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# Knotting Matters

Newsletter of the



INTERNATIONAL  
GUILD OF KNOT TYERS

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# Knotting Matters

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International Guild of  
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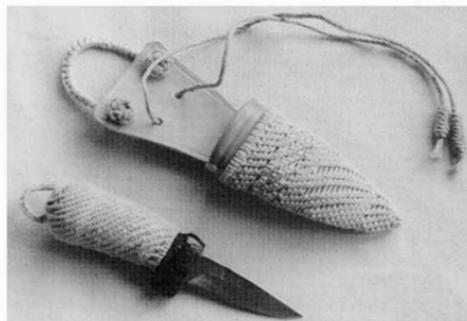
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Cover design by Stuart Grainger



*A decorated knife from the  
"Knot Gallery"*

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# Notes from the Secretary's Blotter

I am pleased to report that I have received a number of letters approving of the new style KM, for which we must thank Colin. Unfortunately, he seems quite efficient and organised, and has been chasing me for my contribution - what is it they say? "Every silver lining has a dark cloud".

On the domestic front, my family is suffering one or two problems at present, which is not leaving me too much time to spend at home. Whilst I am managing to keep the various secretarial duties under control, you may be experiencing slight delays in response to your letters and queries. My apologies for any inconvenience you may be experiencing, but you will get a reply - eventually. Email is suffering the most, as I do not have remote access to the computer, and with my son now living at home again, after five years away, - I don't have much access to the telephone line, let alone the Internet. After being away from the computer for just over a week recently, I came back to over 90 emails.

The response to Y2K2 and all that has been amazing. Ken has received hundreds of post cards, knots and other items. We were all rather touched by one member in the USA, who on the dawn of the new millennium went down the Atlantic coast, and waved at us all here

in the UK. I waved back - did anyone else?

In my last blotter I rather wishfully suggested that I might retire next year. I had hoped to be inundated with offers and applications from those anxious to take on the role. As yet, there has been a resounding silence on that subject - I suppose that ought to encourage me to open my email more often.

I must say that I have been impressed with the response to my new style subscription reminders. There was no significance in the colour of this, as it was chosen at random by the printer, however the fact that it is a startling RED, it has had the desired effect. I would however plead with members to write their cheques in favour of the IGKT, and NOT me personally. It does cause me a lot of inconvenience and extra work, as I have to pay then into my own personal account and then write out another cheque to the Guild. Not only does this increase my own bank charges, in the case of cheques from overseas, I have to be taken into the bank manager office and fill in lots of forms, which is an added inconvenience.

Enough of my moans and groans, - Colin is standing over me with a big stick - I must finish now.

*Nigel Harding*

# From the Editor

# N.K.C.A.C.

By  
Dan Lehman

First of all, may I say thank you to all those members who have written; e-mailed or phoned me complimenting me on my first offering as the new editor of Knotting Matters. I am pleased that the new look has been well received, and I will endeavour to do my best to keep up the standard.

Thanks must also go to the staff at Gipping Press for their assistance and professionalism. They are the ones who turn my scribbled layouts into the reality.

I have to take my hat off to Lonnie and Margaret, the previous editors. It is not until you come to produce something like Knotting Matters, that you realise just how much work they put in to bring the magazine to its members. Which brings me to the point of ways that you as contributors can make the life of your editor easier. Rather than fill up the pages of KM with a long list of do's and don'ts, I have produced a "Notes for Contributors" sheet. If you would like one, just drop me a line.

I received a letter recently from a member, remarking that he was unable to correspond with another member whose full address was not included in the letters page. Whilst I appreciate that a full postal address would be beneficial, space is at a premium. If you wish to correspond and the address does not appear in the member's handbook, I will gladly supply the address on request.

In response to the issue raised in km57: 57 and in various KM Letters, most notably that from Roger Miles [km58: 12], the Council has approved the formation of a committee of the IGKT to handle the initial validation of new knot claims. Guild Member Dan Lehman, who made the proposal to the Council, has been appointed as its chairman. This committee is named "New Knots Claims Assessment Committee (NKCAC)"; its purpose is to receive, review, and give technical opinion on claims by members and others: that a knot is unknown in knot literature and is valid in terms of performance.

As an association of persons interested in knots, the IGKT is a focal point for claims concerning "new" or hitherto unpublished knots. The IGKT can establish itself as an authoritative body on such matters by implementing a process of new-knot-claims validation that is consistent, rigorous, and transparent. Historically, the details of "new" knots have been published in KM; but the publication cycle of KM is such that discussion can take months to complete and there is no assurance of review timeliness or rigor. In any event, no formal assessment of these claims has been made.

Suggestions have been made concerning the Guild's response to such

claims (cf. KM's 57, 58, 59, & 63), but as yet there is no system for dealing with them. The NKCAC will implement a process to identify invalid claims and to present "apparently new" knots for publication in KM as part of a full validation process. (The NKCAC will try to provide a more uniform, standard presentation of such new knots in the KM, as appropriate.)

The NKCAC is looking for interested members to join this committee. We want to set up a virtual committee, communicating mainly by e-mail so that there are no geographical barriers to membership. (Persons with only regular-mail ability can also make contributions.) Prospective members should be willing to devote their time and knotting expertise to the NKCAC's purpose, and in particular:

- 1) have ready access to various knot books, which collectively (and perhaps even individually-e.g. Ashley's ABOK) comprise a broad selection of knots, or which individually extend the coverage of Ashley's ABOK and others;
- 2) have e-mail access (for committee discussion purposes; this although highly desirable, is not essential).

Interested members should respond to Dan Lehman, by e-mail to: "Dan\_Lehman@hotmail.com", or by regular mail to:

"134 Chanel Terrace, #T-1 / Falls Church VA 22046-4112 / USA".

Henceforth, any claim that, or question whether, a particular knot is "new" shall be submitted to the NKCAC for action. Claimants should address the NKCAC directly, to the chair's address above. Any claim received by the KM editor will be forwarded to the NKCAC.

Currently, the incipient NKCAC comprises a few members reached in discussion of its formation (viz., Dan, Tony Doran, Brion Toss, and Roger Miles). We have begun our deliberations with the "New Knots?" of km66: p30; herewith are our conclusions. (Understand that we're operating in our formative stage!)

We believe that km66: p30 is the presentation by Sten Johansson of work of G.M. Sassu published in 1997; the separation of authors isn't clearly marked, but it seems that Sten's introduction ends with the 3rd prg. and thereafter Sassu's book is quoted (the first sentence of the 4th prg. referring to "the previous chapter", e.g.). So the essential text on knots is by Sassu: he refers to three knots from a pupil, Paulo Frigau; then two of his own; then one by Walter Tross; then three more of his own. Herewith, the NKCAC's initial review.

Note that, were the new-knot claims submitted to the NKCAC prior to KM publication, we would have pursued some questions of ambiguity and use with the claimant(s); as those of km66:

p30 come from a more removed source, this wasn't practical.

The knots of Fig.'s 135 & 136 are reciprocal structures: the ends & loop parts are exchanged (i.e., join the ends of one knot and cut its loop and it will be the other knot). Fig. 135 is shown in Graumont & Hensel's Enc. of Knots & Fancy Ropework, 4th ed., pg.109 pl.52, #401 (see also pg.103 #352); Fig. 136 is Ashley's ABOK #1062.

Fig.137 is a hitch that was unfamiliar to us; nor was it among the numerous numbered variations appearing in one P.vd Griend & C. Warner "Pre-History of Knots" article. It seems to be a reasonable knot. The end tends to be drawn by and towards the stand, away from the object, and is nipped between the stand and spine of the overhand form. Dan loaded the knot fairly severely in sisal (large dia.), laid polypropylene (small dia.), nylon kernmantle (soft small-dia. and stiff large dia.); it behaved well enough. (And, with this reviewer (Dan), it led via some inevitable fiddling to another, more constrictor-like knot!)

Fig.138 is a dual-loop knot with which we are unfamiliar, also. We note that one must beware the potential for one unloaded loop to pull out of the knot if the other is loaded in isolation--the knot could completely fail! It should be noted that a similar structure based on the Fig.8 exists. Both such knots have aspects different from e.g. the Portuguese bowline: they can be tied in the bight; and they can be loaded on stands only,

too (which, by one testing for the "side-oriented fig.8 loop" which Rob Chisnall cited, is a strong knot (but beware of pull-through spilling.)) But we surmise that these unknown knots are prone to jam under heavy load.

Dan loaded the knot (a slightly rearranged variation) to 750#, with the double stands tied into a sling (w/ Shakehands): it looked fine.

One can arrange for the loops to pull through one another (i.p. for the secure one to lie within the pull-out-able one) such that the knot will NOT completely fail on one-loop loading. One can also position the inter-loop connecting part such that the stands draw it up against the overhand's bight part, which helps resist jamming.(This isn't obvious from the simple illustration.)

Fig.139 seems "new" in the sense of unpublished, but there should be a good reason for that: it's a pretty bad knot! As illustrated (and note that the illustrations of the completed knot confusingly re-orient the structure 180 degrees on the page), it can simply spill. One might surmise that only a frictive rope was used in developing this knot. The half-hitch part can be positioned to lie behind--as oriented in the left two figures--the upper bend of the overhand part (such that its STAND binds it down into the overhand's "open space"), getting a lock similar to a "slippery hitch"; in this form, the knot resembles Fig.65. (Note that this is NOT how the tied knot is illustrated in Fig.139!) We see no reason to use this

knot. (P.vd Griend & C. Warner showed the case where the end entering the overhand form's "belly" does so from the opposite side [km61: 53, #24 & 25, Ashley #1477]; this approach has better promise.)

Fig.64 is the same-side full carrick bend, artfully mis-drawn!

(Again, one of the goals of the NKCAC is to present knots well, in a more uniform manner.) At least in some ropes, this form of the full carrick bend seems less secure, as the ends are not directly nipped.

Fig.65 is, in one drawing-up at least, a variation on the "oblique" or "opposite-side" sheet bend. The method of tying obscures this, and the illustration of the tied knot is incorrect - we were unable to produce exactly that form. This author (Dan) stressed the knot in 6mm climbing rope at approx. 750#, and then had a tough time w/marlinespike untying it. (If one wants a more secure sheet bend, try that of km07: 19, which had fairly good test results by a former IGKT Irish member Alan Walbridge's break testing. Cf. also km45: 22 for an extra-tucked sheet bend.)

Fig.66 has a bad illustration: the lower left drawing shows a fig.8 form (from left STAND, w/arrow) merged with a marlinespike form; but the tied knot in the lower right has no closed form. We believe the lower right is as intended, and lower left is simply quite mistaken (it's not easy to deduce what was intended (if one reverses stands/wends and interprets the arrow to be guiding the path of the new wends, one gets Ashley #1408!)). This knot requires some careful positioning

of parts in order to get a workable result. (The knot resembles Harry Asher's Vice Versa Major [km06: 15-top], but his is symmetric.) Dan loaded the knot in a sling to 750# (so, 375# in effect on the knot) in 6mm rope; it jammed hard but could be broken via the 1-diam. bight (and courtesy of slippery nylon rope). We were unfamiliar with this knot (without regret).

Fig.67 is unknown to us; it seems to be an awkward way of merging a distorted fig.8 and overhand form. It can be drawn up to resemble

Ashley's #1452 and Asher's Shakehands bends; but we see no reason to not prefer those two symmetric and better-formed knots to this.

Finally (last and least, we think), comes Fig.68. We concur in the apt title of this knot - "L'errore del professor" - and remark that generally errors are not published!

In sum, the current standing NKCAC finds only two potentially "new" knots in this set worth noting - viz., those of fig.'s 137 & 138. Can the broad IGKT membership shed any further light on these? We find that the other knots of km66: p30 not clearly identified from a brief search of primary resources to be unworthy of further research to substantiate whether they are "new" and to give credit for their "invention" or "discovery": absent intrinsic worth of the knot, "new" is an unimportant characteristic. (Making "new" is easy enough, and Fig.68 shows a way that is common amongst knot fiddlers - mistakes realized as interesting novelties.)

