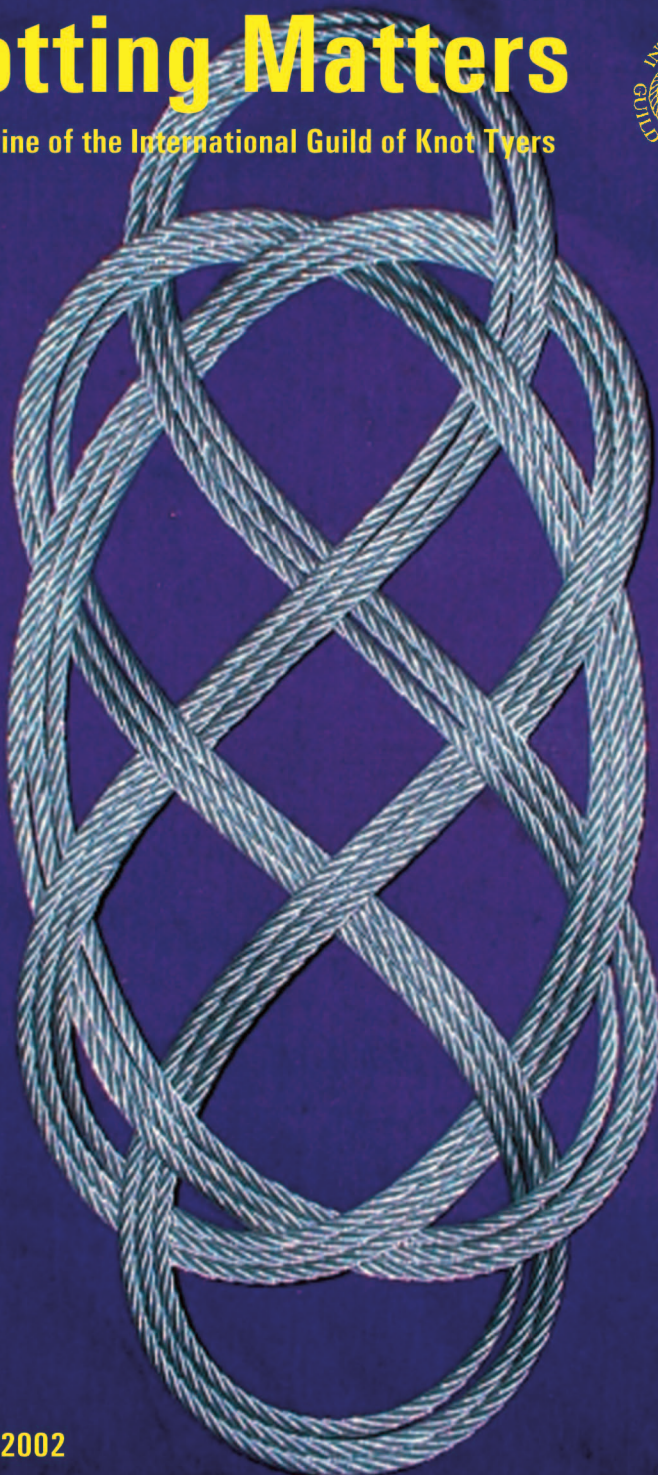


Knotting Matters

The Magazine of the International Guild of Knot Tyers



Issue 77
December 2002

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Knotting Matters

**Magazine of the
International Guild of
Knot Tyers**

Issue No. 77

**President: Brian Field
Secretary: Nigel Harding
Editor: Colin Grundy
Website: www.igkt.net**

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*Yet more of the wonderful wire work of
Harold Scott.
Back Cover - A stropped halliard block by
Agostino Cortese*

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Letter from a President

Autumn has arrived, the Thames barges are striking sails and removing rigging and the season is over. I have been largely absent from the quayside due to declining health. After the best part of 20 years selling ropework, increasing weakness has made it impossible for me to continue. The business has been passed over to my working partner for many years, IGKT member, Sarah Ford. At least I am freed from the tyranny of making enough stock to keep up with the summer sales.

I recently had the pleasure of meeting the New Zealand IGKT President, Tony Fisher who is working on the rigging of the *Golden Hind* in London, his wife Carolyn having taken up a teaching post in Essex. Tony's chief complaint is that

the weight restrictions made it impossible to bring his copy of Ashley with him.

A fortnight ago I visited my GP to be told, "I've just been reading about that knotting club of yours," and he produced a magazine which goes to every GP doctor in the country. There was an article by Dr Ian Crabbe of Essex, which contained a very good 'plug' for the Guild. Well done, Ian.

My apologies to anyone who has tried to e-mail me. My computer is down and in future the only way to contact me will be by phone or post.

Brian Field

Col's Comment

One of the nice things about being editor of *Knotting Matters* is that you get the chance to chat or correspond with members around the world. It's even better when you get to meet them in person.

At the half-yearly meeting, I had the chance to speak with Tony Fisher, President of the New Zealand Chapter. Tony and I have corresponded quite a lot by email and it was really nice to talk face to face. Again, another sign of the friendliness of the Guild.

How should the Guild fund its

meetings? This was raised during a Question Time at the Bromsgrove meeting. Should the present system of covering the costs with the raffle along with some use of Guild funds be continued, or should the people attending contribute to the costs of hiring the meeting place? If we are to make use of venues that are warm, comfortable and large enough to accommodate us all, then this subject will be high on the agenda of the Council meetings. What do you think? Send in your views to the Council and let us know.

KAJ LUND

At the age of over 90 years Kaj Lund passed away on 30th June 2002.

He was active with his authorship until shortly before his death.

Both Kaj and his beautiful wife Eva were always so nice and kind in every way when we visited their home. Kaj was so patient, helpful and very humble, and shared generously his knowledge and great experience.

He kept his love for the sea all his life and together with Eva sailed in their yacht *Bass Rock*, the straits between Denmark and Sweden, from Norway in the north to Germany in the south.

His remembrance is there in his books.

From the Scandinavian Branches

IVY BLANDFORD

Ivy Blandford died on 16th July 2002, aged 90. She is survived by husband Percy and son Peter and his children.

