

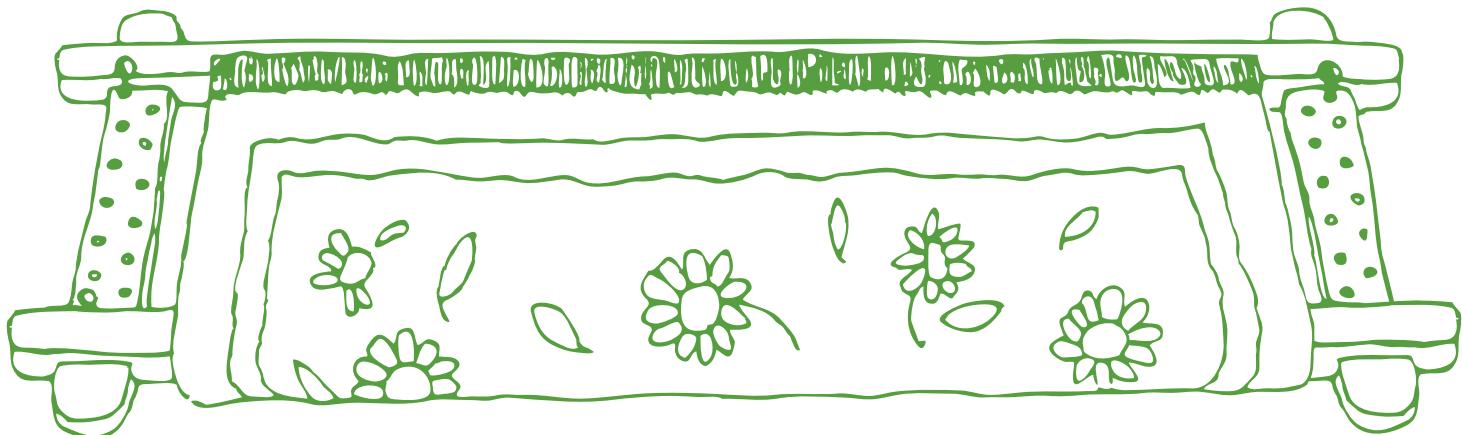
# Hooky and Proggy: A beginners guide

The tradition of mat making isn't unique to the North East but the terms hooky and proggy are. They are also known as clippy mats, proddy, cleekie, clootie, stobby, poked, tab, broddy, bogged and peg rugs.

Like many crafts, mat-making was originally born out of necessity, but today is very much about the pleasure of making and the growing interest in recycling.

Here are a set of instructions for making rag rugs, put together by textile artist Ali Rhind, to take you through the process of making hooky and proggy mats as well as making the frames and tools.

Check out the accompanying instructional films at:  
<http://www.twmuseums.org.uk/shIPLEY-art-gallery.html>  
and Ali Rhind's website at:  
[www.alirhindtextiles.co.uk](http://www.alirhindtextiles.co.uk)



These resources have been produced as part of Hand on Crafts, a Voluntary Arts England programme to improve interest and involvement in specific at-risk traditional crafts.

# ----- How to make frames and tools -----

## Frames

Many people still have mat making frames in their lofts. If you are making a mat as part of a school project it is worth making a plea to grandparents or to your local community. Mat frames, however, are very simple to produce and could make an interesting project in themselves.

### You will need:

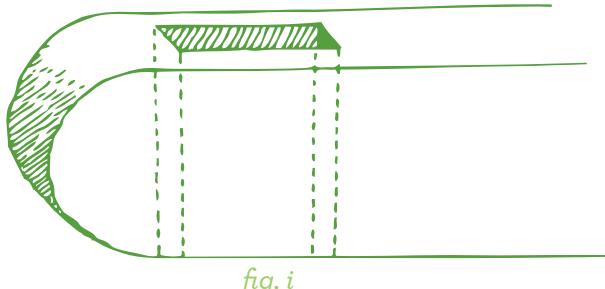
- Upholstery webbing
- Tacks or upholstery staples
- 2 wooden main cross pieces –150 cm x 7.5 cm x 2.5 cm (60" x 3"x 1") \*
- 2 wooden side stretchers – 80 cm x 7 cm x 1.5 cm (32" x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x  $\frac{1}{2}$ ")

Softwood is adequate for the main cross pieces but something stronger, a hardwood or a quality plywood, is preferable for the side stretchers as they are kept under strain.

