

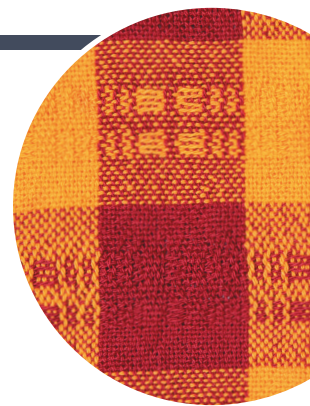
Monk's Belt Revisited

SUSAN A. BLOOMFIELD



Photos by Matt Graves

HANDWOVEN



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STRUCTURE

Monk's belt and plain weave.

EQUIPMENT

4-shaft loom, 20" weaving width; 10-dent reed; 2 shuttles.

YARNS

Warp: 8/2 cotton A (3,360 yd/lb; UKI; Yarn Barn of Kansas), #33 Gold, 720 yd. 8/2 cotton B (3,360 yd/lb; Maurice Brassard; Yarn Barn of Kansas), #5193 Garnet, 864 yd.

Weft: 8/2 cotton A, #33 Gold, 552 yd. 8/2 cotton B, #5193 Garnet, 605 yd.

WARP LENGTH

396 ends 4 yd long (allows 10" for take-up, 30" for loom waste).

SETTS

Warp: 20 epi (2/dent in a 10-dent reed).

Weft: 18 ppi.

DIMENSIONS

Width in the reed: 19⁹/₁₀".

Woven length: (measured under tension on the loom) about 104".

Finished size: (after wet-finishing and hemming) four towels, 17¹/₂" × 21" each.

I am endlessly inspired by past Handwovens. I have nearly every issue from when I began weaving, plus older copies acquired at fairs or from friends. As I peruse these treasures, I often feel a jolt of excitement, a sudden flight of creativity that I know I did not experience the first time I read through the magazine. As a beginner weaver, I skipped articles with what I considered to be advanced weave structures. Nowadays, with my evolved skills, it is like reading the magazines anew as I consider projects I once bypassed.

When I reread the May/June 1987 *Handwoven*, I was struck by the article "Reinterpreting Old Weaves for Today and Tomorrow" by Margaretha Essen-Hedin. She reinterpreted a Swedish museum's small handwoven dress fragment into a tablecloth. I am confident I bypassed this article when I first came upon it because it was monk's belt, and I arbitrarily decided it was too complicated.

The image of that monk's belt tablecloth stayed with me for weeks, and I decided to reinterpret her scrap-to-tablecloth reinterpretation. I changed the scale and colors to create hand towels. In so doing, I realized several things: As we acquire new skills and become more confident weavers, our trove of *Handwoven* magazines (print or digital) is indispensable. We preserve our collective weaving heritage and keep it alive by revision. And above all, lifelong learning, enthusiasm, and confidence can lead to unanticipated, joyful flights of inspiration.

1 Wind a warp of 396 ends 4 yd long following the warp color order, Figure 1. Warp the loom using your preferred method following the draft in Figure 2. Centering for a weaving width of 19⁹/₁₀", sley 2 ends per dent in a 10-dent reed.

2 Wind bobbins with each of the weft colors. Spread the warp with scrap yarn.

3 Weave 1¹/₂" of plain weave in Garnet for a hem (about 30 picks) and begin the pattern in Gold according to the draft. Alternate Garnet and Gold, aiming for a consistent beat of 18 ppi. Continue weaving so you have 7 Garnet rows alternating with 6 Gold rows (this includes the plain-weave Garnet hem sections). End with 1¹/₂" of plain weave in Garnet for the hem. Your towel will be about 26" long.

4 Weave 2–3 picks of contrasting yarn to separate the towels. Weave the remaining three towels, weaving a few contrasting picks to separate each from the next.

5 Weave several picks of scrap yarn to secure the weft. Remove the fabric from the loom. Straight stitch raw ends by machine to secure.