# Variations on the Ocean Mat

By

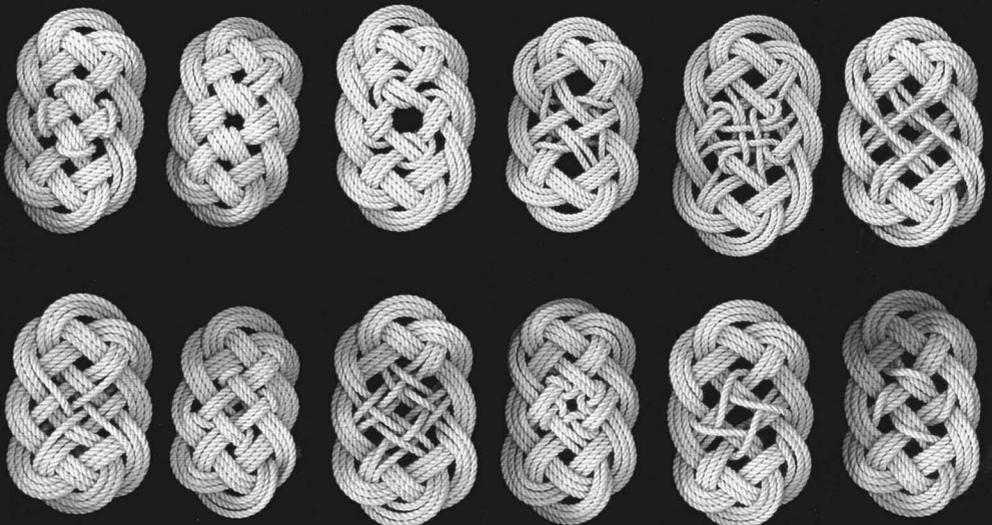
Joaquim Paulo Escudeiro

As a professional, living only on my knot work, I have been selling small mats for use as hair decorative holders for the last seven years. Thinking of refreshing the business, I started to make changes to the third pass at the centre of many of the classical mats. The comments from most of my clients are good, but the more expert are tempted to say that it is rather more like an imbroglio.

As there is nothing completely new in knotting, once the movements are there,

it is likely that sooner or later someone will stumble upon them. I would be interested in comments from members of the Guild who have similar variations, and would like to exchange experiences. Are they beautiful or not, disparaging or enriching? Would anyone care to comment?

I have selected some examples of such machinations. I have many more; because, using decorative liberty the possibilities are endless.



# The Ashley Quiz

Devised by Geoffrey Budworth

**H**ow much do you know about Clifford W. Ashley? Answers to many - but not all of the following questions are contained in *The Ashley Book of Knots*.

- Choose ONE answer only for each question.
- Attempt all 20 questions; if you do not know - guess (there is one chance in four that you will be right).
- Correct answers appear on another page of this issue of *Knotting Matters*.

1. Clifford Ashley was born in:

- (a) 1871;
- (b) 1881;
- (c) 1891;
- (d) 1901.

2. His middle name was:

- (a) Warren;
- (b) William
- (c) Walter;
- (d) Watson.

3. When he was 3 years old, an

uncle taught him to tie the:

- (a) reef knot;
- (b) sheet bend;
- (c) clove hitch;
- (d) bowline.

4. Ashley was encouraged by his father to learn a halter hitch when he was aged:

- (a) 5;
- (b) 7
- (c) 9
- (d) 11.

5. His early artistic development was influenced by the school of:

- (a) Bernard Leach;
- (b) William Morris;
- (c) Clarice Cliff;
- (d) Howard Pyle.

6. When he was 21, the City Directory of New Bedford listed him as:

- (a) an artist;
- (b) a grocer;
- (c) a student;
- (d) a seaman.

7. His chief knot-tying mentor aboard the whaling bark Sunbeam was:
- (a) Captain Charles W. Smith;
  - (b) Dr. Richard Knowles;
  - (c) Captain Daniel F. Mullins;
  - (d) Charles B. Rockwell.
8. Clifford Ashley's original Oysterman's Stopper knot was discovered while mistakenly trying to reproduce what turned out to be merely a misshapen:
- (a) blood knot;
  - (b) stevedore's knot;
  - (c) figure-eight knot;
  - (d) double overhand knot.
9. For a time between 1908 and 1911 he profitably bought, restored and sold old mahogany furniture which he had acquired speculatively in:
- (a) Barbados;
  - (b) Jamaica;
  - (c) Trinidad;
  - (d) Antigua.
10. Ashley wrote for three of the following four magazines. Which is the odd one out?
- (a) Harper's Monthly;
  - (b) Saturday Evening Post;
  - (c) Scribner's Magazine;
  - (d) Scientific American.
11. In 1913 he had a boat named the:
- (a) Auklet;
  - (b) Sunbeam;
  - (c) Wanderer;
  - (d) Greyhound
12. His home was a farmhouse in:
- (a) Westport, Massachusetts;
  - (b) Seattle, Washington;
  - (c) Mesa, Arizona;
  - (d) Richmond, Indiana.
13. He relates how once, in order to be appear properly dressed at a formal occasion, he improvised from a pair of round black shoe laces:
- (a) a belt;
  - (b) suspenders;
  - (c) a wristwatch strap;
  - (d) cuff-links.
14. Ashley was shown how to tie the Theodore knot by:
- (a) Charlie Chaplin;
  - (b) Will Rogers;
  - (c) Houdini;
  - (d) Will James.

15. Sometime after 1916 he patented a symmetrical sinnet (i.e. a plait or braid), the cross-sectional shape of which was:
- (a) round;
  - (b) elliptical;
  - (c) square;
  - (d) an equilateral triangle.
16. Which of the following statements was written by Clifford W. Ashley?
- (a) "Old knots long out of use have a way of coming back into this workaday world with renewed vigour and usefulness."
  - (b) "It is extraordinary how little the average individual knows about the art of making even the simplest knots."
  - (c) "The average newcomer to the ever growing ranks of yachtsmen comes equipped with only a slight knowledge of rope work, and most of it wrong."
  - (d) "As a matter of fact... the wheel, fire, the cultivation of the soil, and other great prehistoric discoveries undoubtedly post-date the knot by countless eons of time."
17. He once tested bends in a course yarn used for the manufacture of automobile upholstery. The yarn was:
- (a) flax;
  - (b) coir;
  - (c) cotton;
  - (d) mohair.
18. Which of his 20 sketched symbols in *The Ashley Book of Knots* - each one used to denote the principle characteristic of an individual knot - represents the feature 'difficult to untie'?
- (a) three joined chain links;
  - (b) a pretzel;
  - (c) a skull & cross-bones;
  - (d) a wedding ring.
19. The approximate number of oil paintings known to have been done by Clifford W. Ashley is:
- (a) 50;
  - (b) 150;
  - (c) 250;
  - (d) 350.
20. The year of his death, at the age of 65, was:
- (a) 1937;
  - (b) 1947;
  - (c) 1957;
  - (d) 1967.

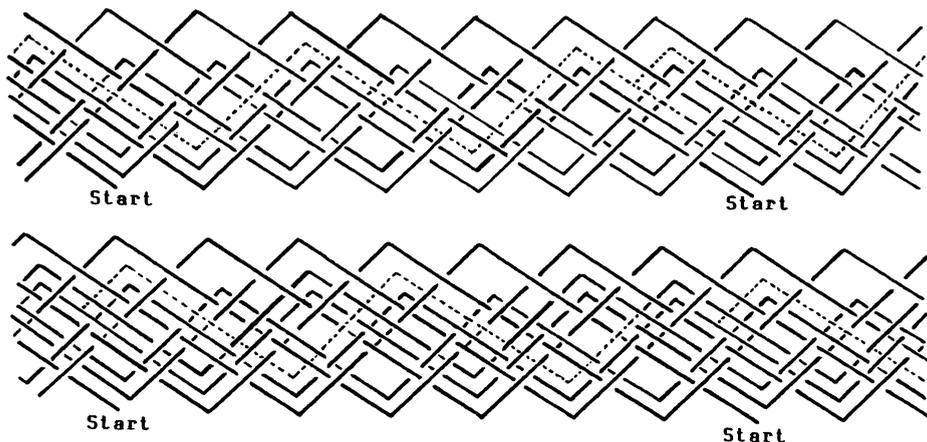
# Turk's Heads with a Built in Mouse - PtlI

By Thomas Simpson

Following on from KM 65 (pages 39 - 44), second and third interweaves can be worked into the 'raised' Turk's head with the assistance of the following two written step sequences. Be vigilant for the changes in steps 5, 6 and 10; they have been indicated with asterisks and underlined.

Step sequence to introduce a second interweave into a 7B x 5P Turk's head.

1. From where the first interweave finished (to the right of the strand that started the interweave), go up over two strands, then under the crossed pair (x2) near the top of the knot, inside the top bight (above the previous interweave).



*Second interweave introduced into a 7 bight x 5 part Turk's head*

*Top diagram: dotted line = steps 1 - 5*

*Lower diagram: dotted line = steps 6 - 9*

2. Down over two strands, then under four strands, tracking inside (above bottom interweave).

to simplify, the instructions are now reduced to a repetitive, concise style.

	3	Up	over	2 strands then	under	X2 strands	inside top bight
	4	Down	over	2	under	4	above bottom interweave
*	5	Up	over	2	under	X2+1	inside top bight
*	6	Down	over	2	under	5	above bottom interweave
	7	Up	over	2	under	X2+1	inside top bight
	8	Down	over	2	under	5	above bottom interweave
	9	Up	over	2	under	X2+1	inside top bight
*	10	Down	over	3	under	5	above bottom interweave
	11	Up	over	3	under	X2+1	inside top bight
	12	Down	over	3	under	5	above bottom interweave
	13	Up	over	3	under	X2+1	inside top bight
	14	Down	over	3	under	5	above bottom interweave

This completes the second interweave and ‘raised’ knot of two interweaves.

A third interweave step sequence proceeds... Keeping to the right of the second interweave start strand, go -

	1	Up	over	3 strands then	under	X2 strands	inside top bight
	2	Down	over	3	under	6	above lower interweave
	3	Up	over	3	under	X2	inside top bight
	4	Down	over	3	under	6	above lower interweave
*	5	Up	over	3	under	X2+1	inside top bight
*	6	Down	over	3	under	7	above lower interweave
	7	Up	over	3	under	X2+1	inside top bight
	8	Down	over	3	under	7	above lower interweave
	9	Up	over	3	under	X2+1	inside top bight
*	10	Down	over	4	under	7	above lower interweave
	11	Up	over	4	under	X2+1	inside top bight
	12	Down	over	4	under	7	above lower interweave
	13	Up	over	4	under	X2+1	inside top bight
	14	Down	over	4	under	7	above lower interweave

This completes the third interweave and ‘raised’ knot of three interweaves.

The two Turk's head diagrams show the second interweave, steps 1 - 9 inclusive - progress indicated by the dotted line. As the steps are within the knot I haven't numbered them, in an attempt to avoid any clutter and confusion (pencil them in, if it helps). Further progress in this and additional interweaves is repetitive and doesn't require illustration.

In the diagrams the actual knot's circumference lies between the overlap at either end helps to see where one is going to (left) and coming from (right). The two Starts also make good reference points for crosschecking positions within the diagrams.  
the two Starts; (left) and points for

Although not visibly obvious, if one looks very closely at the interweaves, they can be seen to form a cycle through the knot, each interweave tracking (on top of) the preceding interweave. So whilst working the knot, frequently glance ahead at the previous interweave to help determine the present track - before negotiating the overs and unders.



