

MASTER

WEAVER

BULLETIN FOR HANDWEAVERS



JULY

1954

FULFORD • QUEBEC • CANADA

# MASTER WEAVER

\* Z - HANDICRAFTS \* FULFORD \* QUEBEC \* CANADA \*

July 1954

No.16

## HOW TO SELL.

A good craftsman is seldom a good businessman - these two abilities just do not go together. Still many craftsmen have to sell their wares, or at least would like to. How to do it?

First of all one has to know the value of the article for sale - not the price one could get, but the price which will cover the costs and pay for the labour at a decent rate. The following factors enter into consideration:

1. Labour. This is the highest item and we discussed already ("Skill in Handweaving", MW 12) methods which should be used to make it as small as possible. This item is again composed of several positions:

- A. Time spent on warping, weaving, finishing.
- B. Research, i.e. work on drafts, preparation of patterns, experiments with materials, even reeding books and periodicals (but not including the period of learning the trade).
- C. Correspondence and personal contact with customers.
- D. Handling supplies and finished goods, packing and shipping.

2. Supplies. Yarns for orders, samples, and experiments. In certain lines like work for interior decorators, the samples are an important item. Office supplies, writing and packing paper, stamps etc.

3. Overheads. This again is a compound item and can be divided roughly into:

A. Space, heating, and lighting of premises used for business. Even if business is transacted in one's home, a part of the general expenses connected with the house or apartment (rent, insurance, taxes, interest on capital invested, repair, heating, lighting) should be included in the costs of weaving. This part should be proportional to the area or space used for business.

B. Depreciation of the equipment. Fortunately weaving equipment lasts very long but not indefinitely.

C. Interest on capital invested in the equipment, and supplies kept in stock. This is not the same as depreciation. If we started the business with borrowed money, we would have to pay the interest, regardless of the depreciation.

D. Risk. Orders may be spoiled, refused, or not paid for.

E. Varia. Travelling expenses, book-keeping, insurance of equipment and stock. If there is no insurance then item 3.D must be increased accordingly.

F. Tax. This varies in different countries. It may reach 10%, but sometimes bona fide artisans are exempted if the turnover does not exceed a certain amount per year. It should not be confused with retail sales tax, which the weaver pays only when selling directly to the customer.

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Now, how to figure out all these items? We start with labour and yarn. Let's say that we know from the experience that making a certain order takes 100 hrs of actual weaving and warping, and that the yarn costs \$ 25.-. If we are satisfied with 1.50 an hours then so far we have \$ 175. To find the items 1.B, 1.C, and 1.D we should try to remember how many hours a day we spend on these items compared with hours of actual weaving. If we work 8 hrs a day and 2 hrs are used for research, correspondence, and shipping leaving 6 hrs for weaving, then we must add one third (two to six) to the labour calculated previously. If the rates for office work prevailing in your district are lower than 1.50 (and probably they are) then let's count \$ 1.00 per hour. One third of 100 hrs à 1.00 makes 33 dollars. Thus we have already \$ 208 for our order.

Comes item 2. If one tenth of the yarn is used up in experiments and samples, then we have to add \$ 2.50 (10% of 25).

Item 3. Overheads are very difficult to calculate. It is a good exercise to find them once, to establish a percentage which later will be added to all prices without analysing all items each time.

Supposing that our yearly turnover in weaving is 3000, or we think that we should make that much, we can find out in percents the overhead. For instance the upkeep of the house costs 1000 a year, and the weaving space is 25% of the whole house. Then we must get \$ 250 a year from the weaving, or about 8% must be added to every order. In our case it makes about \$ 17.

Item 3.B . If a loom can last 20 years then the depreciation is 5%. If all our equipment costs 1000, then the depreciation is 50 dollars, or roughly 1.5% (50 is 1.66% of 3000 turnover). In our case it amounts to \$ 3. Item 3.B is about the same. Another \$ 3.

Item 3.C depends very much on the weaver, his relations with the customers etc. It can be estimated only after a long experience with selling. But if 5 orders out of 100 are lost one way or another, then the risk is 5%. Another 10 dollars to be added to the price.

