

CODE IN OVERSHOT.

If I remember right, there is such a thing as Personalised Weaving. It means that you can use a word or name and base a pattern in overshot on this word. This is very well, but the trouble is that you can not read it back from the woven piece. What we propose here is a code in weaving, in which any message can be woven, and later decoded by an initiated weaver.

This can be done in overshot only, because only overshot can have floats of any length from 3 to 15 and even more. In any other weave the pattern would be too long.

First of all we make the code (fig.1). The vertical columns from 3 to 7 mean the length of floats. The horizontal rows mean the number of picks of weft in each block. The floats of 2 do not mean anything and can be used to separate the words. The same applies to floats longer than 7. One pick of weft has no meaning, nor have any 8 or more picks.

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

Fig.1

Since the pattern derived from the code may be not very interesting, we can correct it by inserting in any place either floats or picks with a number higher than 7, the floats of 2 being always reserved for spacing the words. Now, how does it look in practice?

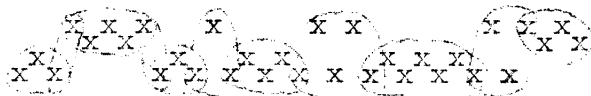
Let us take as an example a short name: A.M.Purcell.

First we are concerned with the threading draft, which depends from the length of floats. The first letter "A" is in the first column, and therefore has a float of 3. Then comes a space or a float of 2. "M" is 5, then space = 2, then P which is 3, U = 3, R = 5, C = 5, E = 7, L = 4, and L = 4.

This gives us already the short draft for our threading:

3 2 5 2 3 3 5 5 7 4 4 or $\begin{matrix} 2 & 2 & 3 & 5 & 4 \\ 5 & & & & 4 \end{matrix}$
 3 3 5 7

To develop it into a full draft we start with block 3 on frames 1 and 2. We could start on any other frame, but we may as well start on one. Thus the first block of 3 is threaded: 1 2 1. The second block of 2 must start with the last heddle of the first block, so it can be only: 1 4 (1 2 would make the first block longer). The next block of 5 starts with a 4, then it can be only: 4 3 4 3 4. Then comes 2 on 4 1. Then 3 on 1 2 and so on until the whole draft is made:



But of course the above draft without treading directions is meaningless. The treading draft read from the Code will be as follows:

2, anything, 4, anything, 5, 6, 5, 2, 2, 4, 4.
 A space M space P U R C E L L

We can weave the text one block after another in the same order in which they come in the draft, and for the spaces use as many picks as we judge best for a pattern. For instance: (fig.2).

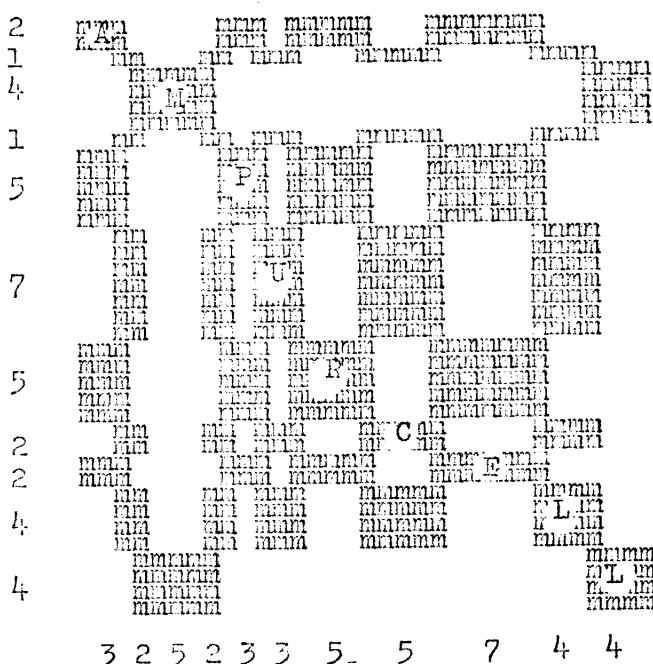


Fig.2

When decoding (reading back), first of all we must analyse the pattern (see MW 3 page 3). Reject the border which has only floats of 2, and start with the first float longer than 2. Count its length - this will give us the column in the Code. Then count the number of picks in the first block. This number indicates the row in the Code. Looking at the draw-down in fig.2 we have for the first letter: float 3, picks 2, which in code corresponds to "A". The second block gives 2 and 1 which means space, then 5 and 4 or "M" etc.

Now the question is how to use the coded words when designing a piece of weaving. The pattern itself in most cases will be not very interesting. To make it look better we can reverse it and thus get a symmetrical pattern. But we have to insert a few floats of 2 at the end of the message before reversing. Let's say 4 floats of 2 and then one block of 3 at the point of turning. But then in the treading this block of 3 must be used only once, otherwise it would mean one of the letters. Thus our threading draft or rather one repeat of it will look as in fig.3:

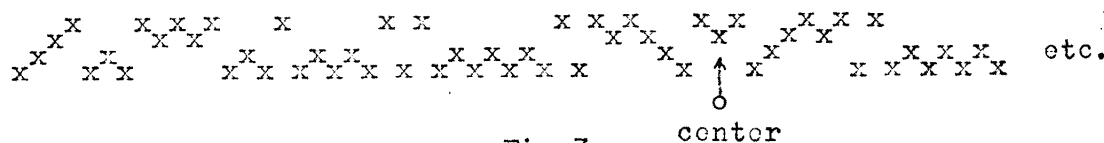


Fig.3

Another and probably much better way of weaving short messages or just signatures is to make them only in borders, then indicate the end of the message by inserting 4 floats of 2, and continue with a traditional or modern overshot pattern.