### **Interweaves cycle within the knot.**

Whilst on the learning curve and if experiencing difficulty in constructing an untried interweave knot, temporally substitute a different (colour or narrower) strand for the interweave (making it easier to follow), whilst noting down the step sequence. Once one has the step sequence of written instructions to hand, the knot's construction becomes clear. The written step sequence is the most effective aid to the construction of all complicated knots.

It is advisable to record and file a step sequence of written instructions for all new variations of complicated ropework that one constructs. Diagrams and drawings are also important, but mainly as ones first introduction to a new type of ropework, when ones knowledge is non-existent or very minimal.

Three interweaves are my usual upper limit with 'raised' knots; although the longer, flat sided interweave Turk's heads are more interweave friendly and I sometimes use up to five or six interweaves with them.

To ensure the workmanship stands the test of time, my ropework is completed by burying the start and finish strands and stitching them with strong invisible thread. This neat, concealed finish is achieved with the aid of a small half-circular needle, similar to, but a lot smaller than the more widely known 'upholstery' needle. Look out for them in the haberdashery/notions area of most department stores.

# Surgeon Learns Plaiting to Improve Surgery

**A**n orthopaedic surgeon has used a four-strand plait to improve the knee ligament damage in one of his patients.

When Mr. Errol Willy, a hairdresser from South Wales consulted surgeon John Fairclough about his sports injury, the consultant asked in return how to make a perfect four-strand plait. This has resulted in a simple and effective remedy to repair the damage.

Four ligaments are removed from the victim's own hamstring and plaited together to give the finished product extra strength and make it easier to attach to the bone.

Mr. Fairclough who pioneered the technique said: "The beauty of the technique is that it is so simple once the skill of plaiting the ligaments has been mastered. After the operation, the result is probably stronger than the original ligaments".

"The problem I had was connecting four strands of ligament about 10cm long between the thigh bone and the shin bone. I was watching my wife plait my youngest daughters' hair when I realised it could be the answer."

Errol Willy helped Mr. Fairclough to master the technique of plaiting with four pieces of rope. Mr. Fairclough said the technique took about a week to master.

*John Constable*

# Knotmaster Series No. 5

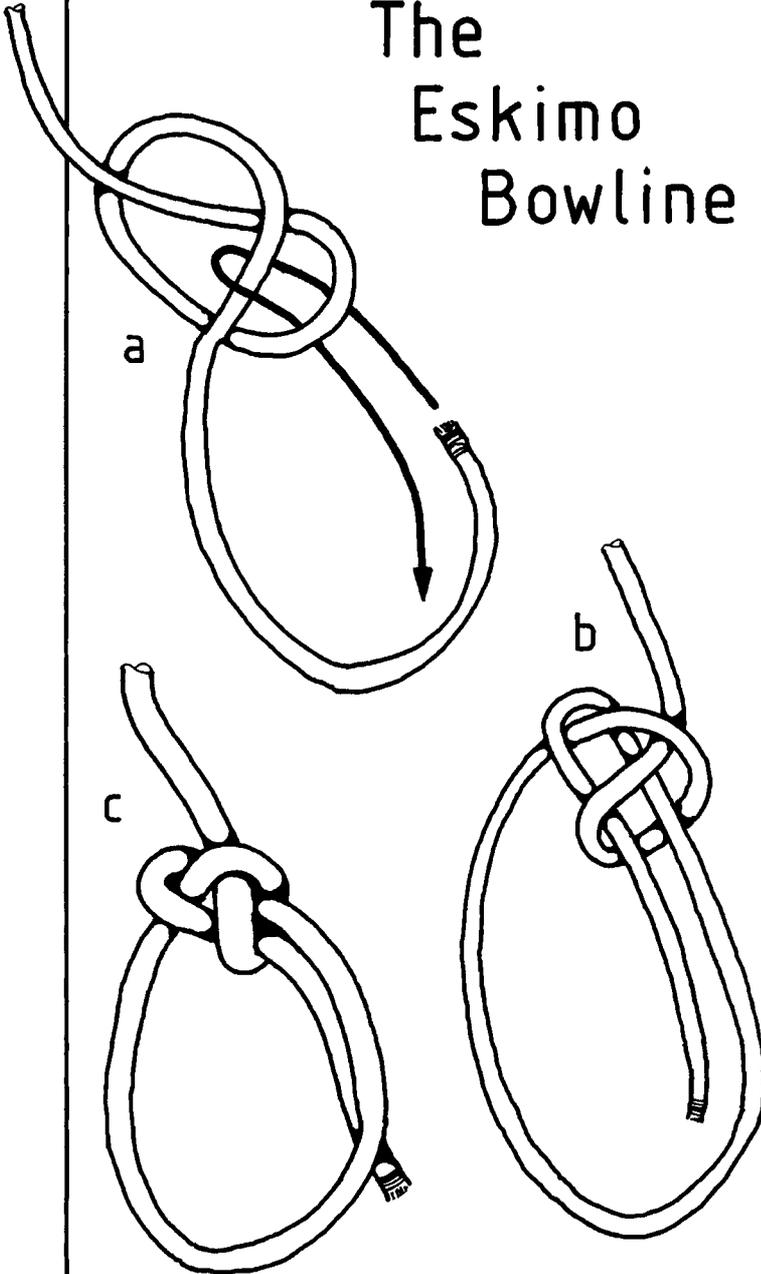
*"Knotting ventured,  
knotting gained."*

## ESKIMO BOWLINE

If a common bowline ever truly was the King of Knots, it was forced to abdicate by the revolution of synthetic rope and cordage.

This version, with its distinct tricuspid face, is a more compact and secure alternative. See Geoff Budworth's account of it (KM27) on an Inuit sled for an idea of its age and origin.

# The Eskimo Bowline



# More on Turks Heads

by Albert Southerden

**A**s a comparatively new member of IGKT, it is with some temerity that I offer the following. I have developed an interest in Turks Heads, but have lacked the ability or understanding of how they are tied. Until recently I was confined to following instructions and charts developed by others.

It is with great admiration that I have watched Brian Field coil a line round his hand, fiddle around with it to produce a simple Turks Head and then expand its bights and/or leads in accordance with his ingenious 'Regular Turks Head Knot Tree'. Similarly, Charlie Smith is able to produce an astonishing variety by looping line around his fingers and weaving the working end though at intervals, and seems able to devise any Turks Head (including the Portsmouth 'Biggest in the World').

I welcomed Mike Wilson's article on the Disk Method in KM 61. Here was a clear, straightforward system that even I could follow! It proved to be ideal for Turks Head mats, but had its disadvantages. A Turks Head with a large number of leads required ever-larger sheets of paper and cork boards; and if a cylindrical Turks Head should be required there proved to be enormous disparity between the inner and outer circumferences with a lot of surplus line to be worked out.

So it was with considerable interest that I read David Fukuhara's Cylinder Method in KM 64. Unfortunately, however, I was unable to make much headway. How could a fixed grid be used as a basis for (e.g.) a 7B x 4L, a 7B x 5L or even a 7B x 16L Turks Head? All would use a common width (circumference) of paper, yet must have different lengths - hence differently proportioned grids.

After much experimentation, I hope I have evolved a system, which appears to cover all cases. So far, I have used it for 6Bx 11L, 7Bx6L, 7Bx8L, 11Bx7L and 11Bx8L.

I start with a piece of paper marked in width with the circumference of my former and with a line across it divided into as many equal spaces as the required number of bights in the Turks Head. The dividing points are numbered from zero (for some bizarre reason, I number from right to left) and includes one edge of the paper. If the number of leads required exceeds the number of bights, then the line will need extending and the numbering continued up to the number of leads.

A second line is drawn across the paper a convenient distance from the first (close for few leads, further away for more leads). This second line is also divided. For Turks Heads with an even number of leads the bights will be opposite one another and the dividing points and

numbering will be as for the top line. If, however, there are to be an odd number of leads, then the bights will not be opposite each other and the lower line will

Next, draw a line from 0 to  $5\frac{1}{2}$  (i.e. half the number of leads) and from  $5\frac{1}{2}$  to 11 (i.e. the full number of leads). It now remains to complete the grid by drawing

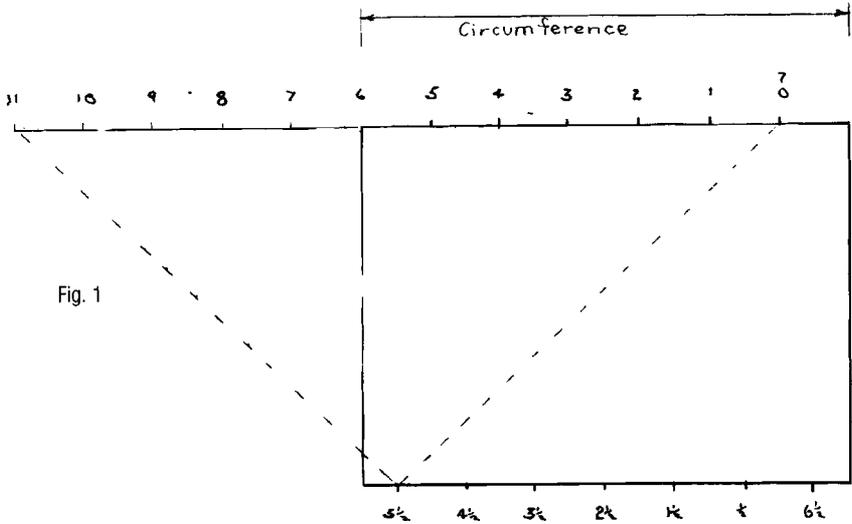


Fig. 1

need mid-points numbered  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $1\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  and soon. This is all illustrated in Figure 1 - which is for a 7B x 11 L Turks Head. (see fig. 1)

in parallel lines from every point and half-point as shown in Figure 2.

Select any convenient start point and mark alternate under-and-over

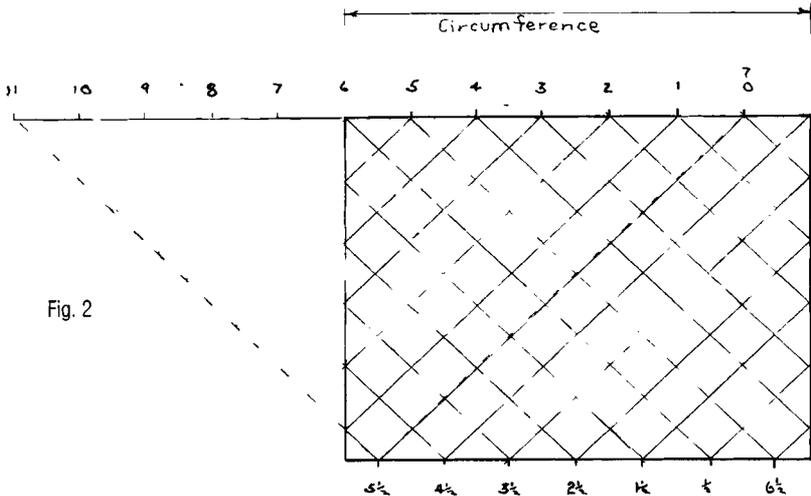


Fig. 2

crossings throughout the chart before fastening it around its former and weaving the knot. My preferred method of marking the crossings is shown in

Figure 3, as there seems little point in doing further work to use Ashley's method.