\* NB.

These lengths of the main cross pieces can be longer for larger rugs or if you wish to have several people working together on one frame, or smaller if you have limited space and intend to make small items. The length of the side stretchers remains the same.

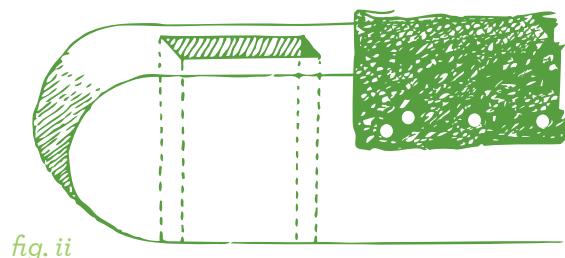
## Cross Pieces



A slot needs to be cut 4.5 cm in from the end and it should be big enough to allow the side stretchers to slide through easily.

If you have a mortiser, this makes things very simple, if not a drill and chisel will do the job.

When the slots are cut and the ends rounded off and sanded, the upholstery webbing should be attached with tacks or staples (as in fig. ii).



Attach the webbing 1.5 cm in from the slots at both ends, fold the ends under and put double tacks at both ends through the two thicknesses of webbing. Tacks or staples should be about 5 cm apart and the webbing attached so that half its width overhangs the frame (fig. iii).



*fig. iii*

## Side Stretchers

Holes are drilled at 2.5 cm intervals (fig. iv). It is best not to drill the holes directly opposite each other as this weakens the stretcher. The holes should be 1cm in diameter.

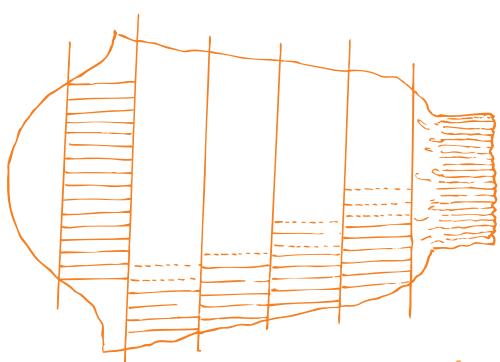


*fig. iv*

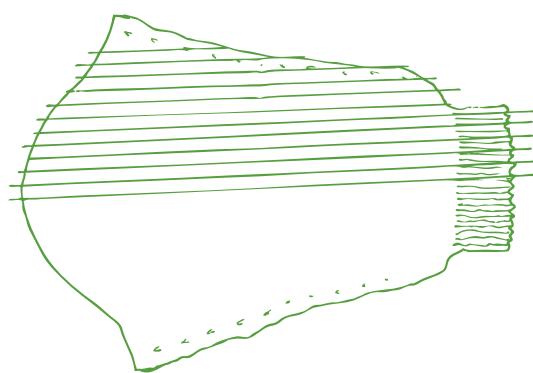
## Pegs

The pegs which are slotted through the stretchers can be made in a variety of ways; short pieces of dowelling, blunt ended nails, golf tees or heavy duty split pins all work well.

## Preparing Your Material



*Proggy clippings*



*Hooky lengths*

Cutting strips for hooky from an old jumper sleeve: Cut 1.8 cm wide long strips with the direction of the knit.

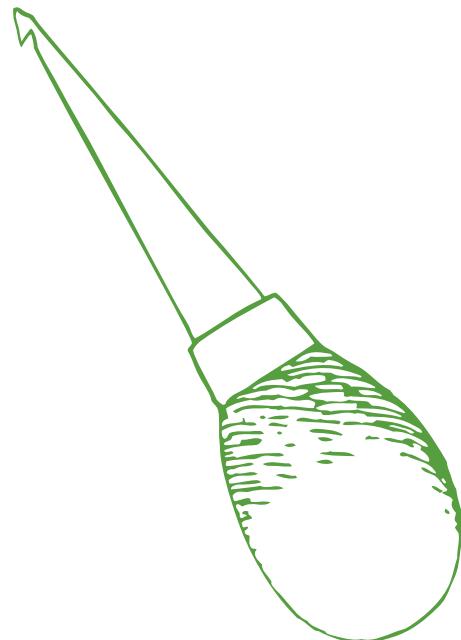
Cutting strips for hooky from an old jumper sleeve: You need to keep the vertical cut with the direction of the knit.

