

Double-faced repp-effect weave

Simplified block motifs from a mediaeval band woven using an Anglo-Saxon technique

Description

The double-faced repp-effect tablet-weaving method is known from a number of historic bands, including:

- Dätgen (Germany, Roman Iron Age)
- Dover Buckland (Kent, England, 6th century)¹
- Saltwood (Kent, England, 7th century)
- Two seal bands (Scotland, 13th century)

The weaving method favours block patterns instead of the diagonal motifs that dominate Dark Age tablet-weaving, and this is reflected in the historic bands.

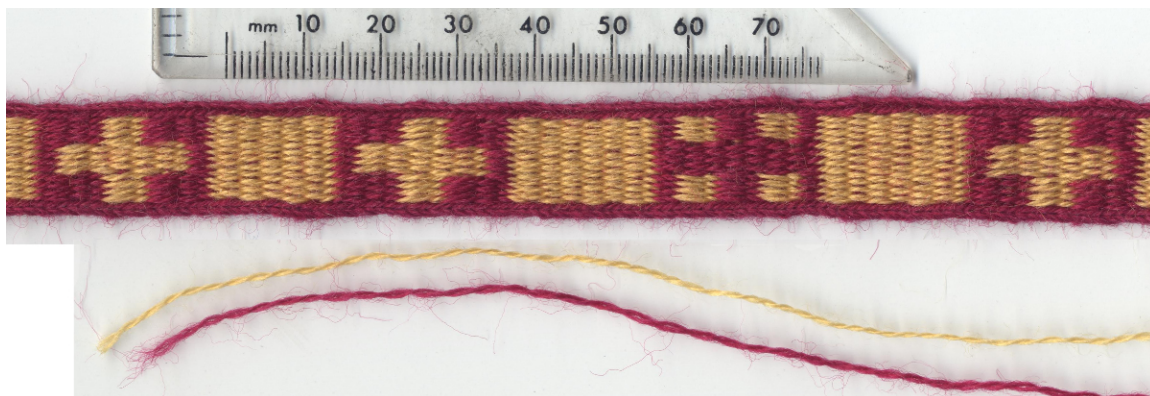


Figure 1: sample woven in two-ply Silver Viscount machine knitting wool.

1 In one of the Dover Buckland graves, the tablet-weaving edged a woman's "Frankish coat", and Walton Rogers suggests that the Saltwood band, made from plied linen, may have been used in the same way.

The Dätgen girdle features offset rectangular blocks. The five Dover Buckland bands feature “rectilinear blocks arranged in some sort of geometric motif”. (No pattern is given for the Saltwood band, presumably it was too badly preserved.)

One of the 13th century seal bands is shown in “Cloth and Clothing in Early Anglo-Saxon England”. It is very well preserved and the pattern is clear. There are alternating light and dark sections along the band, which has a narrow dark border. Each dark section has light geometric motifs within it, featuring crosses, broken crosses and squares. The dangling ends of the band are chequered.

The sample band shown in Figure 1 features simplified versions of the motifs from the 13th century seal band.

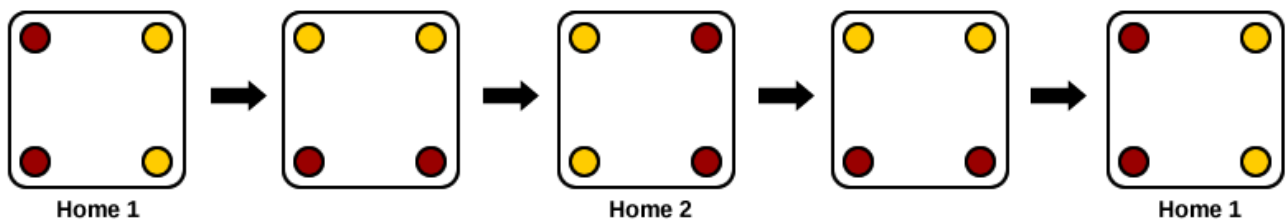


Figure 2: turning sequence for the ground weave.

To weave double-faced repp-effect bands, the pattern tablets are each threaded with two dark, two light threads and are turned alternately forward twice, then backwards twice so that they return to their “home” position (Figure 2). The top surface of the band is therefore light, and the underside dark. Patterns can be produced by giving some tablets an extra half turn, which exchanges the colours. The tablets are all oriented the same way.

