Knotting Matters

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE

INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF KNOT TYERS

"KNOTTING MATTERS"

- - - o0o — - -

Editorial

Recently, an instructor at a Solent activities centre showed me how to lay out deck elastics - those stretchy lashings to hold within reach one's Admiralty charts and emergency gear - across the decks of my sea kayak.

"You can't knot them," he stated. "You must buy self-amalgamating tape to fix them."

"Self-what tape?"

He explained that this special waterproof adhesive tape was the only thing they knew to do the job. It was, he told me, expensive and hard to find; but he thought that I could, for the extra outlay of a few gallons of petrol driving around yacht chandleries and camping shops, locate a roll. I actually caught myself believing him.

But...what nonsense! It MUST be possible to tie off elastic shock cord. Fancy a sea school having forgotten how. So, keep your self-amalgamating tape, I thought.

Back home I bought all the shock cord I needed and tried a few knots. The third knot did it. A bowline was useless in the springy stuff; a water bowline little better. The Angler's or Perfection Loop (Ashley's 1017) proved perfect. Quick to tie, secure in its grip, yet my fingers could pull it apart readily enough when wanted. It did not - contrary to Ashley's experience -jam.

During a subsequent circumnavigation of the Isle of Wight, expedition members were impressed by my neat rows of Angler's Loop knots (with port and starboard versions so that all short ends streamlined aft). Shock cord is not cheap and I could reuse mine in different layouts, or, after a pounding afloat, take up any slack by adjusting the knots individually.

Elsewhere in this issue both Eric Franklin and George Aldridge in their different ways recommend the Angler's Loop. Try it. It really has been underrated.

Two lessons emerge to be learned from this story. First, do resurrect old knots; the reasons they were discarded may no longer hold true. Second, never go hunting the costly and complicated solution when your knowhow and the right knot are no doubt better. People - even qualified people - just don't know anymore. We can teach them a lot.

Two Eye Splices

by <u>JOHN SMITH</u>

"Round" eye splice
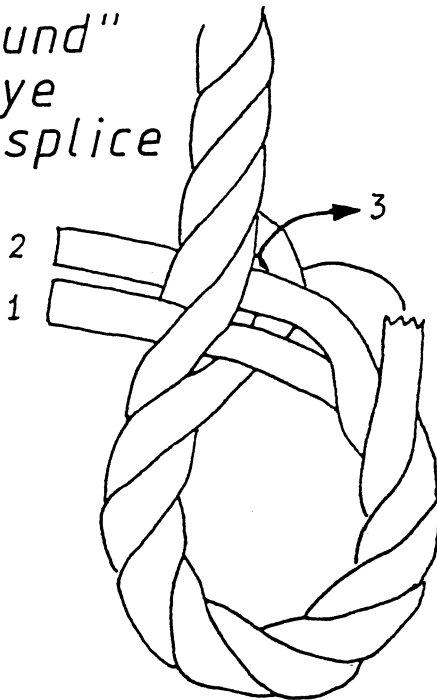
If a relatively small eye is required, through which a line is passed frequently, then an eye which is round and stands "Open" is called for. On the other hand, for a use such as a long running eye, a desirable feature is a very small angle of separation of the yarns.

An obvious name for one is a Round Eye Splice: by way of contrast I call the other a Straight Eye Splice (to avoid confusion, one cannot use terms like "long" or "tapered" which have well established meanings already in the context of' splices).

<u>Round Eye Splice</u>

Arrange the strands as shown in the drawing. The first strand is stuck under one.

  The second strand passes through THE SAME OPENING, but goes under TWO strands. The third strand is "backed" as shown.

Draw the eye into the round shape required, whilst easing the strands to come out evenly around the rope. After this, stick the strands regularly under one as in a normal sailor's splice. They may be tapered as desired.

Compare this with Ashley's 2776. The present splice might be considered easier to start, with one less tuck. However, it does produce the even lay on the inside of the eye, quite like a grommet.

"Straight" eye splice

<u>Straight Eye Splice</u>

For a right handed splicer, this drawing shows the "back" of this splice for the sake of clarity. Arrange and stick the strands as shown. Turn the whole thing over and you will see that the right handed person will find it easier to stick the first strand "under two", move up one strand and stick the second "under two".
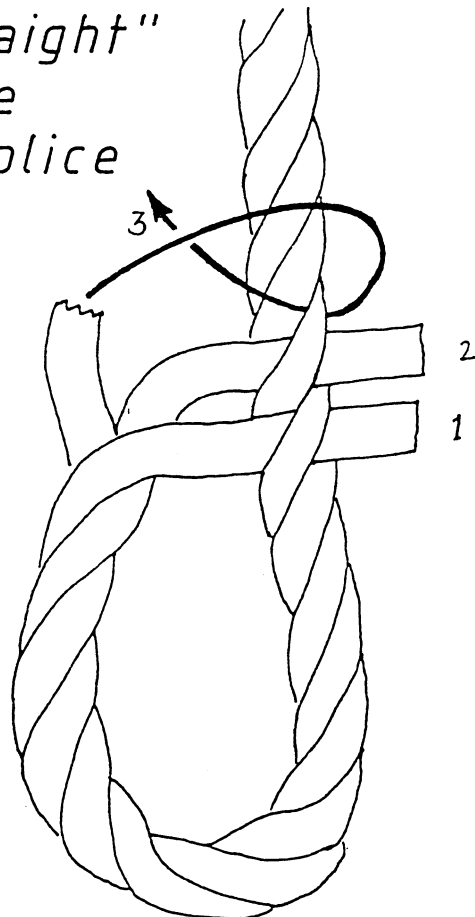
When drawing up the shape of this eye, use the first strand to adjust
the tension. You should seek to marry the bumps and grooves of the
two arms to produce the shallow angle which is the feature of this
splice. Ease all strands to come out evenly around the rope.

As in the round eye, stick the strands regularly now, under one,
tapering or not as required.

A Page of Knots

## Eric Franklin

A LITTLE ABOUT LOOPS

In your progress towards First Class you are only required to learn two loop knots
and the Bowline can only be tied in the end of the rope and the Man Harness Knot
only in the middle. Besides, its more fun to have other knots up your sleeve. Can we
therefore find ourselves a good loop knot which can be tied in any part of the rope
and which is fun to tie? The Middleman's Knot fulfils these requirements and I can
also show you completely different ways to make it, which is more fun.
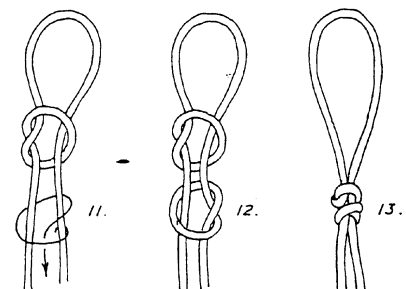

1.   *2.*   *3.*
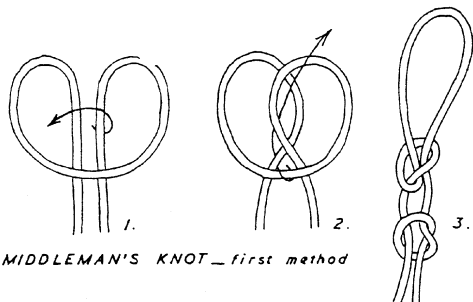
MIDDLEMAN'S KNOT — first method

