocks to the inch), the more difficult it may be to work with. Always buy good quality fabrics rather than cheap alternatives. You get what you pay for!

TQ0019 “Guide to Fabric, threads and needles”

In my “Techniques” section on my Blackwork Journey website is a pdf about different fabrics and their properties. This will help you choose a fabric you can see to work on comfortably.

TQ0019 Guide to Fabric, threads and needles

There are also fabrics which are grided to enable easier counting. These may be worth considering if you do want to do a complicated design.



*14 Count Antique White Zweigart Easy Count Aida Fabric
Two colours of cotton P rle on 14 count Aida. Whilst it is not as delicate as working on 28 count evenweave it is easy to count!*

3. Select the threads with care.

Thicker threads such as DMC 12 Cotton P rle No 12 can be used on Zweigart 14 count Aida. Limit the range of colours that you use and make sure that they show up clearly on the fabric.

To prove this works I stitched the blackwork chart from PR0088 “Choices” on Zweigart 14 count cream Aida. The holes are well defined and easy to see. White fabric can be difficult to work with because of the brightness. Substitute Antique white or cream for easier stitching if glare is a problem.

Larger needles than usual and thicker threads are better if you have hand problems where gripping is a problem. Frames will also help by controlling the tension on the fabric. Different physical problems require different types of frames. Good lighting is also essential if your eyesight is poor.

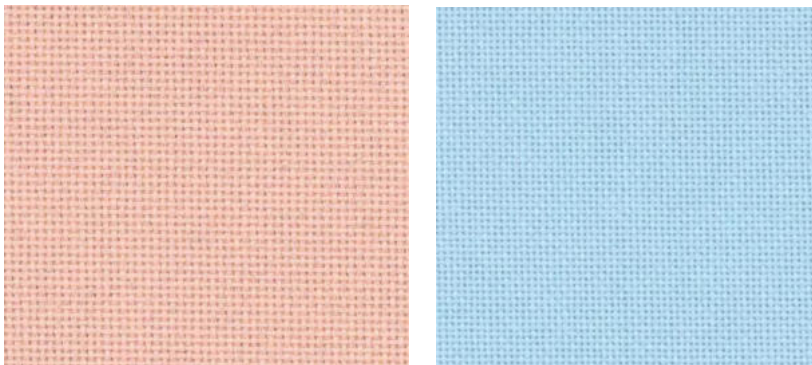
4. Working on evenweave fabrics

Two of the patterns from Counted thread PR0088 “Choices” have pulled thread patterns in the designs and again the choice of fabric will determine whether you are able to work them with limited eyesight.

Working on very fine evenweave is becoming difficult for me but I still want to continue stitching this technique, so I have been considering alternative fabrics.

Pulled thread work is a counted embroidery technique, worked on a loosely woven evenweave fabric.

Stitches are worked around groups of threads in the fabric and pulled, using the tension of the stitches to form gaps, creating lacy, open fillings, bands, border, and hems. It is usually worked in white thread on white fabric but can also be worked with pastel threads.



Zweigart 20 count Bellana and Zweigart 25 count Lugana.



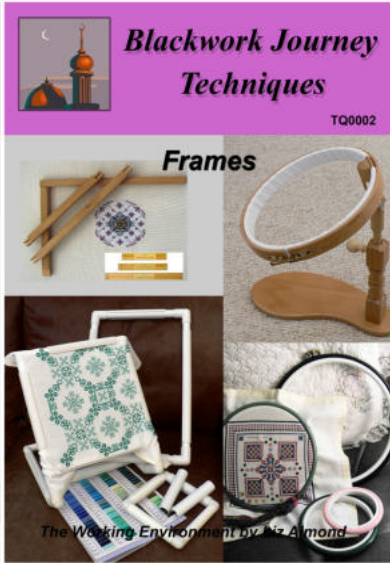
From Zweigart 20 count Bellana to my favourite Zweigart 25 count Lugana there are fabrics available that have clear holes which are easy to see and work well for pulled work. The size of the pattern will have to be adjusted but there is a Fabric Calculator on the Blackwork Journey website where you can adjust the size of the design.

This extract from PR0088 “Choices” was worked on Zweigart 28 count evenweave using two strands of embroidery floss for the pulled work and variegated Cotton P rle No 12 for the framework.

Even using a frame, pulled work will often distort the fabric as you can see in the above example. To correct this, spray the embroidery with water, pull into shape and leave to dry before pressing lightly.

Apart from the above, you may also wish to refer to one or more of my “Techniques” pdf’s.

I hope these tips help you to continue embroidering well into the future. There are ways round most problems if you know how and where to look for the answers and remember, I am always here to help if you need any advice.



Sarita's Journey – an outstanding project!

In my June 2024 Blog, I wrote an article about an embroidered book cover based on one of my designs. Earlier this year, I went back to “Threads” at Worcester to work with the group again and caught up with Sarita to see what she had been working on and whether she had made a box for the book?



Sarita and her outstanding work!



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Sarita has been studying book binding and took details from my charts and created the most detailed and elegant object. The embroidery was worked on evenweave fabric using one strand of DMC 310 black floss. The stitches used were back stitch and cross stitch. Once the embroidery had been completed it was carefully mounted with four embroidered motifs down the spine of the book. The edges of the pages were gilded and a diamond pattern pressed into the surface to complete the book. The next stage was to make a box to contain the book and protect it from wear.

Well, not only had Sarita made a box for the book using her bookbinding skills, but she has created another wonderful box and has given me permission to share her work with you.

The box is exquisite and fits the book to absolute perfection! Thank you Sarita.



New for June.

PR0088 “Choices” – one design, two techniques, three variations!

This can be found in “Projects” on the Blackwork Journey website.



If you are new to either technique create this sampler. The more you stitch, the more confident you will become.

Design 1 Blackwork on Zweigart 14 count Aida or 28 count evenweave.

Design 2 Pull thread work on Zweigart 28 count evenweave or 25 count Lugana.

Design 3 A combination of blackwork and pulled thread work.

Design Area: 5.57 x 5.57 inches
Stitches: 78 x 78 s on Zweigart 28 count evenweave, 9 x 9 inches or Zweigart 25 count Lugana, 10 x 10 inches.

Slow stitching for mindfulness.

Just to make certain I didn't get bored during my enforced time off a member of my stitch group gave me two calico bags to stitch in hospital. This is one of them. I decided simple Japanese sashiko would work well with some extra embroidery stitches just for fun.

Japanese sashiko is worked in the hand rather than a frame using sashiko threads or cotton P rle No.8 and a sashiko needle with a big eye and sharp point.

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The large pattern is called Asanaha tsunagi (linked hemp leaves) which is very popular in Japan. I finished it in hospital, but have yet to decide what to put on the other one.
Thank you Eileen!



I hope you have enjoyed this month's Blog.

If you have any queries, please contact me at: lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk

Happy stitching,

Liz