You may find it helpful to mark the edges of your tablets with felt-tip pen so that you can easily see when weaving which colour is at the top (Figure 3).

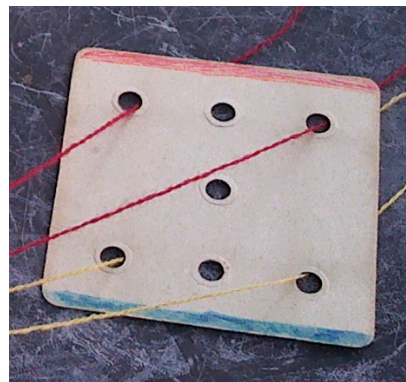


Figure 3: threading a marked tablet.

Figure 4 shows additional motifs which can be woven on the same warp set up.



Figure 4: additional motifs.

Difficulty	Easy
Authenticity	B Simplified mediaeval motifs woven using a period technique. Suitable for Anglo-Saxon re-enactment, medium status.
Number of pattern tablets	12
Number of border tablets	4
Weaving technique	Threading two light, two dark. Block motifs woven on a plain ground by turning all tablets alternately forwards for two picks, then backwards for two picks.

References

- Henshall, Audrey.** "Five Tablet-Woven Seal-Tags." *Archaeological Journal* 121 (1964), pp. 154-62.
- Walton Rogers, Penelope.** *Cloth and Clothing in Early Anglo-Saxon England (AD 450-700) (CBA Research Report 145)*. York: CBA, 2007.
- Walton Rogers, Penelope.** *Costume in the Early Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Saltwood, Kent . Part 2 Textiles and costume*. The Anglo-Saxon Laboratory, 2014. Available online at <http://www.aslab.co.uk/pangur-press/>. Originally published in 2006 by Oxford-Wessex Archaeology Joint Venture (OWA) and Channel Tunnel Rail Link London & Continental Railways (CTRL).

Threading

Pattern tablets

Thread each pattern tablet with two yellow threads and two red, arranged yellow / yellow / red / red. Pattern tablets are numbered 1-12.

1. Orient all tablets the same way, it doesn't matter whether S or Z so long as they are all the same.²
2. Turn the tablets so that each tablet has the yellow threads are in positions A, B.

Border tablets

Two border tablets on each side. Each of the outer two border tablets is threaded with four red threads. Orient the border tablets alternately, S Z.

Border tablets are not numbered because they are not manipulated in the pattern, and you may design any border you like.

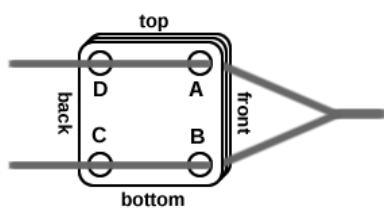


Figure 5: labelling the positions.

A, B, C, D show the positions of the threads in the threading diagram. Most weavers do not label their tablets because which hole is “A” changes as you turn them.

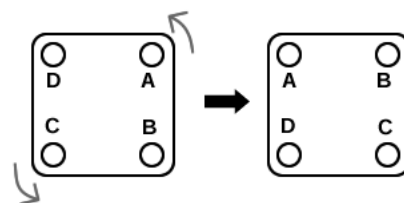


Figure 6: turning the tablets forwards.

If you work with the woven band on your side of the tablets, push the top of the tablets away from you with your thumbs.



Figure 7: flipping a tablet to change it from S to Z (top view).

² Orientation refers to the direction the threads pass through the tablets (Figure 7).

Weaving instructions

Ground weave

To weave the yellow ground weave, start with the tablets in Home Position 1 as shown in Figure 8.

1. Weave two picks turning all tablets forwards.³ The tablets will now be in Home Position 2.
2. Weave two picks turning the pattern tablets backwards, but the border tablets forwards. The pattern tablets will now be back at Home Position 1.

Carry on weaving by repeating steps 1 and 2. The surface of the band should be yellow and the underside red.

Always weave two picks at a time and stop in one of the “Home” positions, where you can easily see which way the tablets should be turned next.

