Knotting Matters

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE

INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF KNOT TYERS

"KNOTTING MATTERS"

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Editorial

Why are knot books so limited in their scope, rehashing the same old stuff, with little new or challenging? Do the authors lack imagination and invention? Partly, I guess, but in the end publishers only print what will attract the biggest readership and the best possible sales. There's no great market for complicated fancy knotting, mathematical formulae, or discussions of trade tricks and tools, so such books don't succeed.

That's a pity because unless fresh developments are aired knotting fossilizes. The notion is reinforced that the time-honoured but antiquated knowledge is all there is... when in fact - I suspect - we are aware of less than half of all that awaits discovery.

So, then - let's produce and sell our own written work! Isn't that what a Guild should do, support and promote its craftsmen and women? And that is our next exciting step. Several projects are in hand now and, before this year is out, I expect Ivy BLANDFORD's shop to have for sale a number of unique booklets (modestly reproduced and bound) retailing members' original work for general consumption. Thus we shall continue to be the biggest impact on knotting since Ashley.

Obituaries

The Guild lost two of its elder founder members recently.

<u>C.G. BELLINGHAM</u>   of Swansea's only connections with knots were as a yacht owner and scout; but, because he had travelled to our inaugural meeting aboard R.R.S. 'Discovery' with a friend, he contributed money and followed our growth with personal interest and pride until his death.

<u>MORLEY KENNERLEY</u> was an American resident in London, a retired director of Faber & Faber (Publishers) Ltd. who are responsible for 'The Ashley Book of Knots' in the United Kingdom. His influence has advanced our cause and his legacy to us is a continuing special relationship with the firm.

We mourn the loss of both yet rejoice they were our friends.

Coils - - - - - - - - from Canadian ROB CHISNALL

1   SKEIN COIL

2

1

2   ALPINE COIL

3
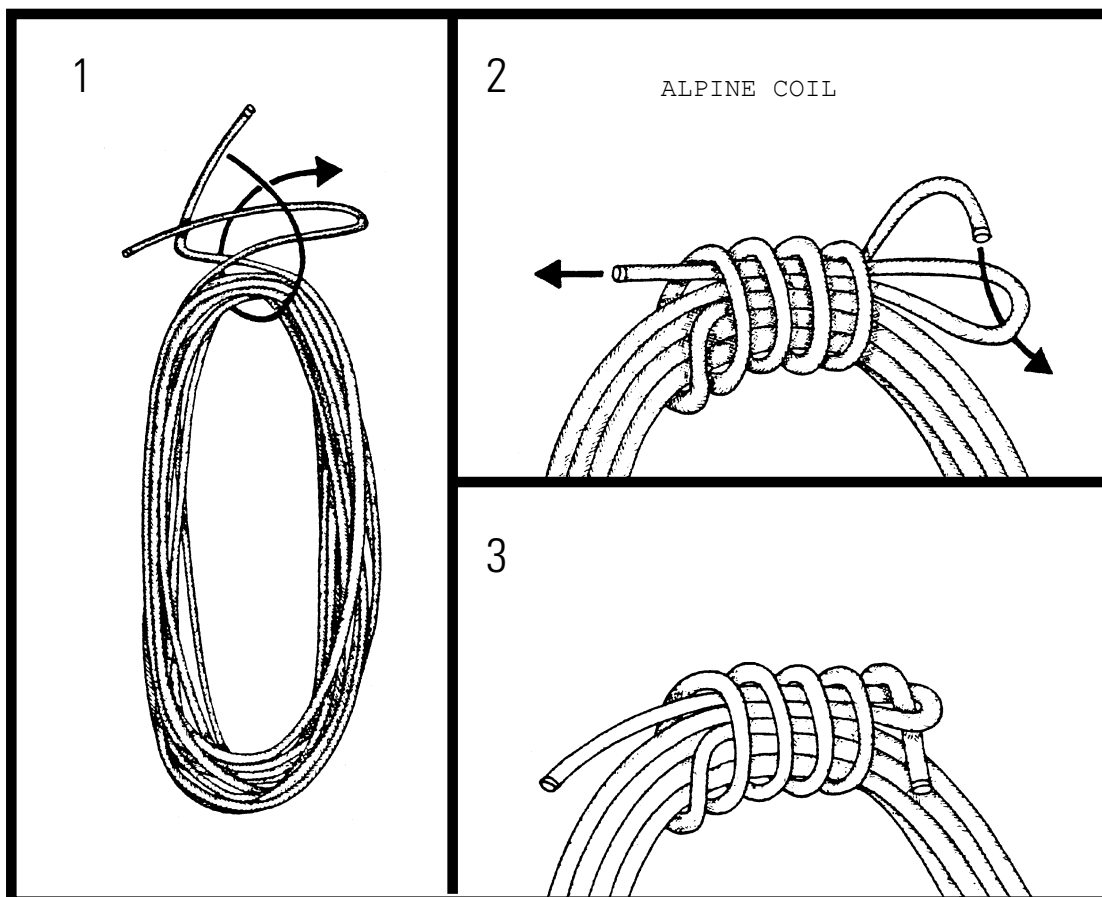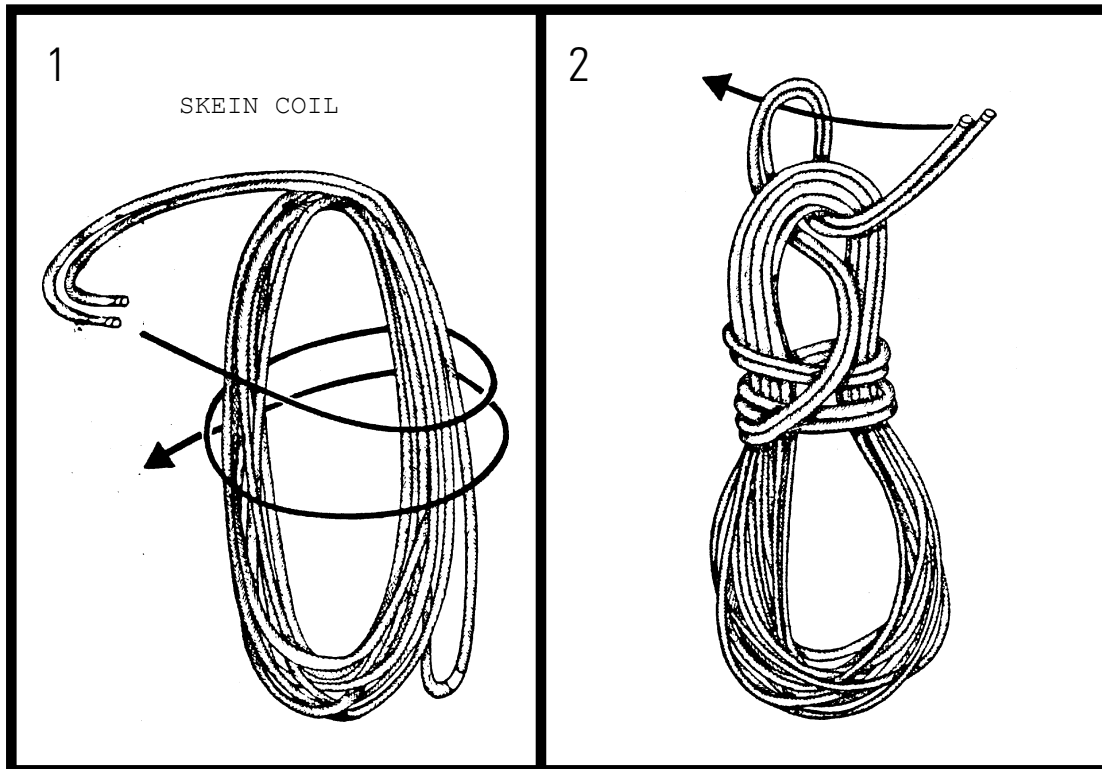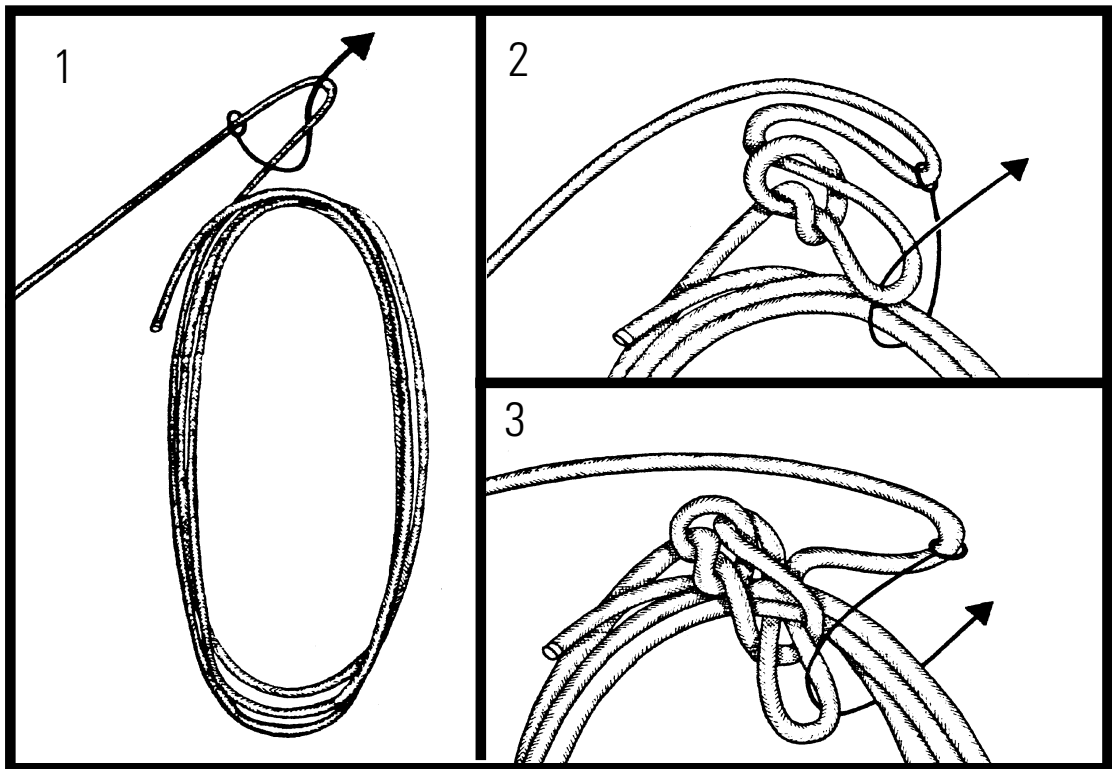
COLORADO SNAKE FIGHT or
SEAMAN'S CHAIN COIL (never tangles)