So, what about the 7B x 16L Turks Head

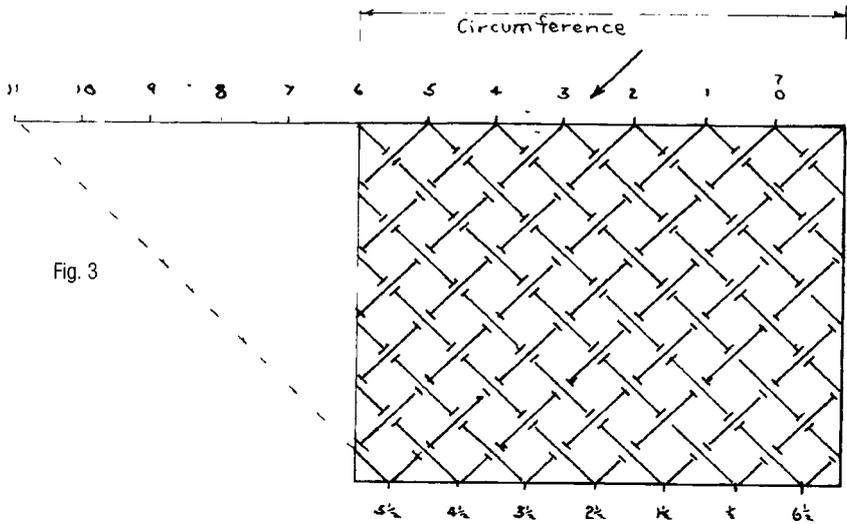


Fig. 3

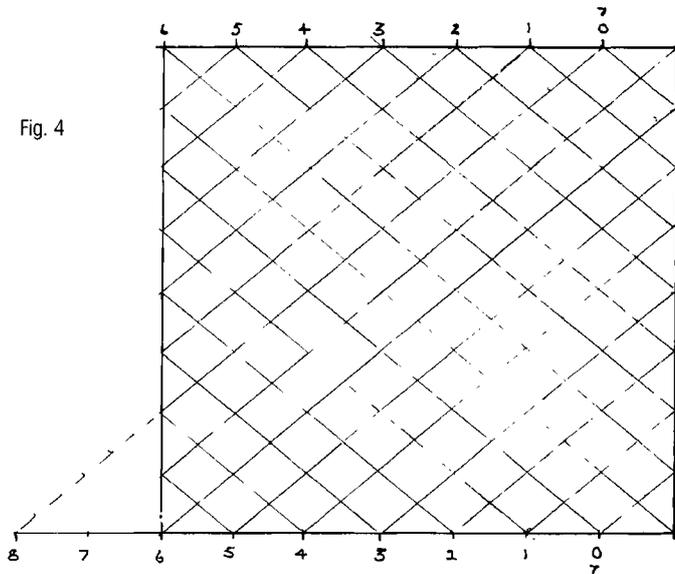


Fig. 4

alluded to earlier? Here, I have divided my circumference into the 7 spaces as before, and with the numbering on the bottom line extended to one side. I then drew my starting line from 0 to 8 (with parallel lines from all points on both lines) and turned my adjustable set-square over to draw lines at the same angle in the opposite direction to complete the grid. I discovered that if a line were extended from point 8 to the top line it would join it (way off the edge of the paper) 16 divisions from 0. The grid is shown in

Figure 4 and has been checked for a single continuous path with alternate over-and-under crossings.

I haven't tried to construct charts with extremely large numbers of leads (say in excess of three times the number of bights) but perhaps someone else might like to have a go to see whether the system will still work. Or perhaps one of our mathematically competent members may be able to prove whether the principle will stand in all cases, or collapse in failure. Does it work for multi-line Turks Heads?

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# IGKT Half-yearly Meeting

## *Hello Knot tyers,*

The October 2000 meeting of the IGKT will be held in the Netherlands.

When? Friday 13, Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 October 2000.

Where? Beverwijk.

Where did you say? Beverwijk, this is a small town about half an hour out of Amsterdam, or one hour north of Rotterdam.

The building we may use is from a scouting group. There is enough space to put some sleeping bags, a field for a couple of tents and a limited amount of beds with members, friend and relatives.

For those knot tyers travelling with not tyers there are a couple of towns within half an hour travelling, all of them with hotels, Alkmaar, Haarlem and Amsterdam. There are also some hotel beds in the next village, Wijk aan Zee, it being a small

seaside resort. And although the meeting will be only Friday till Sunday I understand that travelling long distances makes necessary to arrive early or stay late. Please let me know I might be able to find you a member to host you, just for the day or for a couple of days.

If there are people interested we will organise excursions on the Thursday, Friday, Sunday and Monday.

If you need more information please phone or mail me. Please note my new address, which is printed below. Of course, there will come an invitation with address and a map and so on.

Willeke van der Ham  
Schulpweg 84  
1951 JB Velsen Noord  
+31251213285  
willeke\_igkt@yahoo.com

# The Marion's Knot

By Olivier Peron

**A** while ago, I introduced in Knotting Matters a knot I had created: the Corkscrew knot (KM 62 & 64). After one year, no one has been able to prove this knot exists already, neither Geoffrey Budworth nor Robert Chisnall with who I have been directly in contact. So, even if I know exactly how extremely rare it is to create a new knot nowadays, I think I was right for the corkscrew knot.

This time, I would like to introduce a second new knot in the next Knotting Matters. I have already written Ken Yaldon about it, telling him it was my "Millennium knot".

This knot I would like to call "the Marion's knot" (in memory of a girl... and because it is nice when a knot have a history) is of the same style as the corkscrew knot: a releasable hitch tied without end on a closed anchor.

It's main quality and interests are it is very quick to tie! Moreover it is reliable: I have tried it myself hung in a tree, supporting several tests and big shocks! The Marion's Knot and the corkscrew knot belong to the same family, but their main quality is different. This is the reason why I think it is important to introduce this second knot as well, asking the members' opinion.

I briefly resume the characteristics:

The Marion's knot: reliable, very quick to tie, and funny to untie!

The corkscrew knot: reliable, solid (static and dynamic resistance over 1,000 kg on a climbing rope), and easy to release.

Both are easy to learn and to tie. The Marion's knot is based on the same "key" as the bowline and the sheet bend. It is an adaptation of a releasable belay loop for climbing.

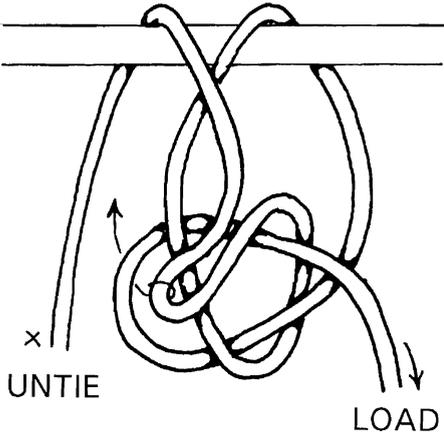
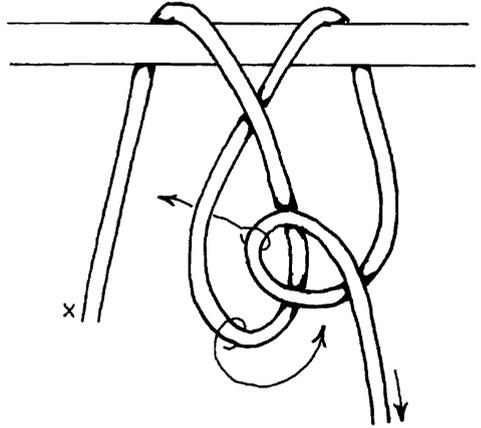
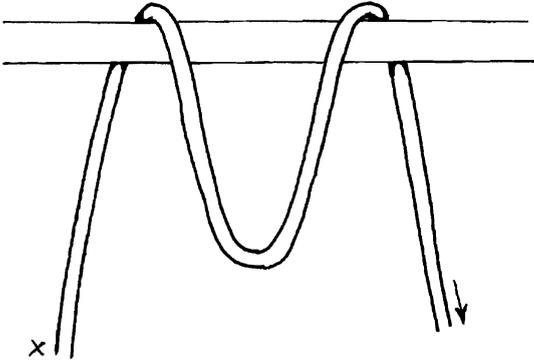
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## ROPE ENDS

In mediaeval churches there is a rood screen dividing the choir from the nave, with the monks (or nuns) sitting in the choir and the laity in the nave.

In the Shinto temples of Japan there is a similar symbolic division between the space-of-the-spirits and the space-of-the-mortals. The ornamental 'screen' in these temples is always made from ritually purified hempen rope. It may be as simple as a single cord, or as elaborate as an open curtain of knotted strings. Generally, the division is very airy so that the spirits (kami) will feel free to move among the mortals.

*Europa Chang*



Marion's Knot



*Ditty Bag by Tony Doran  
Material: 15 oz duck canvas  
Decoration: bag - drawn thread work  
Drawstring - eight strand square sennit with pineapple knot*



**Key Keeper**

**Made by:  
Joaquim Paulo A Escudero**

# Knot Gallery

**F**or those members with access to the internet and who visit the Guild's website, the images on these next few pages will already be familiar to you.

However there are many members who are not, or chose not to get "connected". So here is an opportunity to sample one of the delights of the digital revolution.

Guild meetings and events also give members the opportunity to show their skills and for others to view and gain inspiration.

There are many members around

the world who produce some really beautiful knotwork that is rarely seen by anyone else. So here is your opportunity to show what you are doing.

I am hoping this Knot Gallery can become a regular feature of Knotting Matters. Why should only those people who can access the World Wide Web get all the pleasure of seeing our work displayed?

So come on, don't hide your light under a bushel! Send in photographs of your work and share it with the rest of the Guild.

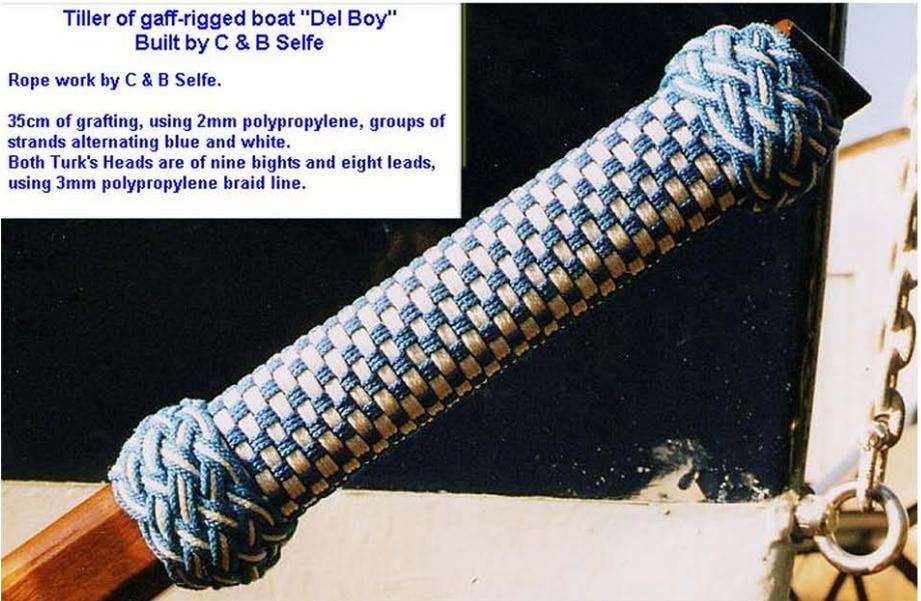


*Knife and Sheath by Yngve Edell  
Needle Hitching in 2 mm flax*

**Tiller of gaff-rigged boat "Del Boy"  
Built by C & B Selfe**

Rope work by C & B Selfe.

35cm of grafting, using 2mm polypropylene, groups of strands alternating blue and white.  
Both Turk's Heads are of nine bights and eight leads, using 3mm polypropylene braid line.