Item 3.E can be estimated only on a yearly basis. If we keep account of these expenses for one year, we can express them in percents of the turnover. Supposing that travel is 100, book-keeping 200, insurance 10, and other items 100, it makes 410, or about 13%. Still more to add to our price: 26 dollars.

So far we have found out that the overheads are 29% to be added to the original price. And the price of our order is now 269.50

The tax if any is the easiest to calculate because it is already expressed in percents. If it is 8% for instance then we add 21.60 to 269.50, and we have the final answer: our wholesale price is \$ 291.10.

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Is there an easier way of calculating the prices? Yes. Once we get through the preliminary stages of figuring out item by item, we shall get a general rule. For instance: labour 40%, supplies 25%, overheads 35%. There will be special orders when the proportion may be

different, but in average we can take the ratio 8 to 5 to 7. If for instance the labour is \$ 30, then the yarn - 50, and the overhead - 70, which gives the price: 200. The better the weaver, and the better the business is organised, the lower will be the first and the last item - it is only the cost of yarn which is beyond our control.

It is very important not to make the mistake that it is only the yarn which counts, and whatever we get extra is the net income. One might say "Well, we have the house anyhow, and I already bought the looms, and I work in the spare time, which does not count". Reasoning like this prevents the craftsman from developing the sales. Once he gets larger orders he will realise that he is not making a cent on them, and then it is too late to persuade your customer that your initial prices were nothing but an experiment. But undervaluating our work, we not only undermine our future in business, but we also spoil the market for other handweavers, who would be quite justified in considering our prices, as unfair competition.

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How to start selling? First of all let's not be too eager to sell at any price. Let's not forget that the people between us and the final customer are highly trained in the art of buying. We may hear stories about little demand for good handicrafts, about high costs of running a shop, and so on. Our only reasonable answer is that we have carefully priced our goods, and that they are for sale at this particular price and nothing else. If the weaving is good and the prices reasonable, we shall get orders from gift shops. Department stores are sometimes more difficult because they want large quantities of comparatively cheap good, and they add 10% or more to the wholesale price, which may result in prohibitive retail prices.

It is better not to sell on consignment. If you do, add to your prices about 50% in item 3.D, then about 5% of the interest, since such sales are seldom paid before half a year or so.

How to deal with individual customers, who buy things for gifts or for their own use? Do not make a mistake of charging them wholesale prices. As a rule they take much more of your time than the retailers, and are more exacting. And they are definitely a bigger risk. In any case add at least 25% to your wholesale prices, not only as compensation for time lost, etc, but also not to create an unfair competition to your retailer. If you like the order, i.e. if you think that you have good chance of selling it to some other customer, accept it without deposit. If not ask for 30% deposit and send it COD.

How to deal with friends? Better give them free of charge what they like, than giving them a discount. Treat them as ordinary customers - they won't mind.

If you think that your weaving is in some way unique, or at least as good as the best - then spend some money on tags attached to each article (name and address). The tags may be woven or printed. The printed ones are cheaper. You can also order a small rubber stamp, buy some silk ribbon, and do the printing yourself. Use the same kind of ink as used by laundries. Attach the tags to the woven pieces very firmly.

When taking orders from a dealer, use your own judgement. Do not take for granted that he knows best. If you are convinced by your own experience that a particular article won't sell, do not accept the order. If you do, the dealer will get stuck with your weaving, and

you will have to wait for years before you get another order. But should such a thing happen, and if you are in friendly relations with the dealer, it may be advisable to replace the unsaleable order with something else. The dealer will be delighted and he will trust you from now on. It is true that now you will be stuck with something which should never be woven, but sooner or later you will get rid of it.

Then you may have individual customers who want a big order. Let's say a whole set for a cottage. It depends on the customer, what you can do. If he is reasonable, charge him accordingly. Suggest something really good - you will get other customers through him. If he is not charge as much as you think you can get. But always refuse if the customer asks for something really atrocious. If you give in, for the sake of a few dollars, then the thing may become in itself a real blackmail, should you become famous, or even well known.