Profile

by the Editor

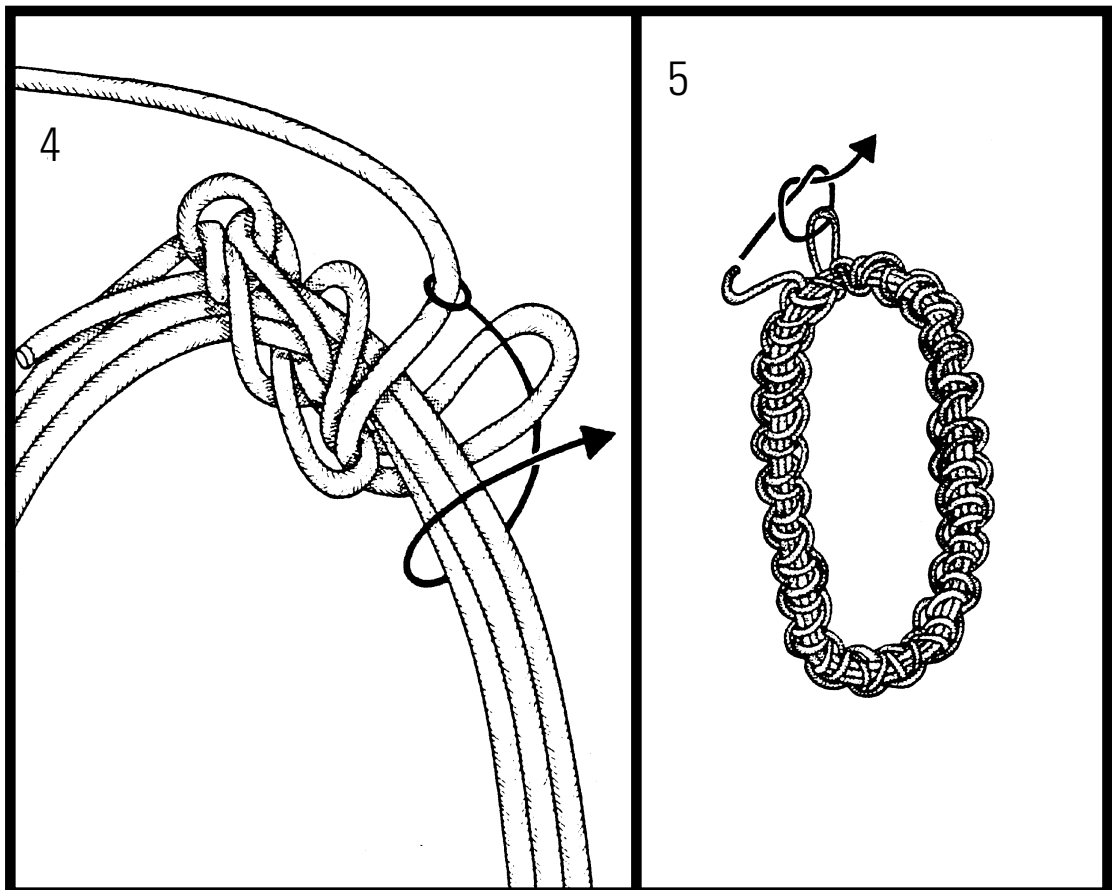Tom LONG was in younger years a sort of smuggler (no doubt nicknamed "Long Tom" by his mates who were - like him - under secret orders from His Majesty's Royal Navy). You've seen him at Guild meetings aboard H.M.S. 'President', the stalwart and ruddy-faced chap with the big strong hands who comes from King's Lynn on the East coast. There's a merry twinkle in his eyes which tells you he really IS the man whose wartime exploits were featured in the British Broadcasting Corporation's 1965 series 'Now It Can be Told'.

Those hands, incidentally, made the 'Ropework Nelson Era' knotboard we display at Guild exhibitions; and, when he flew out to friends and family in Australia last year, he was the centre of attention from crew and passengers as he plaited up a sea chest handle in mackerel line. Then, settling into a 3-months routine of touring and resting, he also made up a 38" x 291/2" knotboard with 72 items (splices, plaits, sennits, coachwhipping, Turks' heads, etc.) and put that sea chest handle as its centre-piece. At Flagstaff Hill in Warnabool they have turned the clock back to 1860 and are refitting 2 schooners and so our Tom judged that a good spot to leave his knotboard.

It won't be the first time this old salt's ropeworking skills have been on display. The Anglia Building Society's Trafalgar Day exhibition (as part of Maritime England, '82) featured his knotboards.

In 1948, the Brixham trawler 'Provident' was lying in Frenchman's Creek near-derelict with just two bare masts. She'd been there since 1939. No boatyard from Brixham to Bristol would attempt to re-rig her. Her owner asked Tom several times to do the job but he thought it too big a task for one man. . . . .until the owner threatened to convert the old craft into a houseboat! Tom yielded, and that's how he came - singlehanded - to re-rig completely the trawler.

Mind you, it must have been a doddle to his WWII activities. In 1941, young Tom was taken off the destroyer H.M.S. 'Punjabi' in mysterious fashion and sent "hush, hush" to Cornwall's Helford River as chief petty officer coxswain of the renowned French sailing vessel 'Mutin'. This vessel was fitted out as a tunny fisherman for working the Bay of Biscay under orders from M.I.6. Tom and all that crew were also dressed the part they needed to play; and risky fun it proved to be, dropping undercover agents on enemy occupied beaches and behind enemy lines, returning to supply them with stores or to take them off again.

This jolly old fellow has tales of adventures to tell. His sailorlike hobby befits him. We are honoured he is one of us.

