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Knotting Matters

Newsletter of the



INTERNATIONAL
GUILD OF KNOT TYERS

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Knotting Matters

Newsletter of the
International Guild of
Knot Tyers

Issue No. 73

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Secretary: Nigel Harding
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Matters are acknowledged.

Cover design by Stuart Grainger



*Ed Morai teaching some ladies to
tie his star knot jewellery - NAB
2001*

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Notes From the Secretary's Blotter

It seems a lifetime ago since I wrote the last blotter, yet it is only three months - just where did the time go? In real life, I work for an electricity company, and I have now suffered another pasting from the summer thunderstorms, and already another bashing from the first of the autumn gales. The summer has now been and gone, we are now well into autumn, and by the time you are reading this I expect to be huddled up by the living room fire, drinking mulled wine.

Since I last wrote, I have arranged for *Knottling Matters* to be distributed by a commercial mailing house. It took a lot of setting up, but seems to have been successful, and does significantly reduce my involvement. I must take this opportunity to thank all those who over the last decade have assisted me in getting stuffed. When I first became involved, we used to spend a couple of evenings stuffing, and knocking back a bottle or so of wine. As the membership increased, so this practice had to cease, otherwise we would never have finished the job.

My next project will be to out source the administration of membership including the collection of subscriptions. This will be a major change in the way in which the Guild is run, and although the members should not notice the difference, it will be of considerable benefit to both the Treasurer and the Secretary. More details will be published as and when the necessary arrangements

have been made, and contracts signed. With this reduced workload, I am expecting a stampede of applicants for the Secretary's job, and who knows, I might even apply for it myself.

Whilst on the subject of subscriptions, this is the time of the year when the majority of subscriptions fall due. Could I remind members to please make their cheque out to the IGKT, as cheques made out to me personally cause me a great deal of inconvenience both with the bank, and the Inland Revenue. The taxman seems to assume that I have some sort of fiddle going on, and would like me to pay income tax on your subs.

Should you be paying by using a friend or partner's credit card, please mention your own name as well, otherwise I don't know whose account to credit with the money. The result is that you will receive another reminder with your next KM.

Finally, I must mention our President, Brian Field, who has been a little under the weather of late, having spent some time in hospital. As I write he is at home for some postoperative recovery, and although feeling a little delicate he is looking forward to the Birthday Celebrations next May. He also wishes to thank all those members who have expressed their good wishes.

I must hurry and finish these notes as I am late again, the presses are starting to roll and I am still busy typ...

Nigel Harding

Col's Comment

When you read this, some three months will have passed since the atrocities committed in America on the 11th September. It is hard to think that given the scale of the disaster that it will not have affected some of our members somewhere, particularly in the USA. What the future holds, only time will tell.

Whoops, it's happened again. The eagle-eyed among you will have spotted the mistake in the Ossel knot in the last issue of KM. A correction is issued as a separate sheet with this issue for you to paste over the offending page. To ensure that these mistakes are not repeated, we have employed the services of a hawkeyed member to vet future issues of Knotmaster before they go to press.

Now that the cost of digital cameras have come down, many of our members are using these versatile devices. Can I make a plea however to those of you sending in photographs taken on digital cameras? Please when you send a picture that is taken with a digital camera, can you send the file on a floppy disc or CD and not as a print. I have to scan prints, and the little dots that make up the picture appear as a grainy pattern. While I can get rid of most of it, some detail is lost in the process. It is far better if I start off with the file and the larger the better. That way I can ensure the detail is retained when KM goes for printing.

May I wish you and all your families' peace at this time of the year?



2K2 Birthday Knotted Piece.

Instead of a birthday card please send a knotted piece, either a bellrope or a macrame patch, the same size as KM that is A5. If you have a burning desire to make a piece the size of a bed spread, go ahead and make it, but please do not send it to me!

A designated area will be part of the 2K2 display, to show the Birthday Pieces. Please attach a nametag and small flag of your country or state, I request you control your patriotism and restrict the flag size to one smaller than the item.

The reason for all the size limits are ease of storage and subsequent shipping on to the next venue. This display belongs to the Guild and if you know the next place in the world that will be a good venue, please write to the secretary.

Ken Yalden

Letter from a President

I must start with an apology for not having visited as many groups as I would have wanted to. I have been awaiting a liver operation on a short call basis and this has made forward planning a little awkward. I am writing this from a bed in the Royal Free Hospital and by the time KM is published I should be well on the way to recovery (*deo volente!*) At least the enforced rest will allow me time to do a little doodling, and I may even finish a booklet on flat knots that I have been thinking about for the last couple of years.

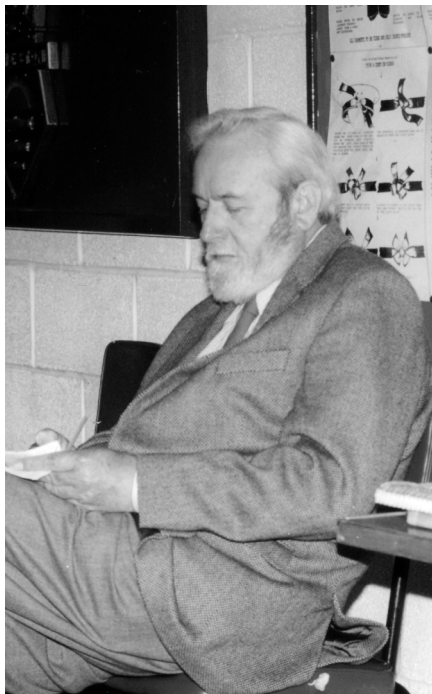
Earlier in the year a researcher preparing a programme for the BBC approached me. He was involved in the reconstruction of a third century BC chariot found in a grave in Yorkshire earlier in the year.

He needed advice and practical help on the lashings needed to construct the chariot and found my name from an earlier BBC arts programme. I asked IGKT member Richard Hopkins to undertake the task as he had the requisite skills and enthusiasm, and lived near the place where the project was centred.

The finished chariot will hopefully be displayed in the Great Court at the British Museum. I look forward to seeing the finished programme and to Richard and the IGKT appearing in the list of credits. It is pleasing to see the Guild being consulted as an authoritative source for information on knotting.

Finally many thanks to all those who replied to my request for comments on the Guild, it's growth and future needs. I will reply to all letters eventually - but not for a while yet!

Brian Field



Inland Waterways Nostalgia

The 2001 IGKT half-yearly meeting was held at the Boat Museum, Ellesmere Port in Cheshire. For those not familiar with this part of the UK, it is located across the water from Liverpool and was once a very busy port where ships from the Manchester Ship Canal transferred their cargoes to smaller craft of the inland waterways canal system. We were housed in the exhibition hall, with plenty of space among the exhibits from the bygone age of canal craft.

Accommodation for those intrepid souls who arrived on the Friday night was a short distance away at the Sea Cadet HQ for Ellesmere Port, TS Forward. For the less hardy among us there was hotel accommodation and we even had two members arrive by narrow boat, who moored in the basin.

Saturday morning found more Guild members arriving and renewing old acquaintances. As usual, our chairman, Ken

Yalden started proceedings at the stroke of eleven in the adjacent lecture theatre. Brian Field was unable to attend this time due to his recent surgery and the welcome was made by past President and founder member Geoffrey Budworth. News about Brian was that although his operation had not gone too well, he was recovering which was good to hear.

Our Hon Sec. Nigel gave a brief report, and this was followed by Ken giving a brief outline of plans for the 20th birthday party next year at Fareham in Hampshire. Geoffrey Budworth proposed a vote of thanks to Colin Grundy for his work in editing *Knotting Matters*, and two members gave a Profile of a Knot Tyer.

After the business part of the meeting broke up, we were free to browse both the members' displays and also view the exhibits from the museum. As usual at these meetings, a lot of informal teaching





Guild members gathered in Joe Skinner's "Friendship" the last of the horse drawn boats. Photo - Gordon Perry

was undertaken with, "How did you do that," or "Have you seen this?"

Saturday evening found us back at TS Forward for the Knot Tyer's Supper, where the only rule is "No cord on the table until after the meal." Following the supper, we were treated to a musical interlude by the Sea Cadet band. They gave an excellent display and are a credit to their unit.

On Sunday, the formula tried out at the AGM at Farnham was repeated, where formal instructional workshops were held on a range of knotting subjects.

Yet again a successful event in a wonderful location. Well done to David Walker for his organisation

Photo's - Ken Yalden





One of the Sunday morning
workshops
You're never too young
to learn

The 'Knot Tyer's Supper'



International Festival Of The Sea 2001.

by Gordon J Perry

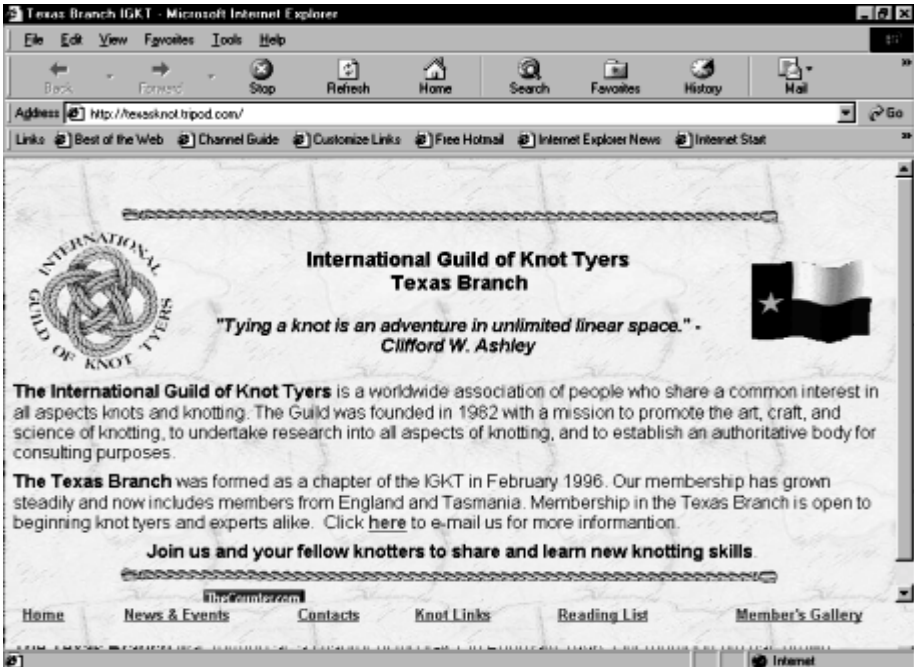
The largest gathering yet of “Tall Ships”, small ships, warships, boats and a host of other attractions drew people in their thousands to Portsmouth during the August Bank holiday. And no less than 20 IGKT members played some part in the proceedings over the four days. The IGKT stand was manned by Gordon Perry, Bob Pearce, Charlie Tyrell, Willeke van der Ham, Ken Elliot, Denis Murphy, Nick Wilde, Ian Schofield and Eddie Bentley. Des and Liz Pawson were assisted by Terry Barnes in the French Quarter - I wonder if “le cap” had anything to do with that! Ken Yalden, Jeff Wyatt, Richard Hopkins and Tony

Dorran were alongside HMS Victory in their “Starbolins” guise. Charlie Smith was onboard the “Grand Turk”. Derrick Babington and Colin Perry in the Victory cutter crew. Don Bellamy, disguised himself as an ancient mariner to draw the crowds with splicing and rope tricks in Anchor Lane while John Hayes and Terry Meaden no doubt both earned their daily crust as usual.