## Cobra

Made by:  
Joaquim Paulo A. Escudiero







*Chest Becket Door Knocker by Colin Grundy*

# THE BOWLINE

By

Owen K. Nuttall

**O**f all knots the Bowline must rate as the King. Though it is just referred to as the single bowline or bowline. But is the bowline as we know it, a true bowline, not according to J Tom Burgess in his book "*Knots Ties and Splices*" published 1884 page 23 figure 34. To him the knot we know as the bowline is just a Plain or Ordinary Bowline. To Burgess the True Bowline Figure 1, 2 and 3. The same knot as depicted by Ashley #1025, he quotes

*"There are people who believe that if a single thing is good, two are bound to be better so they overburden their knots with extra turns and flourishes. The accompanying knot, which is often shown, is a good example of this. The previous being quite adequate and the latter no improvement over it."*

So who is right or is it just a confusion, which has arisen with the passing of time. What was the purpose of the first Bowline was it first used to lower a man over the side of a ship. Or for mooring from the bow of a boat or ship. There seems to be no early documentation of first using the bowline for mooring. As today the bowline is the main method of tying up. (Was the name given to this knot for mooring bow first or for making a bow in the line)? The earliest written reference on the bowline is by Captain John Smith in the new English dictionary 1627 "*the*

*bolin knot is fastened by the brides into the cringles of the sailes"*.

As this is the earliest reference to the bolin knot was it to differentiate between the bowline and the bolin knot. Did the bowline acquire its name for mooring from the bow or did some one called Bolin first tie this knot? I don't think so.

If the true bowline was used first did some one take it a step further to save time by whipping the working end to the side of the loop. Take the working end back through the lower loop or the figure eight, back around the standing part and back through the lower loop of the figure eight fig. 4, 5 & 6 to make a Compromise Bowline. Then was the standard or plain bowline developed from simplifying the Compromise Bowline? Some one in the distant past must have linked these bowlines together.

To go right back to the beginning and the King of all knots the ordinary, plain or what ever. The reason it rates as the King of all knots, it has stood the test of time, it is versatile and above all it is relatively easy to untie although it seems to have lost favour with climbers and caver's in favour of the figure of eight loop with the development of modern ropes. To make the bowline more secure various methods have been used from tying the working end to the side of loop with an overhand knot.

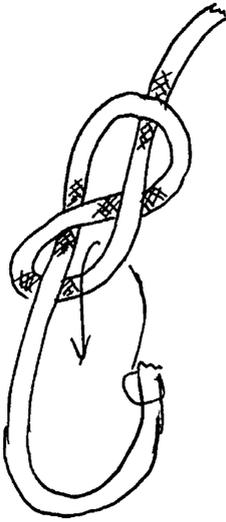


fig. 1

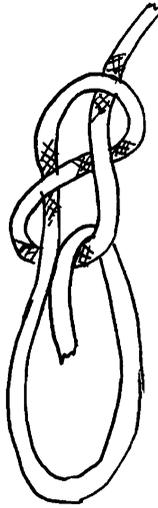


fig. 2



fig. 3

*True Bowline*

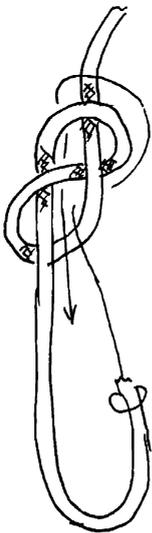


fig. 4

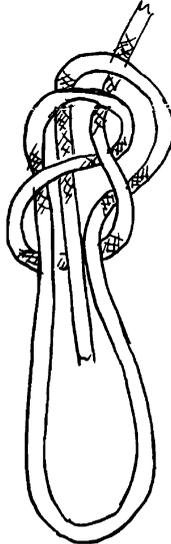


fig. 5

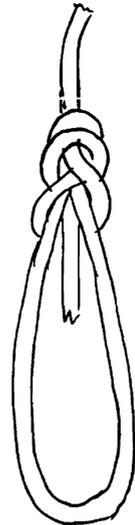


fig. 6

*Compromise Bowline*

The double bowline, the clove hitch bowline (water bowline) even the constrictor tied on a bight and the working end passed up through the centre (to form the loop) around the back of the standing part, and back down through the constrictor makes a distinct type of

bowline or loop knot. Then there is the Figure of eight Bowline figure 1.

For years I have tried to equal this fixed loop knot. (Which could be untied fairly easily). The best I have managed is the Linfit Bowline Fig 1, 2 and 3. Which holds well and unties easily. I have taken

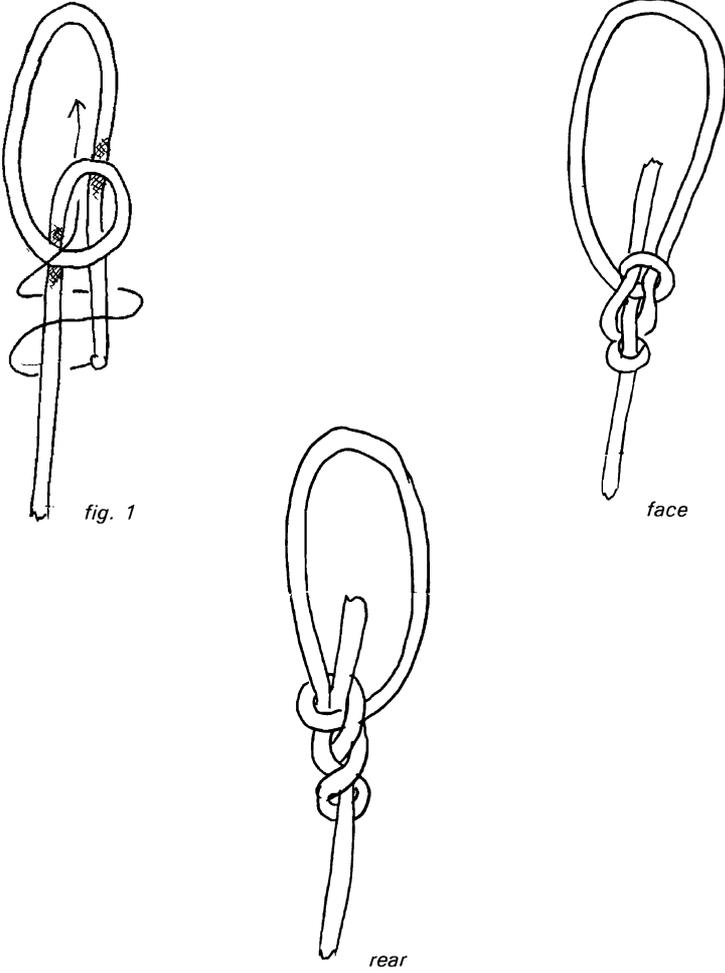


Figure Eight Bowline

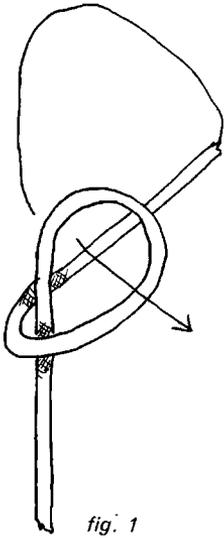


fig. 1

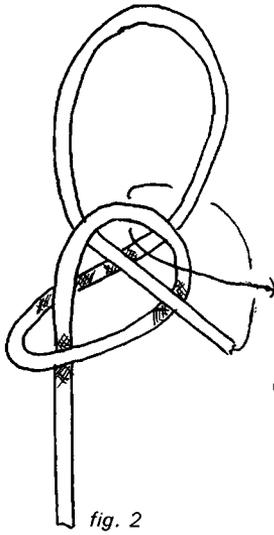


fig. 2

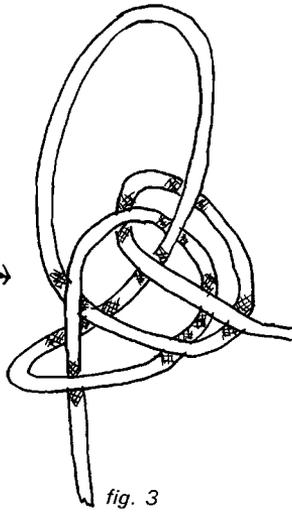
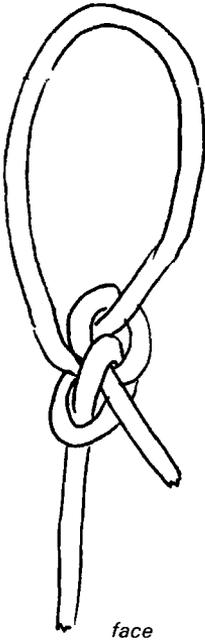
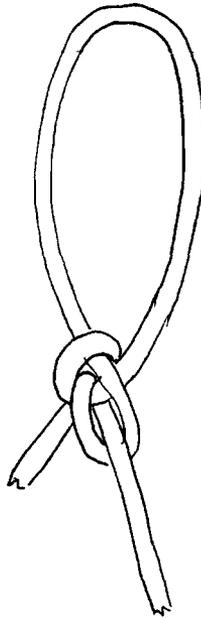


fig. 3

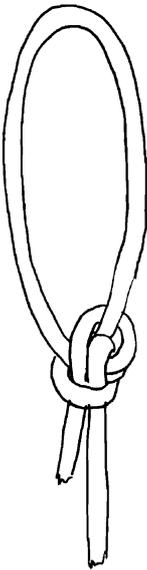
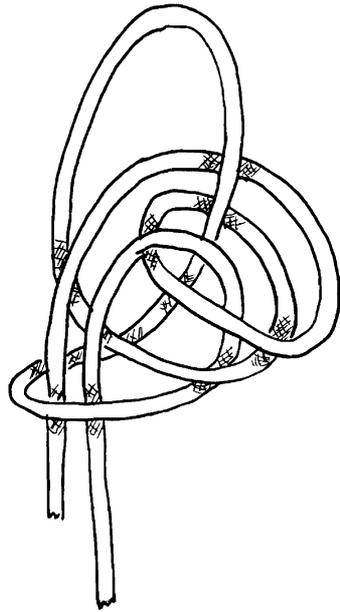
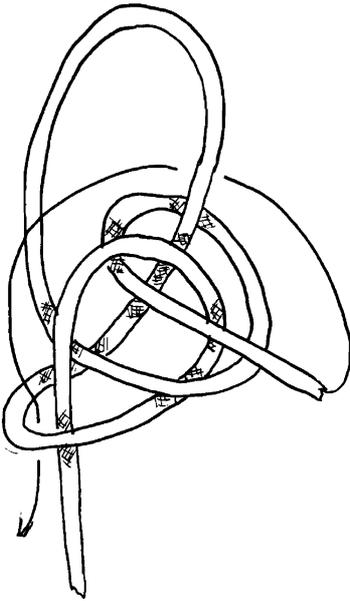


face

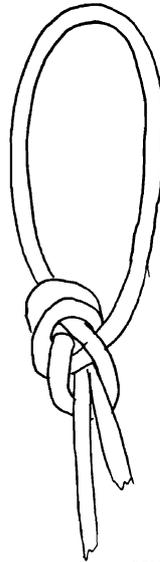


reverse

### *Linfit Bowline*



*front*



*reverse*

*Improved Linfit Bowline*

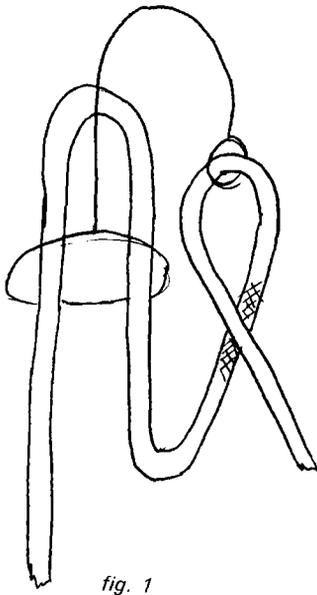


fig. 1

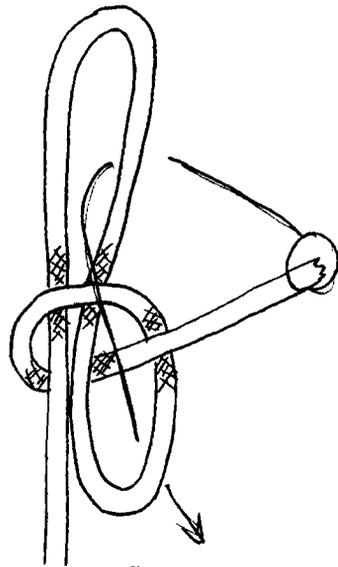


fig. 2

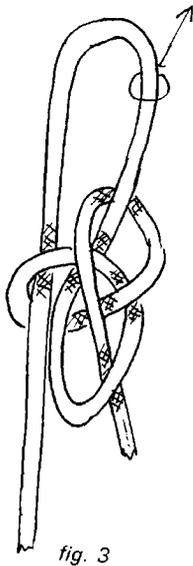
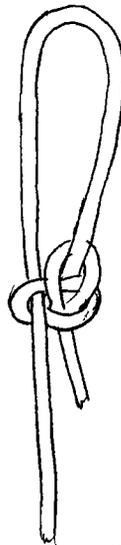


fig. 3



completed knot

*Bowline Slip Knot (Linfit Way)*

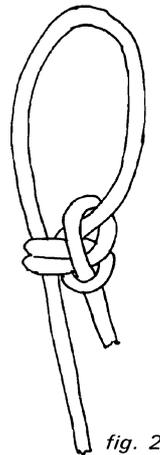
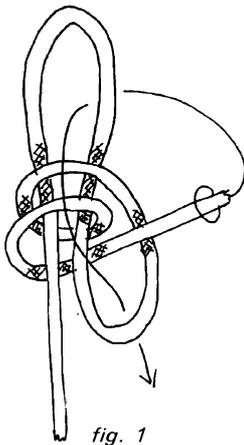
it a step further with the improved version to give it a more bowline like appearance on the reverse (most bowlines are tied with the loop towards you. The sailor's way to save stepping back into the briny, mine is tied the Landmans way).