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Thong of Thongs

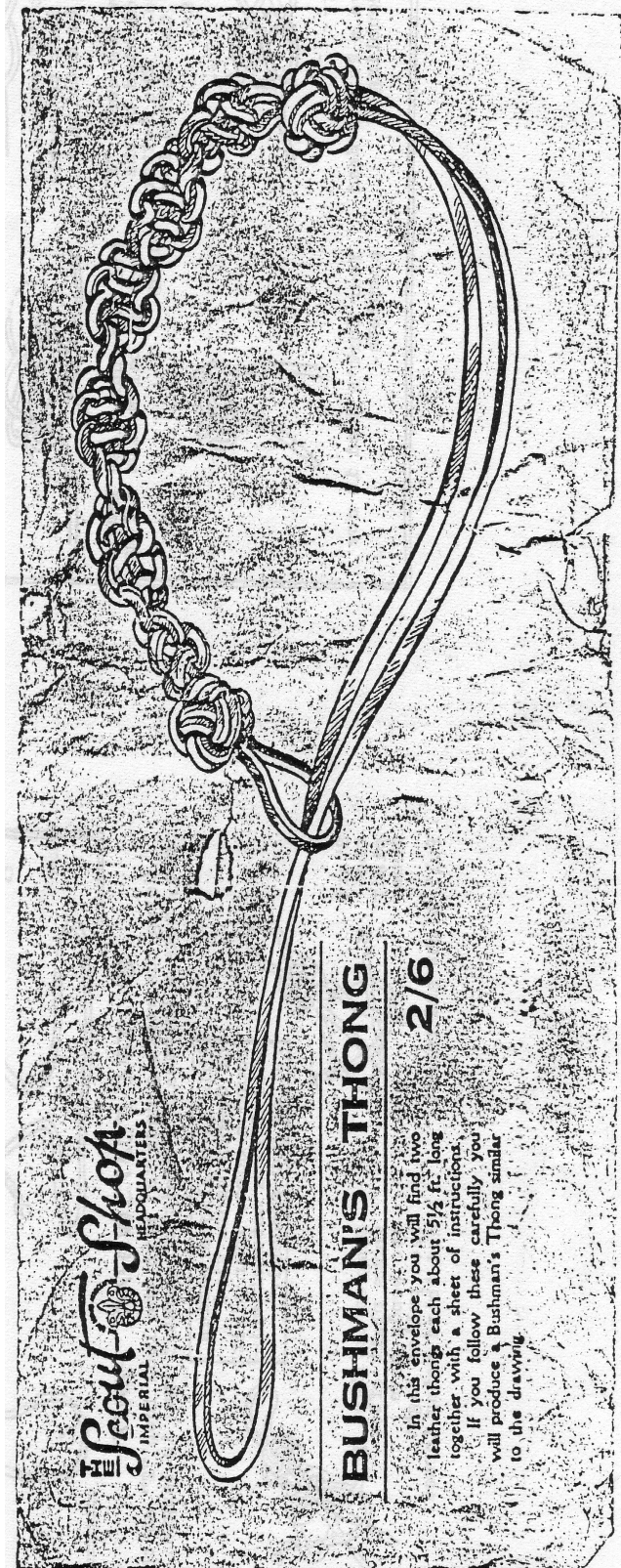*Congratulations!*

on earning

Your

BUSHMAN'S THONG

THIS LEAFLET WILL SHOW YOU
HOW TO MAKE IT

THE Scout Shop
IMPERIAL HEADQUARTERS

BUSHMAN'S THONG

2/6

In this envelope you will find two
leather thongs each about 5½ ft. long
together with a sheet of instruction.
If you follow these carefully you
will produce a Bushman's Thong similar
to the drawing.

Middle-aged scouts
will recall how the honour
of earning your Bushman's
Thong was cleverly turned
into yet another challenge
- before you could wear it,
you had to make it your-
self! That was the tradi-
tion.

The good old Scout
Shop helped and this repro-
duction of their wrapping
paper together with in-
structions how to create
the distinguished lanyard
were sent to us by Brian
LAMB.

Great knot lore,
Brian, thank you. . . . and
it's still a neat way to
make a shoulder lanyard.

5

HOW TO CONSTRUCT THE BUSHMAN'S THONG

With these instructions you will find two leather thongs each about 5½ feet long. If you follow these instructions and diagrams carefully, your finished thong should have the appearance of the sketch on the envelope.

It might be a good idea to try the Turk's Head and the Boatswain's Plait with a piece of cord before embarking on the construction of the Thong.

① HOW TO MAKE A TURK'S HEAD

FIRST MAKE A CARRICK BEND THUS:

(The ends at "A" should be about 4ins. long to enable the knot to be doubled.)

Double the knot by follow-ing round with ends "A" as shown by dotted lines.

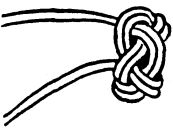Next, follow the ends "A" round as indicated by the dotted lines. The letter "X" denotes the centre for second thong.

Cut any ends close leaving knot as below with a long loop.

You now have a Turk's Head ready for doubling.

Your Turk's Head is now complete.

② PREPARATION FOR THE PLAIT

Having made the Turk's Head in one thong, make a loop at the midway point of the second thong and push it up through the centre of the Turk's Head thus:
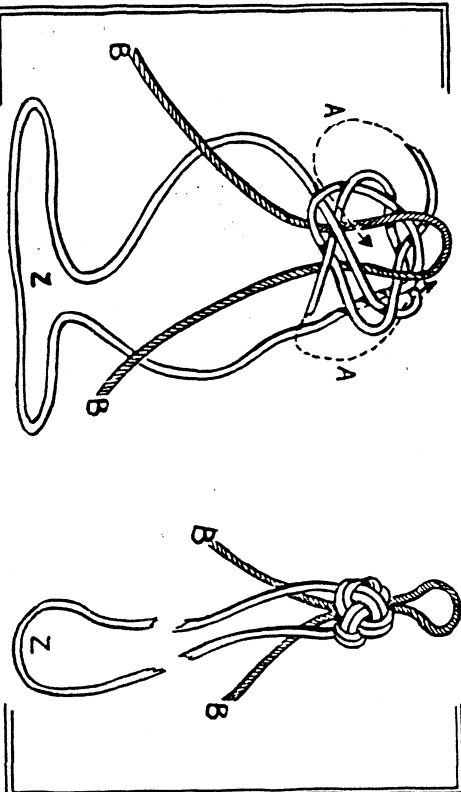
③ THE BOATSWAIN'S PLAIT

Using the working ends "B" with the long loop "Z" as the core, make a Boatswain's Plait of about 5 ins. in length.

This is really a series of Granny knots tied round a core. Your plait will form a natural spi-ral as you proceed.
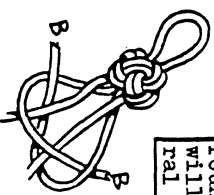
Start the plait thus:

Pull tight and repeat.
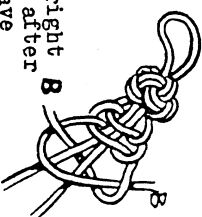
Diagram on right shows plait after two bends have been pulled tight and third being formed.

4 THE FINAL STAGE

After approximately 5 ins. of plaiting, finish off with a second Turk's Head, in a similar manner as the first. As you will only have short ends to play with, you will not find the second Turk's Head quite so easy as the first.

Make your Carrick Bend and then thread the remainder of your loop through its centre at "X". Then finish off the Turk's Head (as insert) and. cut off ends close.

HOW TO WEAR YOUR THONG

Wear your thong with pride ... AND WEAR IT CORRECTLY!
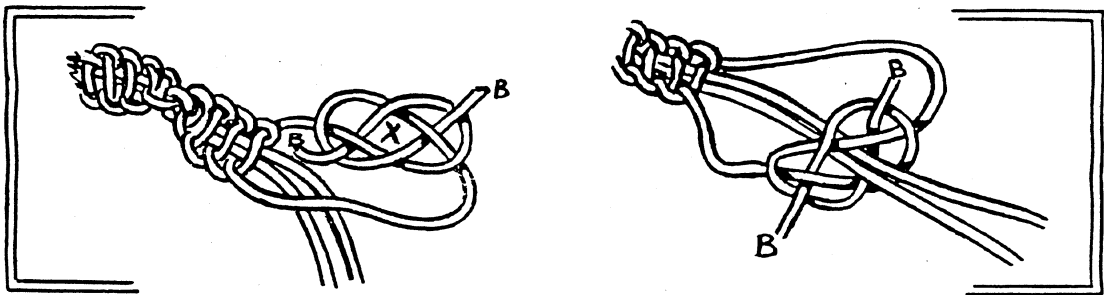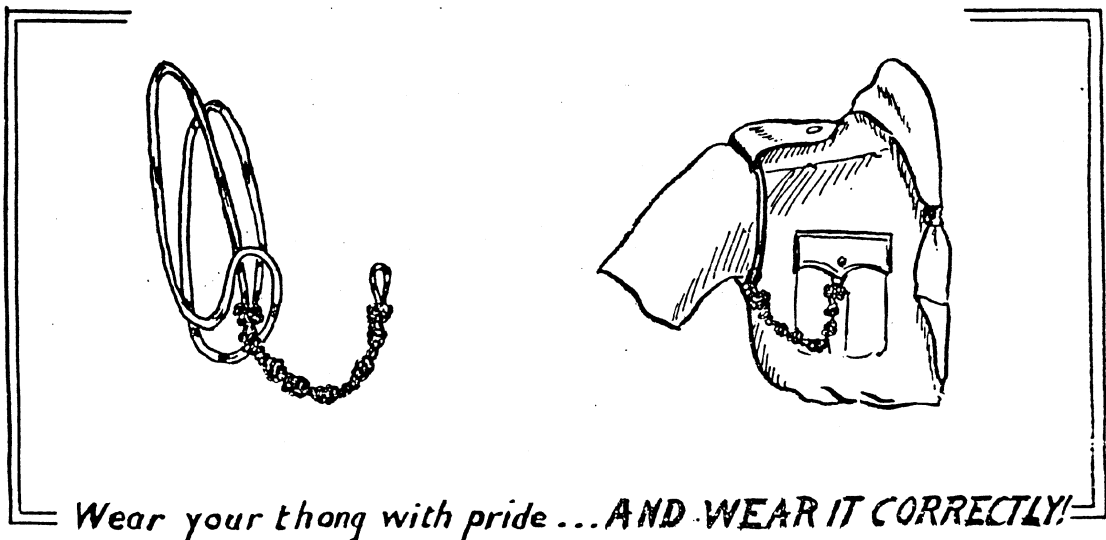
KNOTTING IN MEDICINE AND SURGERY

By R. M. FLINN, M.B., CH.B.