A constant flow of visitors and a variety of demonstrations kept us all quite busy on the IGKT Stand, together with visits by several members, including Nigel and Sylvia - who chose the only day that it rained! There were a good number of enquiries about the Guild, from all corners of the globe, especially from the Tall Ships crews and trainees; it remains now to see how many come and join us.

Charlie Tyrell explaining to Bob Pearce that it is all in the wrist! While Stuart Keyte (Gordon Perry's granddson) is engrossed in one that Charlie showed him earlier.





Website Review

Texas Branch

This site is straightforward to navigate with buttons at the bottom of each page and links to other knot related websites. Apart from an annoying pop-up banner from their host ISP, Tripod, that opens each time you click a new link, the pages load fairly quickly and the sight is free of frames and graphics that can turn your surfing into a trial.

There are e-mail links to the IGKT, Texas and North American Branches. A nice feature is the branch newsletter on PDF format, so those with Acrobat Reader can obtain their own printed or

electronic copies, thus saving on printing and postage costs to the branch.

The Knot Links page takes you to a number of interesting knot related sites and also includes a pre-set Alta Vista search to knot or knotting sites. The Member's Gallery is still under construction, but does contain some half-dozen animated knots.

Despite the irritating banner, this site is pleasant and easy to navigate. Well worth a visit.

<http://texasknot.tripod.com>

CG



by Bruce Turley

One June day I was sitting minding my own business, when I received a call from one of our members up North. He asked me if I would be interested in attending a national Sea Cadet event at TS Weston in Birmingham, which involved 564 Sea Cadets tying 1-metre lengths of rope together with a reef knot.

We were greeted with the sight of numerous rows with alternated bundles of blue and red cord. This event was held to see if the Sea Cadets could establish themselves in the *Guinness Book of Records* for tying the longest piece of rope. After contacting Sea Cadet headquarters I was asked to send a CV of myself and a brief history as to what the IGKT did. Much to my surprise they accepted me and I became one of the Independent Witnesses to ensure that the knots were all tied correctly. It took the Sea Cadets five minutes to tie these knots and join them to the next persons piece of rope, then came the hard work, going up and down the lines first to see if there were any breaks which unfortunately there were. We then decided where to start measuring fortunately the other two

witnesses were Surveyors and took care of the technical side of measuring. We had two pieces each measuring 250 metres but we finally achieved a piece in total of 1374.50 metres. We then had to untie the rope and count how many pieces of rope were used which was 1866 pieces. This information was given to Lucy Hudson who was the event organiser, who then had to write the report and forward it to the *Guinness Book of Records* and await their decision. There is no existing record so in fact they have already made one. If successful this will be included in their book in 2002.

We were made very welcome, supplied with food and drink and also met Admiral Todd and Lady Todd. The television cameras were there and the event was shown on Carlton TV on Saturday and a little snippet on Sunday, which had my good self on it.



The rope layed out ready to start.

*Broken nails at
the finish?*

*Now comes the hard part -
checking all the knots.*



BOOK REVIEWS

HOW TO DRAW CELTIC KNOT WORK

by **Andy Sloss**

First published by Blandford (a Cassell imprint) in 1995; reprinted 1996 (twice), 1997 and 1998. 2nd edition published by Caxton Publishing Group in 1998 and reprinted 2001. ISBN 1-86019-8597

Retail price: UK £17-99, but now selling in some discount bookstores for £5.99

In Part I of this hardback book the novice quickly learns to draw intricate Celtic-style knotwork. A comprehensive Part II- about two thirds of its 190 pages - then acts as a source book of patterns from which experienced students can pick-'n'-mix to create their own imaginative patterns for use as a basis for knitting, embroidery, etc.

The author, who is based in Galloway, Scotland, developed his unique system when trying to write a computer program for knot designs. It is based upon a set of eight basic curves, which can be assembled in any sequence that complies with the logic of just three simple rules.

Owing little to the methods of classic Celtic manuscript illustrations, the method is wholly appropriate to the needs of today's knot designs. Concerned with more than mere passive geometry, how-

ever, Andy Sloss considers briefly the role of pen, brush or pyrography; inspired freehand versus ruler, compasses and dividers; and even mentions the copy, rotate, paste functions of computers and the place of the photocopier. Indeed, a computer design package called 'ProScribe', created as a companion to the book, is also available (details available from: CDD, The Crofts, Market place, Abbots Bromley, Nr. Rugeley, Staffs. WS15 3BS) ... but has not been seen by the reviewer.

With a respectful nod at the traditional methods of construction typical of earlier books, such as the 1977 publication by George Bain, the author of this latest work prefers to look ahead rather than back with his fresh and original approach to a traditional subject. For, as he writes; 'We are here to be as creative as we can be, and it is up to us to make the most of the tools available.'

The Guide Association KNOT BOOK

by **Wendy Goodhind**

Published (1988) by The Guide Association and reprinted 1999

Price: £10.00 (UK) ISBN 0-85260-146-8

Within the soft covers of this attractive, one centimetre (0.4 inch) thick book are contained 144 pages, each 210 mm x 210 mm (8.3 inches x 8.3 inches) square, with sections headed: Introduction - Knots - Hitches - Bends - Decorative Knotting - Tricks - Splices - Whippings - Lashings - Camp Gadgets - Pioneering - Caring for Materials -Glossary - Further Reading.

The comprehensive contents meet a Guide's needs for all stages of her Knot-

ter badge, some other awards, and allied activities such as first aid, craft, camping and outdoor pursuits; while the author's simple explanations are aimed at this kind of young reader - although the absence of references to gender make it, I think, as suitable for boys as for girls - and the lucid text is enlivened by the superb step-by-step sketches of Wendy Hesse.

[I have only one mild quibble. Buried deep in the preliminary small print is an acknowledgement to family members of the late Harry Asher IGKT for their kind permission to reproduce the Grandpa Knot and Pedigree Cow Hitch. A simple courtesy, no doubt, but the implication that access to these knots is somehow or other restricted is misleading, when in fact there is no copyright on ideas but only on the means of portrayal. Provided text and drawings were not slavishly copied from original work by Dr. Asher - and this book is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the genuine unaided work of author and illustrator - then surely no such permission was required. My caveat, however, should neither detract from the book's appeal nor deter Guild members from buying it.]

Containing more than 70 ties, tricks and techniques and well over 300 drawings, it is an excellent starter manual for any youngster.

Geoffrey Budworth

Fewer Knots

Extract from a Volume of bound copies of *Yachting Monthly* and *Motor Boating* magazine (November 1931 to April 1932), discovered by Geoffrey Budworth, who gratefully acknowledges the cooperation the current editor, Sarah Norbury, in allowing him free access to YM's archives for research purposes.

Sir, - Might I put in a plea, through medium of your columns, for the preservation of those fancy knots which though common in the days of sail in the Navy are now steadily being lost. Only the other day a Naval pensioner was showing me some of these knots and plaits, and many a time he added that he thought there were few left now who knew how to make them. There is not, to my knowledge, any book which deals thoroughly with the subject, presumably because to put most of these plaits into words is an impossibility. But while there are still some who live who know how to make them, could not their knowledge be collected either in writings or in practical examples and preserved? I am sure there must be many yachtsmen who would enjoy making fancy gaskets in their spare time and coach whipping their stanchions, if they only knew how it is done; or is this mechanical world too busy for this sort of thing, and must it pass away like everything else?

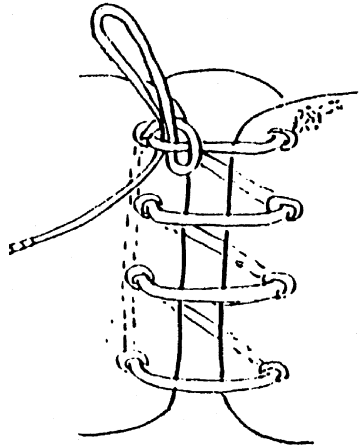
J.W.R.S.

Lacing A Shoe With One Hand

by Dianne Bright

Following on from the meeting of the East Anglian Branch, when we enjoyed a workshop presented by Des Pawson on “Mankind’s Relationship with Knots and Shoes,” several members brought to light many interesting aspects on this topic, not the least being the subject of shoe lacing for the disabled i.e. one-handed persons and stroke victims.

The photograph speaks for itself and the diagram depicts the lacing method of knotting one end and finishing with a simple slipped half hitch.



New Knots or What? - An Answer

By Heinz Prohaska

In KM 66 Sten Johansson showed some knots published by Giovanni Marco Sassu in his book *Il Mondo Dei Nodi* and claimed them to be new. Sten Johansson wanted to find out the opinion of IGKT members in the matter.

I can contribute to that, but before I will go into detail I must state that the question of novelty, if it is easier to solve a knot is good, and less easy if it is poor. Poor knots come usually in the waste basket, and we cannot look into the waste baskets of knot tyers who test their ideas themselves.

The knot shown in fig.138 of Sassu isn't new. I developed it about 25 years ago through a deformation of the mountaineering knot shown in fig.1 seen in a German mountaineering manual. Other climbers may have had the same idea.

The knot shown in fig.64 of Sassu is a variation on the un-seized standard version of the Carrick Bend and with that doubtless known for a long time. The flat version of the knot, shown in fig.2, can be seen in macrame. Moreover, I tested this knot not knowing that it belongs to the state of the art in the course of a knot development in the seventies. Tests in stiffer material showed a great tendency of the knot to come loose. Loaded in this condition, it can be parted between the hands. The tightened knot can also be parted; just the critical load will be higher. Further development led to the standard version of the Carrick Bend and

other knots, some probably new, but that's another story.

If an invention is to make sense, the result of the invention must be better than the state of the art. Knot inventors should always explain the problem that their knot is supposed to solve. For lack of such information by Sassu it isn't possible to make corresponding tests. Subjectively, as a mountaineer who spent half of his life for mountain safety research, I couldn't recommend 90% of these knots for a use in this field.

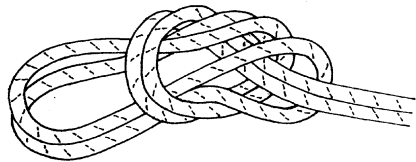


Fig. 1

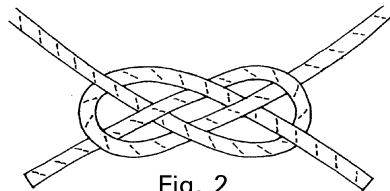


Fig. 2

Contradictions in the drawings seem to indicate that some of the shown solutions are too difficult and complicated even for experts.

Finally it's to point out that a knot development isn't finished with the result of a new structure. The work must be continued through optimizing of tying and untying techniques and optimizing of description and presentation.

References:

i]Johansson, Sten: "New Knots or What?" *Knotting Matters* 66, pp.30-34, March 2000

2]Eidenschink, Otto: *Richtiges Bergsteigen*, pp.55-56, Munchen 1951

TIMELESS TIES

I wish I had the rhymes of Horace*
To sing of Tom and Dick and Doris,
Those ancient folk (real names forgot)
Who bequeathed us knowledge of the knot.