Besides being the wife of our first president, she was a member of the IGKT almost from the start. Her particular interest in knotting was macramé.

In the very early days she was at the Scout annual Gilwell Reunion, where we demonstrated knotting and Eric Franklin produced four knot charts which formed the base on which our supplies department grew. Ivy became our first supplies secretary and held the post for about ten years. She was also on the committee for several years. Until she became ill, she attended almost every IGKT meeting.

She became ill with Alzheimer's disease, a distressing mental illness for which there is no treatment or cure. It progressed over five years, during which time she was looked after at home by Percy.

Ivy was a member of the Scout Association almost as long as Percy, mostly running Cub Scout Packs connected with the Sea Scout Troops run by Percy. She held the Silver Acorn, a high award for services to the Scout movement and a badge for upwards of forty years service as a Scout leader.

Ivy and Percy were married 64 years and for most of that time worked, as well as lived, together. Even during World War II, when Percy was in the RAF and spent much of the war preparing maintenance handbooks on aircraft, Ivy got a civilian job in the same department dealing with books on radar. She survived unharmed after being bombed out twice. They spent a total of about three years in America as well as travelling much of the rest of the world, mixing work and pleasure.

We are thankful for Ivy's connection with the IGKT and that she had a happy and successful life for 85 of her 90 years.

How to make.... Animals

by Willeke van der Ham

Once on a dance holiday I was asked, could I make a maggot? The people had seen me making dragonflies, and non-animal keyfobs. After they explained to me that a maggot is a folk dance, a whimsical fancy as well as a wormlike animal, I did try and got something they found good enough. So we could give Albert a dance as well as a souvenir of it.

The next week I tried a dragon, and though not perfect, it looked well enough to be recognised as such. Later that same travel I have made butterflies too. Everything with just the string I had at hand at the time, some of it nice to work with, some not as good and some just usable.

If you look at animals you will see that most have one thing in common, a spine, or long narrow body. So when you plan to make an animal, start with thinking how to make the spine. Then add a head, then legs, wings and the like and last but not least how to make the size and shape of the body.

For simple animals a button knot head and a plait body will do.

The maggot was nothing but a round four-lead braid made out of one string, the ends worked into a two-strand diamond knot, the lanyard knot, once doubled. The ends were lost in the head.

Other often-used spines are the Portuguese sinnet, crown knotting and the other braids. Rope that is heavy enough to be used as spine is too heavy

for the finer details, but when working with mixed materials it looks great.

I tend to work in a single material, with one piece of string, but other people prefer more strands of the same, or a whole range of rope and string.

I remember having seen a swan and an elephant, both having a head, neck, body and tail made as one crown sinnet, the difference in size worked by adding more, or taking away strands of the same thin cord. (Yes, the bill of the swan and the trunk of the elephant were also part of the same sinnet, while his legs were added in such way that they looked as if they were also part of the same structure, and maybe they were.) The wings and ears had been made from the same cord in a flat structure (Cavandoly work?)

Several books give “How to’s....” of horses and lions where the mane is made by tucking strands through the spine.

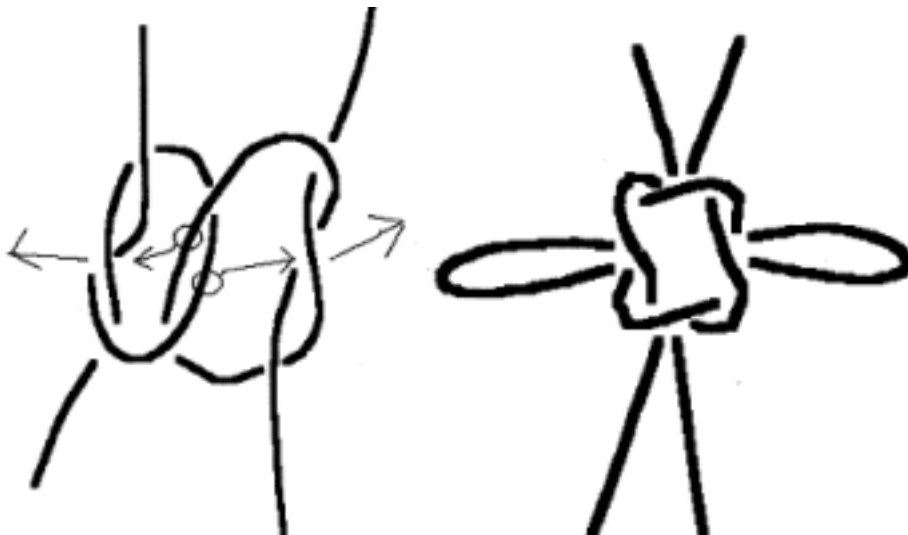
For the carapace of a turtle and the wingcase of a beetle I have seen (ocean) mats being used, while insect wings often are just indicated by their outline or are made as lace structures.

To get you working, my little dragonfly is made from one string. When working in string up to 8 mm I take 1.5 m (5 ft), thicker string needs more length.

I make a button knot in the middle of the string; a four by three Turk’s head (once doubled) is my favourite, the ends coming out in one place or as close together as you can get them. Next make

the Shamrock knot, twice. Then twist the ends into a cord, a little less than half the leftover length, and splice the rest back to the shamrock knots, forming a four ply round braid. Work the ends back

through the shamrock knots and lead them out at one side of the dragonfly (one end each knot.)



The shamrock knot, two interconnected overhand knots. Pull the bights between the parts of the other knot.

One Volunteer is Worth . . .

We are pleased to announce that following the advert in the last issue of *Knotting Matters* for a Guild Librarian; Gordon Perry has stepped forward and taken up the post. Gordon is well known to many members

of the Guild, and was also a former editor of your magazine.

Gordon's details are in the *Membership Handbook*, or he can be contacted by email via the Guild website on librarian@igkt.net.