The Children's Hospital, Birmingham

THE aim of this article is to present an account of the history and technique of knotting as applied to medicine and surgery. It was prompted by observation of many surgeons at work, and the difficulties which they encountered.

HISTORY

The association of knots with medicine and surgery extends far back into history. It was once believed that knots could cure human illness. For instance, a favourite way to get rid of warts in medieval Germany, was to tie some knots in a piece of string, one for each wart, and then to leave the string under a stone. The first person to tread on the stone would gain the warts, and the original sufferer would be freed.

Zulu warriors tied a knot in the tail of every animal they killed as a charm against abdominal pain acquired after eating its flesh. All over the world similar knots have traditionally been used as protective amulets against all kinds of evil and danger. One superstition which has many variations throughout Europe is related to childbirth: pregnant women were forbidden to wear any knots or knotted garments, lest their delivery be obstructed.

This belief was pressed into service throughout Scandinavia for the purposes of a primitive-sort of birth control.

When two parents considered their offspring numerous enough, they would give the name 'Knut' (English Canute meaning knot) to the latest born boy, hoping thereby to prevent the conception of another child. A similar belief, common in Europe until the 18th century, was that certain magic knots could bewitch a bridegroom, and interfere with the consummation of a marriage. As late as 1705, two people were condemned to death in Scotland, for concealing in some clothing nine magic knots tied for the purpose of marring the wedded happiness of one, Spalding of Ashantilly.

The earliest analytical description of knots is found in 'Iatrikon Synagogos', a medical treatise compiled by Oribasius of Pergamum, in the 4th century A.D. Oribasius, a Greek, was court physician to the Emperor Julian, who died in A.D. 386. He copied his material from Herakias, believed to be a contemporary or pupil of Heliodorus, a physician who flourished about A.D. 100. Oribasius confined himself to eighteen knots used as slings and ties by physicians. His familiarity with complex knots, and the numerous different ways of tying them, suggests that the art of knotting must have been highly developed in the profession in those days.

Between the time of Oribasius and the 19th century, literature on knotting is almost non-existent. During the past three hundred years there has been a migration of the art's master craftsmen from the medical profession to the sea.

THEORY AND TECHNIQUE

The actual number of knots used by the profession today is very small. Surgeons, like artists, seem to belong to two types, both equally competent. The first, the nimble intuitive mind, is almost always endowed with-light sensitive hands and fingers. The second, the methodical reasoning mind, usually has heavy hands and fingers that are clumsy. The former will nearly always tie excellent knots; whilst the latter, having no particular aptitude for them, is apt to discount their importance. Little attention is given to the teaching of the anatomy and physiology of knots in our medical schools, yet it is a subject in which a firm groundwork can be gained in a short time.

SOME COMMON KNOTS

The most fundamental of all knots used in surgery is called the *half-knot*, of which there are two varieties (fig. 1). Most surgical knots are built up of a combination of these two, alone or with slight modification. These two knots can be tied either with two hands, a method which should not require further description here, or with one hand, as is most commonly seen. The single-handed method of tying knot (a) (fig. 1) is shown in fig. 2. Similarly, knot (b) is shown in fig. 3.

The *reef* or *square knot* has a characteristic shape (fig. 4). It lies snug and flat, with both of the loose ends on the same side of the knot, and pointing in exactly opposite directions. It is built up of knot (a) followed by knot (b), or vice versa. The reef knot is one of the most deceptive of all knots. Accurately tied and correctly applied, it is safe and secure. Misused it is very treacherous. It has been said that more deaths occur each year from the misuse of the reef knot, than from the failure of any other six knots put together. There are certain fundamental rules which must be taken into consideration when using the reef knot. First, it must always be used as a binder knot; that is, where the knot is in close contact with an object, as in tying a parcel. It should never lie loose, as, for instance, when two hawsers or climbing ropes are joined together. Secondly, the strain on the two ends must be continuous and not intermittent. Great care should be taken that the reef knot assumes the correct shape when tied, as will be shown later.

Figure 5 shows the *granny knot,* which is built up of two (a) knots or two (b) knots. It is an extremely unsafe knot, being very inclined to slip, and should be avoided at all costs unless suitable precautions are taken to prevent this occurrence. C. W. Mayo described the modification shown in fig. 6. Two identical half-knots are first tied, forming a granny knot. This permits of slight adjustment after the knot has been drawn up. When the tension has been adjusted, a third and opposite half-knot is added, forming a reef with the second half-knot. This locks the whole knot tight. The addition of a third half-knot to a well-tied reef knot is quite unnecessary. Provided the latter has been tied securely, the addition of any further half-knot only adds to the bulk, without materially increasing its strength.

There is a modification of the reef knot which is often seen in the operating

theatre. It is shown in fig. 7, and consists of a reef knot in which an extra tuck through has been made in the first half-knot. It is commonly called the surgeon's knot, and is certainly secure, particularly in materials which tend to slip when tied. It is, however, very ugly, and when drawn tight is
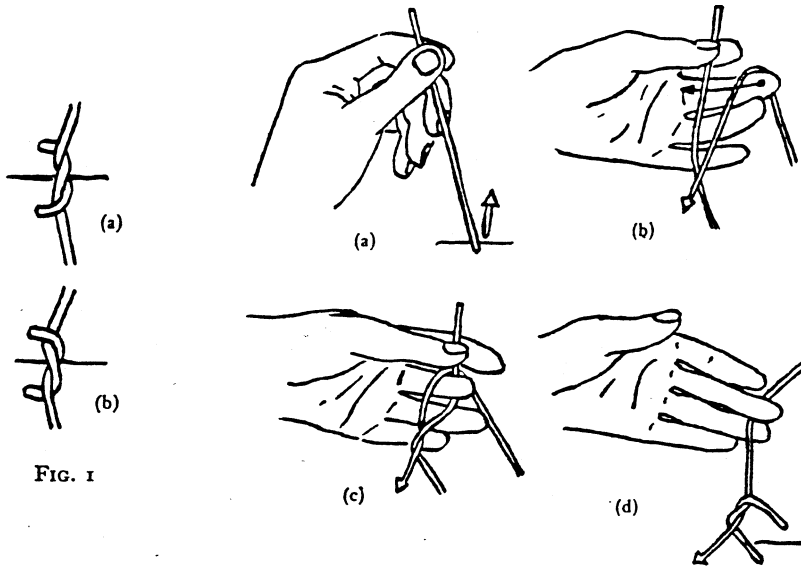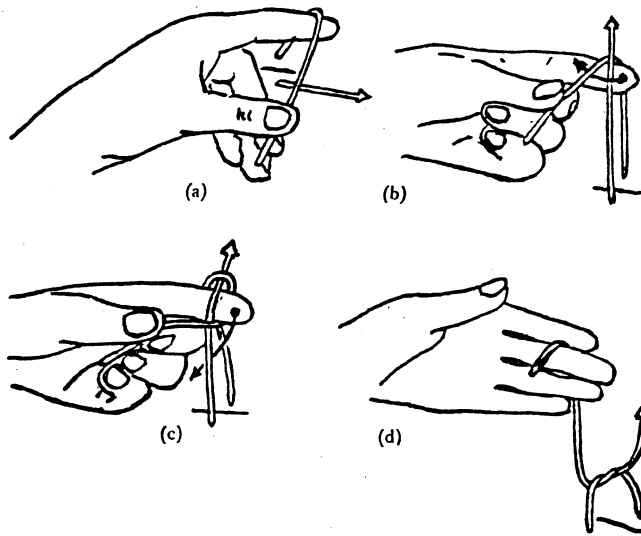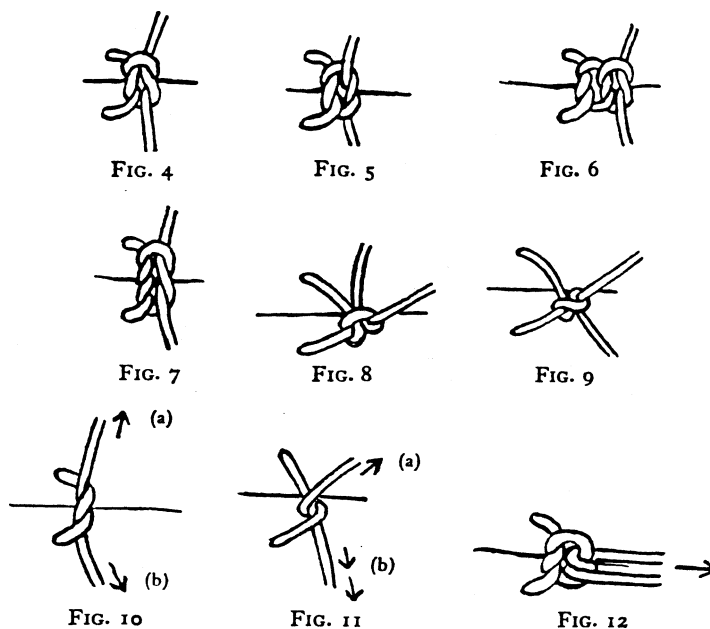

FIG. 1

FIG. 2

FIG. 3

bulky: a factor to be taken into account when using absorbable materials such as catgut.