How to collect? Most customers pay without any trouble, particularly the ones you serve by COD. As far as retailers are concerned you should mark on your invoice the terms: e.g. 30 days net, then plus 5 or 10%. If the bill is not paid after 3 months you can use one of the collecting agencies (they are expensive); in a serious case - Better Business Bureau. But unless the bill runs into thousands, do not go to the court. If your customer is as unreliable as all that, then he is probably broke as well.

Unless you produce very large quantities of identical goods (but then are you a craftsman?), do not employ travelling salesmen. First of all they know next to nothing about the value of your weaving, and then their commission added to your wholesale prices makes the retail prices ridiculously high.

And most of all, do not expect that you can make a fortune on your handweaving. If you make a decent living, you are lucky.

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## TERMINOLOGY

### ONCE MORE ABOUT THE "HARNESS"

We do not know to whom we are indebted for a very lucky and logical compromise between the etymologically wrong but widely used "harness", and the logical but artificial "heddle-frame". This is:

h a r n e s s - f r a m e.

It is very logical because one heddle-frame is a part of a harness. It can be always shortened to a "frame". Finally it eliminates the "heddle" from the term. The objection to "heddle-frame" was that in England it means sometimes a frame on which one makes heddles.

We have noticed that the new term is already used in advertising. If it gets popular we shall speak about 4 harness-frame looms, or about a 4 frame harness, we shall thread a harness, or harness-frames.

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# 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?

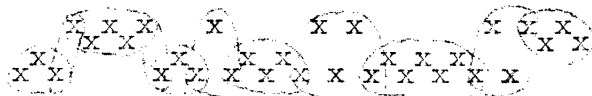
Let us take as an example a short name: A.M.Purcell.

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).

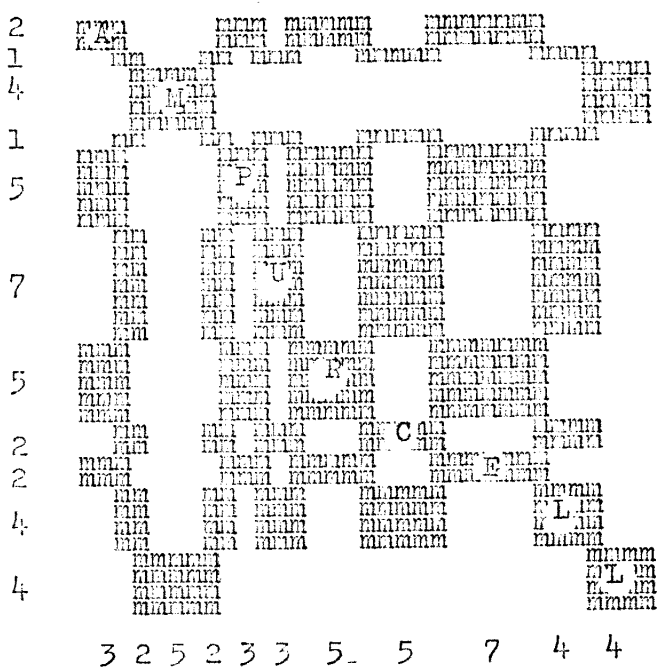


Fig.2

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:

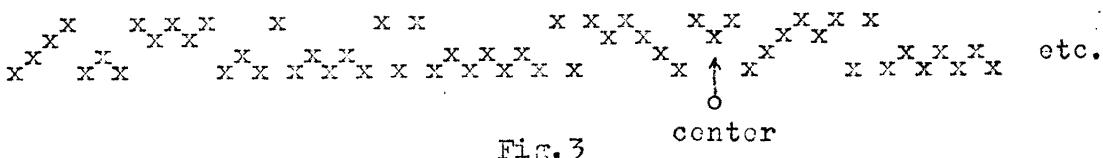


Fig.3

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.