*A project in the breeze..., at the occasion
and in the same convivial spirit as the
Sea Shanty Festival of L'Islet / Saint-
Jean-Port Joli / Saint-Roch-des-
Aulnaies,
the inauguration of a*
Knotting Day

For

Meeting & getting to know each other, and
presenting our talents
Exchanging our knowledge
Sharing our interests and our passions
Discovering new horizons

By

Sailors
Fishermen and woman
Lifeboatmen and women
Climbers,
Surgeons
Scouts and Guides
Ourselves ... and others

How

A day of meetings and activities:
Diverse knotting
Conferences and chat
Demonstrations
Workshops for the public
Exhibitions of tools, materials and
creations
The joy of being there ...and what else?

When

On the Saturday of the next Sea Shanty
festival, 16th August 2003

Who

You like the idea of the project?
Contact: Alain Boucher
Charlevoix, Quebec
mustela@sympatico.ca
Canada 418 665 79 07

*Un projet dans l'air du large..., dans le
cadre et l'esprit conviviaux de la fêtes
des chants de marins de L'Islet / Saint-
Jean-Port-Joli / Saint-Roch-des-
Aulnaies
instaurer une*

Journée des Nœuds

Pour

Se rencontrer, se connaître et se
reconnaître
Échanger les connaissances
Partager nos intérêts et notre passion
Découvrir de nouveaux horizons

Par

Les marins et les marines
Les pêcheurs et le pêcheuses
Les sauveteuses et les sauveteurs
Les grimpeurs et les grimpeuses
Les chirurgiennes et les chirurgiens
Les scouts et les guides
Les uns et les unes . Les autres

Comment

Une journée de rencontre et d'activités :
Nouages divers
Conférences et causeries
Démonstrations
Animation auprès du public
Expositions d'équipement, de matériaux et
de réalisations
Plaisir d'être là...Et quoi d'autre?

Quand

Le samedi de la prochaine Fête des chants
de marins, le 16 août 2003.

Qui

Le projet vous séduit?
Prenez contact: Alain Boucher
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Canada 418 665 79 07

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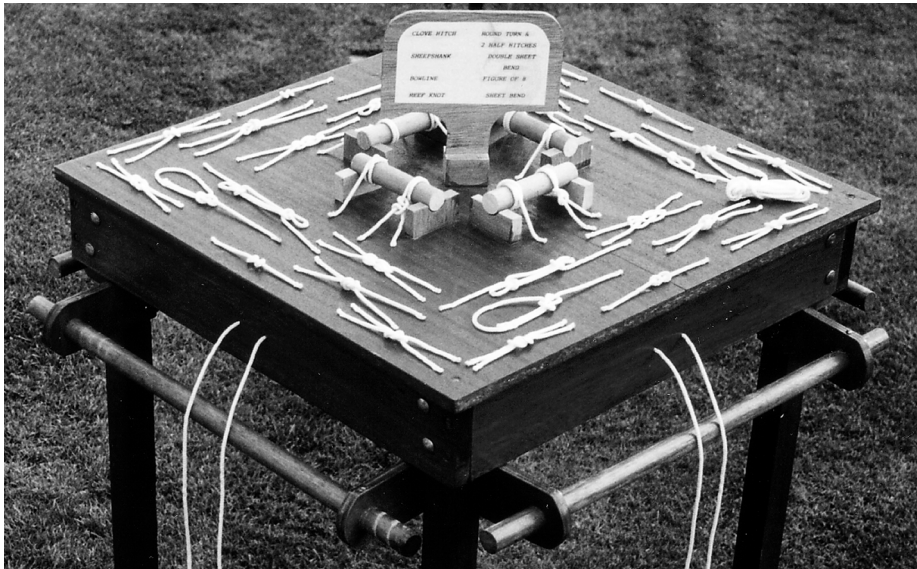
E.mail: Cords@kjkropeworks.co.uk www.kjkropeworks.co.uk/cords

Knot Table for Beginners

by Bernard Collins

Materials required

4	lengths of 3ft x 1½in x 1½in	Legs
2	lengths of 3ft x 2in x 1in	Cross Braces
2	lengths of 2ft x 4in x ¾in	Sides
2	lengths of 1ft 10½in x 4in x ¾in	Sides
1	sheet of Ply 2ft x 2ft x ¾in	Top
8	pieces of Ply 5in x 2in x ½in	Holder for dowel
4	lengths of Dowel 2ft x 1in	
1	length of 10in x 2in x ½in	cut into four equal lengths
8	bolts 2¼in x ¼in	



I made this six years ago and it has served boys and girls of ages from 10 to 16 years. Adults and Scouters also find it useful. Mostly it is made from off-cuts, but if you purchase the materials you are looking between £40 and £50.

First screw the four sides together to form a 2ft square. Attach the legs with 2½in x ¼in bolts. Prepare the eight 5in x 2in pieces by shaping them round at one end and drilling a hole to take the 1in dowel, then screw them to the inside of

the legs. Fix the 2ft piece of dowel through the holes. Screw the 2ft by 2ft piece of ply to the top. Prepare the two lengths 3ft x 2in x 1in to fit diagonally between the legs, you will need to half joint these.

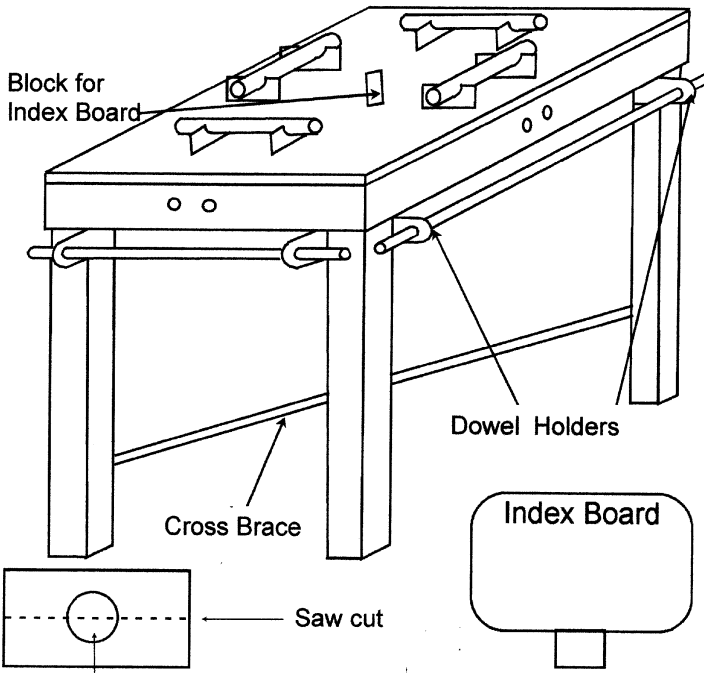
Don't put them around the outside, as this is a temptation for the youngsters to stand on them or use it as a climbing frame, pulling the table over.