4.   *5*   *6*
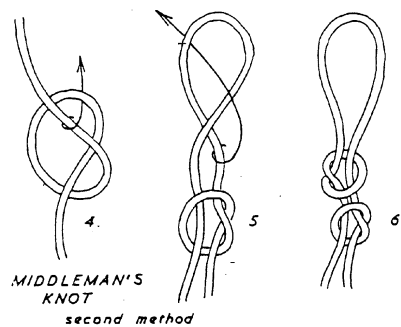
*MIDDLEMAN'S KNOT
second method*

7.   *8.*   *9.*
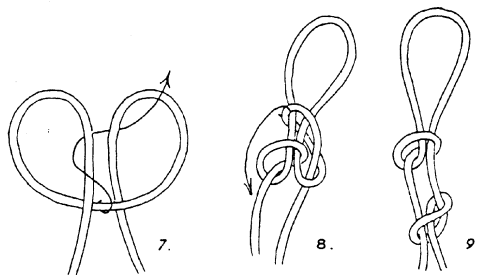
MIDDLEMAN'S KNOT — third method

11.   *12.*   *13.*

*All the methods produce similar, but not all
exactly identical knots, when the two overhand
knots are drawn together, as fig.13.*

*MIDDLEMAN'S KNOT — fourth method
This method can only be used at the end
of the rope. Commence as fig.4 above.*

We just have room for one more interesting
loop knot which can also be tied in different
ways of which this is one. This is the Angler's
Loop. It is excellent for small stuff, twine and
fishing line, etc. but not for rope as it tends
to jam. You can tie it as shown on the right.
and it is a good knot to know and to use.

14   *15*   *16*
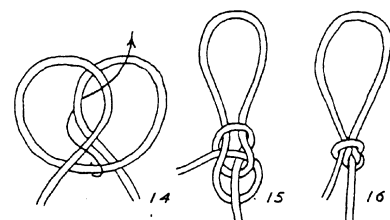
Compare fig.14 with fig.2 and fig.7.

Natural Knots

from <u>FRED BROWNE</u>

in Cambridge, MA.,
U.S.A.

For over 40 years I have felt that somehow the patterns of knots could tell us something about nature, hence my interest in knot classification schemes. Today I feel truly vindicated because it turns out that DNA is intimately involved with knots.

The knot (fig. 1) with 6 crossing points is taken from a Roman stone bas relief of around 300 A.D.

The identical knot form (fig. 2) is a drawing of an

fig. 1   *fig. 2*
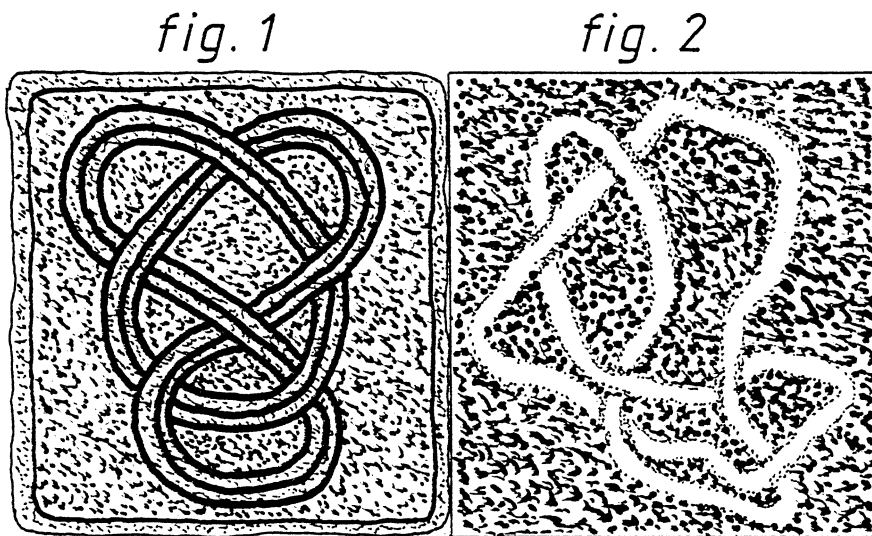
electron micrograph (x 40,000 magnification) of genetic material from the DNA molecule. Researchers in the Department of Molecular Biology, University of California, Berkeley, U.S.A., have observed that this and other knot layouts result when the cut ends of genetic strands recombine.

It is thought these topological signatures will prove to be an invariant which can be used to postulate mechanisms of genetic recombination.

Tackle It This Way

suggests

<u>GEORGE ALDRIDGE</u>

Many people I speak to about knots have the attitude that they are only for Boy Scouts and sailors, having no place in a modern life. Well, there are - of course - many occasions when a little knot-knowhow goes a long way. Although my main interest is fancy knots, Turk's Heads, Star Knots, and their like, I hope I don't lose sight of the practical ones.

I'll describe a handy piece of tackle that I find has many uses. It would be nice to say that it had been handed down through the ages...but in fact I discovered it one day playing with string. There's nothing new about its individual parts but I've not seen this application before and so would be pleased to hear the comments and opinions of others.

The device (drawn below) is similar to the Poldo Tackle (Issue No. 10, page 10), used to shorten the distance between two points, or as a D.I.Y. clamp when making picture frames, repairing chairs, or what ever.

Fig. 1

1st. loop   2nd. loop

Fig. 2

Fig. 3
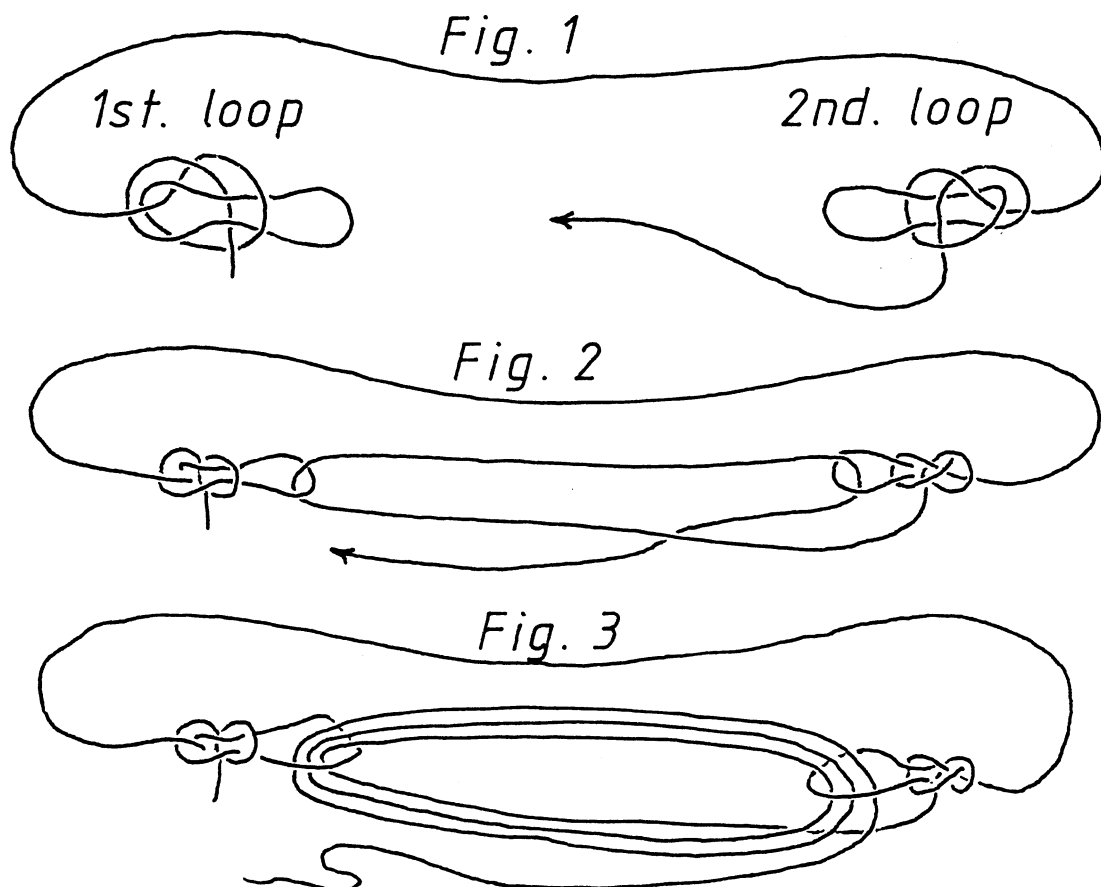
My favourite practical knot is the Angler's Loop (see Eric Franklin's 'Page of Knots' elsewhere in this issue), it's quickly tied and easily untied, so that's the one I use here. Supposing we wish to clamp two chair legs which are 18" apart, this is what we do. –