# ----- Choosing the technique for you -----

## Hooky

This technique uses long strips of fabric, bringing up loops onto the surface to give a close looped pile. It is possible to create more detailed designs using this technique, and the direction that you work in gives movement within your design. Try using different textures such as stretchy velours, silky shiny fabrics or soft woollen jumpers. Patterned materials for example give a surprising speckled effect.

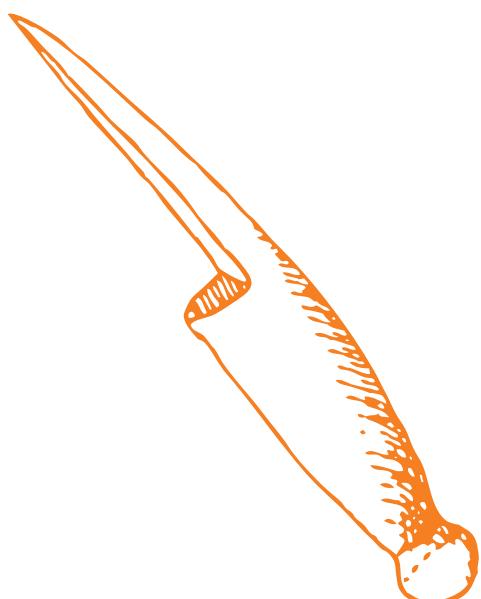
All stretchy materials work well, but if you intend to use your mat on the floor then woollens work best as they wear well and repel the dirt better than cottons or synthetics which should be avoided.



## Proggy

Proggy is the simpler technique of the two and is slightly easier for younger children or less dexterous makers. Proggy lends itself to sharp bold patterns and exciting use of colours as detail is lost in its thick rich texture. The thickness of the pile depends on the type of material used, and how closely you work the clippings.

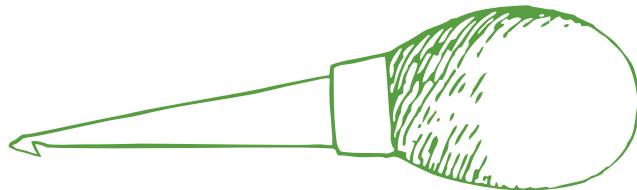
Thick woollen clippings worked close together will produce a dense and upright pile. Finer materials with more space between the rows will have an attractive floppier effect, but that is not suitable for use on the floor. Suitable materials for proggy are non-stretchy fabrics with some body in them such as woollen blankets, coats, shrunken woollen jumpers, flannel and jersey.



# Hooks

Traditionally, hooks were made at home or at work, often adapted from another tool such as a poker or a key to form a hook. The metal part was often made of a soft metal such as brass or copper as they are nicer to use.

Many of these still appear at car boot sales and junk shops, but you do need to be selective and choose a fine harpoon shaped hook with a short tapered shaft to make a large enough hole with.



# Proppers

Making your own propper is quite simple if you use a traditional “dolly peg”. You will need to cut off one leg and sharpen the remaining leg to an even taper which will need to be sand-papered to ensure the end is not too sharp.



# History

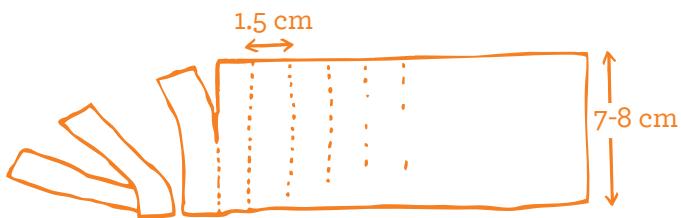
Different areas of the North East had very different tools. In rural, sheep farming areas, rams' horns were used as proppers, while in South Shields 'fids', the wooden tool used to make and mend fishing nets, would be adapted.