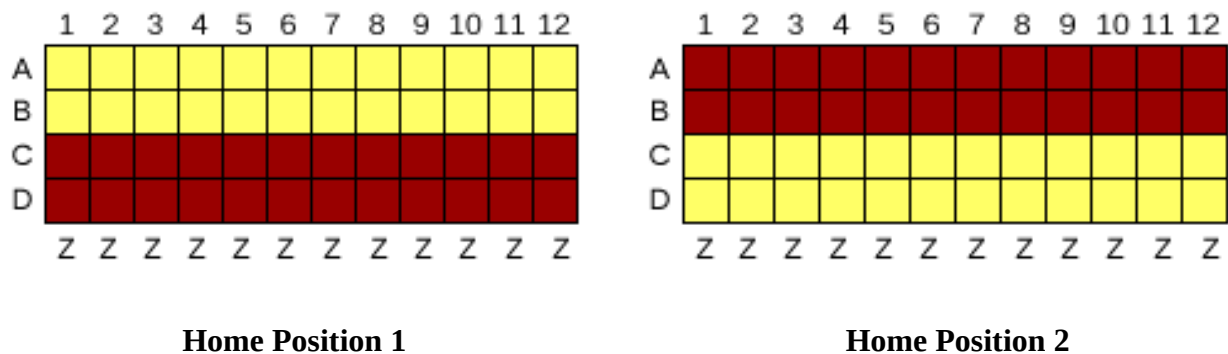


Figure 8: “Home” positions for the tablets.

When the border threads become tightly twisted, flip the four border tablets. This will reverse the twining and undo the twist.

³ One “pick” is a single unit of weaving, that is turn the tablets, clear and beat the shed, tighten and then pass the weft.

Weaving the cross motif

Start with the tablets in Home Position 1, as shown at the bottom of Figure 9, and follow the steps below.

Position 1
1. Weave two picks forwards so the tablets are in Home Position 2.
Position 2
1. Weave two more picks forwards . <i>This changes the ground weave from yellow to red: the tablets are effectively still in Home Position 2.</i>
Position 3
1. After throwing the weft, give tablets 5-8 an extra half turn forwards. <i>Do not throw the weft again.</i> 2. Weave two picks backwards, then two picks forwards, so the tablets are in Home Position 2 again.
Position 4
1. Give tablets 1-4 and 9-12 an extra half turn forwards. 2. Weave two picks backwards. 3. Weave two picks forwards.
Position 5
1. Give tablets 1-4 and 9-12 an extra half turn forwards. 2. Weave two picks backwards. 3. Weave two picks forwards.
Position 6
1. Give tablets 5-8 an extra half turn forwards.
Position 7
1. Weave two picks backwards.
Position 8
1. Weave two more picks backwards . <i>Now the ground weave is yellow again and the tablets are back to Home Position 1.</i>

Weave two complete sequences, each being two picks forwards, two picks backwards, then start again at Step 1 to weave another motif.