I would also praise, extol, applaud
Those artful souls with rope and cord
Who still today do such a lot
To cultivate knowledge of the knot.

And when I'm dead, mere ash and bone,
I trust some scribbler yet unknown
Will in her turn rejoice they got
Our legacy... knowledge of the knot.

Anon

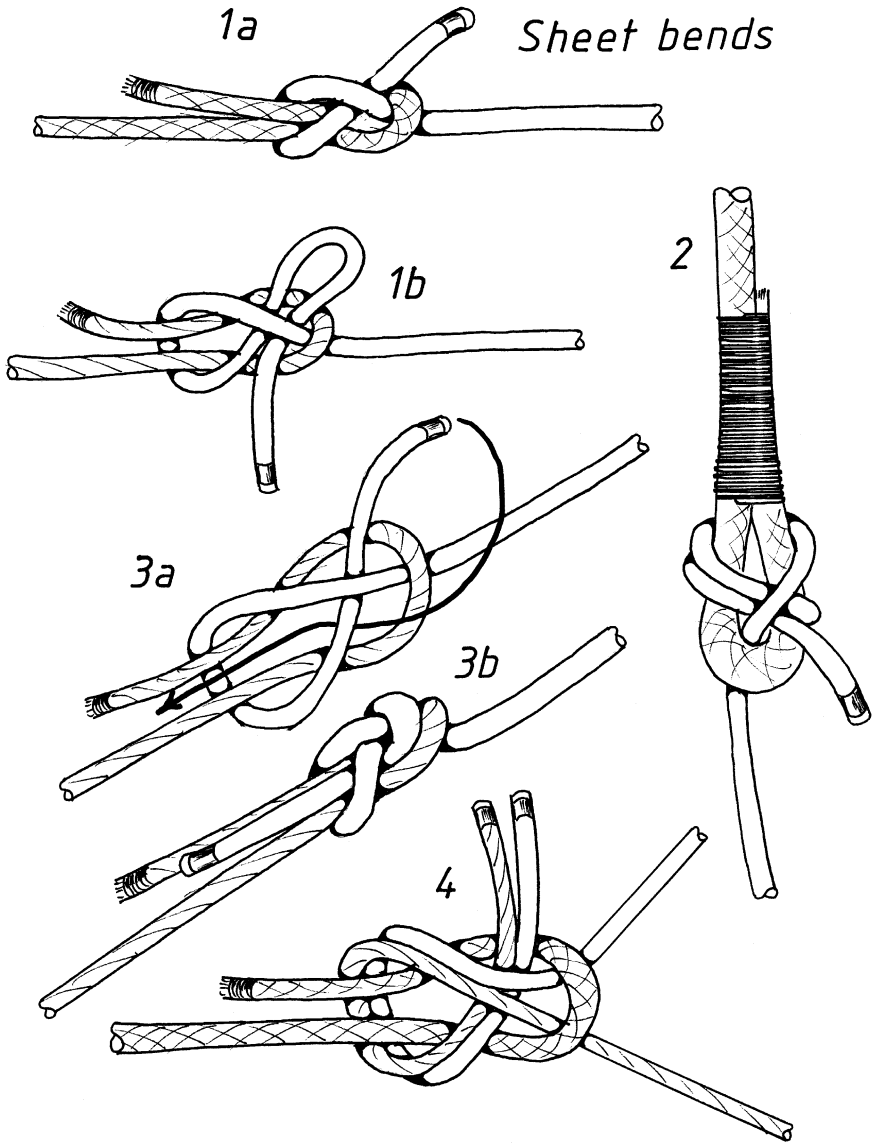
**HORACE* - Roman lyric poet and satirist, whose work is distinguished by its style, wit and good sense.

Knotmaster Series No. 11

*"Knotting ventured –
knotting gained"*

Sheet bends

The common sheet bend (fig. 1a) will join two lines of somewhat dissimilar size or construction, provided the difference is not too great. For trivial tasks – and a quick release – incorporate a draw-loop (fig. 1b). When used to attach a line to a seized eye or other permanent loop it is known as a becket hitch. Tied a different way (not illustrated) it is the weaver's knot. For extra security, wrap and tuck the working end a second time to create a double sheet bend (fig. 2). To streamline the knot, re-tuck the working end (fig. 3a) and tighten this one-way sheet bend (fig. 3b). For a bridle to join a trio of converging lines, try a three-way sheet bend (fig. 4) first published by the Swedish yachting writer Frank Rosenow^{IGKT}.



Anchors - A Way to Splice Rope and Chain

by Tim Weil

What are the elements of a successful knotting project? Having recently completed an 'anchor wrap' job for a friend's 40' trawler, I would suggest the following criteria -

Challenge - "Is this harder than it looks?"

Opportunity - "I've never tried something like this before!"

Partnership - "I'll bet the two of us can figure it out"

Exchange of Information - "The Internet was invented for projects like this"

In short - COPE. Deal with it. Surprise yourself and with some amount of luck and skill you may have a product that your customer will appreciate.

CHALLENGE -

What do you know about rope and chain splicing?

My friend Earl knew of my interest in knot craft. I'd told him of pioneering projects with our local Scout troop, membership in the International Guild of Knot Tyers, and had shown him some of my handicraft - key fob lanyards, and Turk's head bracelet piecework. In his mind, it would be an easy step up to help him with splicing thee-strand nylon rope to an anchor chain used for mooring his boat. In 'boat speak' here was the problem to be solved.

"I have a 34' DeFever Trawler Sedan power boat moored at the Minnesoft Beach Yacht Basin off the Neuse River in Arapahoe, North Carolina. My anchor chain is gathered using a Simpson-Lawrence power windlass with Rope/Chain capstan.

The 3-strand nylon rope (14-16 mm) and G4 ISO chain (6-8mm) will hold a 35 lb. Simpson-Lawrence Delta anchor".

He left me the 40' of rope and of chain in a pair of plastic holding tubs. If I was successful with this effort, he suggested I might even get a boat ride for my effort!

OPPORTUNITY -

Branching out from Turks Head bracelets

My New Year's resolution for 2001 has been to master the Turk's Head bracelet as a commodity product in my knotting kit bag. Towards that end I had bought Tom Hall's *Introduction to Turk's Head Knots* from the KnotStuff web site founded by Martin Combs (<http://www.knotstuff.com>). I also got into the weekly *KnotChat* group on Yahoo run by Dan Callahan (aka knottytyer) in which we corresponded frequently about 4/5/6 lead Turk's head knots, expansion techniques, and assorted weaves (Casa, Gaucho, Herringbone, etc.). By mid-March it was obvious that one year would just get me

started with Turk's head technique and that frankly, I needed more variety in my knotting practice. Splicing methods seems like a welcome change of pace.

PARTNERSHIP -

Let's have an IGKT meeting on anchor wraps!

Through the *KnotTyers club* (<http://clubs.yahoo.com/clubs/knottyers>) Sunday night chats I found a local resource for investigating the rope/chain splice challenge. Ed Morai (aka knotslipstick) works as an engineer here in the Washington DC area where he is often called upon by his Navy Researcher bosses to come up with a knotting solution for practical problem solving experiments. When I put the anchor wrap problem in front of him, Ed was quick to rise to the occasion. His work running the North American IGKT website (<http://www.igktnab.org>) and his long-time knotting interest have resulted in an excellent library of knotting books. After we met up for a TGIF happy hour discussion, the next logical step was to organize a two-person chapter meeting of the Maryland IGKT club and tackle the problem accordingly.

Ed had found a chapter from Brion Toss's book *The Rigger's Locker* (ISBN 0-87742-961-8) which was dedicated to chain splices. We agreed that this would be the approach we would take and I agreed to get the rope prepared for a

workshop the following weekend using Toss's recommended solution.

"Prepare the rope by soaking 6' of one end in a solution of 16:1 water and laundry starch (or use the bottled liquid starch full strength). When the rope dries, the individual strands of nylon will hold their spiral shape, or 'lay better' while you splice".

It required two attempts to get this starching method to work. First of all, locating the starch was a bit of a challenge. Local grocery stores carried mostly aerosol starch for laundry use. A hardware store stocked the powdered brand that is what I eventually used. Ed claimed that fabric stores are a good outlet for the liquid starch. Be that as it may, I didn't quite understand the method Toss described so that I first tried unbraided the rope and soaking individual strands in the starch solution. This turned out to be the wrong approach. Nylon rope does not lend itself easily to splicing techniques. When working with nylon I found it difficult to cut, frequently unraveled and never willing to "hold shape".

On the second attempt I discovered that Toss was suggesting to soak the 3-strand work en masse so that the unbraided ends would hold shape during the back splice technique.

Ed and I decided on using two of Toss's rope/chain splice techniques - the three-braid chain splice and the "shovel

Chain Splice





Shovel Splice (with Crown Knot finish)

splice”. In shorthand notation, here are the descriptions of the two different methods. We’ll let the photos fill in the details that are omitted from the Brion Toss text.

Three-strand Chain Splice

“Unlay the strands about 2 1/2 feet and pass two of them through the end link, pulling them through until you reach the junction of the third strand.... begin unlaying the 3rd strand, leaving a vacant groove to be filled with the nearer of the two other strands”.

Shovel Splice

“Apply a Double Constrictor or other seizing about 2 1/2’ from the end of the rope, then separate the three strands (or double-braid core and cover) into four equal bundles of yarns. Weave two bundles back and forth through every other link and the other two bundles through the intervening links, endeavoring to pull all yarns evenly tight as you go”.

The example (with Crown Knot finish) is probably inappropriate for a working shovel splice. Since this splice was named for “the amount of mud it would bring up from the bottom”, the

extra finishing knots would probably make it unusable for practical boating. In our workshop, it still seemed a nice aesthetic touch.

At the end of our IGKT - Maryland session, Ed and I had two different examples of the rope/chain splice worked out. While both the three-strand chain splice and shovel splice techniques appeared equally strong, the final outcome appeared to rest on the size of the rope/chain capstan entry which was on the customers boat.

EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION -

Knotting Leads on the Internet

While both the three-strand chain splice and shovel-splice methods produced secure, loose-fitting anchor wraps, the discriminating difference appeared to be in the girth of the finished splice and the aesthetics of the final product. In the end, Earl liked the three-strand chain splice because it seemed the least obtrusive technique (and also more likely to fit through the chain/rope capstan passageway).