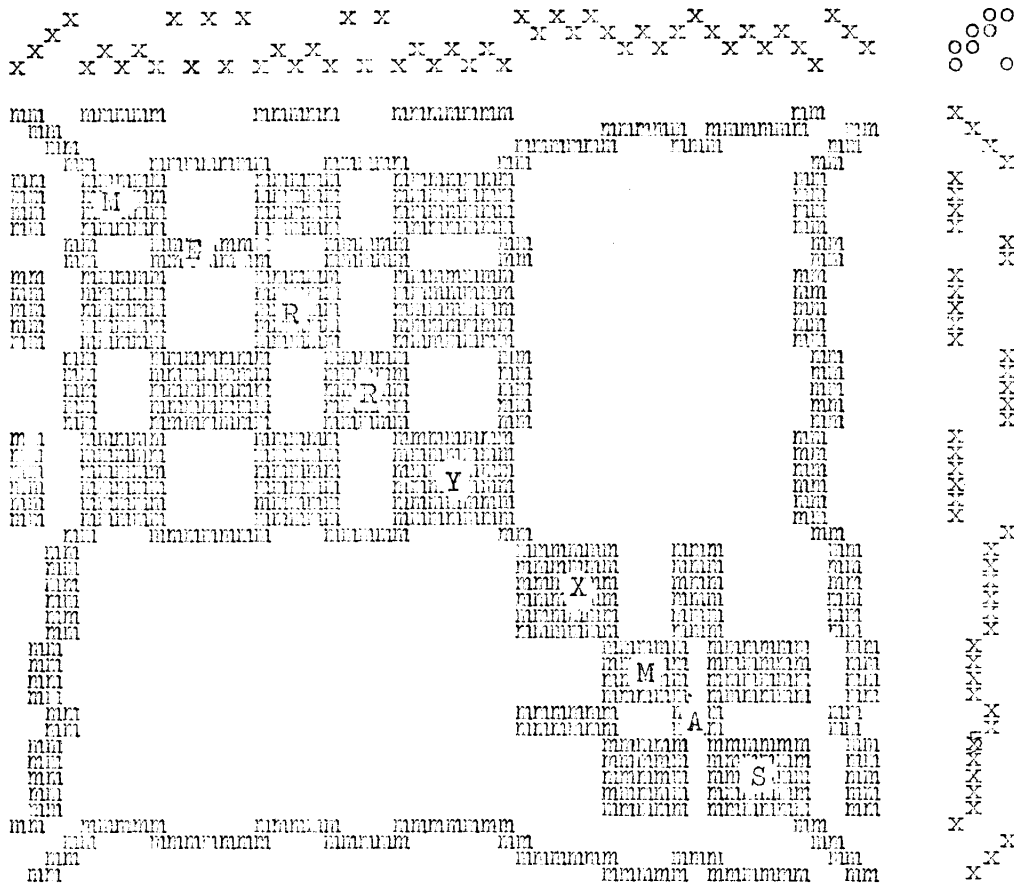


Fig. 4

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 overshoot 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.

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FROM THE EDITOR.

We wish to inform our Readers that the "Encyclopedia of Handweaving" 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.

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# DRAFTING.

It often happens that the draft contains only the threading and the tie-up. Then the problem arises how to find out the treading, or rather one of the many treadlings possible. When we speak about treading drafts we must distinguish between drafts which give a square, symmetrical pattern, and fancy treadlings which can give any pattern at all. The number of the former is very limited.

When we speak about a square pattern we may remember that the best guarantee that we are dealing with a square is to have two diagonals, which cross each other at the center of the figure at a right angle. The treading which will produce such diagonals is called BASIC treading, and there is only one such treading for each threading draft. The way to find it is to draw the diagonal first so that it would cover a square space right under the threading draft. In fig.1 we have a 1:3 diamond twill draft.