The reef and granny knots appear to be easy knots to tie. In reality they are no such thing, for observation has shown that over half the knots

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made in the theatre with a reef as the intention, are in actual fact not reefs at all. The motions of making the knot are performed correctly, but the result is not quite right. The reason for this is that both the reef and granny collapse extremely easily when the strain on the two ends is unequal, producing the knots shown in Fig. 8 and 9 respectively. Both these knots are insecure. This collapse is easily demonstrable with a short piece of string.

FIG. 4   FIG. 5   FIG. 6

FIG. 7   FIG. 8   FIG. 9

FIG. 10   FIG. 11   FIG. 12

To tie the knot depicted in fig. 10, the strain on the two ends 'a' and 'b' must be exactly the same. If, for instance, 'b' is pulled a little tighter than 'a', fig. 11 results-a *half hitch*, which has no hold at all. This may occur at either of the two stages in the making of the knot. It is practically impossible to tie a reef knot single-handed if any appreciable tension is employed. For the same reason, holding the two free ends close together so that they may be cut short is liable to disrupt the knot (fig. 12). Inspection of a reef will show that the two free ends lie in opposite directions; any pull not in these directions will alter the shape of the knot. It is to prevent this occurring that some surgeons add a third half-knot. If this last half-knot were to collapse, the likelihood of the underlying reef doing so would be small.

    Few people have any precise notions regarding the security and breaking strength of knots. Perhaps the commonest misconception is that a knot is weaker than the cord in which it is tied. It is almost unknown for a break to occur in a knot: it is always the cord that gives, usually at its junction with the knot. The force that makes knots hold is friction; hence there are two basic principles-first, that contiguous parts should move in opposite directions when tension is applied. For example, compare the

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loosely tied reef in fig. 13 with the *thief knot* of similar appearance (fig. 14)
When tension is applied to the ends, the 'thief' slides easily apart. The second
principle is that the greater the tension, the more tightly should the parts be
held or nipped together.

The *clove hitch* is a well-known knot (fig. 15) which, however, has a

FIG. 13   FIG. 14   FIG. 16

FIG. 15

LIMB

FIG. 17

(a)   (b)   (c)
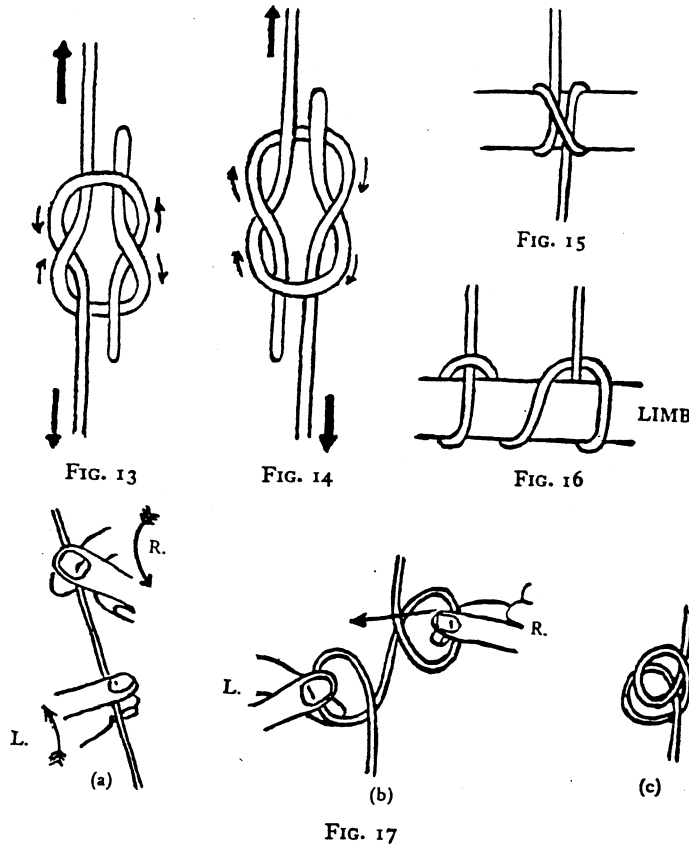
limited use in surgery. It was first described by
Oribasius (Bussemaker and Daremberg, 1861) who
recommended it as a sling for broken arms (as in fig.
16). It is still used as a collar and cuff for this purpose
today. Two quick ways of tying it are shown in fig. 17
and 18.

FIG. 18
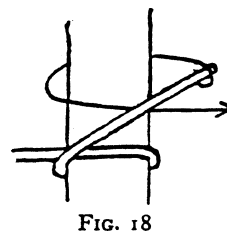
ENDING A CONTINUOUS SUTURE

Ending a continuous suture is always a difficult problem. The majority of peo-
ple use a reef, tying one strand in one hand against two in the other. This knot is
bulky and unstable; furthermore, the adding of another half-knot does not in-
crease its stability. There are two standard methods of

employing the reef in this situation. In the first (fig. 19, 20), the double strand is taken right through the final stitch, and tied against the free end which has not been pulled through. This is a more sensible way than the second method (fig. 21), in which the loose end is pulled right through, and tied against a bight drawn from the last suture. The reason for this latter method
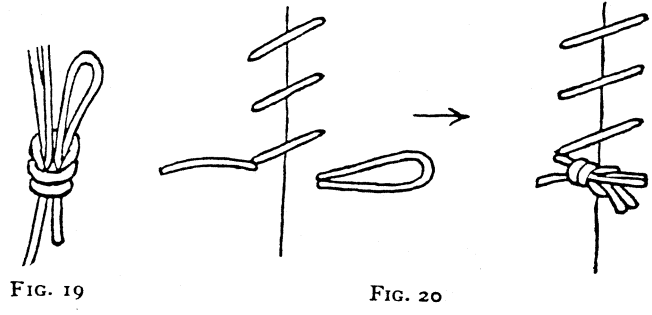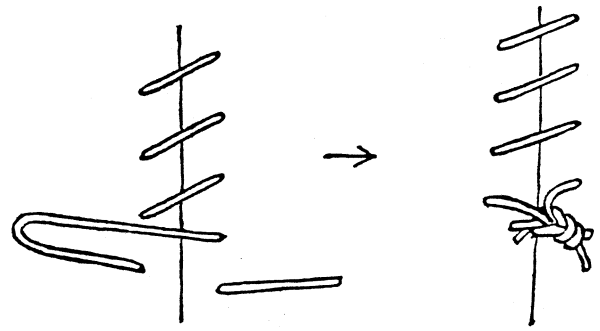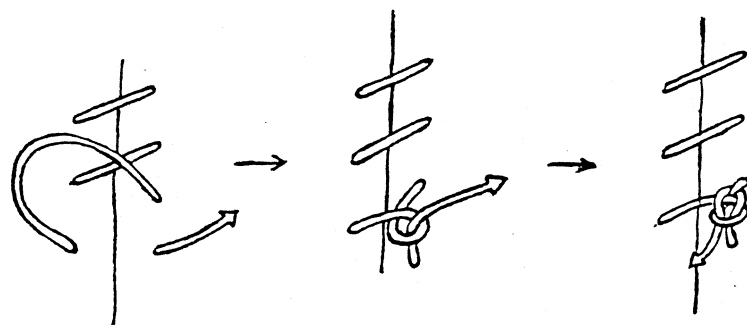
FIG. 19   FIG. 20

FIG. 21

FIG. 22

being poor, is that the strain in the knot comes from three separate points, leading to easier disruption.

A good way of ending the continuous suture has been described by Carr (1957), in which the final knot is not a reef but a *bowline*. This latter knot is compact and far stronger than the reef. The technique of making it is

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depicted in fig. 22; for a more detailed account the reader is referred to the original article.