Take two yards (alright, metres!) of strong cord; tie a small loop in one end and another about 30" away (Fig. 1). Encircle the chair legs with the cord and the loops will be about 6" apart. Take the free end of cord through the first loop and back through the second (Fig. 2). Do this two or three times (Fig. 3). Now a steady pull on the end will draw the two loops together, powerfully tightening the tackle. . .but the beauty of it is IT'S SELF-LOCKING. You can let go of the end (but a quick hitch will finish it off to be on the safe side).

It will work around a cylinder or box equally well, or at the end of a guyline. To release – just tuck the end back through one loop and give it a tug.

"SHOP WINDOW"

As forecast in the last Editorial this Guild now takes another big
step forward by publishing two original booklets. Each of these two
welcome works consists of approximately 30 sides of A4 pages neatly
held together by plastic "comb" bindings. Sandwiched between smart
covers are abundant explanatory drawings and helpful text.

Brian E. Field's
"SAILOR' S BREAST-PLATE DESIGNS - to make & wear"
Price: £3 (excl. p. & p.)

"AN INTRODUCTION TO KNOT TYING & FANCY WORK"
by Stuart Grainger
Price: £3 (excl. p. & p.)

A glimpse into the knot notebooks of other knot tyers is a privilege
we all appreciate. Now - for just £3 a time - you can actually have
your own copy of ideas generously supplied by these two accomplished
Guild members.

SEND FOR COPIES from   Ivy BLANDFORD, Quinton House, Newbold-on-
                        Stour, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire CV37
                        8UA, England (tel: 078 987 257)

"STORE CUPBOARD"

Any Guild member promoting the I.G.K.T. by means of a display or
exhibition stand can now borrow all or bits of our unique collection
of knotwork. Also available, if you need it, is a tubular
construction kit which assembles into a proper trader's stall. All
you have to do is collect and return them.

        The stall is kept by Geoffrey BUDWORTH, Hon. Secretary, 45,
                        Stambourne Way, Upper Norwood,
                        London SE19 2PY
                        (tel: 01-653 8757).

        The knotwork is with Mrs. Lyn GARDNER,
                        48, Lane End Drive, Knaphill,
                        Woking, Surrey GU21 2QG
                        (tel: 048 67 2524)

Quotation

"This chafing-gear consists of worming, parcelling, roundings,
battens, and service of all kinds...rope-yarns, spun-yarns, marline,
and seizing-stuffs. Taking off, putting on, and mending the chafing
gear alone, upon a vessel, would find constant employment for a man
or two men, during working hours, for a whole voyage."
'TWO YEARS BEFORE THE MAST' by Richard Henry Dana (1840)

Knots Count   with <u>DESMOND MANDEVILLE</u>

<u>K N O T S   F O R   N U M B E R S</u>
<u>And   S U M S   O N   S T R I N G</u>

It is no great problem to devise a logical series of KNOTS
representing the simple NUMBERS. So much was hinted at in my earlier
article ('The Alphabend', Newsletter 4, pp 2-5). Here is such a
series - or, strictly speaking, three sub-series representing the
numbers. 0, 1 to 4, 5 to 8, and 9 to 12.

<u>First sub-series</u> (1 to 4)
The number of <u>continuous parts</u> of which each KNOT is composed serves
to indicate which NUMBER it symbolises:-

for Number 1:   The Overhand Knot (Ashley 515) is of ONE
                       continuous part only;

for Number 2:   The Figure-of-Eight Knot (A.520) consists of TWO
                       parts;

for Number 3:   A.525, an elegant small knot, is of THREE parts;

for Number 4:   A cross-variant of the Phoebe Knot is here chosen
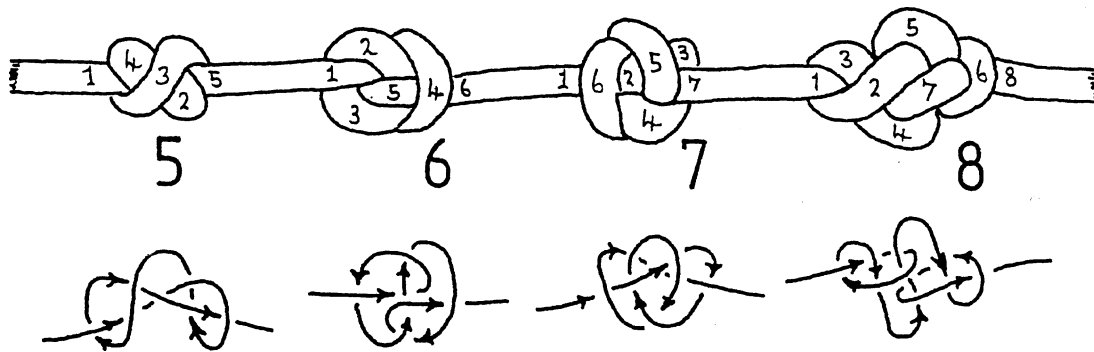   as most suitable of the FOUR-part knots.
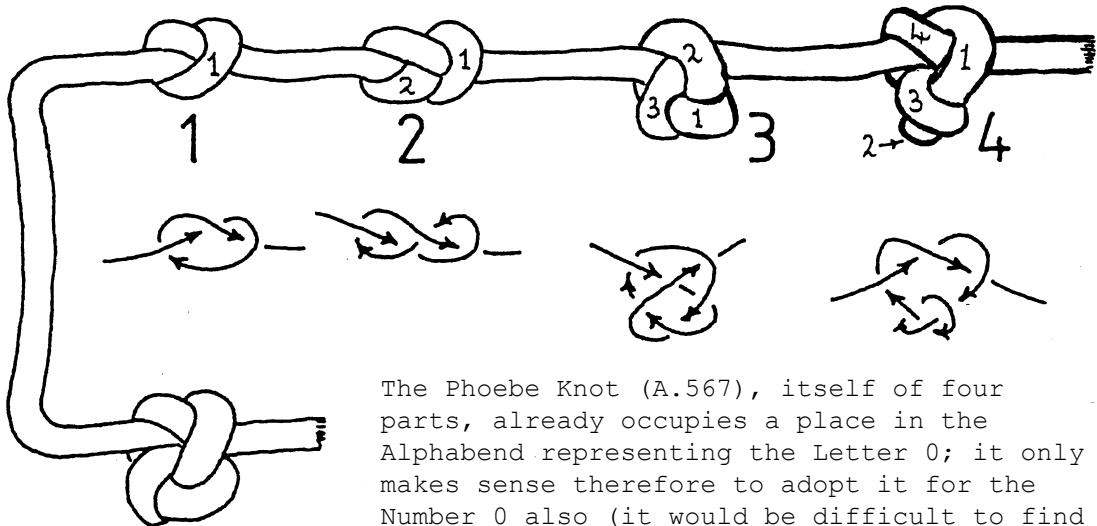
The Phoebe Knot (A.567), itself of four
parts, already occupies a place in the
Alphabend representing the Letter 0; it only
makes sense therefore to adopt it for the
Number 0 also (it would be difficult to find
a knot of zero parts!).