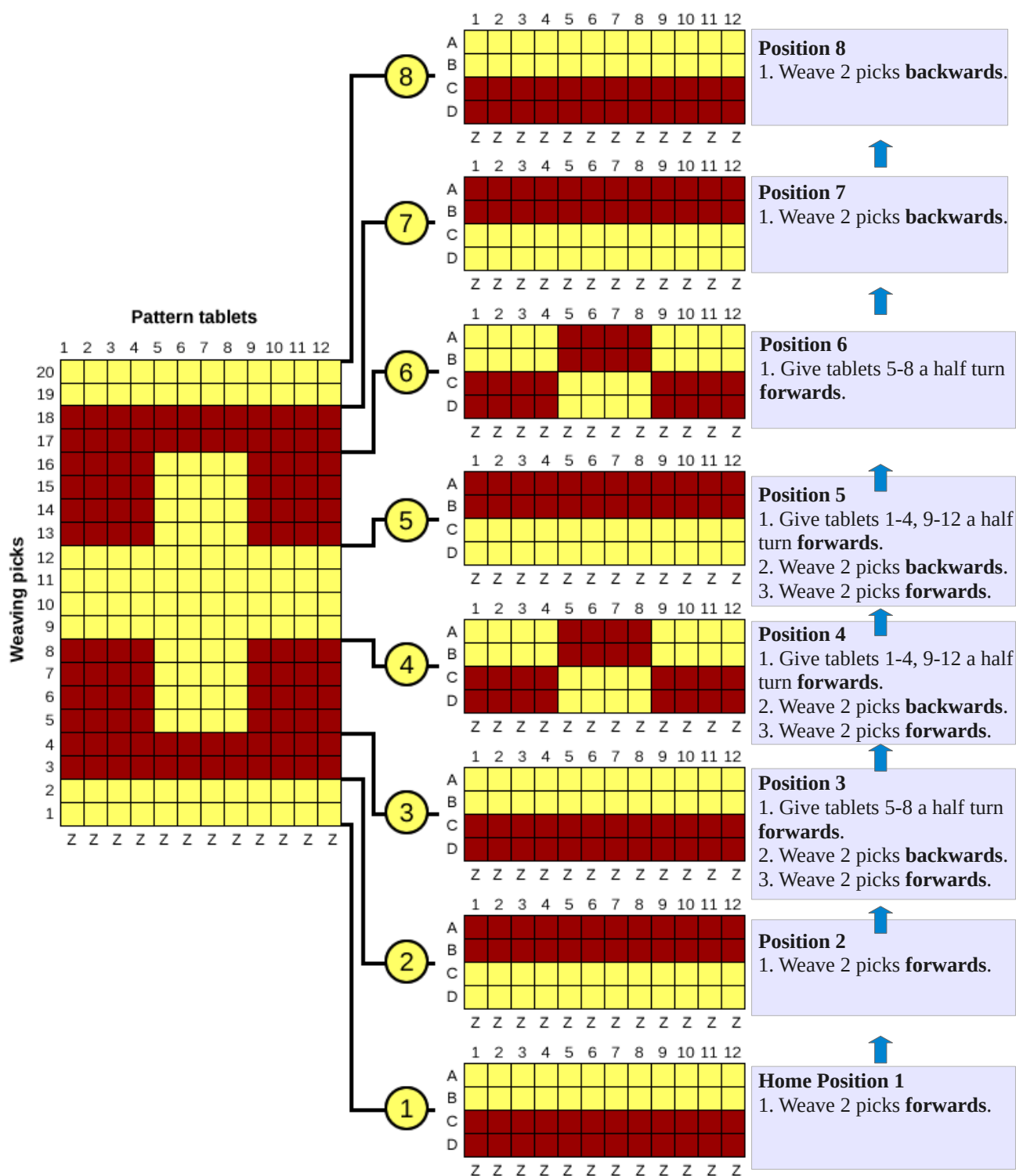


Figure 9: weaving the cross motif.

Start at the **bottom of the diagram** and work upwards, following the steps in turn.

Troubleshooting

If you accidentally turn the tablets the wrong way for the second pick, you should be able to tell by looking at the surface of the band. The second image in Figure 10 shows the surface of the band if you have accidentally turned the tablets forwards, backwards; the same threads are still raised. The third image in Figure 10 shows the surface of the band if you correctly turn forwards, forwards; the surface threads are going down under new warp threads which are being raised.



Pick 1 (forwards)



Pick 2 – wrong (backwards)



Pick 2 – right (forwards)

Figure 10: which way to turn the tablets for the second pick?

Weaving other motifs

Figure 11 shows weaving charts for other motifs inspired by the 13th century band.

To change the colour for an individual tablet, give the tablet an extra half turn in the direction that you just turned it when you are one of the Home positions and have just thrown the weft

So if the tablets are in Home Position 1, give the tablets you want to change an extra half turn backwards. Or if the tablets are in Home Position 2, give them an extra half turn forwards.

Then continue weaving as normal.