THE CONSTRICTOR KNOT

The last knot discussed in this article has not been described in medical literature before, but it is extremely useful. It is called the *constrictor knot*, and its invention is generally attributed to Ashley in 1944, although Drew pictured it in 1931. The knot (fig. 23) draws tight by a steady pull on the

FIG. 23   FIG. 24

(a)   (b)

(c)

FIG. 25
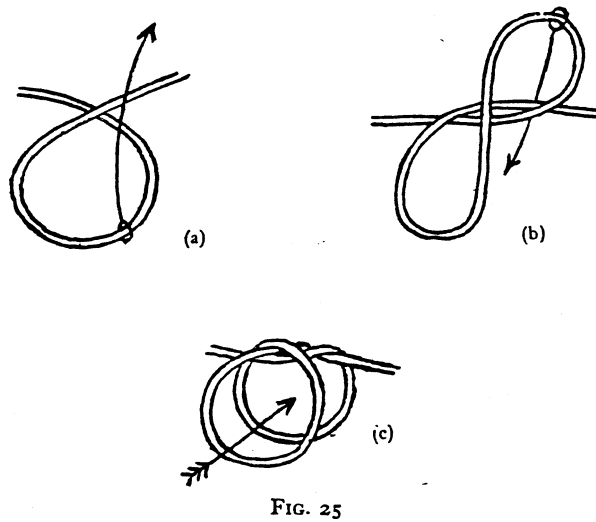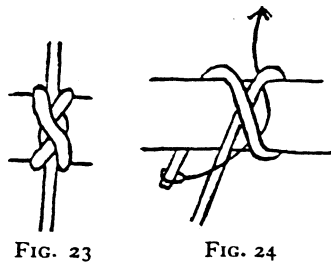
two ends, and when drawn up has such a ratchet-like grip that it is impossible to loosen, and has to be cut apart. The greater the strain within the knot pushing outwards, the greater the grip. This is the criterion of a perfect ligature. It is an exceptional rarity for this knot to slip, and it is very easily tied, by either of two methods (fig. 24, 25).

References
Ashley, W. Clifford (1944): 'Book of Knots', p. 258.
Bussemaker, U. C., and Daremberg, C. (1861): 'Œuvres d'Oribase', vol. 4, Paris, p. 253.
Carr, J. A. (1957): *Surg. Gynec. Obstet.*, 104, 502.
Drew, J. M. (1942): In 'Handicraft', 8th ed., edited by L. E. Griswold.

Puzzle

Creative
people
recognise
patterns
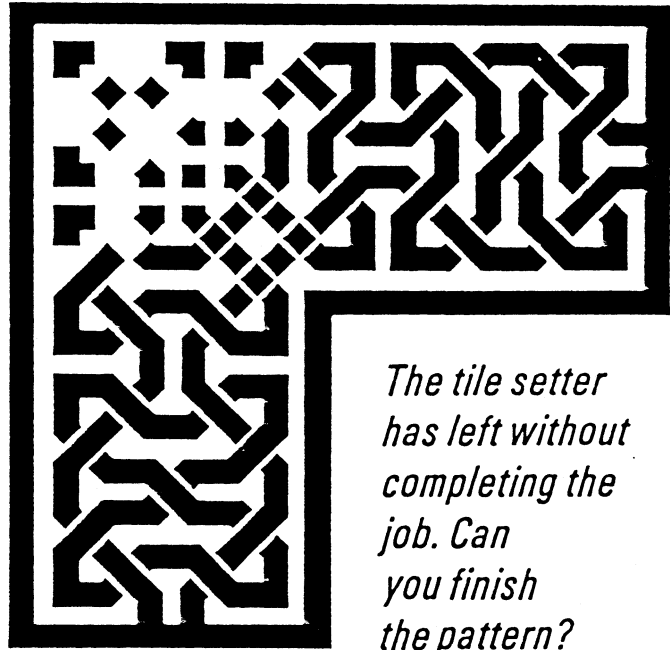
The tile setter has left without completing the job. Can you finish the pattern?

HELP!

Dear Mr. Budworth,

I'm compiling material for a brief booklet on the subject of SHOELACES. I'd be grateful if your Guild members would share whatever expertise they have in this area, especially the knot(s) they'd recommend for particular footwear (street shoes versus hiking boots, etc...), or perhaps they could suggest other sources of information. Naturally, I'd acknowledge their assistance in the published booklet. Thank you for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Colin WALLACE, 44, Sonmore Drive, Scarborough MIS 1X4.

Knotty names

WHO the deuce was Matthew Walker, I wondered, he of the Matthew Walker knot? Then a freind slipped me a battered volume - A Book for the Hammock by W Clark Russell (Chatto & Windus 1889). I quote: "To some knots and splices the inventors have their names such as Eliot's Splice and the Matthew Walker knot. The origin of this knot is thus related . . . 'Over sixty years ago an old sailor . . . said that when he was a sailor boy there was an old rigger named Matthew Walker, who with his wife, lived on board an old converted hulk moored near Folly End, Monkwearmouth Shore; that new ships when launched were laid alongside this hulk to be rigged by Walker and his gang of riggers . . . and that Matthew Walker was the inventor of the lanyard knot, now known by the inventor's name wherever a ship floats." Who the deuce was Eliot?

LEO MADIGAN

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Letters

Dear Geoffrey,

I received my April "Knotting Matters" a couple of days ago and was fascinated to see the piece on the Single Strand Star Knot by Thomas Solly. Having tried his method a couple of times I feel bound to say that <u>it is the greatest advance in decorative knotting for perhaps half a century</u>. I am sure that many minds have occupied themselves at different times with the problem of producing a method of tying a Star in a manner similar to that which produces a Turk's Head. I admit that Harrison published one method, but have never found it very practical, even when Clavery's jig was used to simplify matters. Here at last is a simple and elegant solution to the problem, which can be employed without special aids and in virtually any kind of line. <u>If there was a Booker Prize for knots, Thomas Solly should have it</u>. Why I have overlooked the connection with the Drummer's Plait all these years I shall never know, but Solly's method is, like all the best ideas, so simple that it makes one kick oneself for not seeing it before . . . . . . it would be helpful to have his estimate of the amount of line required for such a knot. Obviously this will vary a little according to the size of line used and how taut one works, but it should be reasonably constant. My own experiments so far suggest a length of line of roughly twelve or thirteen times the circumference of the core over which the knot is to be worked. Many people may regard such information as superfluous, but to those of us who use such knots professionally and have to buy large quantities of line, every foot wasted is several pence down the drain.

Kind regards,
Stuart GRAINGER

Totnes, Devon
24th May 1985

Through the post today
Came a journal bright and gay
It was the Knot Tyers' super book
I could hardly wait to have a look
Thumbing through the fun and games
Here's a list of members' names
Kent is listed, it's plain to see
But oh dearie, dearie me!
There's no David Rogers listed there
Now I don't think that's really fair
I pay my sub by banker's order
Leave me out they shouldn't oughter!

Dear Geoffrey,

When I first tried the bend discussed in Knotting Matters No. 11, p.16 (Ashley's 1445), I was inclined to agree with the view that it was a useful knot. I used soft 4mm braided cord and also parcel string. All the good things said of this knot seemed so.

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However, I attempted to form it in thick, hard, shiny, violently orange polypropylene, a material I confess I do not like. This bend would not even hold together, let alone support a load. A Sheet Bend needed careful forming in this stuff, but then proved serviceable.

These isolated comparative views suggest most strongly that a "good knot"/"poor knot" discussion is not valid <u>WITHOUT REFERENCE TO THE MATERIAL IN HAND</u>. Perhaps when knots established themselves there was a limited variety of materials (at least in the way they behaved) which allowed a "good knot" to be good almost always.

It is interesting to see how modern fishermen, using smooth monofilament lines, have a catalogue of knots very specially developed to be of use in that material.

May I express a thought, not yet matured into a suggestion, as to a role the Guild might play? Should we not establish a series of standard tests? Tests of strength, security, ease of opening, etc., could be performed in a standard range of materials, say 15 combinations of size and stuff. To a degree, judgements will enter the grading of a knot: I do not feel that is altogether bad. If nothing else, it might encourage thought and trial before commitment.

The evil orange flexible stick I referred to is, I am sure, capable of being tamed and put to use, but I am ignorant of the very appropriate knots needed. I will confidently use my favourite knots to a point where they will fail me when I automatically use them in a quite unsuitable material.

If any organisation is to be regarded as a referee on knotting matters, I would dearly hope it is the International Guild of Knot Tyers.

Regards,
John SMITH   Woking, Surrey
                              19th. May 1985

Dear Geoffrey,

I have been doing some theoretical and mathematical work on "Turks' Heads", considering the variations that arise when other than the usual over-1-under-1 weave is allowed. It turns out that all sorts of known knots - e.g. the grommet, a Matthew Walker knot, etc. - can be considered as members of the family. In particular, I have found a formula for the number of essentially different THs when the number of leads is 'L'. (Essentially different means that (a) turning a TH upside down does not produce a different knot, and (b) a left handed version is not different from a right handed version)

It is hoped to produce published details for intrigued members in due course; meanwhile, the formula is:-

$$\frac{2^{L-3} + 2^{K-2}}{}$$

where   K = 1/2L if 'L' is even
and   K = 1/2(L + 1) if 'L' is odd.

| Some values:- L	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No. of different THs	1	2	3	6	10	20	36	72	136

Yours sincerely,

W. Ettrick THOMSON   Aldeburgh, Suffolk
                       12 May 1985

Quotation

". . . . . . Mayfair's oldest shirt tailors and tie makers, Washington Tremlett . . . . . . was formed in 1894 by Tremlett, who began his career in Paris after having a row with his father, a Bristol parson, and invented the REGNATE – "a long and narrow neckpiece, to be tied at the throat with a sailor's knot" – which caused a stir at Monte Carlo gaming tables.