Next prepare the 10in x 2in piece of wood; cut this into four 2½in pieces. In the centre of each piece drill a 1in hole, cut length-wise through each piece, forming the holders for the 4in pieces of dowel. Position these on the tabletop. The easiest way to fix the dowel is to glue the pieces in position then drill down through the cups and screw up from underneath the table into the dowels.

Next cut out a block 1½in x 1½in, make a slot length-wise ½in deep to take the index board. Glue and screw this block diagonally in the centre of the block. Take a piece of ¼in ply 7½in x 6½in and shape it with a tail to fit the block. Print out the names of knots and glue them to the board, treating both sides the same.

Drill two holes midway in the four sides, two inches apart, and thread through six feet of cord for boys to carry out their knotting practice.

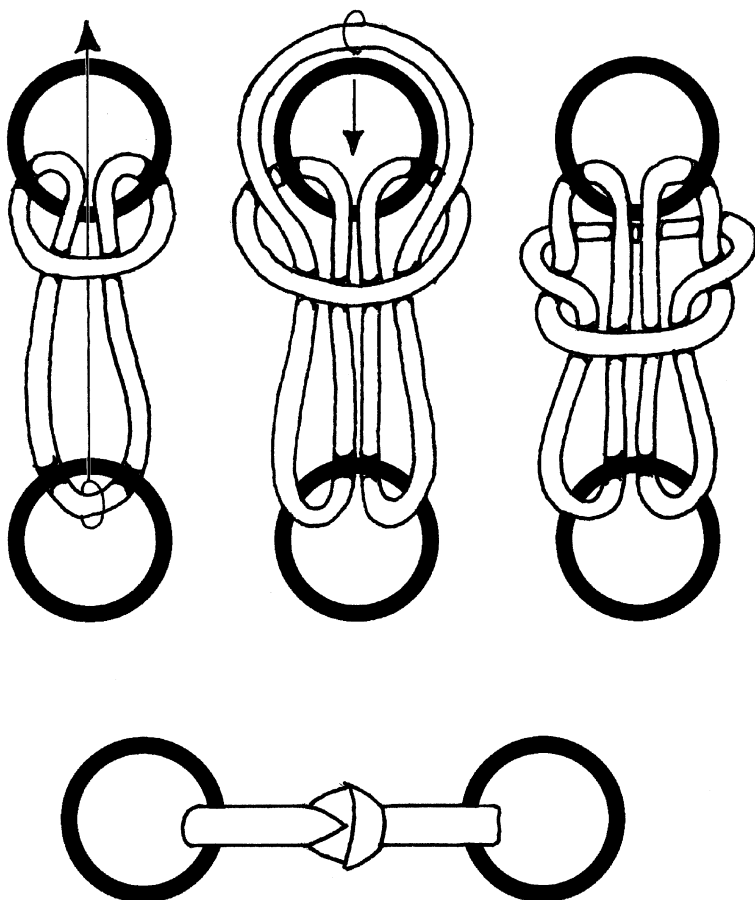
Suggestions of knots for beginners are, reef knot, figure-of-eight, sheet bend, bowline, sheepshank, double sheet bend, clove hitch, round turn and two half-hitches.



A Touch of the Irish

by Joe McNicholas

Here are two knots that may interest members of the Guild. I call them the *Irish Hitch* and the *Irish Bowline*.



Irish Hitch

I use this knot to tie a tag to a bag when travelling. When tied in tape, the knot is flat and symmetrical and can be used to attach two rings with webbing. This knot may also have uses for crane slings, and is similar to *Asher's Equaliser* (KM 4).

1. Make a cow hitch (ring hitch) around a ring.
2. Connect a second ring by passing through the middle of the ring.
3. Tuck the webbing under the cow hitch.
4. Pass the end over the first ring to complete the knot.
5. The resultant knot is flat and symmetrical.

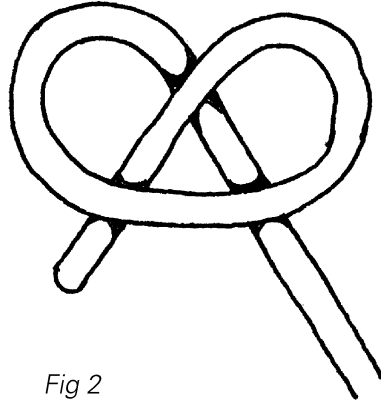


Fig 2

Irish Bowline

This symmetrical knot looks like a shamrock and is very secure.