A totally different approach to tying the Bowline is tying the Bowline Slip Knot (Linfit Way) Ashley's Bowline slip knot #1117 has a large loop, and the standing part has to be threaded back through the large loop. Tying the bowline slipknot (Linfit way). When you get to fig 2 hold the centre loop close together with your thumb, pulling on the working end to keep the eye close to the standing part. After fig 3 hold the centre of the knot with you thumb, pull the part of the loop, marked by the arrow to hold the knot, finally tighten by pulling the working end to complete the knot. Taking the bowline slip knot a stage further by doubling the centre loop to make a French or

Portuguese bowline making a more stable slip knot. If you tie the bowline slip knot (Linfit way) with an enlarged centre loop, pull the standing part out of the enlarged loop, pull the two ends in opposing directions you will have the plain or ordinary bowline.

Tying the Pennine single loop double the rope to form a loop give it a full twist to arrive at fig 1 hold the crossing point with your finger and thumb. Place two turns around the loop (of the size needed) tuck the loop as in fig 2 on pulling on the two working ends there will be a little slack in the right hand bottom loop. Take out the slack marked "first" then pull tight on the top loop marked "second" This is a very easy knot to tie it is very secure and best of all it is very easy to untie. I would welcome any comments from climbers on this knot.

*Have fun with these knots.*



*French or Portuguese Bowline Slip Knot  
"Linfit Way"*

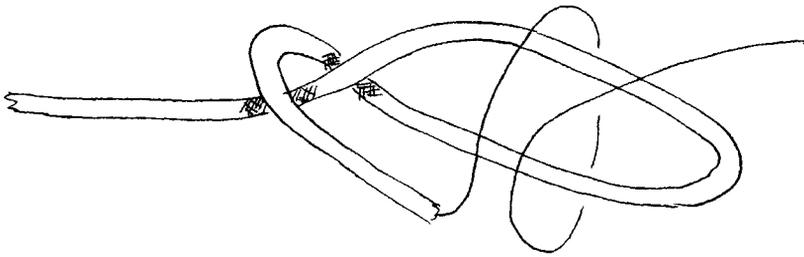


fig. 1

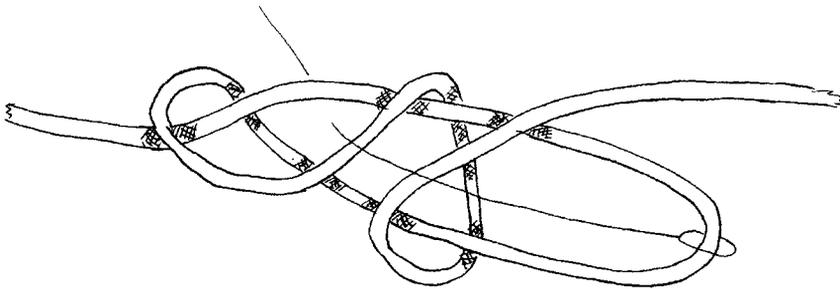
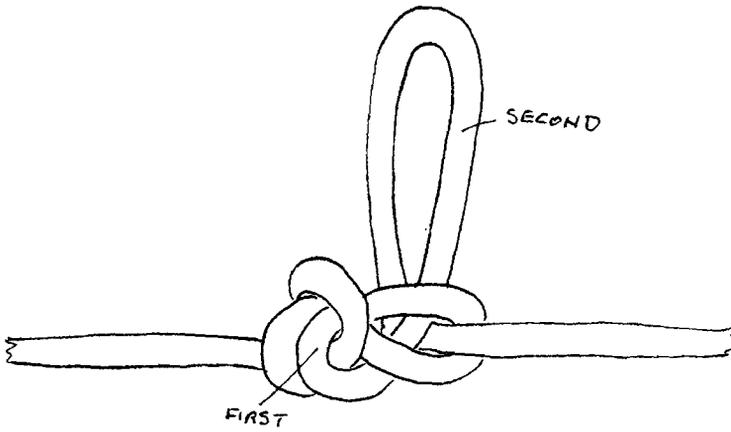


fig. 2



face

*Pennine Single Loop*

# Improved Square Lashings - a response

by Charles Warner

The Square Lashing depicted by John Kennaugh (KM 66, p 39) is an improvement on some others, but it is some way from the best. The principal factor influencing the security of a lashing is the tightness of the turns and anything that will allow a bit of slop will seriously reduce the carrying capacity of the structure. I will describe the best way I know to achieve the most robust result.

The rope used should not have too much stretch. It should have a diameter about one tenth of the average of the diameters of the two spars being lashed together at the point of the lashing. The length of the rope needs to be around 75 times that average diameter.

If the rope to be used is greater than 5 mm diameter, two people are needed to make a tight lashing: their combined strength to pull the turns tight and then one person to hold the turns while the other puts on the next. If the rope is more than 7-9 mm diameter, it should be pulled tight using lever spars and Marlingspike Hitches (Ashley # 2030); bare hands are not enough. If the rope is more than 13-15 mm diameter, three people pulling hard are required. The pull needed for adequate tightening is a large fraction of the safe working load of the rope, usually taken as between a fifth and a tenth of the breaking load of the rope when new.

Start the lashing with a Clove Hitch with a long end below the load. In the common case of a horizontal load-bearing spar being lashed to an upright, the Clove Hitch will be on the upright immediately below the horizontal spar. If you are making the lashing with the structure lying on the ground, the upright spar should be underneath the load-bearer, and supported a little above ground level to allow passing the rope underneath it. The Clove Hitch is the tightest part of the lashing (at least before the frapping turns are put on). So it should be placed beneath the load, with further turns placed above it to give it maximum support by reducing its load.

The Clove Hitch should be worked as tight as possible, pulling hard on the ends against each other, and ensuring that the turns are close together. The knot should be arranged that the lead from its centre is directly in line with the first turn so that pulling the turns tight cannot rotate the Clove Hitch on the spar. That first turn should be made on the side of the horizontal spar where the final Half Hitches of the lashing will be taken: upwards if the spar is sloping, otherwise on the side most out of the way.

John says that the 'traditional Clove Hitch' is insecure. This is true of any Clove Hitch under a substantial load anywhere the load is taken on one end only. Usually the knot may be secured by

making one or more Half Hitches with the running end on the standing part, and perhaps a seizing as well. However, in a lashing the bulk of the Half Hitches can prevent complete tightening or interfere with the direct pull on subsequent turns. So the running end is secured by tightly and evenly twisting it with the standing part (with the lay of the rope if applicable) for a distance sufficient to pass over the next spar, thus trapping the end.

A Clove Hitch thus secured is better than John's Timber Hitch in this application because it can be pulled tighter (pulling two ends against each other), it does not allow any slack to arise, and it has two tight turns gripping the spar, not one.

Take the rope up and over the horizontal spar (assuming the horizontal spar is on top of the upright when making the lashing), round behind the upright, back over the horizontal spar and then behind the upright again, inside the Clove Hitch. This completes the first turn and should be pulled tight, pulling in the direction in which the rope leads, and making sure that each rope passing from one spar to the next follows as direct a line as possible. That first turn should then be held tight while making the next, usually best done by pressing it hard against an adjacent rope, in this case the Clove Hitch.

Subsequent turns should pass outside the previous turn on the horizontal spar but inside on the upright, to allow the most direct line between the spars. Making all turns outside the previous ones on both spars, as depicted by John, gives a more oblique direction to the ropes between the

spars and consequently to less force holding the spars together. The turns should be close together, with no gaps and no turns riding over previous ones. With larger ropes you may need to knock them together with a wooden mallet, or with the lever spars. Each turn should be pulled tight on completion and held tight until the next turn is completed and pulled tight.

Make four complete turns, then, holding those turns tight, lead the running end round the horizontal spar to give a direct start, without riding turns or oblique pulls, to the frapping turns. John recommends Half Hitches instead of ordinary frapping turns. This might be a good idea if using a rope substantially thinner than that recommended here, but with full size rope the extra bulk of the Half Hitches might interfere with the direct pull needed; and the knots would be difficult to work back tight so that no slippage could occur, and would be more difficult to untie.

Two complete frapping turns are applied, pulling each in turn very tight and holding it tight until the next turn is in place. Make a Half Hitch on the horizontal spar in the direction that gives a direct pull with no riding over previous turns. Work the Half Hitch tight, moving the end back and forth until there is no further rotation; it should be hard up against the frapping turns so that there can be no further movement of the ropes. Then make a second Half Hitch in the same direction, tight and hard up against the first. If the rope being used is slippery, a third or even fourth Half Hitch may be needed. Any surplus rope should then be wrapped tightly round the spar in the same direction

and secured with one or two Half Hitches. If your rope is grossly overlong, these wrappings may overlap to keep them out of the way; in this position riding turns will not affect the security of the lashing.

If the rope is the correct size for the job, there will be little space uncovered by rope between the upper and lower turns in the middle of the lashing on the upright spar and the two frapping turns will just about fill the space available without riding turns.

Using the techniques described here, I have taken part in making a square trestle bridge with a calculated safe working load of more than four tonnes. We didn't have four tonnes available, but we did have more than 40 full-sized men, many of them jumping. The lashings did not slip a millimetre.

*John Kennaugh replies:*

Following the publication of my drawing for an improved square lashing (KM66) I have received comments from Jeremy Fox and Charles Warner. They both make the point that the start knot should be below the horizontal spar as that supports the spar from the start. They also make the point that when placing the wrapping turns it is better to place the turns inside existing turns on one spar and outside existing turns on the other. I have tried this and it seems a valid point.

While he agrees that a clove hitch is insecure he suggests various ways of making it secure. The most obvious one is being to twist the short end around the working part so that it gets trapped against the spar. Anyone with a Scouting background may like to note that that is

how BP drew it. While I agree that this will make what is an insecure knot into a secure one, why not use a secure knot in the first place? i.e. a timber hitch. Charles believes a clove hitch can be made tighter and has two turns gripping the spar not one. I do not see the significance of this.

If he doesn't like the timber hitch I would suggest a ground line hitch which is as simple as a clove hitch but much more secure. I think this is a super knot. In fact from my own investigations I believe it to be more secure than a rolling hitch for a sideways pull. The only time I use a 'clove hitch' these days is if I am locking off with two half hitches.