London Day-by-Day, by Peterborough, from the Daily telegraph (18/8/77)

The following ties originally appeared in the leaflet 'How to Tie a Good Knot' issued bt The Tie Manufacturers' Association of London:-

WINDSOR

(position as seen in your mirror)
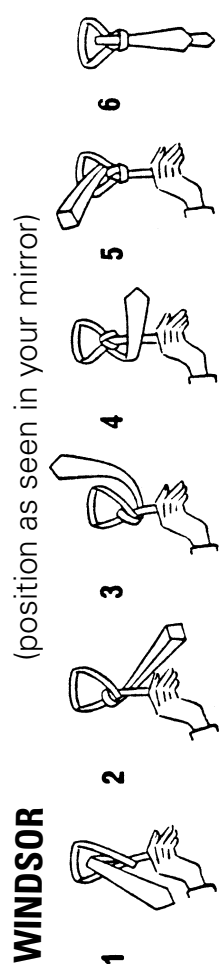
1. Have wide end of tie extended well below the narrow end. Cros wide end over the narrow end up through the neck loop. 2. Bring the wide end down and behind the narrow end. 3. Turn wide end up. 4. Put through the neck loop, bring down and pass across the knot. 5. Turn up through the neck loop again. 6. Pull down through knot and adjust.

HALF WINDSOR
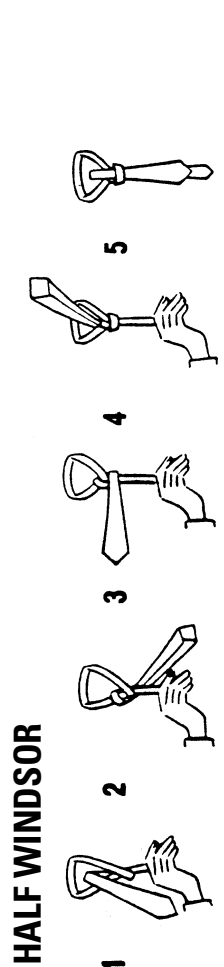
1. Have wide end longer than the narrow. Cross wide end over narrow and up through neck loop. 2. Bring the wide end down below the narrow end. 3. Wrap around the knot once. 4. Continue back up through the neck loop. 5. Pull down through knot and adjust.

PRINCE ALBERT

This is not a compltetely new knot. It is an adaptaion of the oldest form of knotting the long tie, which came into being in the late 19th Century during the lifetime of prince Albert. It is designed to give a large soft knot and a wide spread and is ideal for the new bigger ties.

1. Loop the wide end twice over the short end. 2. Pass under throat and through neckband. 3. Pass down the front and through the second loop. Be sure to leave the knot slak to ensure maximum spread.

BOW
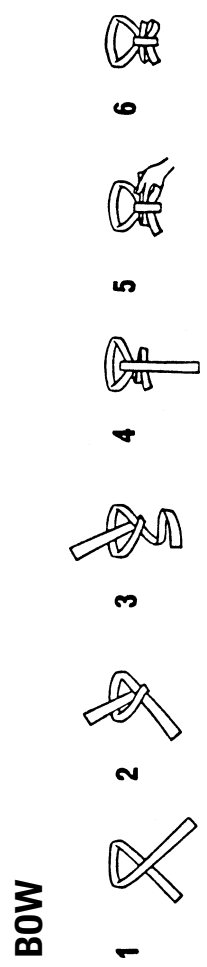
1. Arrange tie so that the end in your left hand is one and a half inches below the other end. Place longer end over shorter end. 2. Put longer end through the loop. 3. Start forming one section of bow with thumb and forefinger. 4. Hold this with thumb and forefinger of left hand and drop long end over it. 5. Form back section of bow by turning long end over and sliding through knot. Even ends and tighten.
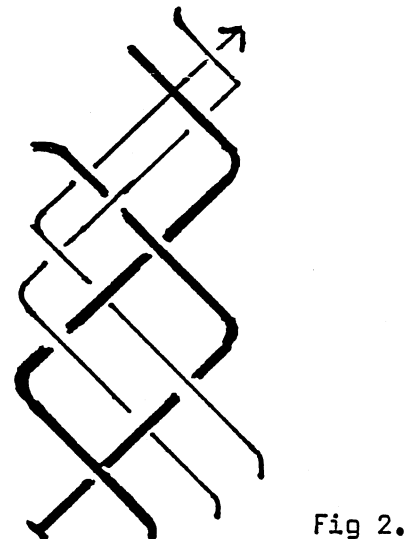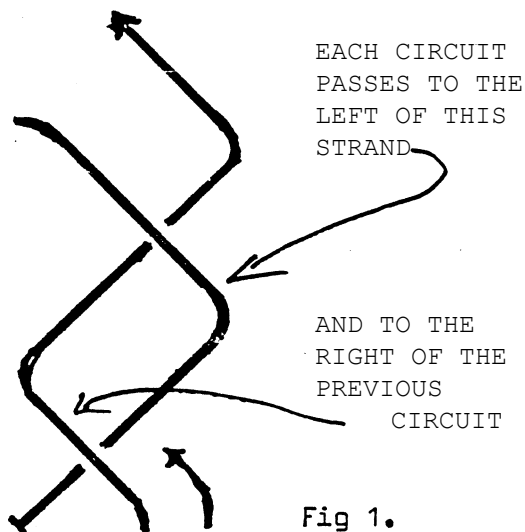
Turks' Heads - 1

RAISING A SQUARE TURKS HEAD TO LARGER DIMENSIONS IN THE HAND.

START WITH AN OVERHAND KNOT. THIS FORMS THE FIRST CIRCUIT. THE LOWER
END WILL NOT BE USED.
THE OTHER END WILL BE USED TO RAISE THE KNOT. TTAKE THIS END OVER THE
HAND TO THE RIGHT, DOWN, AND UP ALONG SIDE THE FIRST CIRCUIT (SEE FIG
1).
THEN REEVE THE END THROUGH THE CENTRE OF THE OVERHAND KNOT. AT THIS
STAGE STUDY THE KNOT CAREFULLY, AS THIS FORMS THE BASIS OF OUR
FINISHED KNOT. THERE ARE A NUNBER OF POINTS TO WATCH FOR.
THE HEART OF THE OVERHAND KNOT SHOULD BE KEPT LOOSE, AND THE
CROSSOVER POINTS SHOULD BE KEPT TO THE FRONT OF THE HAND. THE STRANDS
AT THE BACK SHOULD BE KEPT STRAIGHT. STUDY FIG 2. AND BE SURE THAT
THE TUCKS ARE IN THE ORDER SHOWN.

EACH CIRCUIT
PASSES TO THE
LEFT OF THIS
STRAND

AND TO THE
RIGHT OF THE
PREVIOUS
CIRCUIT

Fig 1.

Fig 2.

JUST AS OUR SECOND CIRCUIT PASSED TO THE RIGHT OF THE FIRST, SO OUR
THIRD CIRCUIT WILL PASS TO THE RIGHT OF THE SECOND. OR TO PUT IT
ANOTHER WAY, EACH CIRCUIT WILL PASS TO THE LEFT OF THE UPPER PART OF
THE ORIGINAL OVERHAND KNOT.
NOW TAKE THE WORKING END TO THE RIGHT, OVER THE FIRST STRAND, UNDER
THE SECOND, AND DOWN THE BACK OF THE HAND, SO FORMING A THIRD STRAND.
THE END IS NOW BROUGHT FORWARD AND REEVED BETWEEN THE LAST CIRCUIT
AND THE UPPER PART OF THE OVERHAND KNOT. THE WEAVE SHOULD OPPOSE THAT
OF THE STRAND TO THE LEFT.
IT WILL BE NOTICED THAT EACH ALTERNATE CIRCUIT WILL FOLLOW THE WEAVE
OF THE ORIGINAL CIRCUIT.
THE END IS NOW TAKEN TO THE RIGHT AGAIN, ABOVE THE PREVIOUS CIRCUIT,
AND OPPOSING THE WEAVE. THE REST IS JUST REPETITION OF PREVIOUS
CIRCUITS.
OF COURSE, AS YOU RAISE THE KNOT TO LARGER DIMENSIONS, YOU WILL RUN
OUT OF WORKING SPACE, AND YOU WILL SOON FIND YOURSELF WORKING AT THE
BACK OF THE HAND, BY THIS TIME THIS SHOULD NOT PRESENT ANY PROBLEM.
ON EVERY SECOND CIRCUIT YOU WILL FIND THE TWO ENDS COME TOGETHER, YOU
CAN THEN DOUBLE THE KNOT AS REQUIRED.

George Aldridge.

Turks' Heads - 2   by Frank Harris

It always seems pointless to me, memorising how to start various Turks' Heads, while pinning cord down over those flat "disc" diagrams is (much as I admire dear old Ashley) downright silly.