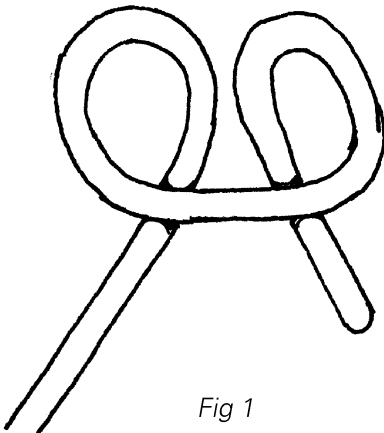


Fig 1

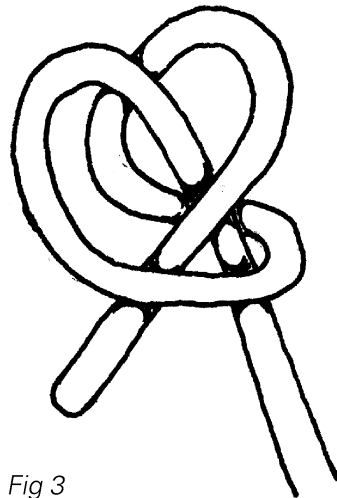


Fig 3

The Cost of Old Rope

by Richard Hopkins

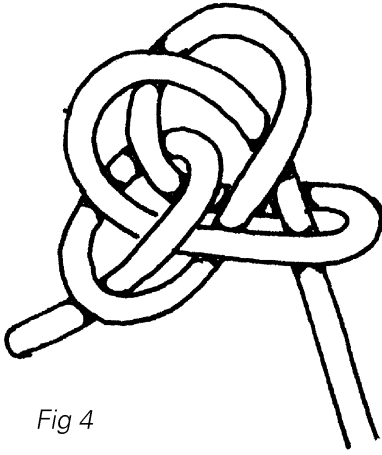


Fig 4

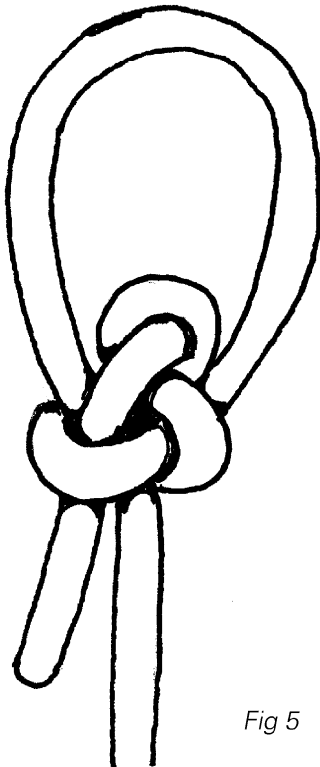


Fig 5

On 6th March 1777, a man called James Hill appeared before the court at Winchester.

He was a painter and a not very efficient saboteur who had been bribed by the American ambassador to France to create as much havoc as possible in British dockyards. Fires were lit in the dockyards at Portsmouth and in Bristol, and the authorities were certain from the clues that they had been started by the same man.

“Jack the Painter” was soon caught and dealt with in the simple methods of the time (also involving a length of rope).

The record of his court appearance gives us a clear idea of the cost of rope in the late 18th Century. The charge was that he “did maliciously set on fire and burn in the rope-house, twenty tons of hemp, of the value of £100, ten cable ropes, each one hundred fathoms in length, and valued at £80, and six tons weight of cordage valued at £200, besides damage beyond compare to the dockyard”.

This gives us hemp, presumably in the raw state at £5 per ton but when made into cordage (not described in detail) it then was worth £33 per ton.

I wonder how much this amount of natural fibre rope would cost today?

Details from *Espionage* by Graham Kerr, Batsford, 1974.

Pulling up Stakes

On Monday 6th August, 2002 the *Dallas Morning News* front page proclaimed “DMA to dismantle its signature sculpture” above a photo of the Stake Hitch sculpture.

Stake Hitch is the work of renowned artist Claes Oldenburg and his wife, Coosje van Bruggen. Oldenburg and van Bruggen are noted for their extraordinarily sized sculptures of ordinary objects. This sculpture depicts a much larger than life rope tied off to a monumentally large stake in the floor. The stake is said to extend some twelve and a half feet below the floor of the museum gallery. The line then climbs upward at an angle for some 53 feet to the 40 foot ceiling of the Barrel Vault gallery of the Dallas Museum of Art.



The rope itself is 20 inches in diameter and the stake extends 15 feet above the floor.

The magnitude is hard to grasp unless you have stood at the stake looking toward the ceiling. The rope itself ascends with the lay of the line taking on the appearance of a whirlwind swirling skyward. It is certainly much grander than any hitch I have tied to a tent stake or canoe.

A myriad of images comes to mind in viewing this work. Some people are reminded of the lines holding a circus tent, others recall the cowboy and his rope, and others even see it as a line anchoring the building to its place in Dallas. The range of interpretive views is from whimsy to philosophy but no matter how you see it, you certainly cannot forget it.

When I first saw the work more than a decade ago, I had not yet begun my interest in knotting. I simply marveled at its size and simplicity. Since then I have learned a few knots and appreciate this one even more.

The decision to put the work into storage came as a surprise when the DMA board announcement was made. The work has stood as the anchor point (no pun intended) of Barrel Vault gallery and the Dallas Museum of Art since the museum opened in 1984.

DMA says that the move is a temporary one to allow the display of other large works, which are only possible in a gallery of this size. When

will the Stake Hitch see the light of day again? Well the DMA says they intend to return the work to its original location before the end of the decade.

While there have been protests to the decision, it seemed like little hope exists for a reprieve. With that in mind I took a quick trip down to the museum to get a last look.

When I arrived at the museum on the Thursday the scaffolding was already in place for the removal and it was clear that the fate of the work was sealed. As I looked into the barricaded gallery the Stake Hitch looked even larger than I remembered as I saw it in its temporary frame of scaffolding. It was time to unhitch and move on.



Oh yes, there is one final note. What is the knot? It is a slipped half-hitch, which after 26 years is being untied.

I apologise for the omission of the authors name with this article. The truth of the matter is I have lost it! If the author would like to contact me, I will ensure the credit goes where it is due - Ed.