Several other research interests emerged in this exercise. Whipping techniques, constrictor knots, wall and crown finishing knots and specialty

equipment (like Toss's Fid-o backsplicing tool) added to the research interest of the rope/chain anchor splice project. A few of the related Web links are listed here -

Jimmy Green Rigging (Devon, UK) - Chandlery and AnchorPlait Splices
<http://www.jimmygreen.co.uk/newsite/Home.htm>

Marlow Ropes Nylon-to-Chain Splicing Poster (free with every purchase)
<http://www.marlowropes.co.uk/yachting/default.htm>

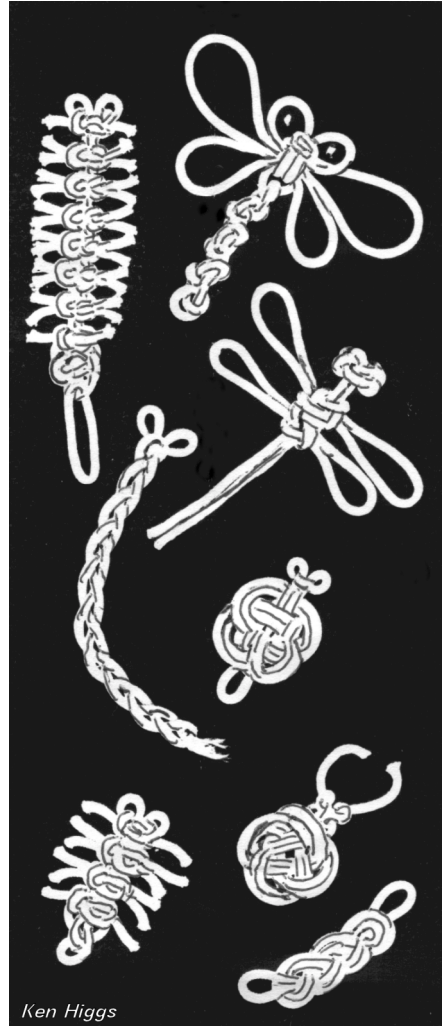
Brion Toss - The Complete Riggers Apprentice
<http://store.yahoo.com/tfguild/comrigap.html>

Correspondence on the topic also came from the following sources -
Rec.Crafts.Knots (Usenet Newsgroup)
FootRope Knots
<http://www.bigwig.net/knots/pawson.htm>

Final Thoughts

In the vernacular of KnotCraft it is true that "one thing leads to another". In this case, some interest in knotting areas led to the assumption that I could do more than I'd tried in the past. With a bit of research, and some help from IGKT colleagues I was able to deliver the rope/chain splice for anchor wrapping which I'd never attempted before. My friend Earl was quite happy with the finished product. I'm still waiting for the boat-ride invitation. Along the way I found many Internet resources which made this

a project worth attempting. And as a final bit of irony, I found several local marine shops that would do this job for under \$20!

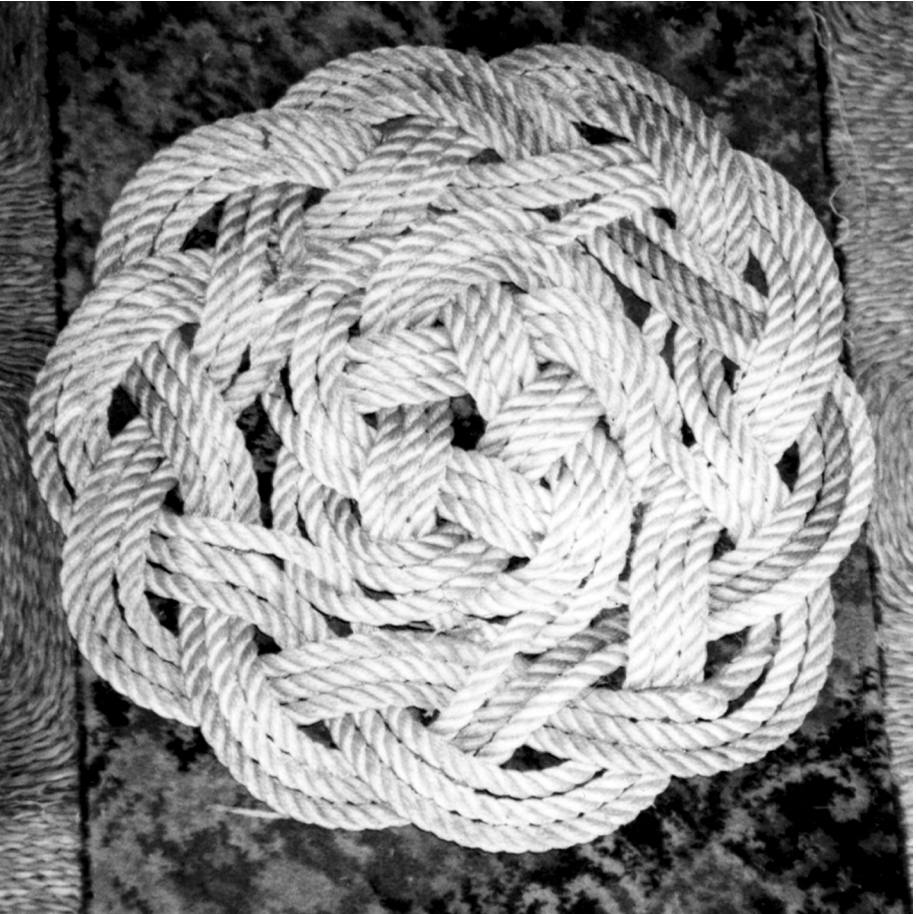


Ken Higgs

**Be inventive
create your own
'Bug Collection'**



Knot Gallery



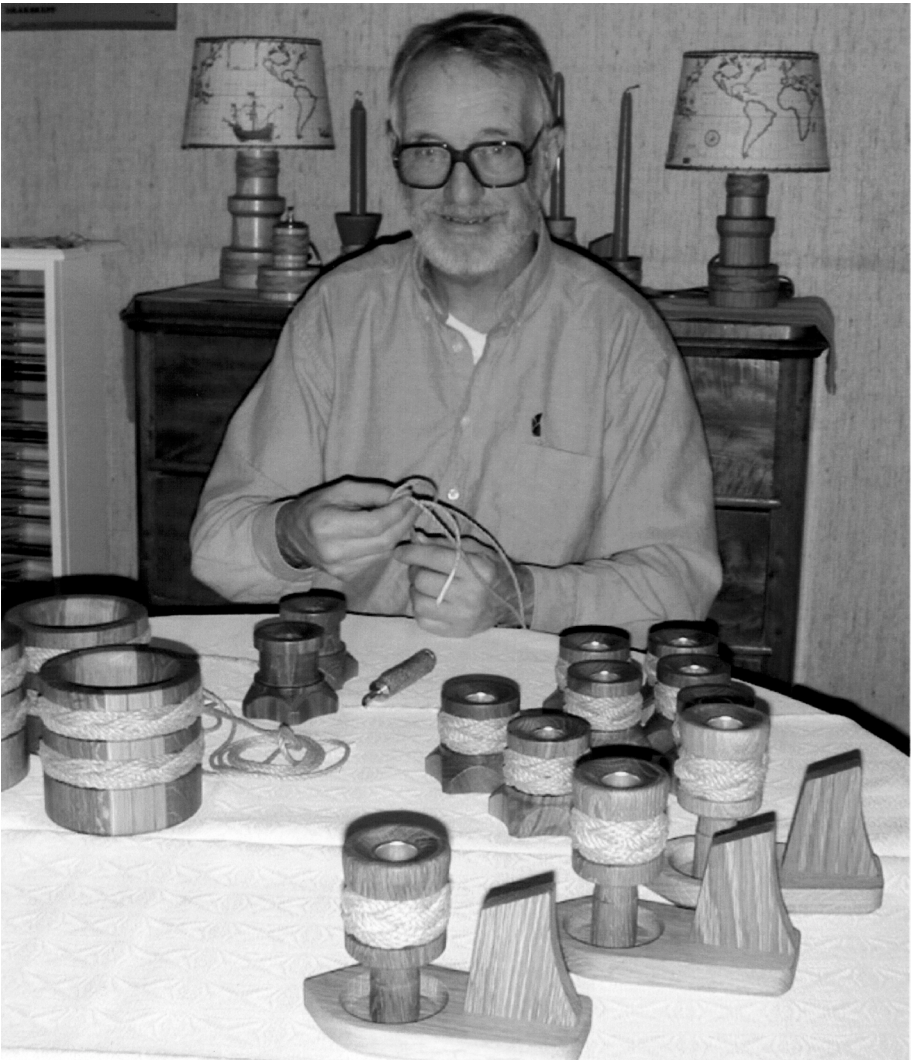
Above - A magnificent Turk's Head mat by Rod Orrah.

Left - Sphere in wire rope by Harold Scott.

Overleaf - Stampede strings by Geert "Willy" Willaert.







Above - Jonny Ekdahl busy making gifts from wood and hemp rope.

Right - A beautiful knife for a sailmaker with hitched sheath by Yngve Edell.

Overleaf - Medicine bag drawstrings in braided leather by Mike Storch.



Turks Head Knots With Three Leads and 3, 6, 9, ... Bights Tied as Mats

by Jesse Coleman

In a previous note, I discussed how to tie the 3L X 6B Turk's head knot. In this note, we will see how to tie other Turk's head knots in the family of THK's with three leads and bights numbering 3, 6, 9, 12, etc., or $B = 3n$, where $n = 1, 2, 3$, etc. I provide drawings in this note for the 3L X 3B, 3L X 9B, and the 3L X 12B THK's, shown as mats. The drawings for larger knots in this family become too difficult for me to draw. Besides, there are an infinite number of knots in this series and I had to stop at some point.

The rule of the greatest common divisor states: "The number of cords needed to tie a THK is the greatest common divisor of the number of bights and the number of leads in the THK." The number of leads in this knot is three. Three is divisible by the integers 1 and 3. The number of bights is $3n$, $n = 1, 2, 3$,

etc. This number is divisible by the integers 1, 3 and n . The largest number that is in both of these two sets of numbers (1, 3 and 1, 3, n) is three. Therefore, three is the greatest common divisor of 3 and $3n$. Thus, three cords are required to tie the knots in this series of THK's.

The 3L X 3B THK

Cords of any colour may be used. Let's call them red, white and blue. We begin with the simplest THK in this series, the 3L X 3B THK. First, lay a round loop of red cord on the table, as shown in figure 1. Surely this is the 1L X 1B THK, the simplest of all THK's. Next, lay a loop of white cord over the first cord, as shown in figure 2. Now, weave the blue cord through the first two cords, as shown in figure 3. The finished

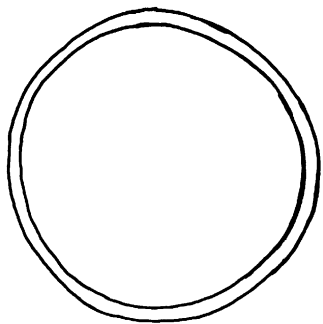


Fig. 1

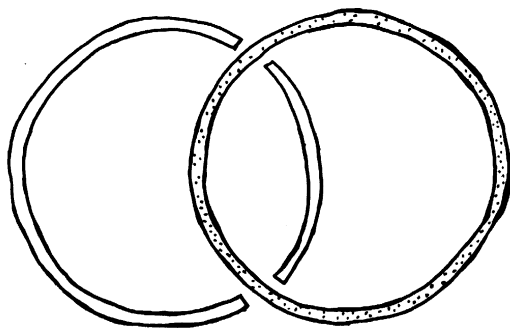


Fig. 2

knot is shown in figure 4. When I work up a THK in mat form on the table, I use

tape to hold cords in place while I add more cords.