Let's make a Xmas gift with a "Merry Xmas" woven in the border. We start with several floats of 2 (meaningless), then weave carefully the coded part, finish with another 4 short floats, and continue the main part of the woven piece with any pattern at all.

The coded message is: M E R R Y X M A S
floats: 5 7 5 5 7 6 5 3 6
picks: 4 2 5 5 6 6 4 2 5

We have this part of the draft shown on fig.4. This coded part will take about 2 inches, and it should be reversed on the opposite border. Thus we have plenty of space left for plain uncoded weaving. It is advisable however to separate the border from the center so as not to mislead the reader.

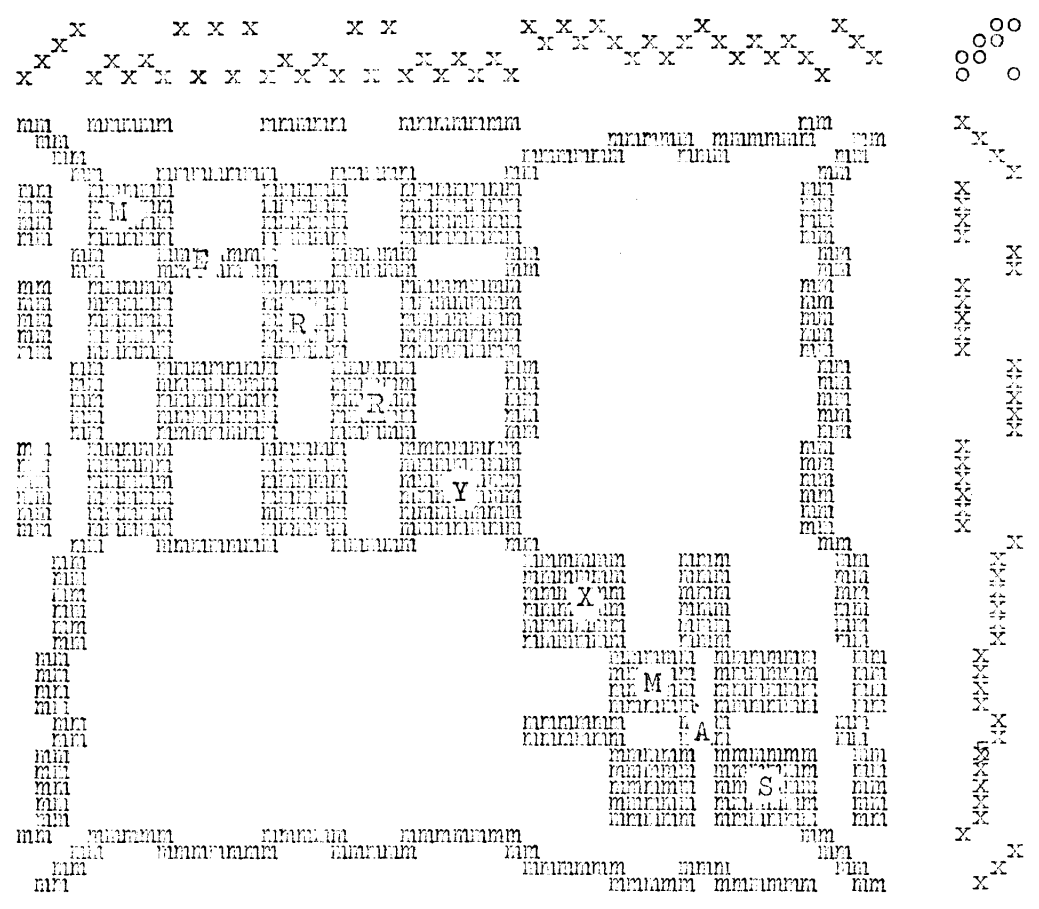


Fig. 4

Very long coded messages may be woven in the same way, provided that the fabric is wide enough. A letter takes in average 4 warp ends. Thus a warp of 800 ends can conceal a message of some 200 letters, or 30 to 40 words. Here though we cannot expect that the patterns will be as good as the text.

So far we spoke about coded writing which required special threading. Messages can be coded however on ANY overshot draft, or even crackle, and other weaves which have 4 blocks of pattern. The code in this case is different, however. We shall describe this second method in the coming issue of Master Weaver.

FROM THE EDITOR.

We wish to inform our Readers that the "Encyclopedia of Hand-weaving" is out of print. The second edition will appear probably in 1955. The back copies of MW for 1953 are out of print also. They will be reprinted later on. We have still the reprints from 1952 in form of two booklets, one with articles of general interest and one with theory of weaving only.