Knotmaster

Series

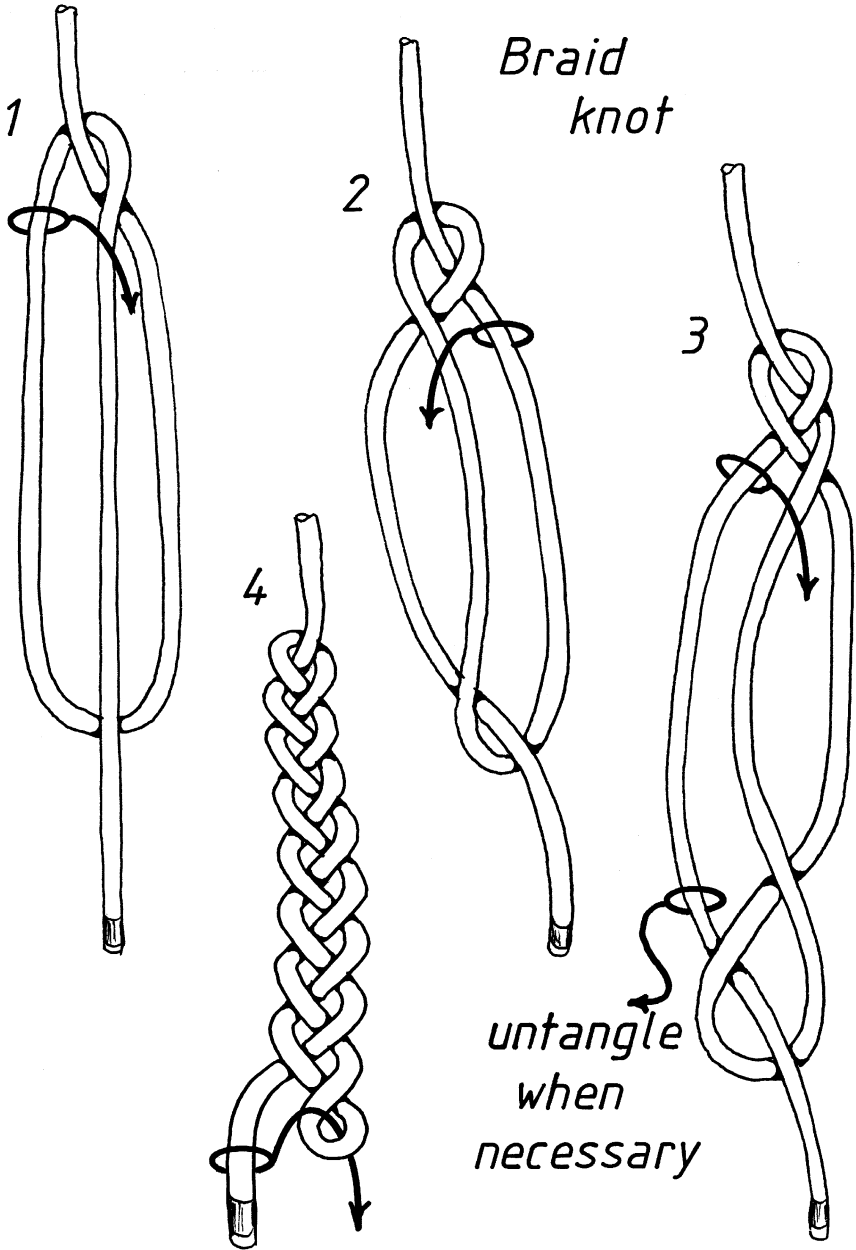
No. 15

*“Knotting ventured -
knotting gained”*

Braid knot

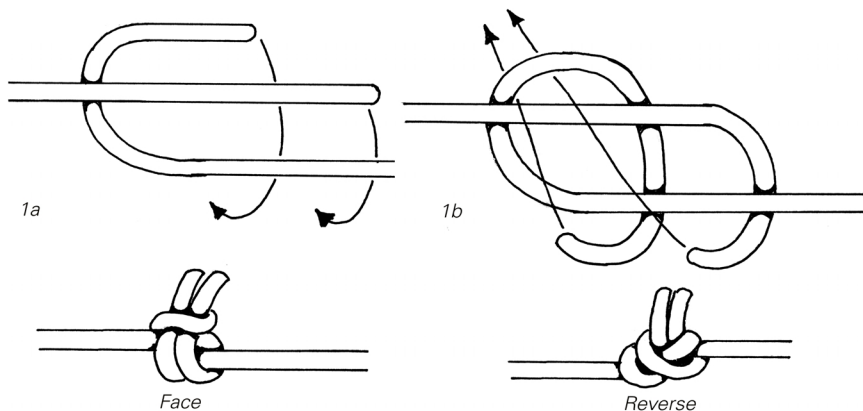
Use this knot to replicate a three-strand pigtail plait in a single cord, as a makeshift handle on a suitcase (or dinghy dagger plate), to shorten an overlong church bell-rope, or to embellish a lanyard or waist-tie of any kind.

From the starting layout, simply bring each left and right-hand strand in turn alternately over to replace the existing middle strand (fig's 1-2). Observe how a loose mirror-image of these movements is also created at the bottom of the plait; this must be removed at intervals by withdrawing the standing end (fig. 3). When there is no more slack remaining in the lower bight, make a final locking tuck (fig. 4).



A Family of Bends

by Owen K. Nuttall

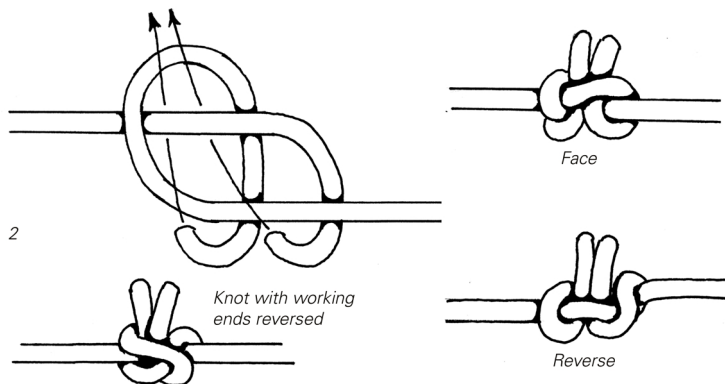


1. Tom Thumb Knot

A simple knot tied in string, very similar to the basic thumb knot (which is the only bend where the two working ends lay parallel on one side and the bulk of the knot is topside).