## Answers to Ashley Quiz

- |         |         |
|---------|---------|
| 1. (b)  | 2. (a)  |
| 3. (a)  | 4. (b)  |
| 5. (d)  | 6. (a)  |
| 7. (a)  | 8. (c)  |
| 9. (b)  | 10. (d) |
| 11. (a) | 12. (a) |
| 13. (d) | 14. (d) |
| 15. (d) | 16. (a) |
| 17. (d) | 18. (d) |
| 19. (d) | 20. (b) |

# Tapered Turk's Head Fender Cover

by Darren Samphier

The Melbourne Maritime Museum has two tugboat fenders covered in tapered Turk's Heads. These fenders are approximately 4 metres long and about 80cm diameter in the middle. I would like to share with you the construction of the rather unusual cover. I have made a rather inaccurate model as in the picture below. The inaccuracy comes in the rate of tapering. The original fenders taper more gradually.

The fender cover is, in essence, a 4 bight by 15 lead Turk's Head.

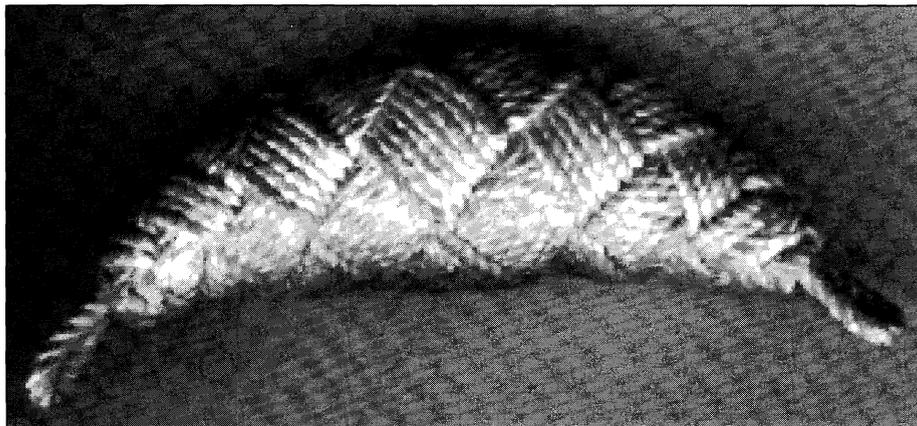
As can be seen in the photo it is followed eight times in the middle but only once on each end. This is what gives the tapering effect

I have made a small boat fender using this cover. I found it easier to make the cover on a separate cardboard tube and

slip it over the fender body before tightening it down.

The steps I followed were:

- Begin by tying a four-bight by fifteen-lead Turk's Head.
- When this has been tied once through the doubling begins. The tapering of the Turk's Head also begins at this time. Normally the doubling would begin back at the start point; where the initial tying began. To taper the Turk's Head requires that the doubling start **one lead back** as in the diagram overleaf.





***The arrow points to the cord that is turned back rather than continuing to the end of the knot.***

- In this way the knot is doubled on all four of the bights; one lead back each time.
- \* When the knot has been fully doubled and it is time for tripling, turn back another lead back before the first turnback.. Do this each time the number of leads needs to increase.
- \* In the diagram I have turned back one lead less each time. This was so I would get the shape I desired. As mentioned above the original fenders taper more gradually. This was achieved in two ways. The real fenders were more than fifteen leads and the turnbacks were not at each lead. The turnbacks were such that the first turnback was at the second lead in but the next turnback was at the fifth lead in. ie the first lead was a single strand, the next three leads were doubled and

the next lead in was tripled. This produced a more gradual taper but the middle leads had still been followed eight times.

I hope the above gives a clear enough idea of what I am talking about. A local knot tyer here in Melbourne showed me a fender he had made using this construction but he went a step further. The Turk's Head he tied around the middle of the fender as a rubbing strip had been tapered at the back so that the fender could be bent without the Turk's Head bunching up at the back. Once you understand how the tapering is achieved above the method of tapering a normal Turk's Head is fairly simple to grasp.

## **ROPE ENDS**

"I began to manufacture crampons to fit our four ski boots. Using knotted lengths of our safety rope, our last repair wire and the pin-nose pliers, I put together some rough and ready crampons just before we reached the first blue-ice."

"I noticed that Mike (Stroud) was wearing his rope crampons and working well with them. I envied him his ability, even with blistered fingers, to handle ropes and lines. Even at home in summer I am cack-handed with knots; 'rope dyslexia' I call it."

***"MIND OVER MATTER"***

*by Ranulph Fiennes*

*The Epic Crossing of the Antarctic Continent*

# Book Review Branch

## Lines

### New Zealand Chapter

**THE 85 WAYS TO TIE A TIE** - The Science and Aesthetics of Tie Knots, by Thomas Fink and Yong Mao, published (1999) by Fourth Estate Limited, 6 Salem Road, London W2 2BU, England ([www.4thestate.co.uk](http://www.4thestate.co.uk))

This delightful little hardback book combines a scholarly glimpse of knotted neck-tie history with the briefest outline of knot theory, before explaining how to tie all of the 85 tie knots that can be tied with a conventional tie. It also defines the aesthetic criteria for the four most popular knots (and considers nine others).

The authors - both theoretical physicists at the Cavendish Laboratory, Cambridge - enliven their clever work with: 8 coloured plates; 20 black-&-white archive photographs of celebrities, from the Duke of Windsor to Elvis Presley; an evocative couple of end-plate picture; and hundreds of instructional step-by-step line drawings.

A helpful summary for those who are not physics graduates lists every knot against a system of tying symbols, while a more rigorous appendix represents the knot sequences as random walks on a triangular lattice by means of elegant algebraic equations. There is a compact bibliography and an excellent index.

Fashion guide, knot-tying manual and a fascinating read, there is something in its 144 pages (only 4 of which feature abstruse mathematics) for every KM reader. Value for money. Highly recommended by this Guild reviewer.

**G.B.**

Price: £10.00 sterling (UK pounds)

ISBN 1-84115-249-8

We continue to hold the monthly meetings on the "Hikitia", 4:00pm, first Sunday of the Month.

At our first one on the 9th January, we were honoured to host the International Guild's Vice-President & our inaugural Patron, Professor Vaughan Jones. What a wonderful person he is. He explained to us how valued his membership of the Guild is to him. He was very interested in our work here in New Zealand and really enjoyed his visit to the "Hikitia".

Jack Sheahan has shared with me an article from South Africa, dated 1908. Of particular note is the warning in the use of old Stockholm tar!!!! Jack, once again, thank you very much for sharing your knowledge and experiences with us, very much in the spirit of why the NZ Chapter was formed!!

Guild member, Pat Cunningham has recently retired from the sea. His last shipmates from the "Arahura" wrote him a lovely testament to a respected seaman, whose skills were so valued by his peers. Since his joining the "Hikitia", we have seen his august skills used in splicing main forward and stern springs and all of our starboard fenders now have decent Turks heads on them!

New member Jeremy Cooper has hosted a few of us on his Junk, Fu Tie'n, which is berthed at Paremata, near

Wellington. For all the riggers amongst us, the rigging on the tree-masted vessel is an eye opener! Each slat section on each sail has sheets attached to it! Welcome to the team, Jeremy! *Tony Fisher*

## **Devon Branch**

1999 proved to be a busy year. Activities included Beaver colonies, Scout packs, and a special course for Devonport Brownies, Four different local events included Buckland Manchorum fete, Bere Ferrers water carnival and fete at Colbrook where Scouts entertained the Lord Mayor making ocean plats.

The branch also attended the Duke of Edinburgh award sampler's day at Newton Abbot where some 80 students sampled knots.

Finally our biggest effort went into Plymouth Navy Days and the American thanksgiving weekend at the navy base museum, where the group mounted a Clifford Ashley display thanks to Charlie Smith (ropemaking) Edna Gibson (Indian weaving) and Richard Hopkins (marathon 6 knot challenge)

A circular being issued to all Devon members shortly - forming Devon 2000 group *Denis Murphy*

## **East Anglian Branch**

On Saturday 25th. March, 2000, twenty-two members gathered for another informative and enjoyable spring afternoon of 'Knotting Interests'.

The theme this meeting was 'Macramè and related matters'

Des Pawson started off with a

presentation of various books and publications on the history of macramè and the 'Herwig Influence of macramè for Seamen' (page 20 Ashley refers) and produced some actual vintage pieces of work that he had acquired during his researches and visits. Very informative and impressive.

Ken Higgs then took over and again presented an impressive quantity of literature on the subject and displayed numerous pieces and examples of his very own ornate and beautiful work and in particular a lovely 'handbag' he had made for his wife. He also showed us several colourful and exotic looking 'belt' designs originating from 'friendship band' designs. A delight to see and an example to inspire us all.

I then took over with my own ideas and examples of macramè 'Pot Hanger' designs using less cord than the more traditional densed knotting designs and a display board of various 'Curtain Holdback' knot designs and my DIY method of making an adjustable stand and turn table device for up-ending pot hanging macramè pieces enabling you to separate and deal with multiple strands/plys to finish off the 'pot hanger' underneath as distinct from just gathering in and tying off in a bundle

Our next meeting has been scheduled for 1.30pm on Saturday 30th. September 2000 at the same venue at Stowmarket, Suffolk and the theme will be 'Shoes and Knots'. So bring along your 'Rope soled footwear, clogs and wellies (perfumed of course)' and lots of ideas and samples of your skills to tell us all about! Hope to see you there. *John Halifax*

## Swedish Branch

On 12 March 2000 the Swedish Branch of IGKT met in the premises of the former Skeppsgosseåkären (“Ship’s Boys’ Corps of the Royal Swedish Navy”) at Skeppsholmen in Stockholm. The meeting was very informal and had no special programme besides meeting people with the same inclination: knots and rope-work enthusiasts. Nevertheless, some members had come a long way, e.g. Jonny Ekdahl with Ulla from Malmö and Rune Sundmark all the way from Luleå up north in Sweden.

The initiative was taken by some of the driving forces, among them Sven-Erik Andersson, known as Pille Rope-maker.

We were happy to count some new members. The Branch totals now about 30 members all over Sweden.

Pille displayed some interesting books on knotting, which the members can order through Pille, among them Des Pawson’s Handbook of Knots in Swedish translation.

Olof Nyström distributed some sketches of a way of tying a bowline and asked if anyone could find it practically useful. He had learned it in a sports-wear shop and the man who demonstrated it asserted that he had used it as a professional yacht sailor.

Jonny Ekdahl showed some very attractive pieces of carpentry-work, decorated with Turk’s-heads and other rope-work, which the members admired very much. He distributed the products as gifts among the members, which was very much appreciated indeed.

Yngve Edell specialises in making

sailors’ knives of a traditional style. He is member of the Swedish Knife Society and has published an article in the Society’s journal. He had brought a lot of different models, intended for various purposes on board and different categories of sailors. The knives had in common that they were nicely decorated with various kinds of needle hitching as practised in older days.

Yngve also demonstrated some sail cloth work, such as tool or ditty bags, some of them made of cloth, beautifully tanned with bark in old fashion.

It was decided that the Swedish Branch would meet next time 10 March 2001 at the Älvängen Ropeyard, north-east of Göteborg. Any member of the IGKT is welcome to this event and further information may be obtained from the undersigned. *Olof Nyström*

## West Yorkshire Branch

Saturday 1st April, we had a day out in Scarborough where we represented the IGKT at the lace guild convention. Our display represented a lot of different aspects of knotting and more than filled our allocated space. The lace makers took particular interest in needle hitching on bottles and we were given to understand that there is one aspect of lace making (needle lace) that is very similar. Interest was also shown in flat knotting, particularly Brian Fields breast plates. Our ropewalk was also very popular and generally seems to be one of our best attractions. *David Pearson*



# Postbag

The views expressed in reader's letters do not necessarily reflect those of the Council. The Editor reserves the right to shorten any letter as necessary.