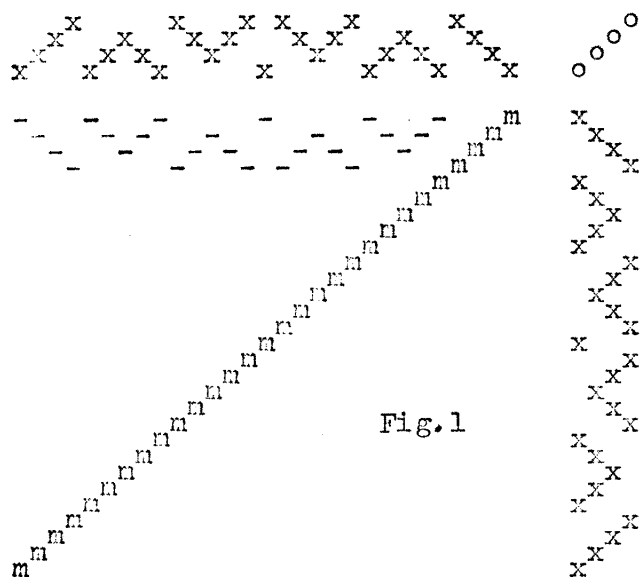


Fig.1

Since each treadle is tied to only one frame, the weft will go only over one warp end. This is easy to check by making the draw-down of one shot of weft on each treadle. Then our diagonal will be made of single squares of the graph paper. The first step then in finding the treading will be to draw a diagonal from the upper right corner to the lower left corner of the draft. Doing it we do not look at the threading draft at all except to locate the beginning and the end of the diagonal. After the diagonal is drawn we can find out square after square which treadle produced each element of the diagonal.

We look up from the first square ("m") to the threading draft and see that immediately above the first square there is a heddle on on frame 1. Since frame 1 is tied to treadle 4, then obviously treadle 4 is the first to be used. Consequently we make a mark on the treading draft right below treadle 4 and in line with the first square. The second square was made by a heddle on frame 2, which is tied to treadle 3, and the mark comes under treadle 3 in line with the second square. The third square: frame 3, treadle 2. The fourth: frame 4, treadle 1, and so on.

When we complete in this way the whole treading draft, we can compare it with the threading draft, and we can see that they are identical, except that the first is horizontal and the second vertical. From this observation comes the expression "woven as drawn in". It is an old term and means literally: treading the same as threading. In the above example the term "woven as drawn in" can be taken literally. But we shall see later on, that it is used often to mean that the treading

is only similar to the threading. The main point is not so much that both drafts are the same, but that they will produce a pattern as close to a square one as possible.

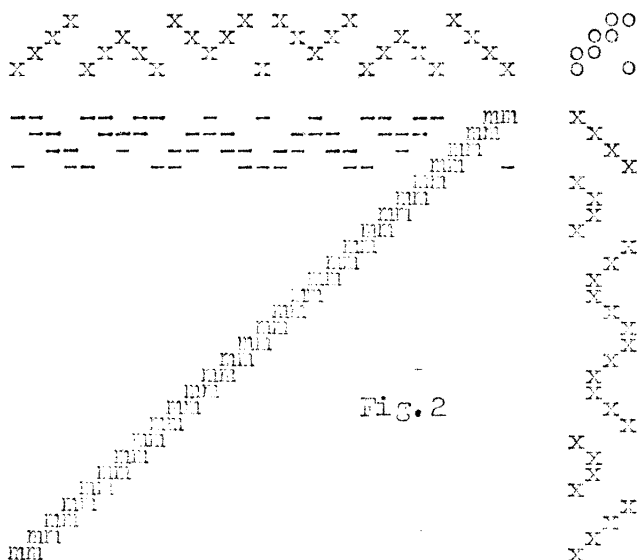


FIG. 2

Fig. 2 gives an illustration of squaring a pattern in such a way that the diagonal will be absolutely straight although the treading draft will be no longer identical with the threading.

Here two frames are tied to each treadle, and consequently the weft will go in most cases over TWO warp ends. The skips of weft which go over two or more warp ends are called "floats". Then we shall draw the diagonal with blocks of two by one (two squares long, one square deep). The blocks or floats will overlap each other by one thread of the warp. Otherwise the diagonal would not have the 45° angle necessary to produce a square pattern. Here again we draw the diagonal without looking

at the threading draft, except to find the beginning and the end of the diagonal which must be in line with both ends of the draft. Then we look