6 Wet-finish by machine washing in warm water, then tumble dry. Cut the towels apart between the contrasting picks and



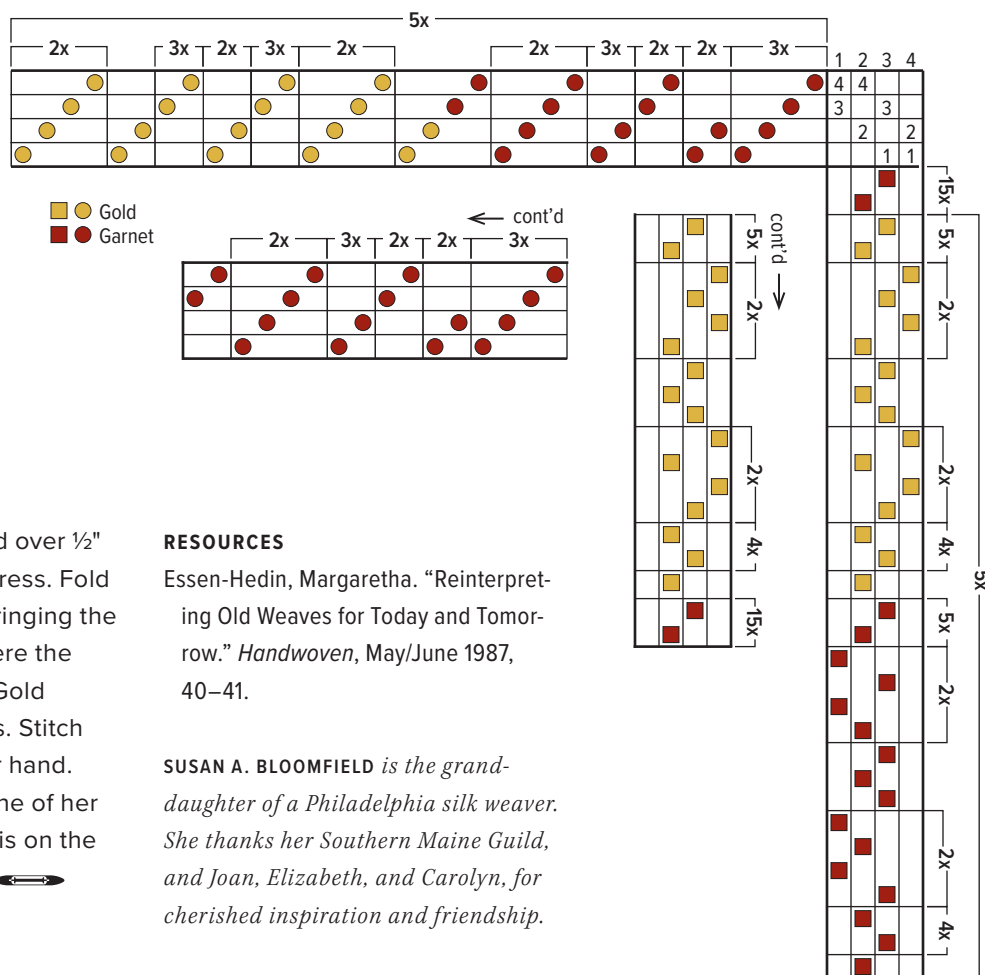
HEDDLE COUNT

Shaft 4	98
Shaft 3	98
Shaft 2	100
Shaft 1	100
Total	396


1. WARP COLOR ORDER

5x		
180	36	Gold
216	36	Garnet
396 ends total		

2. DRAFT



trim any scrap yarn. Fold over 1/2" on the raw edges and press. Fold the hem under again, bringing the first fold to the spot where the Garnet hem meets the Gold monk's belt block. Press. Stitch the hems by machine or hand.

Note: Susan hemmed one of her towels so that the back is on the front. Weaver's choice! 

RESOURCES

Essen-Hedin, Margaretha. "Reinterpreting Old Weaves for Today and Tomorrow." *Handwoven*, May/June 1987, 40-41.

SUSAN A. BLOOMFIELD is the granddaughter of a Philadelphia silk weaver. She thanks her Southern Maine Guild, and Joan, Elizabeth, and Carolyn, for cherished inspiration and friendship.