Wallsend had a large rope works called Haggies where the metal heckle pins that were used to splice the ropes also made good proppers.

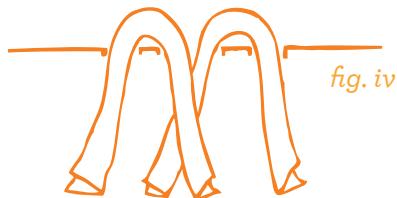
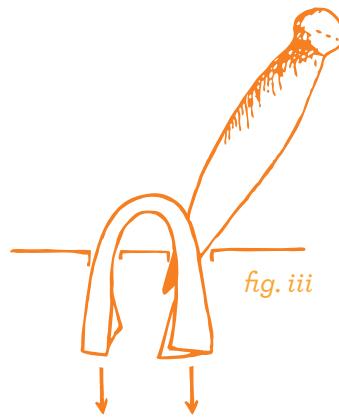
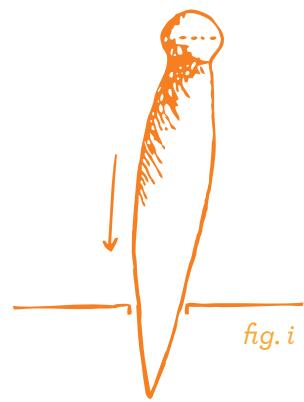
Men often made fine hooks and proppers when they were apprentices in the shipyards along the Tyne and the Wear. These were sometimes made as love tokens using ebony, brass, copper etc. In pit villages they tended to be cruder, all-metal tools, made by the pit blacksmiths. Everywhere, however, human ingenuity prevailed and you can find beautiful tools made from keys, bullets, bolts or even organ stops!

# Proggy

1. After deciding the size of your mat, pull out a thread in your hessian 6 cm larger than the finished size. Cut along the line made by the pulled thread, this gives the hessian a straight grain.
2. Make a 3 cm hem, by hand or machine, there is then no further finishing to do and you may work right up to the edge, through this double thickness.
3. Proggy is worked from the back, so mark out your design with the rough side of the hem facing up. Use chalk first to mark out the design, using a damp cloth if you make a mistake. Then go over with a marker pen for the final design to work to.
4. Using an overstitch, sew your marked hessian on to the webbing on the frame using a very strong thread. Make sure the hessian is placed centrally to avoid distortion.
5. Only about 50 cm of your pattern needs to be exposed, the rest is wound on the frame and tightly stretched. Wind on when that section is completed and so on until you have finished.
6. Using sharp scissors cut clippings 7-8 cm long and 1.5cm wide. Lightweight materials can be cut up to 3cm wide and folded double.

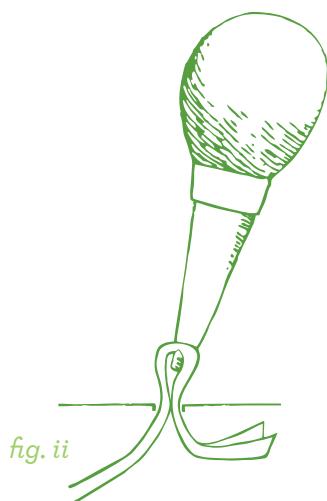
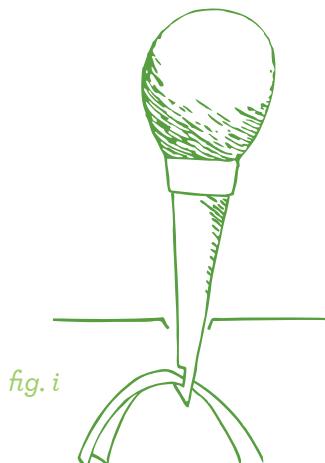


7. Progging is worked with the back of the rug facing up. Your finished side will be underneath.
8. Make a hole with the tapered end of your progger (fig. i).
9. Poke your clipping halfway through with your progger. Keep your other hand underneath to catch it and pull it down to leave about 4.5 cm on top (fig. ii).
10. Make your second hole about 0.8 cm away and poke the other end of the clipping in it, then pull down using your hand underneath to make the two ends even (fig. iii).
11. Pick up your next clipping and repeat the process by progging the second clipping through the same hole as the end of the first clipping. This gives a dense texture. If you are using thick material it may be necessary to create a new hole, close to the first one, to prog the next clipping through (fig. iv).
12. When you have finished your mat snip the stitching between the webbing and the hessian, remove from the frame, turn over and trim any uneven clippings to give a neat pile.
13. You may like to spray your mat with a fabric protector to help keep it clean.