(<u>N.b</u>. Knot 1 similarly does duty for letter
E, knot 2 for letter I, knot 3 for A, knot 4
for & (which is sometimes written as an
inverted 4, viz.), and knot 5 - see below -
for u.)

<u>Second sub-series</u> (5 to 8)
The number of <u>separate facets</u> that are to be seen, when viewed from
just one side of the KNOT, <u>plus</u> two (for the two leads), serves to
identify the NUMBER symbolised:-

for Number 5: The Double Overhand Knot (A. 516) presents THREE
              separate facets to the view*; add 2 for the leads,
              giving 5;

for Number 6: The structure here is A.582 - two overhand knots fused
              together - and has FOUR facets; 4 + 2 = 6;

for Number 7: A structure not in Ashley, derived from Knot 3 by
              twisting the ends together within the knot. Has FIVE
              facets, plus 2 leads, giving 7;

for Number 8: This slight variant on the decorative knot (A.583) has
              SIX facets; 6 + 2 = 8;

*Note - from one aspect the Double Overhand Knot seems to present
only TWO facets, but this illusion vanishes when the knot is rotated
slightly.

Third sub-series (9 to 12)

The total number of facets visible on both sides of the KNOT, plus
two (as before, for the two leads) gives the NUMBER: -
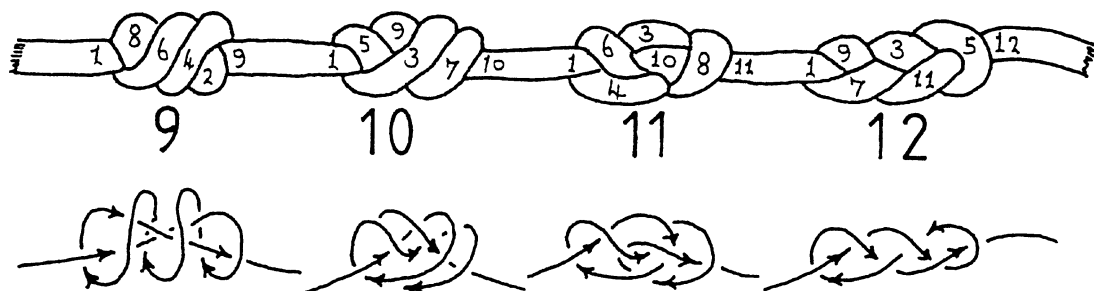
for Number 9:   The Triple Overhand Knot (A. 517) has FOUR facets
                  viewed from one side, THREE from the other;
   4+3+2=9;

for Number 10:   The Duplex Overhand Knot (A.551) is tricky; it can
                  draw up as A.577 or in yet another form. Properly
                  executed however it reads 4+4+2=10;

for Number 11:   Two Overhand Knots may be run together as in
                  A.575, which will be seen to read 5+4+2=11;

for Number 12: Finally, in A.569 we have a sort of extended
Figure-of-Eight Knot, with FIVE facets on <u>each</u>
side.

<u>Notes</u> (a) Knots have varying numbers of bulges, or bights, on either
side (see figures below). The total number of bulges/bights for an
odd-numbered knot will be found to be <u>odd</u>; for an even-numbered knot,
<u>even</u>. This holds throughout.

(b) Similarly, odd-numbered knots 1, 3, 5, etc. will be seen to be
odd- (either right- or left-) handed; those illustrated here being
right-handed overall. The even-numbered knots 2, 4, 6, etc. are
'even'-handed; each consists of equal right- and left-handed
elements, and is therefore of a neutral handedness overall (knots 0
and 10 are exceptions).

1 [odd]   2 [even]   5 [odd]
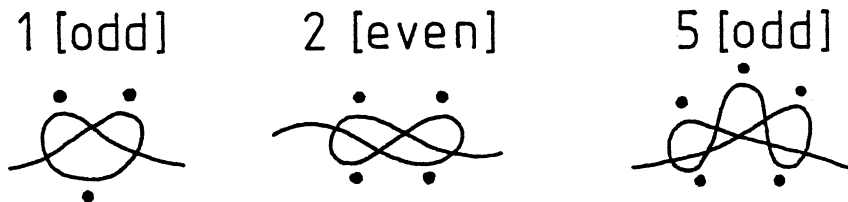
(c) Some vexation may be felt at
first, that the simpler number
knots 0-5 have vowel equivalents,
but not in the usual alphabetical
order, viz. A, E, I, 0, U. My
answer would be that they are
here set down in a much more
basic order, namely in the order
in which a baby learns them (see
table on right)!

O "0-0-0; . . . am hungry"
1 : "Ee ...it hurts"
2 "I....feel better"
3 : "A. . . thing I see"
4 : "&...(smiles) it's...
5 : ". . .yoU, Mummy!"

13   200   1985
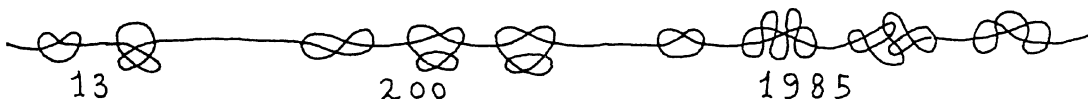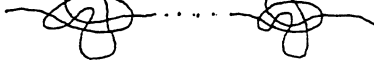
A number greater than 12 may of course be expressed by two or more
knots in sequence, as in the above examples. For numbers such as
these one will make no use of the knot symbols for 10, 11, 12;
indeed, it would be confusing to do so. One simply uses the
appropriate knot for each digit in turn, along the cord. The same can
of course be done for the three numbers 10, 11 and 12, but, as there
<u>are</u> occasions when one has to count just up to a dozen, the existence
of separate knot symbols for these numbers seems to be justified.

<u>S U M S   O N   S T R I N G</u>
One requires just <u>seven</u> more symbols, in the shape of BENDS drawn
from the Alphabend, in order to be able to set down quite elaborate
arithmetic on a piece of string! These

symbols are listed in the Table that follows:-

Arithmetical function	Usual symbol	Alphabend symbol	BEND symbol
plus	+	P	
minus	–	M	
multiply by	x	X	
divide by	÷	Dee	
equals	=	Q	
decimal point	·	Dum	
brackets	(....)	Y......Y	

Now, at last, it may be clear why in the Alphabend there had to be TWO bends ('Dee' and 'Dum') for letter D - the Drawbend Double'.

Furthermore, Bend Dee coming after one number and not followed at once by another number (or by Y) may be taken to represent the symbol % - a second number equal to 100 being 'understood'. One could carry this still further; e.g. Bend X if not followed by another number (or by Y) might square the number preceding it (as happens with a pocket calculator). . . but enough is enough.