My idea - which I pass on freely for your judgement - is one knot pattern (fig. 1)which can produce any size knot.

fig. 1

bights

leads

fig. 2
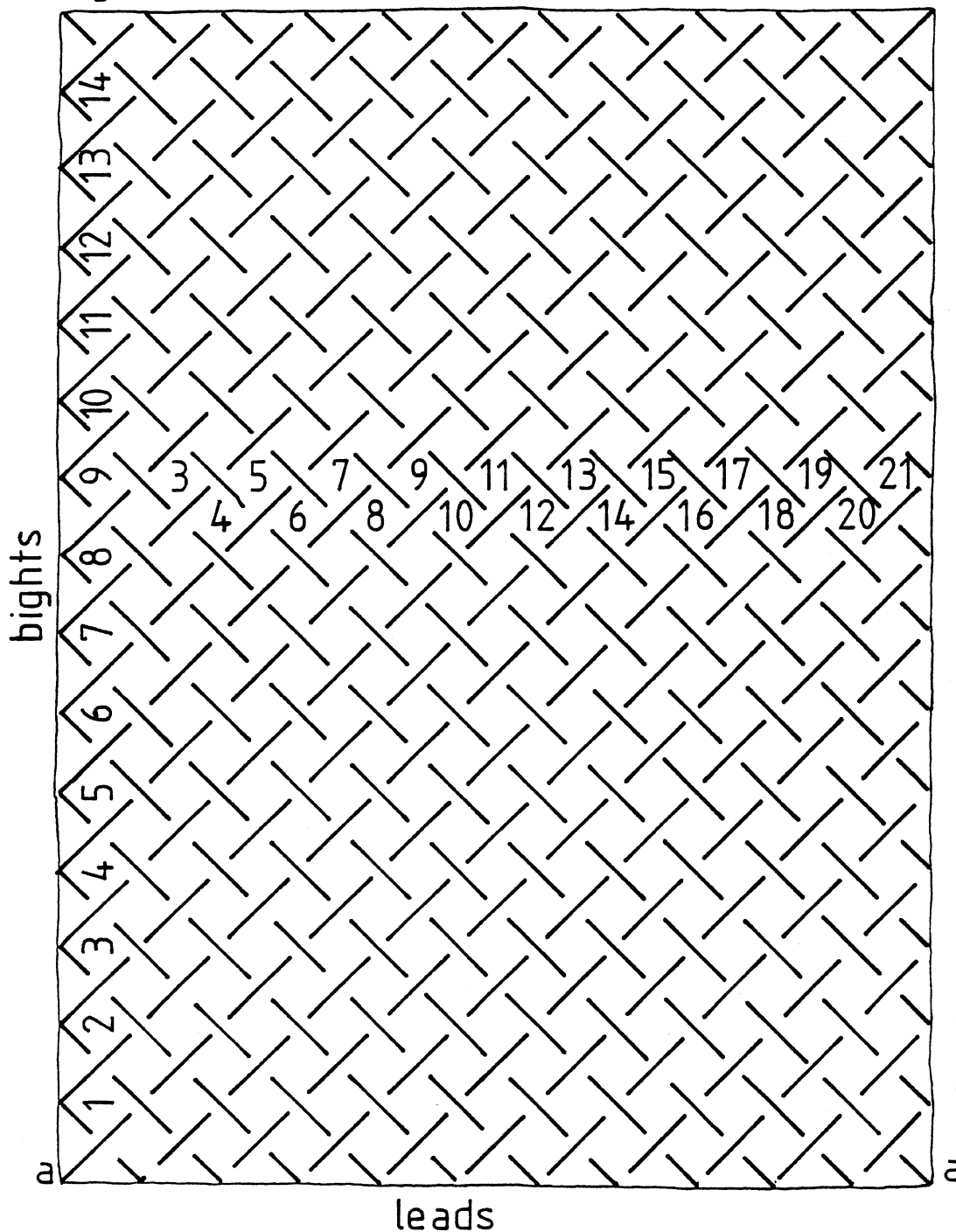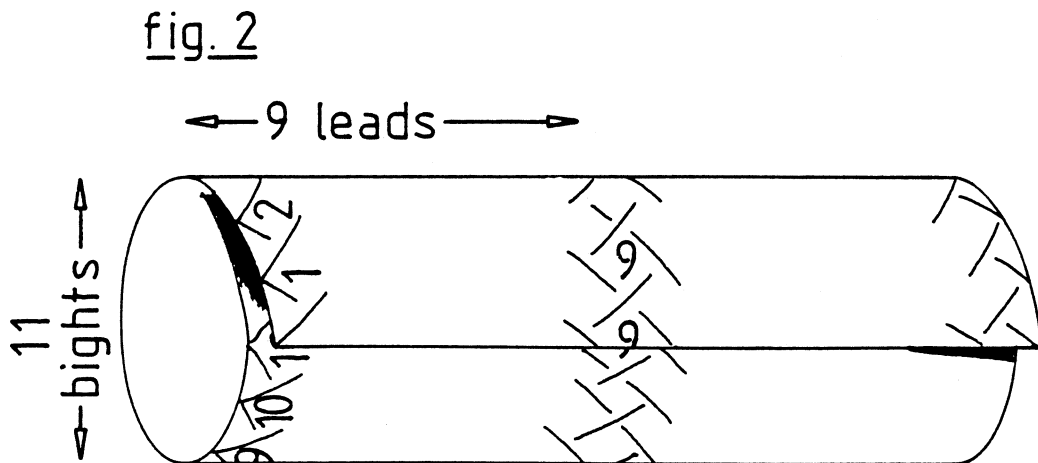
←—9 leads—→

11 bights

Here's what you do:-

(i)   copy fig. 1, scaling it up or down (as many leads and
            bights as you imagine you   will ever need) to suit your
            purpose;

(ii)   wrap it around the foundation for your planned Turk's Head;

(iii)   note carefully where the paper's leading edge 'a-a' meets
            the numbered 'bights' scale . . . in fig. 2 it coincides
            with No. 11, so this knot will have eleven bights;

(iv)   now wrapping and pinning your cord around the knot pattern
            you can include as many leads as you wish by turning back
            when the furthest corner of any numbered 'lead' square is
            reached (keep in mind the law of the common divisor unless
            you are prepared to use more than a single strand);

(v)   keep to the over/under sequence of the diagram.

Notes

*   This all-purpose drawing copes with any combination of leads and
     bights, plain or coloured cord, doubled or tripled.
*   Having tied just one experimental cycle, you will quickly spot
     how to calculate the length of cord needed to complete the knot
     (each square in fig. 1 is 1/2"2).

*   When you know just what can be achieved with Turks' Heads of
     certain dimensions, you can ever use this knot pattern to
     create herringbone or twill weave knots.

*   Of course there IS some point in sailors' "tied-in-the- hand"
     methods (they don't need paper, rule, pen and ink, pins, etc.).
     Still this scheme of mine makes a poor knotsman's day a little
   easier and I recommend it to you.

LEARNING SAILMAKING

On Saturday, May 4th., twenty members gathered at Brightlingsea, at the sail loft of James Lawrence, for a day with member Frank Thompson, to learn something of the art of making sails. This is one of the few sail lofts that makes sails for Thames barges and large traditionally rigged craft, as well as all sizes of yachts, together with upholstery and general canvas work of all sorts, inducing a sling for a killer whale! Frank started by showing how a sail is designed and set out on the floor and then constructed. He gave us an outline of traditonal and modern materials. after pub and other lunches, a long afternoon was spent learning how a sail is roped, how to sew canvas, how eyelets and rings are inserted and cringles and rings are fitted, particularly into holes apparently too small for them. Frank showed the special sailmakers' splices for bolt ropes and how to point a rope.

Even those of us who thought we knew something of the subject, learned many practical dodges and trade secrets, that can only come from demonstrations and not from books. Frank is a master of his craft and an able demonstrator, who gave us a very instructive day, for which we thank him and which, we hope, will be repeated for the benefit of other members.22

P.W.B.

Frank Thompson shows how to rope a sail.

THE SCOUTER
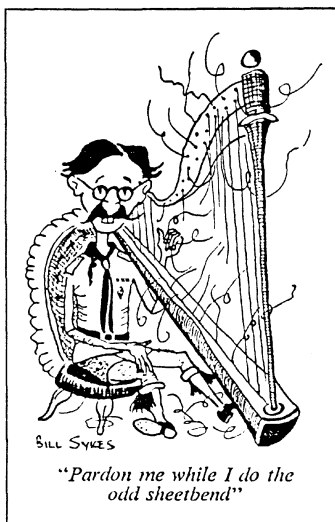
"Pardon me while I do the odd sheetbend"

BILL SYKES

A charming anecdote emerged at the Guild's Birmingham display. Frank Denton of Norfolk, an old ex-seaman who died a year or so back, used to import extra long licorice bootlaces which - by all accounts - he tied into Monkey's Fists and gave away to local children.

Now, isn't that delightful?

Sweet Charity