## KM REPRINTS?

While looking for a reference in an earlier KM, I found items which, while being long forgotten, were of use to me now. Can consideration be given to compiling such snippets into one 'loose leaf' format (so that it may be added to) or, on a regular basis have them reprinted in current KM editions?

An alternative thought, once every eighteen months, publish a complete copy of ALL the indexes so far compiled. Lesley Wyatt produced an excellent one in 1995.

*Ken Higgs  
Suffolk, U.K.*

*(Thank you for your comprehensive list. This has been passed on to Frank Harris who is compiling a "Best of KM" - Ed.)*

## THE SURREY SIX

I agree with Tony Doran's comments on the 'Surrey Six', which were presented attractively. We should certainly not accept them as officially-endorsed without a lot more thought.

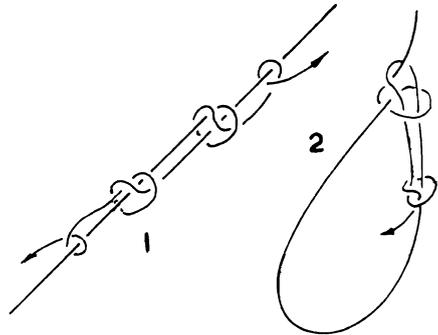
Modern synthetic cordage differs from traditional cordage in being made from continuous smooth filaments instead of the traditional short lengths of mostly rough natural fibres. Where the old cordage was whiskery, to provide

some friction, the new stuff is slippery. Consequently all new cordage, from the finest lines to large ropes are more slippery and we have to take that into account. The people today with most need to consider life and death factors in knotting are climbers and they have different ideas from the 'Surrey Six'.

Climbers do not accept any of the usual joining knots. They favour what we have known as the fisherman's knot and assumed was only for fine lines. They form it with long ends, which are half-hitched to the standing parts (1). They favour long ends and either the half-hitch or an overhand knot for the ends in all knots, even the allegedly-safe bowline (2).

The 'Surrey Six' presentation is a good effort, but I detect an undertone of Scouting traditionalism there (include me in!) and as a Guild we must consider wider thoughts before we ever risk recommending any knot as the ultimate choice for any purpose.

*Percy Blandford  
Newbold-on-Stour, U. K. Alpine*



## Sea Chests

I am researching the history of the sea chest. Do you know the dimensions of a British Sea chest, be it a seaman's or an officers sea chest. Do you know of any museums in England that has any on display?

Finally, a brew pirates drank called "Black Strap" was made from rum, molasses and chowda beer. Do you know what chowda beer is?

**William H. Isenhower**  
**Albuquerque, USA**

## Guild Journal

I enjoy the relaxed, informal approach of Knotting Matters. It reminds me of the way I learned to tie some knots: down on the wharf with an experienced mariner and an old, dirty piece of line. I do, however, appreciate the fact that members of the Guild would like to publish a journal. If the Guild is to move toward its goal of becoming "an authoritative body for consultation purposes", some sort of publication is needed. I would like to share some thoughts on the subject.

I understand that the purpose of a journal would be to informally present information to a wide-ranging audience. In doing so, we must keep in mind the varying levels of understanding of knotting principles and terminology. The style used for submissions should be informal with a format comprising of a summary statement, introduction, discussion and conclusion. There is more than one format of informal

report writing, but a style should be agreed upon by the Guild.

The writing style of submitted reports is of more concern than format. It should be clear, concise and coherent: in other words, readable by the journal's audience. The intended audience should direct the author in their writing style. Unnecessary wordiness should be avoided to ensure the entire audience can understand the journal. According to Ron Blicq, Technically-Write:

*"Big words create a barrier between writer and reader. Some writers use big words to hide their lack of knowledge or because they think it makes them sound important, others because they start writing without first defining clearly what they want to say. There are many long scientific words that we have to use in technical writing; we should surround them with short words whenever possible so our writing will not become ponderous and overly complex."*

I would look forward to reading a technical journal on knotting and I would bet that there would be enough knowledge and enthusiasm within the Guild to ensure a steady supply of material. A journal would ensure the Guild's move toward becoming the authoritative body and compliment our worthy newsletter.

**Bob Edwards**  
**L'etang, New Brunswick,**  
**Canada**

*(We will take this useful advice into account in the 'author pack' mentioned in KM66 - Ed.)*

## Improved Bowman's Knot

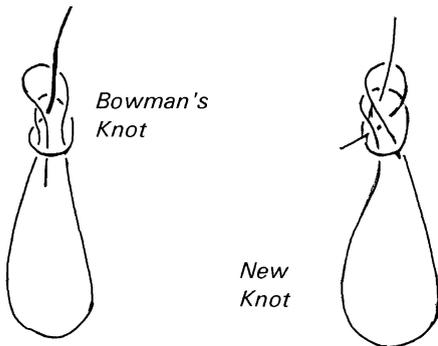
I made this knot one day while I was trying to improve the "Bowman's Knot". I did not like the way the working end of the Bowman's Knot simply turned back on itself, and was held only by the tension of the knot. It seemed it would slip loose under the right conditions.

I took the working end and ran it through the knot at 90° (and it seems to work quite well!

I realise this is probably not a new knot, but I haven't seen it any book on the Internet. If it already exists, could you please tell me what the name of it is? How does a knot get tested to see how good it is?

*James Moor  
Oklahoma USA*

*(Any helpers - Ed.)*



## NO NAME KNOT

I like L. F. Osboborne's knot on page 18 of KM 65. Tying it is one of those delightful flowing, three-dimensional, graceful exercises that make the actual tying of a knot such a tactile and sensual pleasure.

The actual structure of that knot is the same as the Tugboat Bowline, described in Brion Toss's book; Complete Rigger Wire and Rope. The difference, apart from the slipped end, is that the standing part and working end are transposed.

There seems to be an opportunity for a descriptive convention for knots that are structurally identical, but where the load is applied to a different end. The difference warrants, believe, another name but the sameness should not be lost.

Consider a simple wooden pencil. With the load applied to the pointed end it is a writing or marking implement. Apply the "load" to the other end and it is a rod, a probe, a punch or whatever. The applications are entirely different and so are the techniques, safety factors and performance indicators.

Yet it is still a pencil.

*John Smith  
By E-mail*

## Tarbuck Knot

I am an adult leader in my son's scout troop. I have known the common knots, such as the reef knot, bowline and clove hitch since I was young but am just learning to tie some of the less well-known knots. (I'm particularly pleased with the Zeppelin bend and the

Alpine Butterfly.) I have a question, however.

The Boy Scout manual shows a tautline hitch. I found a very similar knot called a Tarbuck knot in The Complete Book of Knots by Geoffrey Budworth. Is one of these superior and, if so, why?

Thank you very much for your help,

**Greg Holland**  
*Via E-mail*

## **JAMES HARVEY AND TURK'S HEADS**

I was delighted to get my KM65 and doubly delighted to see the article by James Harvey (p37) on "The Comprehensive Turk's Head", also the ad for his book by the same name (p27). I had spoken (by phone) with James a couple of times following publication of my article in KM64.

I confess I was having trouble coming to grips with his Rule A and Rule B method and had raised this with him in one of our conversations. James lives in Tasmania. I guess that is about as far away as you can get from the centre of the IGKT CBD. Imagine my delight when I learnt that he was in my hometown (Sydney) to visit his daughter. To good an opportunity to miss!

I was very fortunate to be able to spend a couple of hours with this "master". James is in his early eighties now but not nearly as old as his years would suggest. Like all true masters of their craft, James was very generous of both his time

and knowledge. James' knotcraft and Turks Head passion stem from his seafaring days and, as he acknowledges in his book and as is so often the case, the encouragement of family and peers and the time spent with the "masters" of a previous generation.

James' book is based primarily on the 'guide' method, which is very easy to follow once understood. Detailed tables and instructions covering virtually all-possible knot combinations are clearly set out. The book is very well illustrated and there are many examples of the more 'decorative' knots. I was particularly impressed with the section on 'Irregular' and 'Spherical' Turks heads and had the great pleasure of being 'walked through' by James on the method of tying a 13x12 spherical knot. I have since found that a 13x12 spherical knot tied with 3mm Kangaroo hide thong, is exactly the right size to cover the ball from a standard size computer mouse. Haven't found a use for them yet but they do look great.

It was a real privilege to meet with James Harvey and a great thrill to spend time with a true "master" of the craft. I would suggest that, if you really want to know all there is to know about Turks Heads, but you cannot get down to Tasmania to meet James or get James to come to you, then the next best thing would be to get a copy of his book. You probably should do that anyway.

**Jim Caswell**  
*Sydney, Australia*



# Knotting Diary

## **AGM's & 1/2 YEARLY MEETINGS**

### **A World of Knotting**

IGKT-PAB & NAB, Long Beach, California  
24th -25th June 2000  
Contact: Lindsay Philpott, Tel: (562) 595-8854,  
or  
Joseph Schmidbauer, E-mail:  
Koolkatz@prodigy.net

### **IGKT Half-yearly Meeting**

14th October 2000, Beverwijk, Netherlands  
Contact Willeke van der Ham, Tel: +3 125 121  
3285  
E-mail: willeke\_igkt@yahoo.com

## **BRANCH MEETINGS**

### **Dutch Branch**

Last Saturday of month, Rotterdam  
Contact Jan Hoefnagel, Tel: 078 614 6002  
E-mail: jchoefna@cybercomm.nl

### **West Yorkshire Branch**

18th July, 19th September 2000  
Beaulah Hotel, Tong Road, Farnley, Leeds  
Contact David Pearson, Tel: 0113 257 2689  
E-mail: wayzegeese\_uk@yahoo.co.uk

## **EVENTS**

### **Wakefield Canal Festival**

3rd and 4th June 2000 - Contact David Pearson

### **Tall Ship 2000**

Charleston Wooden Boat Appreciation Day  
17th to 18th June 2000  
Contact Dan Machowski

### **Mystic Wooden Boat Show**

Mystic Seaport, Mystic, Connecticut  
23rd to 25th June 2000  
Contact Dan Machowski, Tel: (843) 795 9240  
E-mail: djm@awod.com

### **Leeds Waterways Festival**

12th and 13th August 2000 -  
Contact David Pearson

### **National Folk Festival**

East Lansing, Michigan - 12th to 13th August  
2000  
Contact John Burke, Tel: 313 562 4393  
E-mail: knottyrope@prodigy.net

### **SS Boyer Maritime Day**

Toledo, Ohio - First weekend of September  
Contact John Burke

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Quarter Page	£10	£15

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## Price List 2000

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<b>Geoffrey Budworth</b>	
Knotlore <i>a miscellany of quotes from fact and fiction</i>	£2.50
Much Ado About Knotting <i>history of the 1<sup>st</sup> 10 years of the Guild</i>	£2.50 *
The Knot Book	£3.99
<b>Brian Field</b>	
Breastplate Designs	£2.50
Concerning Crosses	£1.50
<b>Eric Franklin</b>	
Turkesheads the Traditional Way	£1.50 *
Nylon Novelties	£2.00 *
<b>Stuart Grainger</b>	
Knotcraft	£3.60 *
Ropefolk	£1.30
Turks Head Alternatives	£2.20 *
Creative Ropecraft	£9.95
Knotted Fabrics	£9.00
	<i>Hardback price includes UK postage</i>
<b>John Halifax</b>	
Something Different <i>with over 50 Button Knots</i>	£3.20 *
<b>Harold Scott</b>	
On Various Cruxiform Turks Heads	£2.50
Sliding Template Method for Designing Cruciform Turks-Heads Vol. 2	£3.00
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Knotting Matters <i>copies of past editions</i>	£2.50
<i>(Some past editions available – contact the Secretary for details)</i>	
* bulk purchases of these items available at a discount – phone for details	

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