Examples of arithmetical string-doodling follow. Comments and improvements upon the knot-number series set out here would be welcomed by the author, and indeed upon the Alphabend as well. So please let him have them!

S O M E   S A M P L E   S U M S

(a) $\dfrac{15 + 6}{3}$ = 7   Write as (15 + 6) ÷ 3 = 7
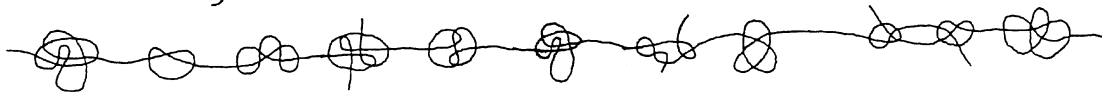
(b)   4% of 300 = 12   Write as 300 x 4% = 12

(c) 9.625 x 8 - 13 = 77 - 13 = 64 = 8^2

And WHERE is all this leading us? No one, in our age of the computer, is going to keep accounts on knotted string as the ancient In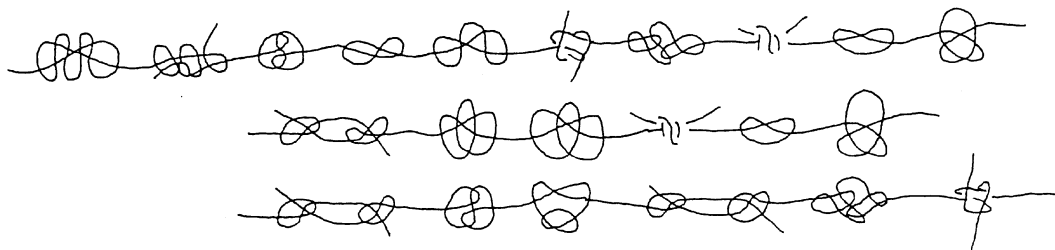cas – who lacked not just 'chips' but all arts of writing – did with such skill. Maybe however the exercise takes us yet one small step further towards a classification of the simple knots, just possibly indeed towards a shorthand way of 'writing' them.

And what scope a trained CALLIGRAPHER would see for developing the squiggles on this page into a real art form! Or at another level, what inspired and mystical GRAFFITI based on these same squiggles might come to deck the walls of some of our duller city underpasses!!

Cartoon

WILF
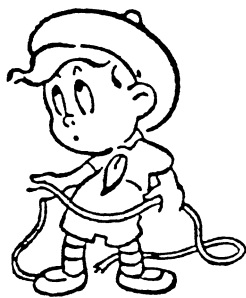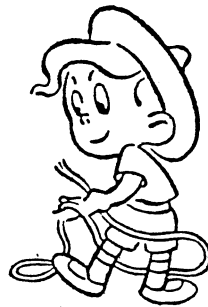
"LEFT ——— OVER RIGHT ——— AND UNDER
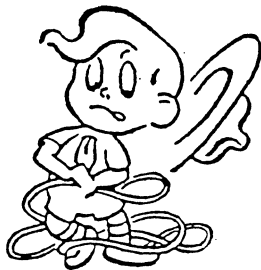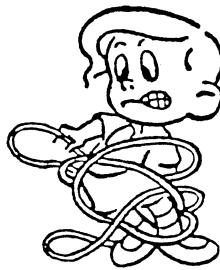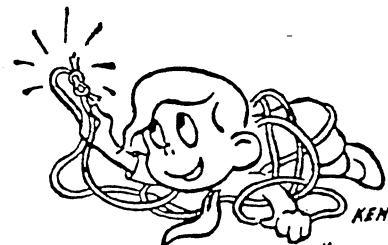
RIGHT ——— OVER LEFT ——— AND UNDER!"

by KEN

from 'Scout Smiles'
comp. by E.G.W. Wood (1950)

Quotation

" . . . it was fearful dark and the mariners made us afraid with their running here and there, and loud crying one to another to pull at this or that rope."

Puritan Francis Higginson's account of
'THE ATLANTIC CROSSING' by Melvin Maddocks,
                    pub. Time-Life Books (1981)

Horse Dealer's Hitch

from A. P. BLOOMER

I couldn't help "throwing my hat in the ring" on the subject of horseman's knots (K.M. No. 11, page 20) with this knot taught me many years ago by a North country horse dealer.

Incredible as it may seem from the drawings, it can be tied quickly and securely - in the dark - in the wet, even with an "argumentative" horse on the end!

Equally important, it can be released one-handed under the same conditions, nor have I even known it either to slip or jam.
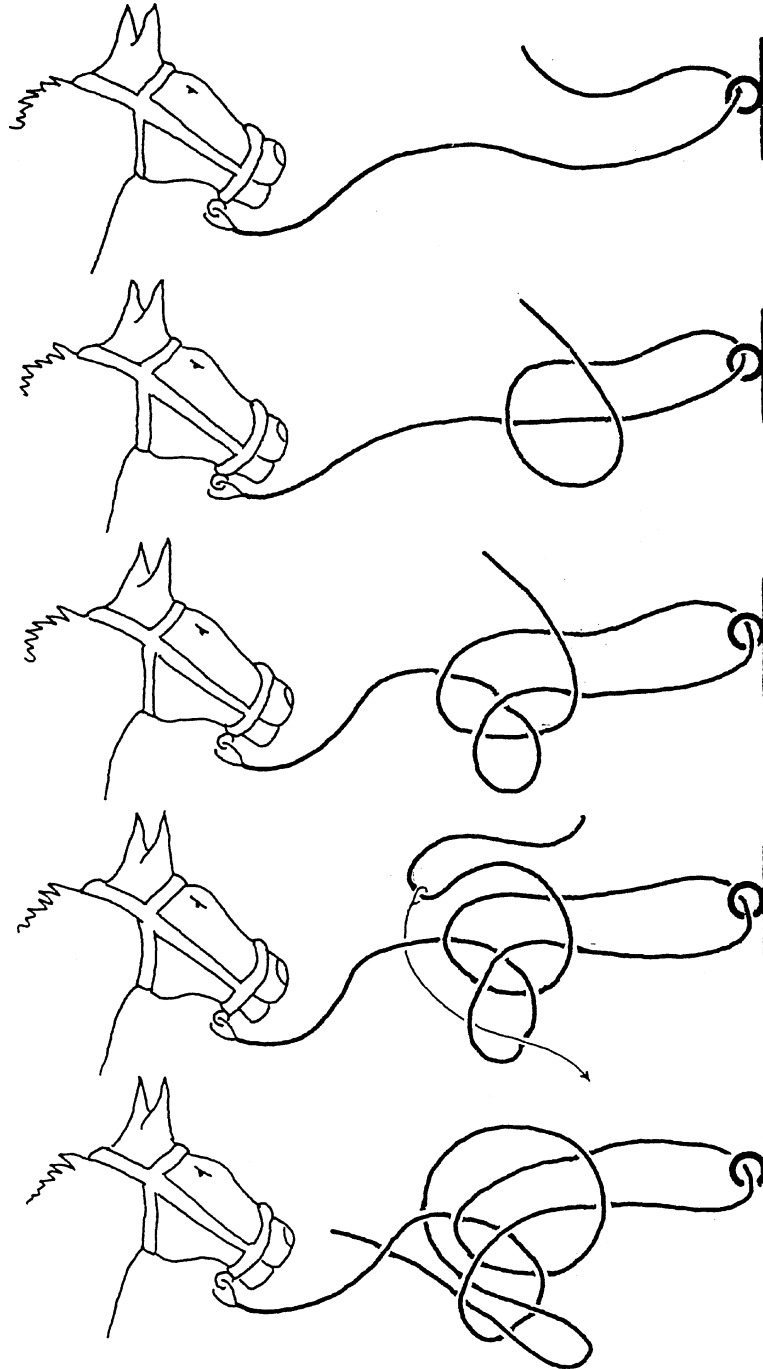
Quotation