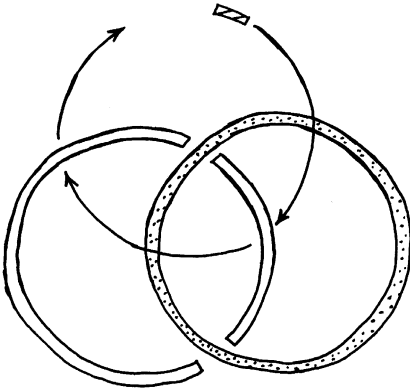


Fig. 3

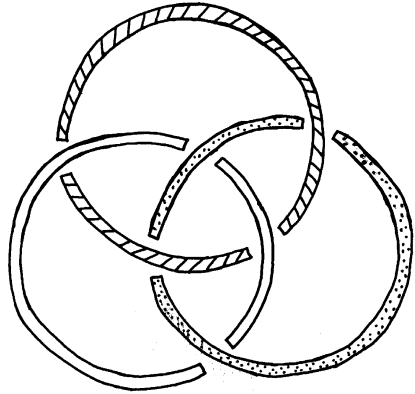


Fig. 4

The 3L X 9B THK

To tie the 3L X 9B THK, lay a triangular loop of red cord on the table, as shown in figure 5. Next, lay a similar triangle of white cord over the red triangular loop, as shown in figure 6. Now, weave the blue cord through the first two cords, as shown in figure 7. The finished knot is shown in figure 8.

The 3L X 12B THK

To tie the 3L X 12B THK, lay a square loop of red cord on the table, as shown in figure 9. Next, lay a similar square of white cord over the red square loop, as shown in figure 10. Now, weave the blue cord through the first two cords, as shown in figure 11. The finished knot is shown in figure 12.

Each cord in each of these completed THK's follow the usual over-and-under pattern of all THK's.

You can see how this is easily be extended to the next THK in the series, the 3L X 15B THK. Use five sided loops of cord and proceed as before. Lay the first loop on the table. Lay the next one on top of the first, being sure that the corners overlap properly. Then weave the third cord in the first two, being sure to maintain the over-and-under weave. I hope that extensions to larger THK's in the series are evident, because I can't draw the tedious figures.

All Turks head knots with three leads will have bights numbering: $B = 3n$, or $B = 3n + 1$, or $B = 3n + 2$, where $n = 0, 1, 2, 3$, etc. Those THK's with $B = 3n + 1$ or $3n + 2$ are single-strand THK's

because the greatest common divisor of 3 and $3n + 1$ or $3n + 2$ is one. Thus, the only multi-strand THK with three leads will be tied with three cords and may be tied with the method described in this

note. (OK, OK, I can tie a 3L X 1B THK and a 3L X 2B THK, but I don't think a 3L X 0B THK exists, but I had to find some formula to express all this.)

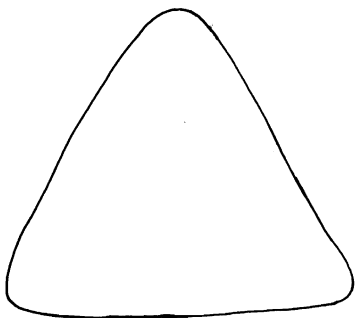


Fig. 5

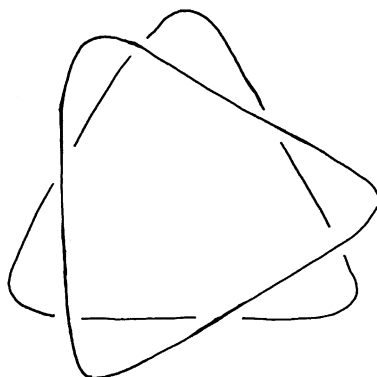


Fig. 6

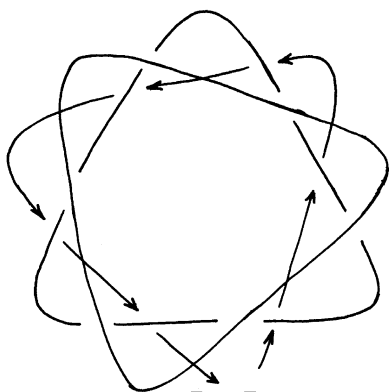


Fig. 7

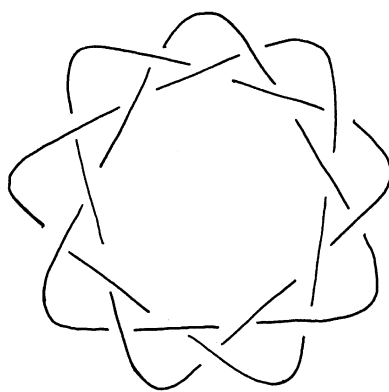


Fig. 8

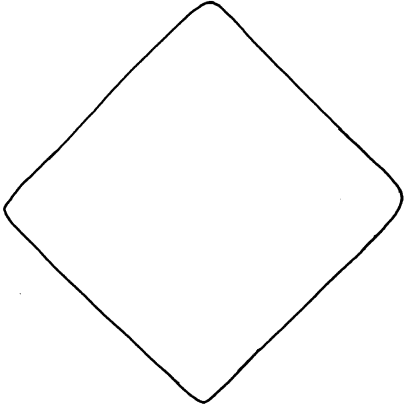


Fig. 9

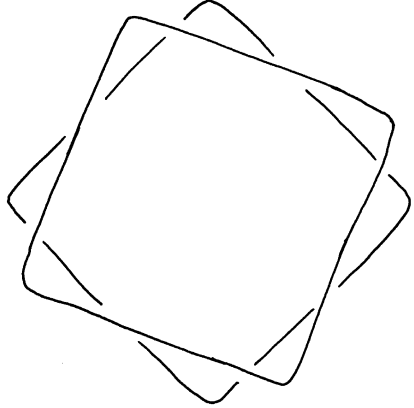


Fig. 10

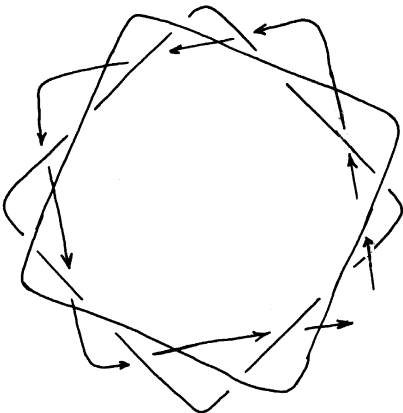


Fig. 11

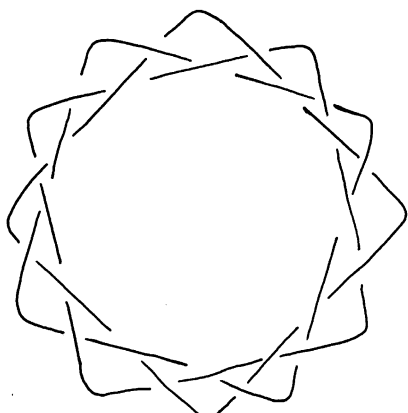
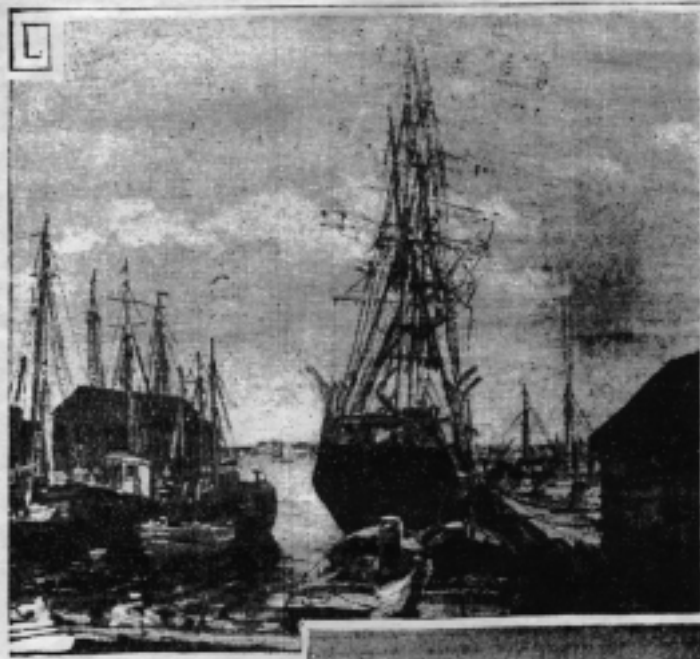


Fig. 12

Fairhaven's Ex-Whaler, Artist and Author Shows Uncanny Skill When It Comes to Devising Knots



Ashley Astonishes Experts by Accomplishing the "Impossible"

He talks amiably, is a genius with various colors and can tie a knot such as you never saw before; he has written all about whales after having served his apprenticeship on the rolling deep aboard a far-famed old veteran of the chase, the whaling bark Sunbeam.

COLLECTOR OF ANTIQUES

He smokes a well-taxed pipe, drives a racing car, has invented a machine that braids a kind of triangular shaped rope that experts said never could be made, and is a collector of antiques that many a connoisseur would go half round the world to see.

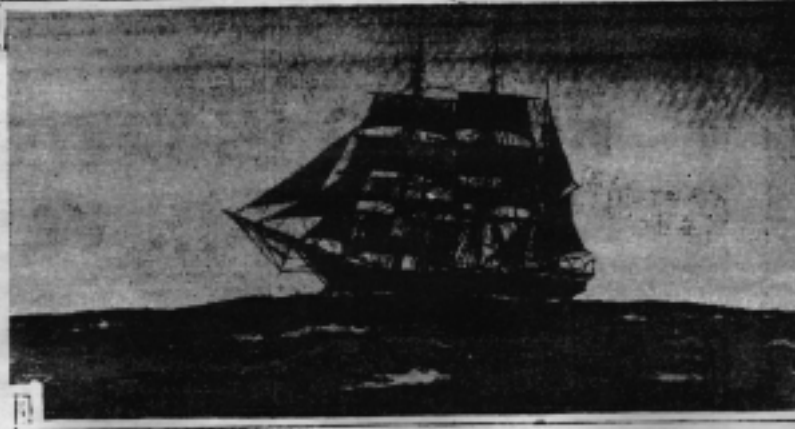
He is the single youngster (at 47 years of age) who perhaps more than any other person has served to keep the atmosphere of whaling, the whaling ship and the whaling port of New Bedford alive and dramatic and interesting.

His name is Clifford W. Ashley and a lot of his marine and particularly whaling sayings are hung in restaurants that the antiquarians swear by.

But more than that, if you are entertained in the least, you will stop and eavesdrop the ordinary visitor's welcome in the beautiful but ancient studio where he works summers at 2 Washington street, Fairhaven, a studio that overlooks New Bedford harbor, to see him tie knots.

EXPERT ON KNOTS

For the painter is something of a



Bark Wanderer, last whaler to leave New Bedford and wharf scene there, painted by Clifford W. Ashley; painter-knot-tying wizard executing a knot stunt in his Fairhaven studio; below, another of his admirers in the whaling bark Swallow, owned by Mrs. Arthur Delano.

large pasteboard box required hours of patient attention and painstaking effort to devise and create.

The painter-knot-tyer will tell you that the hybrid knot comes as naturally as the hybrid flower or fruit.