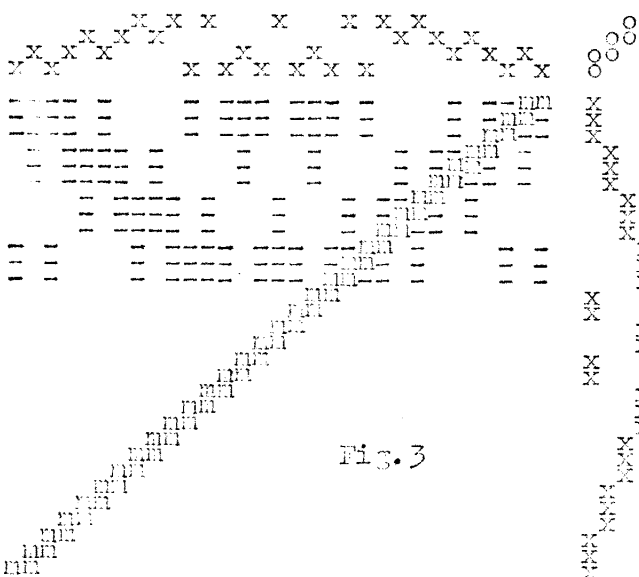


FIG. 3

up from the first block of the diagonal, and we observe that it is produced by the combination of the first and the second frame. The treadle which is tied to these two frames is No. 4. Thus the first mark in the treading draft must be placed directly under treadle 4 and in line with the first block or float. The second block is made by frames 2 and 3. They are tied to treadle 3, so the treading mark comes under treadle 3. The third block requires heddles on frames 3 and 4 - tied to treadle 2 - so the third mark is under treadle 2, and so on until the end of the diagonal is reached.

Here we can see that the treading draft is similar but not identical with the threading draft. Still we call it "woven as drawn in", because the pattern will be square.

Finally in fig 3 we have the same method used for a different draft. Here the treading and the threading drafts are hardly similar, but still they produce a pattern as square as it can be, and this way of treading will be still called "woven as drawn in", although the original meaning has been nearly lost.

# TURNEID SWIVEL.

Swivel (MW 1, page 6) is essentially tabby, consequently there are no floats, vertical or horizontal. Thus the term "turned" cannot be applied to the direction of floats. However, in swivel such as we have described so far, the pattern is formed by colours in weft.

If we turn the draft so that the threading draft becomes the treading and vice versa, we shall have colours in warp and only plain ground in weft. The advantage of such an arrangement is not obvious at first. We shall get the same pattern, with the same number of frames, but in most cases we shall have to have at least two warp-beams, because the take-up on the pattern ends will be much smaller than on the ground. On the other hand we shall use only one shuttle - since there are no colours in weft. This makes weaving much faster. Figure 1 shows a draft for plain swivel and fig.2 - a draft for turned one.

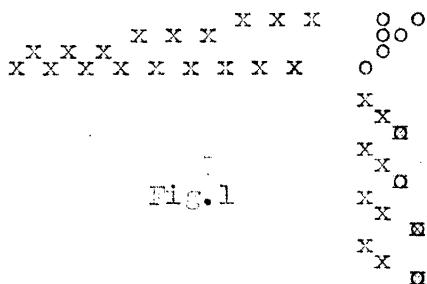


Fig.1

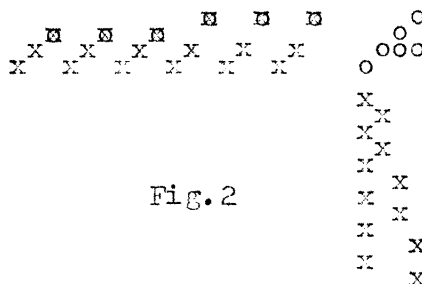


Fig.2

In threading or treading 'x' is ground, and 'o' - colour. The above tie-up will give two blocks of pattern, but no combination of blocks. Since every combination of blocks of pattern in plain swivel requires an additional treadle, then after turning it we need an additional frame. If we have enough frames and enough warp beams the turned swivel is an excellent solution for production weaving, but won't appeal to a hobbyist.

However there is a possibility of using both the plain and the turned swivel in the same piece of weaving. As we know, for purely practical reasons plain swivel cannot have narrow blocks. In horizontal direction we can have even single lines, but in the vertical - the blocks must be not much less than 1/2" wide, or the pattern weft will not stay in the fabric. But just the opposite is true for the turned swivel. Here the vertical lines may be single, but single horizontal lines are out of question.