" . . . . that he had ever been aloft on a dark night in the Atlantic, or knew the hundred ingenuities that could be performed with a rope's end and a marlin-spike . . . . "
'THE TRUMPET-MAJOR' by Thomas Hardy (1840 - 1928)

Amazin'
Puzzle
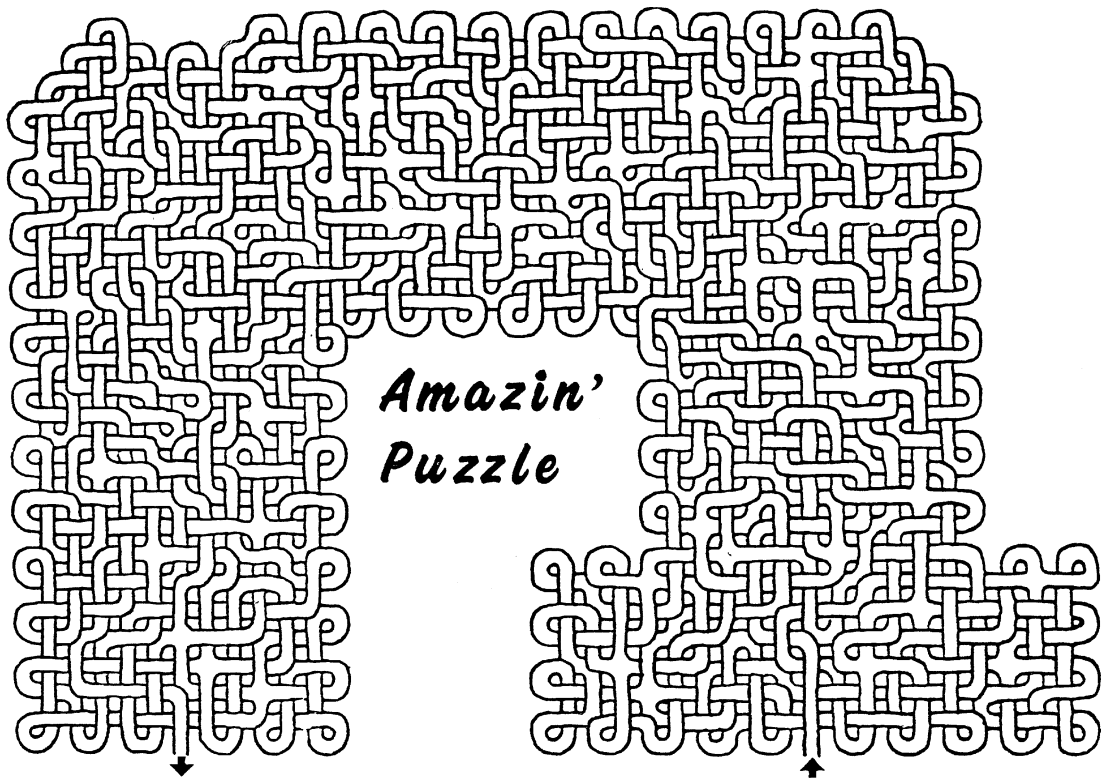
Letters

Dear Geoffrey,

   I was grateful for your profile of Clifford Ashley. I am sure
many other people must have wondered about him, as I have, and will
be glad to have their curiosity satisfied.

   I have had great difficulty in finding anyone to make my spike,
or gripfid, as seems to be a better description. One local firm
offered to make it in brass for £5.50p. each, but I do not feel that
is a realistic proposition. I shall continue looking for a production
source. Do you happen to know of anyone who might be interested? I do
not really mind if I make nothing out of it myself, but I do find it
a useful tool and believe that others would also.

   Similarly a few years ago I designed a frame, primarily for
knotting, which sold quite well for a little while and then the
workshop making it had to close. An instruction booklet went with the
frame. If you know of anyone who might be interested in making these
frames - metal or plastic (and I can improve on the original design)
- please let me know.

                        Yours sincerely,
                        Stuart GRAINGER   Totnes, Devon
                                                       15 May 85

Howdy,

I've just received the report of the 3rd. annual meeting and the accompanying (magnificent!) proposal for an Ashley extravaganza. I am intensely interested in participating in this event. I might be of particular use with the next-to-last chapter. Additionally, I'm currently at work on a sea chest and could produce beckets á la Ashley, and bring the chest with me, answering art and domestic considerations all at once.

Did any member serve in the barque "Sea Cloud" between 1931 and 1955? I'm working on a book about that vessel (which I sailed in this Winter). Currently she is owned by 9 Hamburg businessmen, but was originally built and sailed by E.F. Hutton and Marjorie Post. I'd like to interview crew from that era and thought there might be some square-rigger veterans who were aboard then.

                    So long,
                        Brion TOSS   Brooklin,
                                                                Maine, USA
                                                                16 Jun 85

Dear Geoffrey,

Tom and I wandered with the boat in the Algarve, then sailed down to Gibraltar, over to Morocco and back, then along the coast of Southern Spain, then on to Ibiza and Palma Mallorca.

I keep working on my knotting 'skills' from time to time and am surprised by the lack of knowledge among other yachtsmen. I am going over to a French boat today to show the skipper - also a woman - how to do sailmaker's whipping which I always feel is so much better than plain.

Myself I struggle to put a knot on the end of a decorative sennet. I suppose it's really easy enough if one could just <u>see</u> someone do it and I miss the I.G.K.T. meetings where any one of dozens of folk could no doubt get me over the difficulty. I continue to work it out from Ashley but he is sometimes "an embarrassment of riches". Please give my kind regards to all the members of the Guild who know me.

Talk about lotus eaters! We are happy to idle away our days. I am in and out of the water dozens of times a day. How lucky we are.

                    Best wishes as always,
                                                                Aux. sloop
                        Ann (Devine)   'Alpine Rose',
                                                                Mallorca
                                                                6 Jun 85

Dear Geoffrey,
....The big news is that I finally appeared in court to give evidence as a knot expert. I had to go to the Supreme Court of Ontario in Toronto - talk about trial by fire! I was quite nervous, but I brought along drawings to clarify my explanations and I demonstrated by tying a strap onto the crown attorney' s wrists (actually the defense attorney as well). The accused, Tien Poh Su, was convicted of first degree murder.

Incidentally, as a result of my involvement with that homicide, an article will finally be appearing in our local paper about the Guild. Plus I have an interview in Toronto for a province-wide radio program. (It's funny how the media has virtually ignored or edited out my descriptions of the Guild in the past, up until this public interest in the Tien Poh Su case).

I think there is a need for some research into the handedness of knots in regards to knot identification and crime. I'm trying to design a research project that will involve a survey of all knotting literature and will also involve the testing of a large number of knot tyers of diverse experiences in order to determine just how frequently and regularly the reef and granny knots occur (plus their variants and handedness). I'm soliciting the aid of a professional statistician in order to ensure that my experimental design will yield a maximum of accurate and reliable information. This information could be invaluable to future knot specialists who have to give evidence.