"You get one of the old-time standard knots like the Turk'shead, for instance, and 'cross it' with another old-time knot. Then you have the start of an entirely new series of knots."

He also uses one of his receptacles for

Everett Police Ordered to Be More Civil to the Pub

Mayor Threatens Suspensions if More Complaints of Rudeness Are Received

The following article is an interview with Clifford W. Ashley by the Boston Traveler on Thursday, June 13, 1929. Ashley's daughter, Phoebe Ashley Chardon, found the article recently and gave this copy to Brian Field. It is reprinted with permission of the Boston Herald.

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COLLECTOR OF ANTIQUES

He smokes a well tanned pipe, drives a racing car, has invented a machine that braids a kind of triangular shaped rope that experts said never could be made, and is a collector of antiques that many a connoisseur would go half round the world to see.

He is the single youngster (at 47 years of age) who perhaps more than any other person has served to keep the atmosphere of whaling, the whaling ship and the whaling port of New Bedford alive and dramatic and interesting.

His name is Clifford W. Ashley and a lot of his marine and particularly whaling canvases are hung in museums that the antiquarians swear by.

But more than that, if you are a sailor-minded in the least, you will stop and

overstay the ordinary visitor's welcome in the beautiful but ancient studio where he works summers at 2 Washington Street, Fairhaven, a studio that overlooks New Bedford harbor, to see him tie knots.

EXPERT ON KNOTS

For the painter is something of a Houdini too in his magical skill with strands of rope.

He will tie you a knot out of a clear sky such as no one among all the fraternity ever dreamed of and it will prove a fanciful, a fantastic or an artistic knot - for he carries imagination also into this phase of his abilities.

The world listened and wondered while Luther Burbank crossed fruits and obtained new hybrids.

It is perhaps not less magical to witness this wizard of knot-tying developing hybrid knots.

Without boasting in the least he tells you: "I am a person who makes knots 'synthetically'." He does, a brief visit to his studio disclosed. You may be an out and out tyro at knots. Yet there can be no mistaking the wizardry of this man's fingers and brain.

He takes three, 10, or 100 strands and weaves them into flat, round, square, or oblong knots and braids; he makes a braided rope where the many strands weave in and out in almost unending series - makes a flat, a triangular, a round, a four-sided rope at your behest.

HYBRID KNOTS

Some of the samples that lie round the generous-sized studio and litter a large

pasteboard box required hours of patient attention and painstaking effort to devise and create.

The painter-knot-tyer will tell you that the hybrid knot comes as naturally as the hybrid flower or fruit.

“You get one of the old-time standard knots like the Turkshead, for instance, and ‘cross it’ with another old-time knot. Then you have the start of an entirely new series of knots.”

He dips into one of his receptacles for rope and twine and pulls out a quartet of little knots - knot heads you might call them - “Chinese button knots!” he advises. “You perhaps call them pajama knots. These four were crossed with the so-called manrope knots and I obtained a nice new series of button knots and another of manrope knots.”

The knot-tyer will advise you that back of the act of tying a knot is a mathematical principle. Starting with one or the other of the list of sailor’s knots you cross with one or the other of the list and at each crossing, following the principle always, you have sprouted an entirely new family of knots.

STARTED YOUNG

Ashley developed his new science from a very early boyhood.

He will tell you that he was tying knots when he was 4.

He sailed from New Bedford on the Swan Song voyage of the whaling bark Sunbeam, beautiful Maverick of the once magnificent whaling fleet. He helped with the sextant, he stood a trick now and then at the wheel and in the crow’s nest; he studied whaling and



sailing aboard the whaler under the microscope.

A shellback may have grinned at the youngster with his camera, his habit of squatting on deck with a lot of rope on hand sizing up varying shipboard knots - or making notes in a small book.

He went out in the whaleboat with the veterans and manned an oar. He even tried his hand at hurling the harpoon and the keen edged lance as the closing in and death of the animal.

ACQUIRES FAME AS ARTIST

Then he materialized in New Bedford once more; startled the town and the whaling world with his book on whaling - became a figure because of his

canvases produced in rapid-fire order relative to a 1000 scenes of the chase of the mammal.

Eventually, however, his name became to knots.

At exhibitions his baffling genius in knot creations and the braiding great numbers of strands into harmoniously wrought shapes drew marked attention.

Today he says: "I am always glad when any one gives me a new purpose for a knot. I have something to work to and the desired knot can certainly be made.

"Every once in a while I run out of ideas for knots. Then I get a new idea and I start out on a whole new series."

Recently a New Orleans expert wrote a lengthy essay on braids, explaining with great care the impossibility of making a triangular braid. It simply could not be done - was outside the human skill.

In 20 minutes the Fairhaven artist tied one of eight strands. Shortly there after he made a long braid of 100 strands, a perfect triangle in shape, and later devised a machine that would make just such a rope.

"I spent several nights," he said, "deciding whether I would go into the rope making and manufacturing business, as I was urged to do, or stick to my painting and knot-tying. Painting and knot-tying at home won."

Ashley makes his headquarters part of the year at Wilmington, Del. This fall another of his books, "Whaleships of New Bedford." will be published.

The Mooring Hitch

By Brian Jarrett

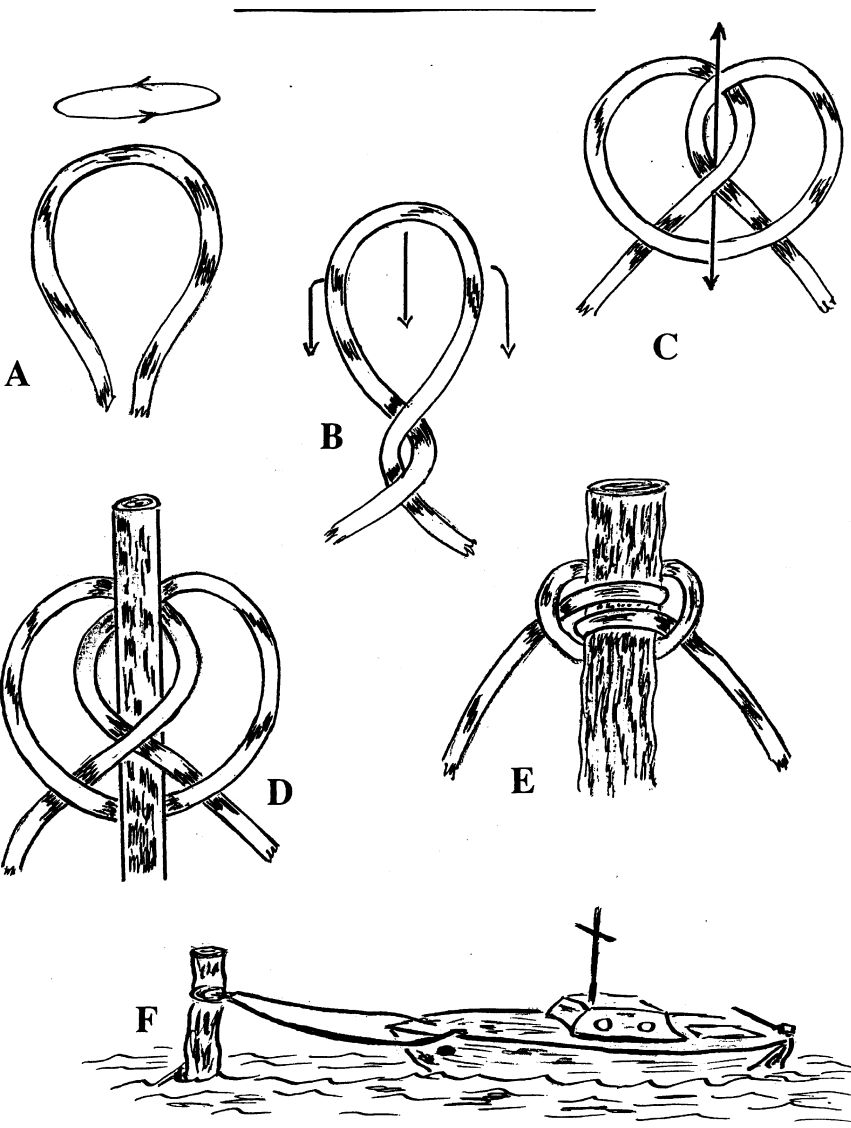
When tying a hitch used for mooring a boat, one of the preferred hitches is the Clove Hitch. It is popular because there are several ways of tying it.

If you are tying up to a vertical post the quick and easy way of tying a Clove Hitch is by forming two vertical loops and placing this formation over the post. A method we all know!

For some time, I have demonstrated the tying of a Mooring Hitch (Ashley #1191) using the method in the *Ashley Book of Knots*. One of the limitations in its use is that the two ends of the rope have to be pulled through the formed bight. Ask any yachtsman? Pulling all that rope through is impractical.

Herewith then is another method of tying a mooring hitch without pulling the rope through the bight.

The mooring post is fitted as shown in 'C' with the double-ended arrow.



A Clever Binding Method

by Thomas Simpson

Back in Victorian times when plug tobacco was a popular custom, a ship's company (to save costs) would club together and buy bales of cured, premium graded, Virginia leaf. Certain seamen within the ship's company were recognised "high rollers", they would roll the plugs for all hands and their payment was an extra tobacco share. The tobacco was so tightly compressed that commercial plug making machinery, supplied to the tobacco trade, couldn't better the seamen's plugs.

This clever binding method (now on the very brink of extinction) was shown to me fifty years ago by a Board of Trade acquaintance - an old bath wallah from Bombay. It's very adaptable and lends itself to other binding tasks - it certainly doesn't deserve to disappear from use. All that's required to set it up are two anchor points (about three feet high), between which tension is introduced. I'll describe it in its familiar shipboard setting.

Run off a length of suitable binding material from its source (no need to cut it). Pass the end under and then back over the top of a ship's rail, back off the rail about six to eight feet, holding the two parts of the binding material - leaving a bight around the rail.

With the end of the binding material pass three turns around the object to be bound (as though starting a whipping). As this strand is coming from the top of

the rail make sure it winds on over the ton of the object to be bound. With the other part of binding material (coming from under the rail) make a round turn leadint under the object to be bound. At this time it's a good idea (if working solo) to wrap a narrow strip of paper masking tape around the fragile initial bindings, this holds the turns in place and prevents them spilling, whilst carrying out the next step.

Run the strand (from the round turn) in a straight line to a convenient anchor point, which should be roughly three feet above the deck; make a bight fast, in such a manner, that the overall run from the rail is hanging in a slight sagging arc (not tensioned).

Now straddle (stand astride) the binding material, facing the object to be bound, remove the masking tape, carefully readjust and tighten the turns, take the slack out of the sagging arc by moving the object to be bound a little further from the rail (towards the anchor point). Lift the binding object up towards you so that the binding material tensions carefully and comfortably into your crotch. It's quite surprising how little tension is required to obtain a tight binding. You can face either way when straddling, I'm under the impression that I have more control over the binding with my back to the rail (straddling the bight) - try it facing both ways.

Whilst lifting the binding object up towards you, to increase tension, twist it

(in a circular motion) to advance the binding. Ideally the two windings should be close to each other, the round turn is a surging turn (a slipping turn) - adding a braking effect - controlled by the amount of tension applied.