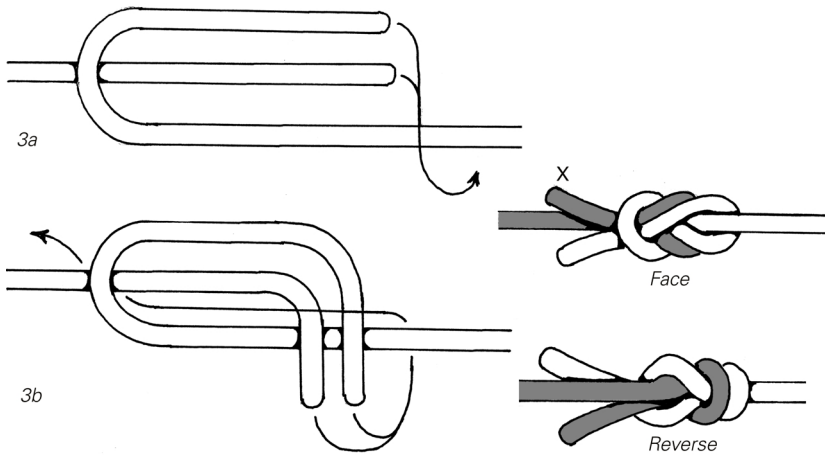
2. Thumbelina Bend

This is a tucked version of the one above suitable for tying two ends of string or small cord.



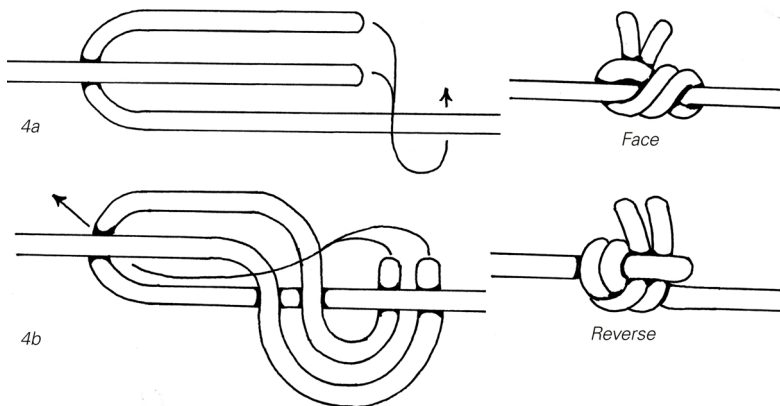
3. Three-Two-One Bend

A strong secure knot that I use often, similar to the tucked sheet bend, but is more streamlined when pulled up tight. The three-two-one bend is a good bend for joining ropes or cord together of different diameters. This knot is at its best when tying a monkey's fist to a hawser, with a three to four metre length between the tail end of a monkey's fist throwing line and the hawser. (A simple knot to tie to an eye spliced loop) making it more comfortable on the hands when hauling up a steep harbour wall.



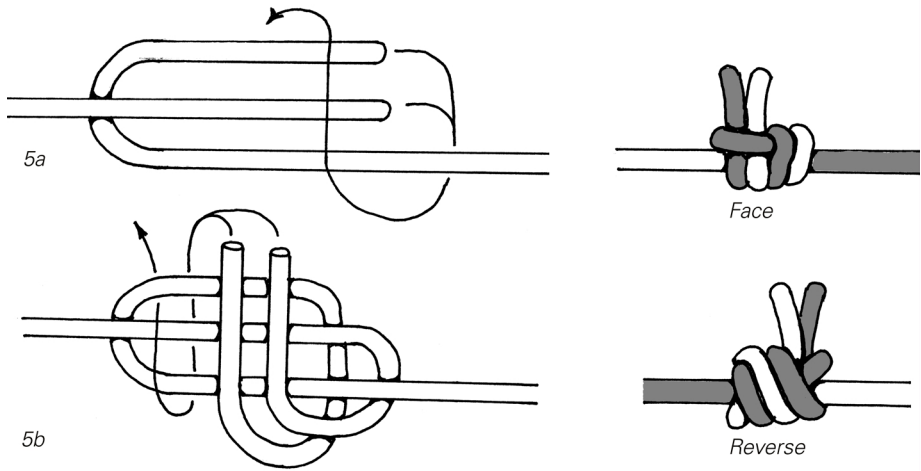
4. Sidehand Bend

A secure bend tied in rope.



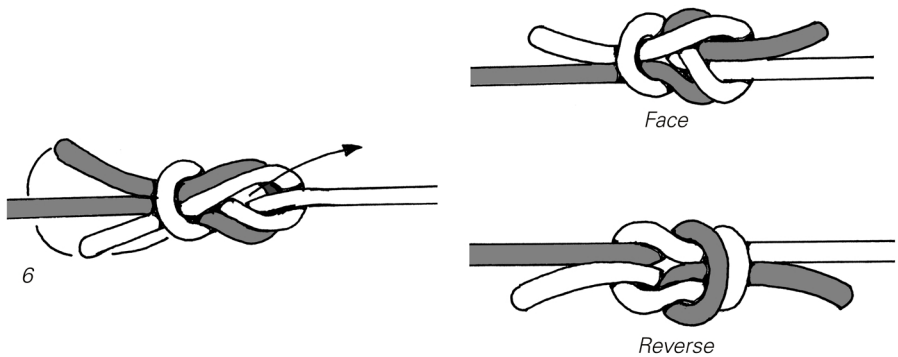
5. Holdfast Bend

As it is named, a secure bend in ropes of equal diameter.



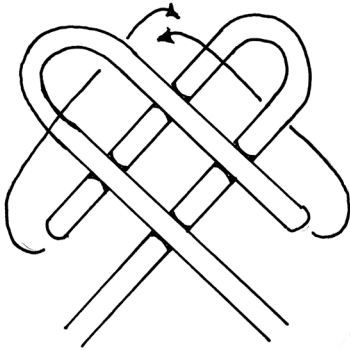
6. Tommy Tucker Bend

This is the three-two-one bend taken a stage further. (the x of fig. 3 on the three-two-one bend is tucked up through the knot). This is a knot for tying in equal diameter ropes unlike the three-two-one.

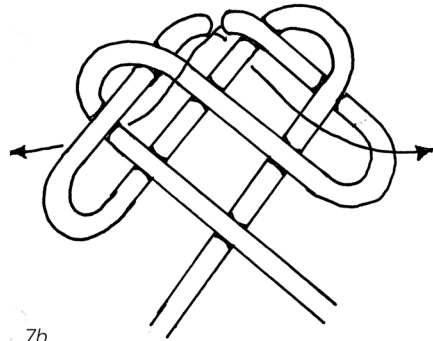


7. Pennine Bend

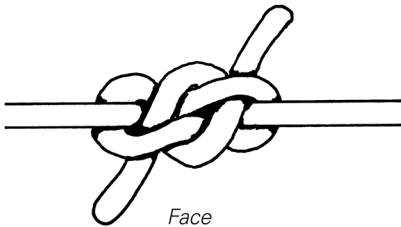
An easy knot to tie and an easy knot to untie.