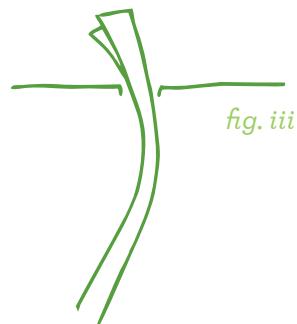


# Hooky

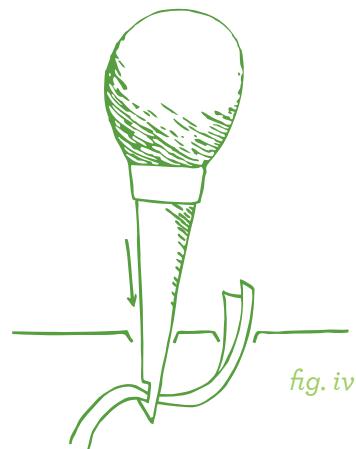
1. After deciding the size of your mat, pull out a thread in your hessian 15 cm larger than the desired finished size. Cut along the pulled thread, this gives the hessian a straight grain.
2. Make a 1.5 cm hem by hand or machine and then pull another thread 6 cm in from the hemmed edge. This will be the edge of the finished mat and the 6 cm border should be turned under when you have finished.
3. Prepare your strips of fabric to hook, cutting them 1.8 cm wide. If your fabric is very thick and heavy the strips will need to be slightly narrower. If the fabric is very fine the strips should be wider, you may want to cut the strips double width and use it folded in half.
4. Hooky is worked from the front, so mark your design with the rough side of the hem at the back.
5. Using an overstitch, sew your marked hessian onto the webbing on the frame using a very strong thread. Make sure the hessian is placed centrally to avoid distortion.
6. Only about 50 cm of your design needs to be exposed, the rest is wound on the frame and tightly stretched. Wind on when that section is completed and so on until you have finished.
7. With the right side of the rug facing up, begin by holding your hook in your right hand and your strip of fabric in your left hand which should be underneath the hessian. Always work from right to left (reverse these if you are left handed).
8. With the hook facing up toward you and in the direction you are working, push down through the hessian to make a hole. This should be big enough so that when you bring your strip up, the hook does not catch on the hessian (fig. i).
9. Working at a slight angle, bring the end of the strip through the hole to the top of the hessian (fig. ii).



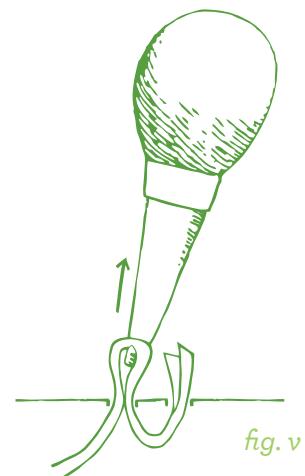
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10. Always start and finish by bringing your strip ends up to the top surface and start your next strip in the same hole. These ends can then be trimmed to the same height as the loops. They are then hidden by the loops surrounding them from accidental snagging (fig. iii).



11. Push the hook down again about 2 or 3 strands of hessian to the left of the previous hole. Catch the strip and bring up a loop about 1-1.5 cm high, to the top surface. Continue in this way (fig. iv & fig. v).



12. As you get more practiced, pinch your strip underneath (almost folding it), this will give a neater, rounded loop on the surface (fig. vi).



13. When you have finished, press your mat on both sides with a steam iron and a tea towel. Turn the 6 cm border under, pinning first to keep it flat, then slipstitch it down making sure that every few stitches you catch the hessian not just the strips. Alternatively you can glue the border down with a fabric adhesive.