On reaching the required binding length, tape up, more securely than earlier (to hold everything tightly in place), disconnect the anchored bight, and carefully maintaining tension, de-tape, remove the round turn, and finish off as though completing a whipping - winding the last 3 or 4 turns, well tensioned, on a bight

Looking around your own environs you will soon identify a suitable working site. For a first, tentative "hands on" rehearsal, you can work with the anchor points closer than normal - as close as six feet apart. You will only require 12-15 feet of binding material, a short piece of broom handle, and paper masking tape. The entertainment value is increased by the absence of a drawing (believe me) - an interesting hour is guaranteed.

ROPE ENDS

'I am not sure but it would be safe to state that the real difference between civilized and savage man consists largely in the knowledge of knots and rope work ... Columbus himself would have been far more handicapped without knots than without a compass.'

(A. Hyatt Verrill, Knots, Splices and Rope-Work - New York, 1912)

Branch Lines

France

A meeting for the French branch has been organized for the 16-17 March 2002. This is the third weekend of March, like last year. Hopefully this will become an annual event held at the same period every year. The site for the meeting will be in Douarnenez. Accommodation has been organized for under 200 francs (it will be Euros in fact) a day full board, reservations in advance. A big knot dinner will be held on the Saturday evening, let's hope there will be a lot of knotters. Contact Graham MacLachlan on tel/fax (00 33) (0) 2 33 07 67 04.

Graham MacLachlan

Texas Branch

Some members of the Texas Branch (TxB) recently attended the NAB-2001 in Rockport, Texas. The Texas delegation included:

Ed Baker
Rob Higgins
Charlie Holmes
Wayne and Kay Lewis

Sam and Missie Lanham
Gary and Barbara Sessions

The weather was nice, that is to say not too hot and the Texas Maritime Museum was an excellent venue for the our displays. We were never overrun with visitors but the few who did appear were appropriately appreciative. John Burke had arranged for a hospitality room at the Best Western Motel, which was the event headquarters, and we convened there whenever we weren't at the Museum or eating some of the fine sea food available in the Rockport area.

Congratulations to John and Kay Burke and all of the NAB crew on a job well done.

Gary C. Sessions



'Old Tar' Lee Johnson of Brighton MI

East Anglian Branch

On a pleasant autumnal Saturday afternoon 22nd September, sixteen stalwart members of the East Anglian Branch gathered once again at the Education Room of the Museum of East Anglian Life for our half annual meeting.

We enjoyed a convivial 'hands-on' workshop about 'net making' and 'hammocks' which I presented ably assisted by our knowledgeable member with the 'red beret' Des Pawson whom most other members world wide, know.

We rigged a jackstay across the room with hanging jig/frames there-from and indulged ourselves in creating differing knot meshes e.g. the traditional mesh knot (sheet bend), overhand bends and granny knots. We made a few tiers of meshes for effect, to satisfy ourselves that we could do-it.

Des produced an excellent example of a 'netted hammock' that he had collected for his museum and I produced my first ever effort at 'netting' in the form of a hammock 6'x 3' made of 3mm blue polypropylene with 8mm head; foot and side ropes. Not the best material to use for the finished job, but economical for training purposes. As an old fisherman said to me "All you are doing is making holes in rope!" I must admit that my efforts need honing and refining somewhat.

Our next meeting will be on Saturday 23rd March 2002 at the same venue. The 'hands-on' workshop topic will be 'Needle Hitching' presented by Liz and Des Pawson; details of which will, be promulgated in the next member's circular letter confirming that meeting. Regards from our members to all worldwide.

John Halifax

West Country Knotters

In early July the West Country Knotters put on a static display of ropework in the library at Burnham on Sea. This is the third time we have put on a display at the library and it seems to have generated moderate interest. I say 'moderate' because people make all sorts of favourable comments but leave it at that. The object of the exercise is to try and motivate an interest in ropework, but people seem to shy off for some reason. The display was in the front window of the library and was on view for two weeks.



At the end of July some members of the Branch took part in the Burnham Area Rescue Boat annual gathering celebrating the building of the lifeboat station by Anneka Rice in her 'Challenge' programme. This year we hoped to give a good representation of the Guild with a 'hands on' demonstration of practical and decorative ropework and this we certainly did! Richard Hopkins brought his six-knot challenge and Europa Chang Dawson was helping in own inimitable

way of drawing visitors to the displays, and teaching them bits and pieces of ropework. 'Jumper' Collins, aided by his good lady Babs, was in fine fettle with his superb display of decorative work, including lampshades and sea chest handles.

Another addition to our gathering was a display by Dan Hillman. He has built, into a car trailer, a replica of a two masted brig. The replica is fully rigged and is used to help teach youngsters the basics of tall ship sailing.

We have recently held a branch meeting and among the formal matters were a couple of items that may be of interest to readers of *Knotting Matters*. The first concerns Denis Murphy who is well known in knotting circles. The members of the West Country Knotters had agreed that Denis should be made an Honorary Member of the branch. Vernon Hughes, our chairman, presented Denis with a framed certificate of Honorary Membership saying that it was in recognition of Denis's long interest in, and support of, knotting at local and national level.

The second item was a report from Richard Hopkins saying that he was helping in a reconstruction of a chariot using rawhide knotting for the BBC programme 'Meet the Ancestors'. He showed members copies of photographs of the knots used and of the chariot. The programme he thinks will be broadcast on BBC 2 during March 2002.

Dave Pusill & Tug Shipp

Pacific Americas Branch

On The weekend of September 8th and 9th the PAB attended the Tall Ships

Festival at Dana Point Harbor here in Southern California. This is the high point on the knot calendar and we try to make it there every year. The Orange County Marine Institute is undergoing a change and growing into the Ocean Institute. There is a lot of construction going on and so this year the Festival was held across the harbor on the grass next to the Baby Beach. This made it very nice being under the trees and everyone enjoyed the change of venue. Lindsey Philpott did the yeoman work of manning the display for both days as well as carrying on the Knot Tying Contest. A number of the sailors gave it a good try and it was unbelievable watching how fast they could form those six knots. The winner was Bobby Nelson who first beat the time that Jennifer Spearel set last year of 17.14s with his first time of the day at 17.12s. Not satisfied with just beating her time by two hundredths of a second, he went on to get a crowd-pleasing time of 16.28s.

Charlie Bell showed up both days with his Bell Rope display. This is a very eye catching collection with a complete line of bell ropes made by Charlie over the last several months. They are both the continuous and the covered type of bell rope. Everyone admired the workmanship; it would have made Captain Harrison proud. Joe Schmidbauer showed up to help out on Sunday and helped to answer the many questions about marlinspikes and manrope knots.

Yvonne Chang, one of our resident experts in Chinese Knotting, will appear on the satellite station DIY Network on Wednesday, October 3rd and 7th. She will appear on the show "Crafts From Around the World". The idea is to show

viewers how to do any craft project in or around their home. They also have a companion web site at www.diy.net that will also show a sampling of Yvonne's work.

Our regular monthly meeting was interrupted on September by the amazing events taking place in New York City. Hopefully we will be able to resume them again to begin sharing our knot knowledge. Lindsey Philpott has started a new venture of caning seats and doing rush weaving. His first small project will be footstool in rushwork and then his dining room chairs will be his first caning project. It will be interesting to see it all when he shares it with us at a future gathering.

The next event for our knot display is the Cabrillo Aquarium Festival of the Sea on October 21st. We will tell more about this in the next issue.

Joe Schmidbauer & Lindsey Philpott

Solent Branch

Perhaps the most significant achievement of the Solent Branch in the last year, has been the increase in Guild Members in the area. Now just one year old the branch has had four well attended meetings, the latest in early October took the form of a short semi-formal meeting followed by a "Show and Tell" for one minute on the subject of unusual or handy tools, materials or hints by each attendee. From hand held vices to clothes pegs, rug hooks to wire loops, breaking small line to tool rolls, hand made netting needles and bamboo fids. This was followed by group workshops on Bell Ropes, Braiding and a Pot-pourri of knots, bends and hitches.



Ken Yalden with children trying the six knot challenge at Queen Elizabeth Country Park.

A busy summer season saw Solent members, out and about at a local school, WI meetings and a luncheon club, all of which raised funds for both the Guild and the Branch. Recruiting shows, where we were often supported by the stalwarts from other branches, included a Nautical day in Fareham, the Queen Elizabeth Country Park Fair, the Earl of Southampton's Show, Fareham Gala Day, the International Festival of the Sea and a Victoriana day at Bursledon Brickworks. Bob Pearce also had a five-minute spot on local television. Just two more events are planned for this year, the Junior Shell Club and Lymington Sailing Club. We are now looking forward to next year and meeting you all at the AGM and 20th Birthday Party.

Gordon J Perry

Kent & SE area

The third gathering of Guild members in this region, organized by Derek

Chipperfield, took place on Sunday, 23rd September 2001, at Chatham Historic Dockyard beside the tidal River Medway, in one of the 18th century buildings attached to the working Ropery.

A total of 15 enjoyed the free-&-easy atmosphere, along with a loosely structured programme of activities which included: a review of knot books and booklets since 1982 (by Geoffrey Budworth, decently excluding his own); tying Turks' Heads (Europa Chang, Albert Southerden and Bob Stroud); braided picture frames (Jeff Wyatt); Spanish hitching (Geoffrey again); and blocks-&-tackles (Derek).

Those present also had a chance to see - and take away printed instructions for tying - the unorthodox folded, stepped or wrapped Matthew Walker knot recently discovered by Sam Lanham of Fredericksburg, Texas, USA.

But, as always, just as much fun was had from the contents of individual plastic carrier bags which, when emptied out, became the subjects of numerous informal show-&-tell sessions.

Reported by our Stringer in the south-east

Postbag

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

Response on Two Articles

Concerning the article in KM71 p4 by Richard Hopkins on the subject of Knots in Heraldry. Readers interested in this subject are commended to refer to Brian Lamb's article in KM33 (Autumn 1990), my follow up article in KM35 (Spring 1991) and of course the result of Richards own researches in KM55 (March 1997).

Query on the article by Olivier Peron (KM 71 p14) first column, what or who is a palm tree braider?

*Roger Carter
Plimmerton, New Zealand*

Ropewalk Exhibition

In North Lincolnshire, at Barton on Humber right under the southern end of the Humber Bridge lies the old Halls Barton Ropery a magnificent long building which closed in 1987. This building has recently reopened the ROPEWALK art gallery and craft centre. There is a small display on ropemaking as carried on at the site and it is worth dropping by if you are in the area to see this and the very fine building.

Ropewalk Contemporary Arts and Craft
The Ropewalk,
Maltkiln Road

Barton on Humber
North Lincolnshire
DN18 5JT
Phone 01652 660380
www.the-ropewalk.com

Opening hours Tuesday - Saturday
10am-5pm

Sunday & Bank holidays 10am-4pm

In Barton there is also the Baysgarth House Museum that has I am told a small display on ropemaking as well.

This museum is open Thursday, Friday and bank holidays 1030am - 3.30pm Saturdays and Sundays 1030am-4.30pm.