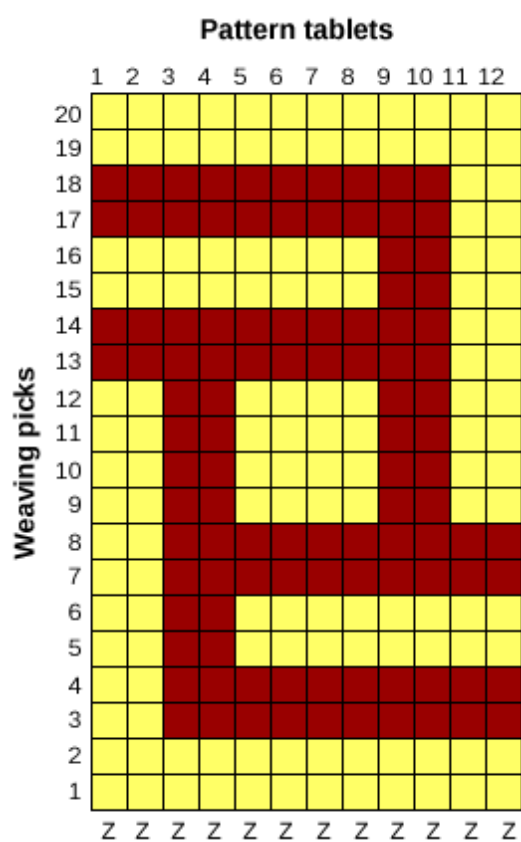
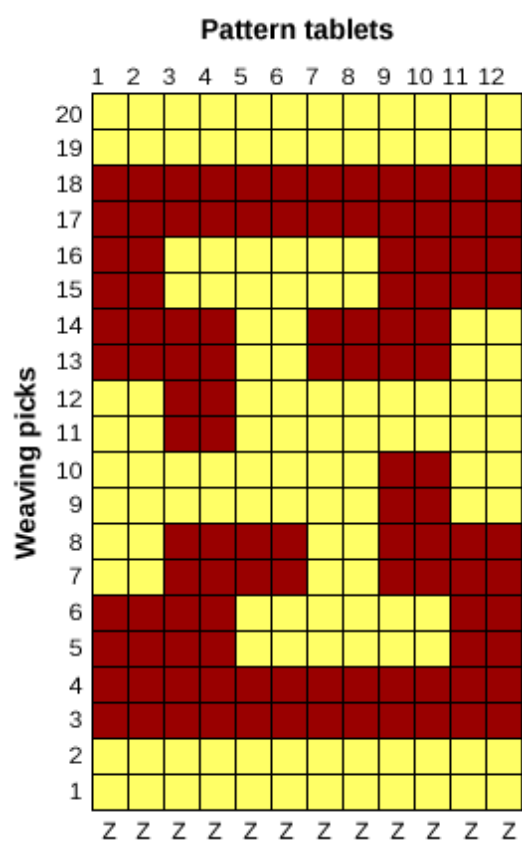
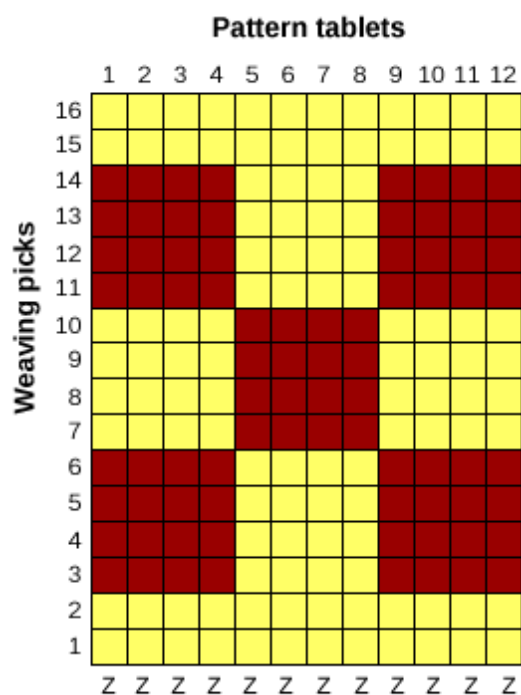
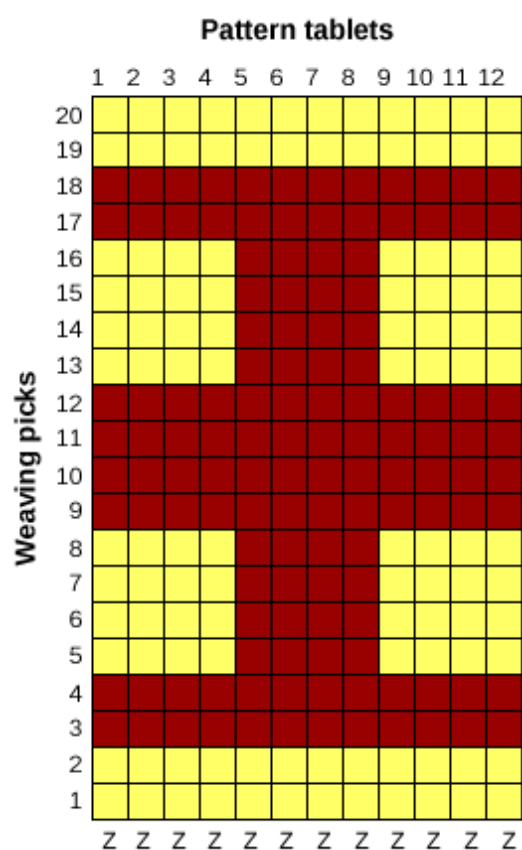


Figure 11: additional motifs in the style of the 13th century seal tag.