                Bye for now,

                                              Kingston,
                Rob CHISNALL   Ontario, Canada
                                              12 Apr 85

Dear Geoffrey,

    Re. my 'locking hitch' (K.M. No. 10, p.13) and Ettrick THOMSON's response (K.M. 11, p. 20), what a coincidence. I am 53 this year and fifty years ago I was a regular rider on my grandfather's shire horse while he was ploughing his farm field in the Peak District of Derbyshire. Thank you, Ettrick, for your comment.

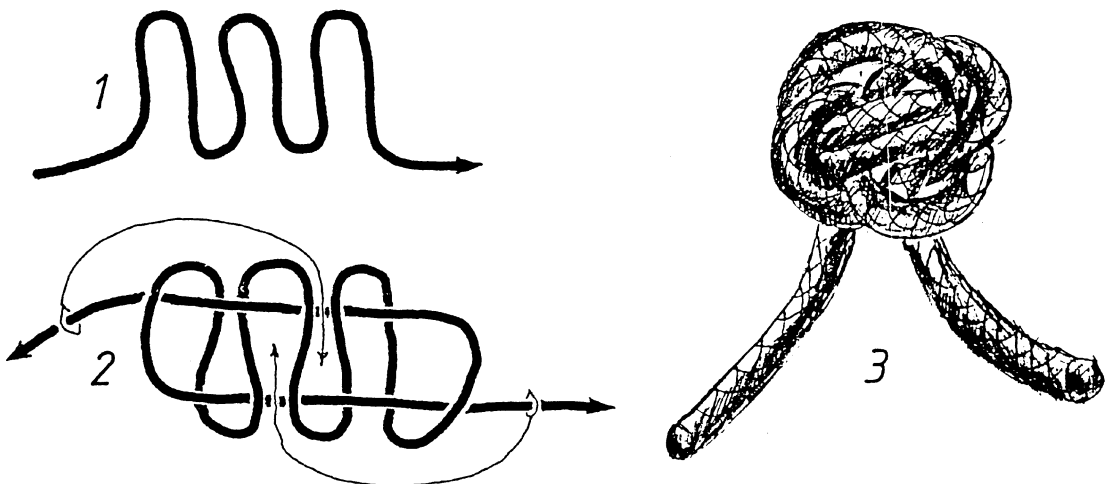   Now who can analyse this "button knot". I discovered it accidentally whilst practising the Ashley collection, and I cannot find its equal. Maybe someone, somewhere, can show it has been around before.

                Regards,

                                              Watton-at-Stone,
                Ted UPTON   Hertfordshire
                                              3-6-85

BUTTON KNOT

"Pilchards" and "Turbans"

1	- NOEUD DE CHAISE DOUBLE - DOUBLE TIE PENDANT THUMB - GASSA D'AMANTE DOPPIA
2	- BALLE POUR LANCER LES LIGNES - LINES THROWING BALL - PALLA LANCIA SAGOLE
3	- NOEUD POUR HAMECON - KNOT FOR FISHING HOOK - NODO PER AM
4	- CAPPELAGE SIMPLE - PLAIN STRAP - INCAPPELLAGGIO SEMPLICE
5	- NOEUD A CHAINE - CHAIN KNOT - NODO A CATENA
6	- JAMBEE DE CHIEN A UN NOEUD - MARGHERITA KNOT WITH ONE THUMB - NODO MARGERHITA A UNA GASSA
7	- EPISSURE A NOEUD - THUMB TYPE SPLICE - IMPIOMBATURA GASSA
8	- BOSSE - STOPPER - BOZZA
9	- NOUED PLAT - PLAIN KNOT (SEIZING) - NODO PIANO
10	- NOEUD SIMPLE - SIMPLE KNOT - NODO SEMPLICE
11	- NOEUD PARLATO - CLOVE HITCH - NODO PARLATO
12	- PIE DE POLO
13	- ESTROPE POUR AVIRONS - STROP FOR OAR - STROPPO PER REMO
14	- CAPELAGE DOUBLE - DOUBLE STRAP - INCAPPELLAGGIO DOPPIO
15	- TURBAN - TURBAN - TURRANTE
16	- NOEUD DE CHAISE SIMPLE - PLAIN TIE - PENDANT THUMB - GASSA D'AMANTE SEMPLICE
17	- CERCLE A DOUBLE NOEUD - CIRCLE WITH DOUBLE KNOT - CERCHIO A DOPPIO NODO
18	- JAMBE DE CHIEN A DEUX NOEUDS - MARGHARITA KNOT WITH TWO THUMBS - NODO MARGHERITA A DUE GASSE
19	- TRINELLA
20	- JAMB DE CHIEN - MARGHERITA KNOT - NODO MARGHERITA
21	- NOEUD DE PALANGRE - PILCHARD KNOT - NODO DA PALAMITI
22	- EPISSURE SIMPLE - SIMPLE SPLICE - IMPIOMBATURA SEMPLICE
23	- CAPELAGE SIMPLE AVEC UN DEMI CLOU - PLAIN STRAP WITH HALF HITCH - INCAPPELLAGGIO SEMPLICE CON MEZZO COLLO
24	- NOEUD DE SAVOIE - SAVOY KNOT - NODO DE SAVOIA

FOREIGN KNOT NAMES may give us an idea of how others use those knots.
. or they can make no sense at all. Either way, it is intriguing to
compare them with what we know and understand.

Book Reviews

<u>KNOTS & CRIME</u> by Geoffrey Budworth (Police Review Publishing Co.)

As those who have been in touch with Guild affairs during the last couple of years will know, our Hon. Sec. Geoffrey Budworth is a retired police inspector, who has applied his knotting knowledge to the solution of particular crimes with some success and has lectured and demonstrated on the subject to interested parties. A video made by him is used for police training. Now has come this book.

It is a paperback with 202 amply-illustrated pages, costing £3. After some introductory matter on ropework generally, the bulk of the book is taken up with advice on the interpretation of knots found at the scene of a crime, their identification guided by a classification using the number of crossing points, occupational knots, and much other information useful to an investigator, probably not conversant with the applications of cordage.

This is obviously a rather specialist publication, aimed at a particular readership. It is the result of a considerable amount of original thought. Geoffrey is uniquely placed to be able to tackle this subject and he is to be congratulated on the excellent job he has made of it.

We can look forward to seeing the book being made good use of. We feel sure that it can help in the solution of crimes involving knots, that might otherwise be left unsolved.

No doubt Geoffrey will be glad to supply copies direct to Guild members, price £3.30 including postage.

P.W.B.

'<u>KNOTS & SPLICES</u>' by Jeff Toghill (pub. in G.B. by
                        Fernhurst Books; originally in
                        Australia (1979, plus 4 reprints))

Sales of this book in Britain stopped abruptly when I.G.K.T. member Tim Field claimed it contained misleading information (e.g. the reef knot is a bend for joining two ropes of equal size) which made it potentially lethal for unsupervised youngsters. The Guild's experts were consulted and they upheld Mr. Field's contention. The publishers, Fernhurst Books, have - to be safe and sure - ceased further distribution and also offered to accept from shops unsold copies returned in mint condition. Why review a book gone out of circulation? Well, it could have been a nice and cheap little pocket edition and it may yet appear with amendments. Meantime, do treat it with caution.

Price: £1.50p.

