

Handweaving is one of the most exacting hobbies. And no wonder. Such as it is now - it is the final product of work of millions of craftsmen during thousands of years. Lucky as we are to inherit the fruit of their experience, we cannot hope to assimilate all this knowledge and skill in a few easy lessons.

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## CODED WEAVING.

When we do not feel like making special threading drafts, we can still weave coded messages on any draft which gives 4 different blocks of pattern. This means any 4-frame twill, plain, diamond, dornick, herringbone, then any overshot, crackle, and even summer-and-winter, but always woven with binder.

Instead of the length of floats, we use here the number of the block. The picks of weft remain as before. Since however the numbers of blocks are completely arbitrary, the clue to these numbers must be given in each woven piece. We do this in the first horizontal border. The first pick of pattern weft means the 1-st block, the second pick - the 2-nd block, and so on. We shall show later on on a draft how this works out.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	-	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
2	-	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
3	-	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
4	-	V	W	X	Y	Z	-	-

Fig.1

The code is given in Fig.1. The rows (horizontal) are the blocks; the columns (vertical) are the number of picks. One pick of pattern weft does not mean anything (first column), except at the beginning, where it shows the order or numbers of blocks.

The letter "A" is the first block used twice, "Z" is the fourth block used 6 times.

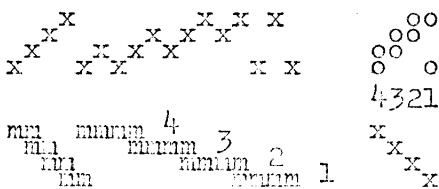


Fig.2

Let's suppose that we have the threading draft shown in fig.2. We start the border repeating several times the same treading with only one shot of weft on each treadle. The first shot will be the first block for the whole message. In our case treadle No.1 will be used for block No.1 (in a draw-down the first pick of weft is the lowest one, as in actual weaving). Then treadle 2 for block 2, tr.3 for

block 3, and tr.4 for block 4. We could start on any other treadle as well, but once this order is established it gives the clue to the whole message and therefore cannot be changed.

The importance of preserving this order becomes obvious when we try to read the message. Since we have only the woven piece we have no idea what tie-up and treading were used, but we know that the first pick of pattern weft is No.1 (fig.2) and that it shall have the same number whenever it is repeated all through the coded text. Thus when reading we must refer always to the first four picks of weft in the border.

Let's make our message: "MERRY XMAS". The first letter "M" is according to the Code: block 2, picks 7. The second "E" - block 1, picks 6. The whole text will be:

	M	E	R	R	Y	-	X	M	A	S
Block No.:	2	1	3	3	4	4	4	2	1	3
Picks:	7	6	5	5	5	7	4	7	2	6

When two letters are on the same block they must be spaced with one shot of weft on a different block. Thus the complete treading directions will be as follows:

block No.:	2	1	3	2	3	4	1	4	1	4	2	1	3
picks:	7	6	5	1	5	5	1	7	1	4	7	2	6

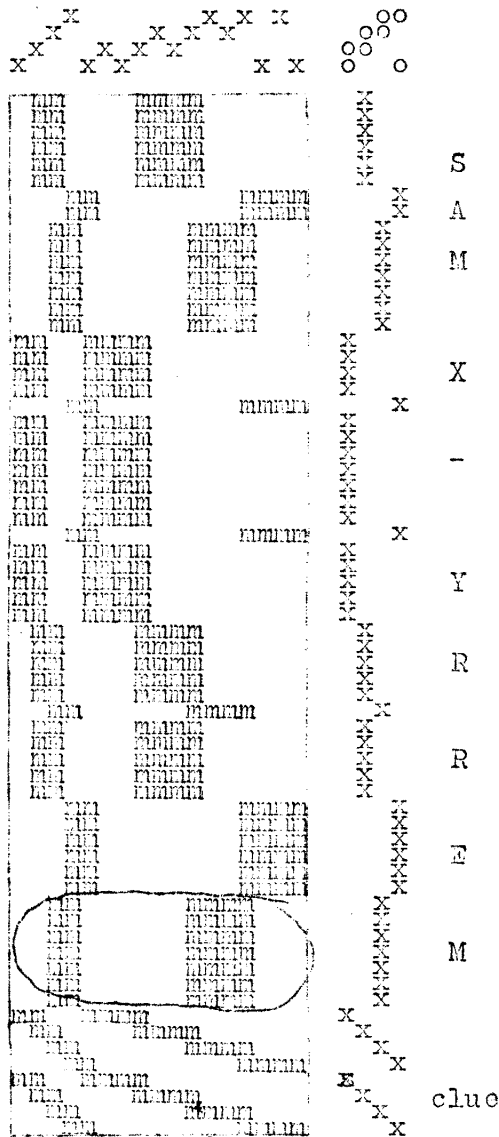


Fig. 3

Fig. 3 shows the message after weaving, except for the binder. The text is here upside down, and the clue at the bottom. When reading it will be easier to turn the piece right side up, with the border on top.

When reading we take a piece of paper, and mark in one row the number of the block and in the next the number of picks. The first letter of the text is concealed in the block of pattern which has more than one pick of weft. In our case it is the block circled on the draw-down. Looking at the border we can see that this is the same block as the 2-nd pick of weft in the border. Then the number of the block is 2. It has 7 picks. We look in the Code (fig.1) and find the letter "M". The next block is identical with the first shot of weft in the border therefore the number of block is one. It has 6 picks, and the code gives the letter "E". And so on.

It is obvious that with this system of coding, we do not need to look at the whole woven piece. The first inch or so, or for that matter any part of the fabric taken vertically will give the answer. We may even after weaving cut the the cloth into several narrow vertical stripes - each of them will contain the whole message.

Very narrow fabrics such as book marks may be used here, and this is one more advantage of this method when compared with the first one.