By combining both drafts (fig.1 and 2) we can have both vertical and horizontal lines on the same piece of weaving (fig.3). Treadles:

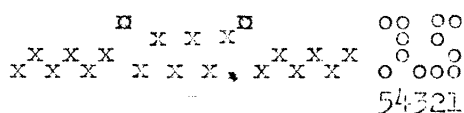


Fig.3

- 5 and 4 give plain ground,
- 3 and 4 - vertical lines,
- 2 and 4 - horizontal line,
- 1 and 4 - another horizontal line.

On a four frame loom, all we can get are two blocks in weft (one being the opposite of the other, and one block in warp. Let us see what we can do in these circumstances. Fig.4 gives a few ideas. Some are conservative, and some are "modern".

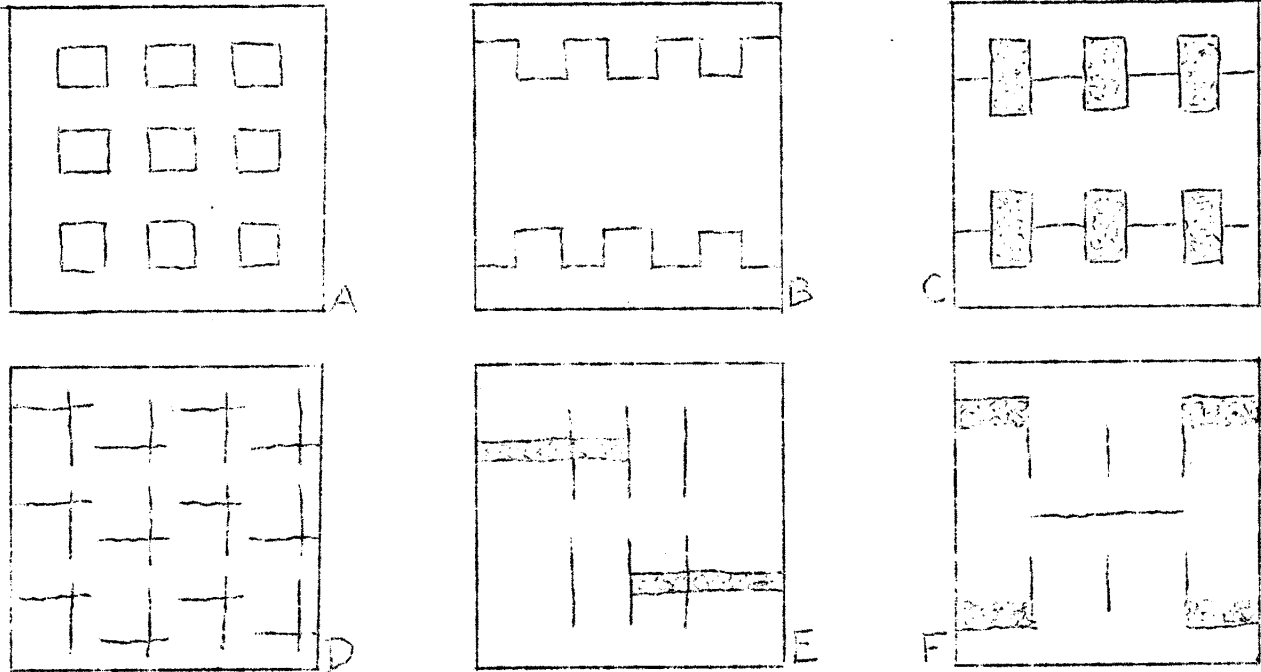


Fig.4.

On fig.5 we have a draft for fig.4 a, b, and c; in fig.6 - a draft for the pattern on Fig.4 d. Fig.7 shows a draft for pattern 4.e, and fig.8 - for pattern 4.f.