'<u>THE BOOK OF ORNAMENTAL KNOTS</u>' by John Hensel (pub. by
                              Charles Scribner's Sons,
                              New York (1973))

Sub-titled "A new form of the macramé art", this is really an attempt to sell Oriental knot patterns to those

who do not know them. Carrick mats and Chinese lanyard (or priest cord) knots are shown in black and white photos, which I found a let-down after the glossy coloured cover. Pinning-out stages are illustrated step by step, accompanied by a concise text. Finally, various practical projects are suggested. This book is not for the accomplished but would suit those with just a passing interest in this particular aspect of handicraft.

Price: upwards of $7.00

Donkey Hitch (?) from Tim Field

A BINDING KNOT FOR POLES

I learnt this knot from the Girl Guides and I'm not ashamed to give them the credit. It's an excellent knot. I use it for the sets of poles for our 14-foot, 160 pounds tents. I've heard it called a "Donkey Hitch" but that doesn't sound right for a binding knot. The finishing Reef Knot makes it easy to untie; our youngest Scouts can tie it and the grip is first-rate.

1.   Lay 'Z' (or 'S') shape under poles.

2.   Lead end 'a' over poles and through bight a1; lead end 'b' over poles and through bight b1.

3.   Haul 'a' and 'b' tight - upwards and away from each other; ensure passes around poles lie close for high friction.

4.   Bring 'a' and 'b' b together and finish with a reef knot on top.
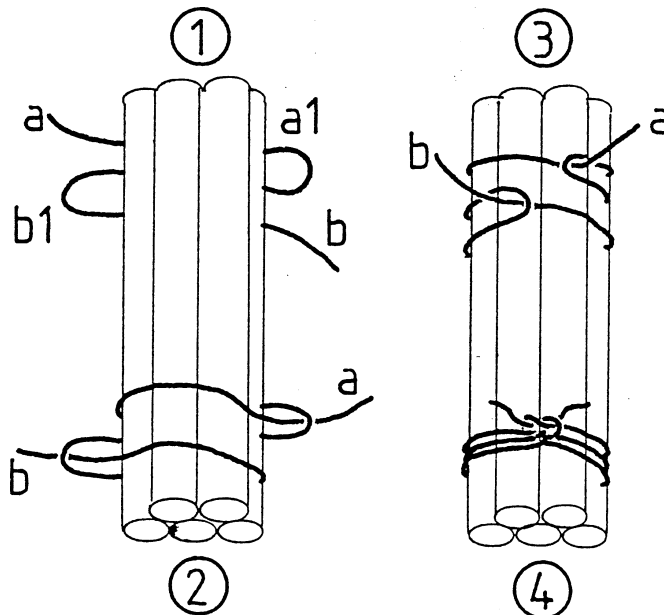
Afloat & Ashore   with GEOFF BATCHELOR

As a Chief Officer in the Merchant Service I am perhaps more interested in what I would call the more serious side of things, that is rope and wire work for ships and boats. There is a lot more of this carried out on certain classes of merchant vessel than is commonly appreciated. I went to sea in 1957 and then nearly all the splicing was done on board ship. With the advent of machine splices - and on ships with cranes instead of derricks - most of the work was being done ashore; but

over the last 10 years or so the economies of the industry partly reversed this trend and we were back to a do-it-yourself situation. This with a vengeance in many cases, as there was a vast difference in putting a Boulevant splice in a high quality crane wire to putting a Liverpool splice in an old 21/2" cargo runner. We never were supplied with rigging vices and you often felt (and looked) as though you had done 10 rounds with a tiger by the time you had finished.

Having said that, it is sad to say that conventional general cargo and heavy lift ships are fast disappearing from the British fleet and the new specialist vessels do indeed have little serious rope and wire work to practise on. Also, to put the record straight, we never had to do the really heavy splicing like heavy lift strops. This was done ashore by professional riggers. I was Chief Officer of one ship that could lift 500 tons at one go, and it has always amazed and intrigued me how they got the splices into some of the strops we used.

I come from a seafaring family (Merchant and Royal) and those members who did not actually go to sea were for the most part fanatically interested in "messing about in boats", so my interest in knotting goes back as far as I can remember. I am keen on small boat sailing myself. So I make items of fancy ropework as a hobby and for local pubs and homes, and I occasionally help out at local handicraft exhibitions with a display of knots and splices.

I "invented" a set of tools for fancy ropework. They are used for jobs like burying the ends of multi-strand knots. I carefully took to pieces the telescopic aerial of an old transmitter radio and obtained 7 metal sections ranging in diameter from 9 mm. to 2 mm. and all approximately 10 cm. long. The metal in these tubes is very thin but they are quite strong. One end of a tube is totally open but the other end (see Fig. 1) has a. slightly incurving lip.
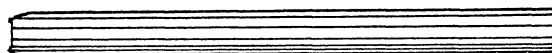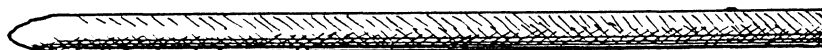

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Next I shaped wooden "fids" of varying diameters which exactly slid into the open ends of the tubes but would not pass the constriction at the other end. These wooden pieces (Fig. 2) are about 3 cm. longer than the tubes (wooden knitting needles and the tip from an old freshwater fishing rod all proved suitable material for the fids).

With the fid pushed into the tube through the open end (Fig. 3) the tool is complete. To use it, consider a multi-strand piece of work finished with a star knot which is then crowned. All those ends must be tucked away out of sight. So, choose a tool slightly larger in diameter than one of the strands. With the wood in place in the tube, work the tool like a fid up through the centre of the knots (Fig. 4.) and out of the work at a convenient place.
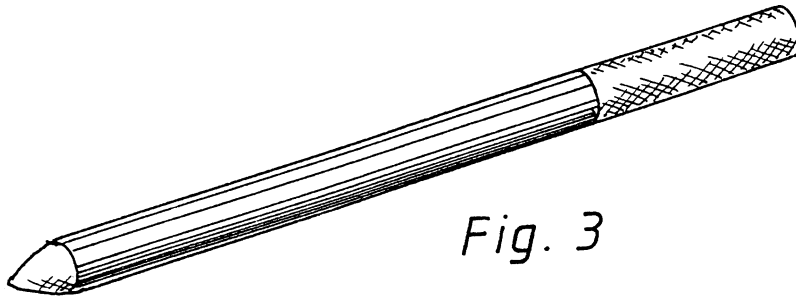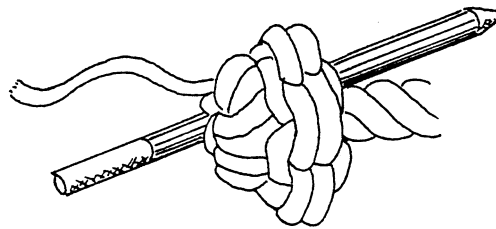

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

Next withdraw the wood backwards through the open end of the tube and push the end of one of the strands as far up the tube as it will go. Now pull the tube clear of the work in the direction of the arrow and the strand will be left sticking out clear of the work. It only remains to pull the strand tight, cut if off, and push the end back out of sight with a fid.

It's a simple enough idea but I find these tools extremely useful.

Quotation

"In the same way a pipe, which the king had bestowed upon me, was rendered sacred in the eyes of the natives, none of whom could I ever prevail upon to smoke from it. The bowl was encircled by a woven band of grass, somewhat resembling those Turks' heads occasionally worked in the handles of our whip-stalks.

A similar badge was once braided about my wrist by the royal hand of Mehevi himself, who, as soon as he had concluded the operation, pronounced me "Taboo"."

'TYPEE' by Herman Melville (1846)