*Des Pawson
Ipswich, England*

Ashley gives me the hump

I was recently reminiscing of my days as a young seaman on board the ORIENT Liners and the CASTLE boats during the late forties and early fifties, and was thinking of the times when we had to rig awnings for the passengers dances on the afterdecks. We spread the awnings out over the wooden mainframe or wire, unfurled the awning sideways, and lashed the awning to the tensioned wires previously rigged.

Each eyelet set along the awning edge had a rope tail spliced in about a yard long (measured in feet not centimetres). The rope tails were lashed to the side-wires using an awning knot. I decided to check out this knot in Ashley's book but of all the knots marked awning knot, namely #19, 304, 310, 325 and 411, none

showed anything like the hitch I was taught as a youth. Moreover, none of his hitches/knots shows an awning attached to any of the knots.

Searching through his book I found a similar knot #215 called a CAMEL knot. If you can imagine the rope tail being passed over the wire and back through the eyelet a couple of times, then hove tight (like a tackle) then over the wire and back up and across the lashing and a slipped half knot placed on the wire stay to hold the lashing tight. When it was required to let go the awning in a hurry all we did was pulled on the free end of the slipknot and everything collapsed taking the strain off the awning immediately.

Looking through the *Manual of Seamanship* (1901) I see my awning hitch in a clear diagram. Whilst in the *Manual of seamanship*, I looked up two other hitches. The midshipman's hitch which is used instead of the blackwall hitch around a cargo hook and not as suggested by Ashley as a companion to the rolling hitch. And I looked up the rolling hitch itself that is often mixed up with midshipman's hitch in Ashley. The above *Manual* and the *Boatswains Manual* (1944/46) both show the rolling hitch quite clearly as knot No 1735 not 1734.

I have hung my life on the Navy rolling hitch and would use no other. I was also examined on this knot by a board of trade examiner for my Efficient Deckhand Certificate.

The rolling hitch is different from the Midshipman's hitch or Magnus hitch or indeed the camel hitch.

Incidentally, has anyone out there blacked down the main forestay of a passenger ship? I did just that on Boxing Day 1948 in Naples aged eighteen. What an experience.

As for Gordon Perry (Old salts Postbag KM 70) Yes I've helped set up a bull rope to a derrick. And made SNOTTERS.

Yours with the small hump.

**Peter Hughes.... Ex AB.EDH.
Erith, U.K.**

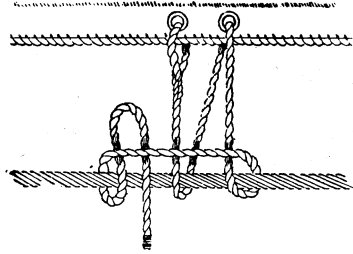


FIG. 19.—Awning Hitch.

Little Bo-Peep

I know this is not a knotting matter, but can anyone confirm the following version of the nursery rhyme "Little Bo-Peep" to be fact.

In an article in the *Oregon Coast Magazine*, it is claimed that the rhyme has a seagoing connection. The article comes from a review of the book *Jargon of the Sea*. They say that a short distance from Hastings, England lies a small seacoast area known as Bo-peep, which was a favourite landing spot for smugglers.

Customs officers hiding in the shrubbery waiting for the smugglers, because of their bobbing and peeping over obstacles became known as Bo-peepers.

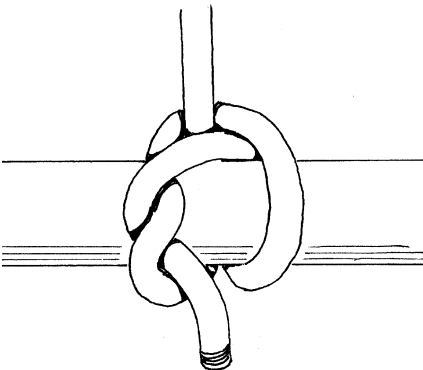
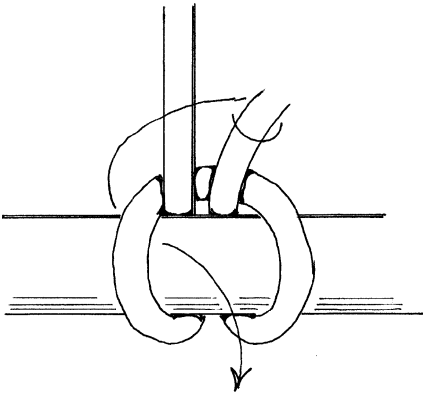
Sometimes it's hard to believe what I read.

**Clint Funk
McMinnville, Oregon**

New Knot?

Can anyone help me? Is there a name for this knot, as I cannot find it in any knot books that I have seen.

R. G. Robertson
Lerwick, Shetland Islands



On early Ropemaking Tools

There is a good deal to be said about the tool discussed in KM72 by Richard Hopkins.

Another Egyptian representation of it was announced in E Mackay's *Note on a new tomb (No 260) at Droh Aba'l Maga, Thebes*, *J Egypt Arch* III (1916) p125-126 and plate XV. Mackay observed the same tool in use by contemporary Egyptians and a photograph is reproduced there.

More recently Emily Teeter reviewed this and other evidence of Egyptian ropemaking in *Techniques and Terminology of Ropemaking in Ancient Egypt*, *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* Vol 73 p71-78 (The Egyptian Exploration Society London 1987). Emily Teeter took the view that the early tool differed from the more recent photograph in having a heavy weight and cord rather than the bar of Wilkinson's description.

I have experimented with both these forms of the tool. Both work, but the cord and weight version is considerably more awkward to use and I would need some convincing that it was used in practice.

The best illustration I have seen of Mackay's find is in T.G.H James *Egyptian Painting and Drawing*, British Museum 1985, which reproduces a watercolour copy of the original.

On the other side of the world, *Pioneering. Boy Scouts of America Merit Badge Series* shows the tool and says it was used around about AD 1200 by Native Americans. I would be interested to know what evidence there is for Pre-Columbian use. The situation is confused because the tool survived on the Iberian peninsular until modern

times. Des Pawson has photographed the tool in use to make three-strand rope, in Portugal. It seems likely that the tool accompanied the Spanish to the new world.

As evidence for this, the tool survives in Texas as the 'tarrabee'. I have seen a reference on the Web to its adoption by Native Americans, from the Spanish, to spin hair moss. There it was called the tarabi.

The tool appears again as the 'taravia' in *Making Horsehair Rope* by Diane Gadway and Richard Schneider (1993). This is a booklet with accompanying video that shows the taravia in use Mexico for spinning yarn and forming strands in the making of horeshair rope.

I have not found 'taravia' in a Spanish dictionary. However a plausible etymology would be from the Latin 'terebra' meaning a gimlet.

There are a number of similar tools. The one found in Britain and Ireland seems to have been the wimble. This was the subject of articles by R U Sayce in 1939 (in a Swedish journal *Folkliv*) and again by Alexander Fenton in Gwerin in 1961. Sayce was unable to find the wimble used on continental Europe, so there seems to have been a good deal of local variation in this type of tool.

Murray Peake
Bendigo, Australia

A Knot by any other name.....

Some knots are known by more than one name, and some names are used for more than one knot. When you combine this

with geographical and dialect differences, illustrators inadequacies, and vocabulary variations, you have the perfect recipe for confusion and errors in knotting literature.

It seems that even *Knotmaster* may have fallen victim to this multiplicity of knots and names! I feel that the "Ossel Knot" shown in *Knotmaster Series No 10* in KM72 would be better described as a Net-Line Knot as shown in *The Knot Book* by Geoffrey Budworth and described in *The ABOK* as a Net-Line Knot (and hitch!) from Looe.

The Ossel Knot is illustrated in *Knots Ties and Splices* by Chas. L. Spencer, in *Nets, How To Make and Preserve Them* by G.A. Stevens, and also in *The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Knots and Ropework* by Geoffrey Budworth as well as in other books. These publications all clearly show an additional turn around the headline on the other side of the standing end of the ossel from the first two turns, before the working end crosses over and tucks beneath the first turn.

To further add to the confusion Ossels may also be called Ossils, Osils, Ossles, Norsals, Norsells, Nossles, or Daffins. They are defined by John Garner as:

1.Short lines connecting the top edge of a net (especially a drift net) to the headline or leadline and

2.A Gangen as used in long lining may also be called a Norsal and vice versa.

The Ossel Hitch shown in *Knotmaster No 10* is as illustrated in most other reference books and does not appear so subject to variation in form and description other than sometimes being referred to as an Ossel Knot!

Maurice Smith
Wheaton Aston, UK.

Rope Making Museum

There is a small museum about rope making and the traditions around it in the centre of the Netherlands.

It is a small museum, aimed at people who know nothing about rope. The explanation texts are in Dutch and English, and there is a good video on how rope used to be made. It is a nice little museum, worth visiting if you are near.

Stichting Touwmuseum DE
BAANSCHUUR

Reijersteeg 4 Oudewater

The Netherlands,

+31 (0) 348-56 78 32

Open 1 April - 1 November, Tuesday
- Saturday 10.00 - 17.00 Sunday and
Holidays 12.00 - 17.00.

Entry adults fl 3.00 (1.36 Euro).

*Willeke van der Ham
Noord, Holland*

Jumbo Fenders

Liz and I were sailing in the Baltic with Sten Johansson and took this photo.

It is a jumbo fender on the stems of the most modern of icebreakers in Helsinki.

The purpose of the fenders is to protect the stem of the icebreaker and the bow of the ship it is towing, should the icebreaker come to a sudden stop in heavy ice. It always pleases me to see traditional practice in a modern situation. These could be called giant sword mats using the heaviest of mooring or towropes as the warp with a weft of smaller ropes or wire rope.

*Des Pawson
Ipswich, England*

Do You Make Knives?

I would be interested to hear from anyone who has an interest or would like to have a go at knifemaking?

*Yngve Edell
Gavle, Sweden*



Knotting Diary

EVENTS

Knotting Extravaganza
Liverpool Maritime Museum
16th - 17th February 2002
Contact: David Walker
Tel: 01244 682117

AGM's & 1/2 YEARLY MEETINGS

IGKT 20th Birthday Celebrations

Fareham, Hampshire
20th - 25th May 2002
Contact Ken Yalden
Tel: 023 9257 8603
E-mail: kennethyalden@lineone.net

IGKT Half-yearly Meeting

Hanover International Hotel,
Bromsgrove, Worcestershire
11th - 13th October 2002
Contact: Bruce Turley
Tel: 0121 453 4124
E-mail: 106077.1156@compuserve.com

BRANCH MEETINGS

French Branch

16th - 17th March 2002
Douarnenez
Contact: Graham McLachlan
Tel: (0) 233 076704
E-mail: ile.tatihou@cg50.fr

East Anglian Branch

23rd March 2002
Museum of East Anglian Life, Stowmarket,
Suffolk
Contact John Halifax
Tel: 01502 519123

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Breastplate Designs	£2.50
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Turksheads the Traditional Way	£1.50 *
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Knotcraft	£3.60 *
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Turks Head Alternatives	£2.20 *
Creative Ropecraft (Hardback - 3rd Ed.)	£9.95
Knotted Fabrics Hardback <i>price includes UK postage</i>	£9.00
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Something Different <i>with over 50 Button Knots</i>	£3.20
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The DIY Book of Fenders	£9.95
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