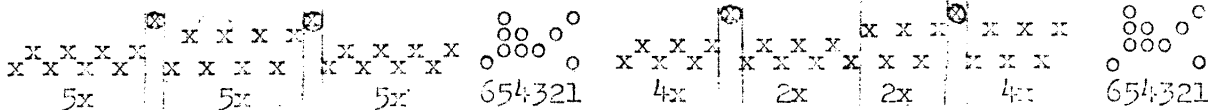


Fig.5

Fig.6

Tie-up in fig.5 or 6 gives the following variations of treading:

- Variation 1. - treading 1,5 - we get plain ground without any colour either in warp or weft. Colours in warp remain under the fabric.
- Variation 2. - treading 6,5 - gives vertical lines in colour.
- Variation 3. - treading 1,5,3, with colour on 3 - gives horizontal lines corresponding to one block of pattern on frame 2. No vertical lines.
- Variation 4. - treading 6,5,3 with colour on 3 - gives horizontal lines as in Var.3, and vertical lines.
- Variation 5. - treading 1,5,2 with colour on 2 - produces the same result as Var.3 but with horizontal lines in the second block of pattern.
- Variation 6. - treading 6,5,2 with colour on 2 - is similar to Var.4 but with horizontal lines in the 2-nd block.
- Variation 7. - treading 6,4,6,5 (not used in any of the patterns on fig.4) gives vertical lines with short floats of 3.

Fig.4 a has been woven in the following way: Variation 1 to make plain ground in the border, then one repeat of Var.6, then Var.2 to square, then one repeat of Var.6, and again from the beginning.

Fig.4 b: Var.1 - one repeat of Var.6 - Var.2 to square - one repeat of Var.4 - Var.1 to fill the center of the woven piece - one repeat of Var.4 - Var.2 to square - one repeat of Var.6 - Var.1.

Fig.4 c: Var.1 - one repeat of Var.6 with the same colour as in warp - Var.6 with a different colour to square - one repeat of Var.4 with the same colour as in warp - Var.6 with the second colour to square - one repeat of Var.6 with the first colour.

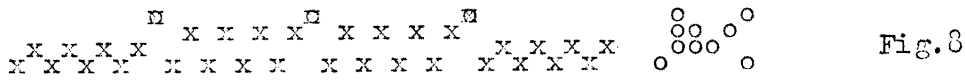
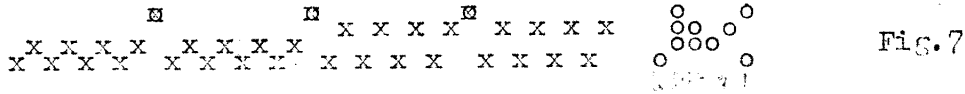


Fig.4 d (draft on fig.6): Var.1 - Var.2 - one repeat of Var.4 - Var.2 - Var.6 (one repeat) - Var.2 - and start all over again.

Fig.4 e (draft on fig.7): Var.1 - Var.2 - one repeat of Var.4 with first colour - several repeats of 4 with second colour - one repeat of Var.4 with the first colour - Var.2 - Var.1 - Var.2 - one repeat of Var.6 with first colour - several repeats of Var.6 with second colour - one repeat of Var.6 with first colour - Var.2 - Var.1.

Fig.4 f (draft on fig.8): Var.1 - one repeat of Var.4 with first colour - Var.3 with second colour - Var.2 - Var.1 - one repeat of Var.6 - Var.1 - Var.2 - Var.3 with second colour - one repeat of Var.4 with first colour - Var.1.

Of course there are many more possibilities that the above 6 examples.

The technical requirements of turned swivel are few. Since the vertical blocks of pattern form long floats, the take-up on the corresponding warp ends is much smaller than on the ground warp. Consequently the colours in warp cannot be warped and beamed together with the ground warp. If they are few the best solution is to wind them on bobbins and hang at the back of the loom. If they are more numerous they can be beamed on a separate warp beam - it may be a small roller, or a broom stick tied to the loom frame.

The frames with only a few warp ends are no problem in a jack-type loom with single or double tie-up. In counterbalanced looms, these frames should be tied each with two cords (one at each end) to the loom frame so that they will not rise higher than necessary to open a good shed. Otherwise there would be too much tension on the colours in the warp.

The sett of warp, as always with swivel, should be rather close and the beating - hard. The yarn for the pattern should be a little heavier than the one for the ground. The colours bright or dark, otherwise the pattern will be hardly visible.

The floats at the back may be cut close to the fabric - after washing and ironing, or - if only one side of the fabric is going to be used - they may be left as they are or better cut about 1/4" from the fabric.

We shall discuss later the turned swivel on more than 4 frames as well as the "three dimensional weaving" of swivel.

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