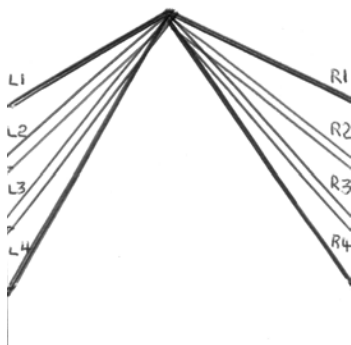


A Simple Braid from Latvia. This braid is made with 8 Strands. To help you follow the instructions, colour in as red, lines R2 and L2 and colour in as blue, R3 and L3 in the diagram below. These yarns should be thicker than the black ones – or you use the same yarn doubled.



Pin the strands to a piece of thick expanded polystyrene or thick cardboard
Initial position 1

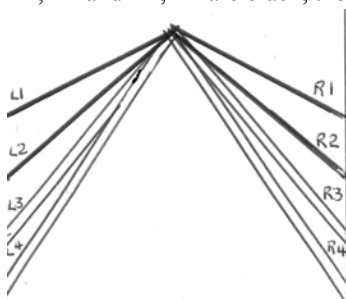
Move 1. Move R2 over to left, below L4.

Move 2. Move L2 over to right, below R4.

Move 3. Move R3 over to bottom left, below the red thread.

Move 4. Move L2 over to bottom right, below the red thread.

Your yarns should now be in this order: Colour the diagram to match R1, L1 and R2, L2 are black, then R3, L3 are red and R4, L4 are blue.



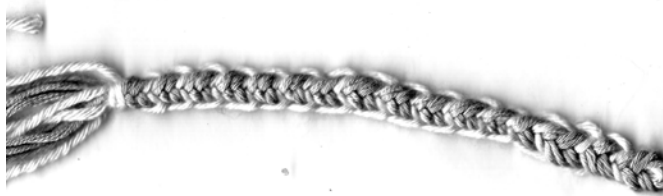
Move 5. Move R1 **under** the new R2, **over** R3 and R4, and place below L4.

Move 6. Move L1 **under** the new L2, **over** the other threads on the left, and place below R4.

Tension the braid by holding the threads, and pulling your hands gently apart.

Repeat moves 1 to 6

Directions supplied by Sandy Jessett



Welcome to the first issue of ***Begin Braiding***. I would like to introduce you to the world of braids and narrow bands. You are welcome to make copies of this issue and give it to others.

These small textiles were a vital part of life in the past. Bands could be used as ties and trims on clothing and objects. They were also things of beauty. They are still present in our daily life but are usually made mechanically and they get taken for granted.

You can make braids using many different methods. I am going to introduce them to you one by one in this publication and hope you will find it interesting enough to practise the methods. Once you understand a method, you can use all sorts of material to make the Braid and see if you are satisfied with the results. You can alter the scale of the materials - thick or thin and vary the colours. Above all, do have fun

Practical things

You will need a board to enable you to pin threads down, so that you can work firmly and evenly. You can use particle board or thick cardboard or glue two sheets together. Thick polystyrene sheet is useful. The nicest pins to use are special T shaped pins used for macrame. PVA glue can also be used to secure ends of braids. You can also sew or whip the ends of braids so they look good, so a large needle will come in handy and some matching thread. Embroidery threads come in many colours.

When you are manipulating threads, you will need to produce a consistent, even result for the end product to look attractive. The pull you need to exert on threads is called tension. It is very important and it is something that will come with plenty of practice.

If you write to Fred Aldous 37 Lever Street, Manchester, M1 1LW they will send you a catalogue of interesting craft items and you can order them with a postal order

Plaiting. You probably already know about the three strands hair plait which looks like this first diagram You can use knitting yarn for the three elements and use several strands to make a fat plait. Cotton yarn will look crisper.



Pin down the strands on to your work surface. Make the plait by working the outer strand into the centre, first from one side and then from the other side. In the illustration the next move will be from the left into the centre.

As you can see, the colours used will work their way from side to side. You can experiment with thick and thin yarns and different colours. You can use paper strips, raffia or straw and recycled plastic bags cut into strips. Plaits can be sewn together to make mats and bags and coiled round and sewn to make containers. By overlapping a new strand before reaching the very end of one, you can carry on plaiting. Move the pins up the plait as you work to keep an even tension and the plait looking the same.

This next diagram is for the seven strand plait, illustrated as four light and three dark strands.

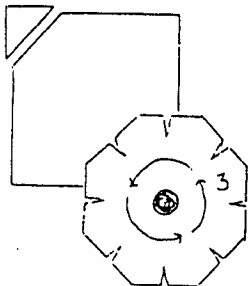


When you have many strands, put them over a cord or lolly stick pinned down on the board. The next move is to bring the outside left hand light strand over the other three into the centre followed by the outside right dark strand into the centre. If you hold the groups of threads, one in each hand, the group that has four strands held makes the next move. Play around with the colours for this plait and find out the effect on the appearance of the plait and which combination you like best. Keep the tension firm..

Diagrams by June Barker



Fill Gap. The fill gap braid is very popular but it requires a special board which you have to make yourself.



Take a square of firm cardboard (about 7 cm to 10cm square). Cut off the corners evenly and cut a narrow notch in each side. Push a pen or knitting needle through the centre of the card to make a smooth hole for 7 strands of thread to go through

Diagram Ann Dyer

Seven threads are required, leaving one slot empty. You can try with knitting wool to start with. To begin with, use 5 main colours and 2 strongly contrasting ones. For normal thickness, you need threads one and a half times as long as the braid you want to make, plus about 20cm for the unbraided ends. Put one thread in each of seven slots, push the ends through the hole and knot them right underneath the board.

Position the board with the empty slot at 12 o'clock then weave by taking the thread from the third slot to the right of the empty slot, out of its notch and then put this thread into the empty slot to the left. The illustration above shows the direction arrow marked on the board and the number 3 as a reminder.

Keep repeating the process.

Ann Dyer recommends this method of working;

“Balance the board on your thumb and first finger which holds the tied ends of the threads. Later these fingers will hold the top of the braid, all the time easing the finished braid down through the hole, then tuck your next two fingers into your palm and pretend they don't exist. Bring all the threads together and slip them under your little finger. This gives you space to get hold of the thread you want under the board and stops them jumping out of the slots.”

For a very long braid, wind the threads on to cardboard bobbins.

Please send an envelope marked **fill-gap**, with your name and address if you would like a longer explanatory leaflet on this subject.