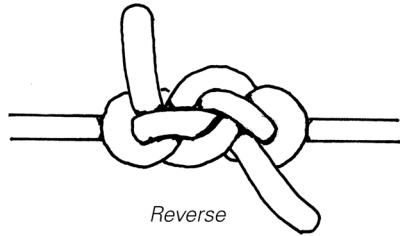
7a



7b



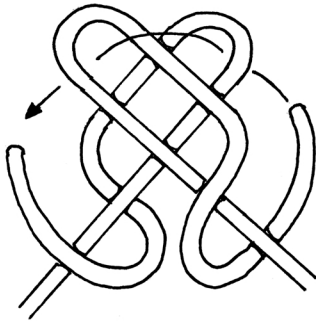
Face



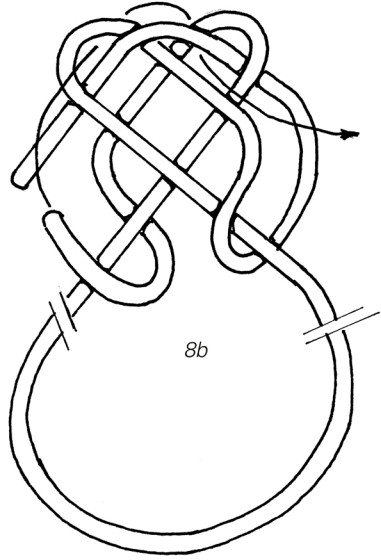
Reverse

8. Pennine Holdtight

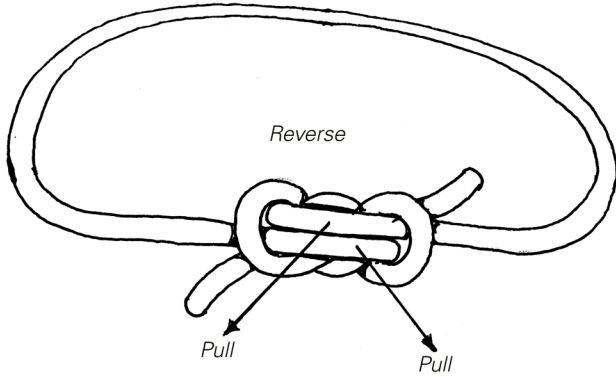
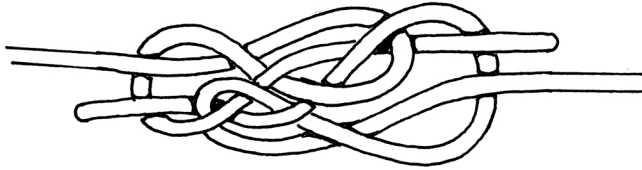
Basically the tying is similar to the tying of the Pennine bend but tied in short length of small rope or cord to form a type of jug sling knot. When the knot is tied up fairly tight (without distorting) the two marked ends pull down to form the two adjustable loops. Tighten the double loop with a see saw motion of the single loop when slipped over an object and pulled up tight, it has a vice like grip which I find useful. Another plus is that the top loop does not need tying or adjusting unlike the traditional jug sling knot.



8a

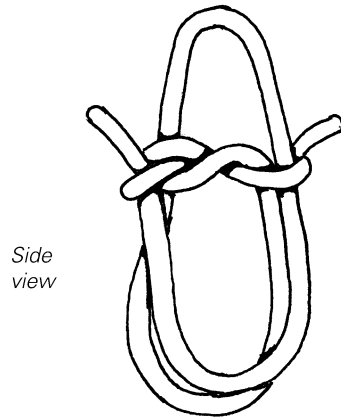
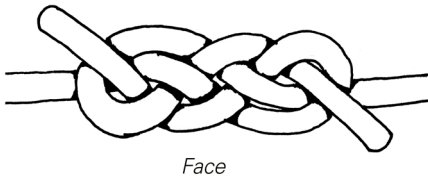
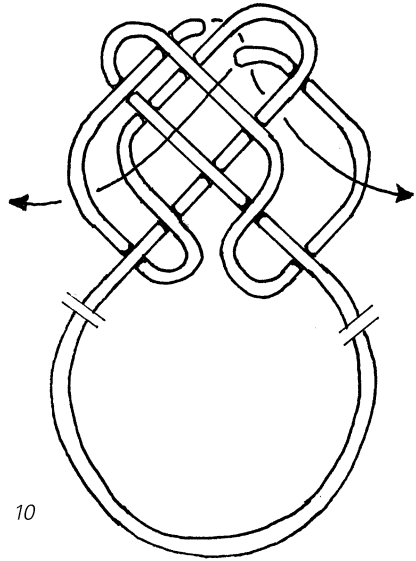
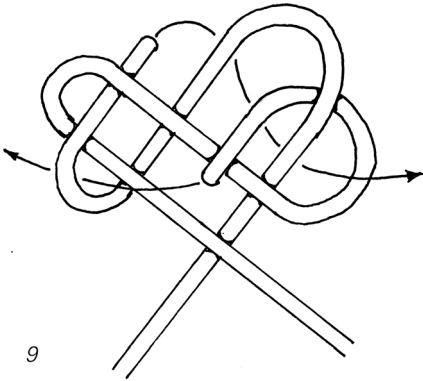


8b



9. Celtic Bend

A simple bend to tie, more decorative than useful unless the two working ends are whipped to their respective standing parts otherwise the knot will distort.



10. Celtic Holdfast

Tied similar to the Celtic bend in one piece of rope or cord and adjusted as the Pennine holdfast. This also has a vice like grip making a good jug sling type knot.

Have fun tying these ten family knots.



Knot Gallery

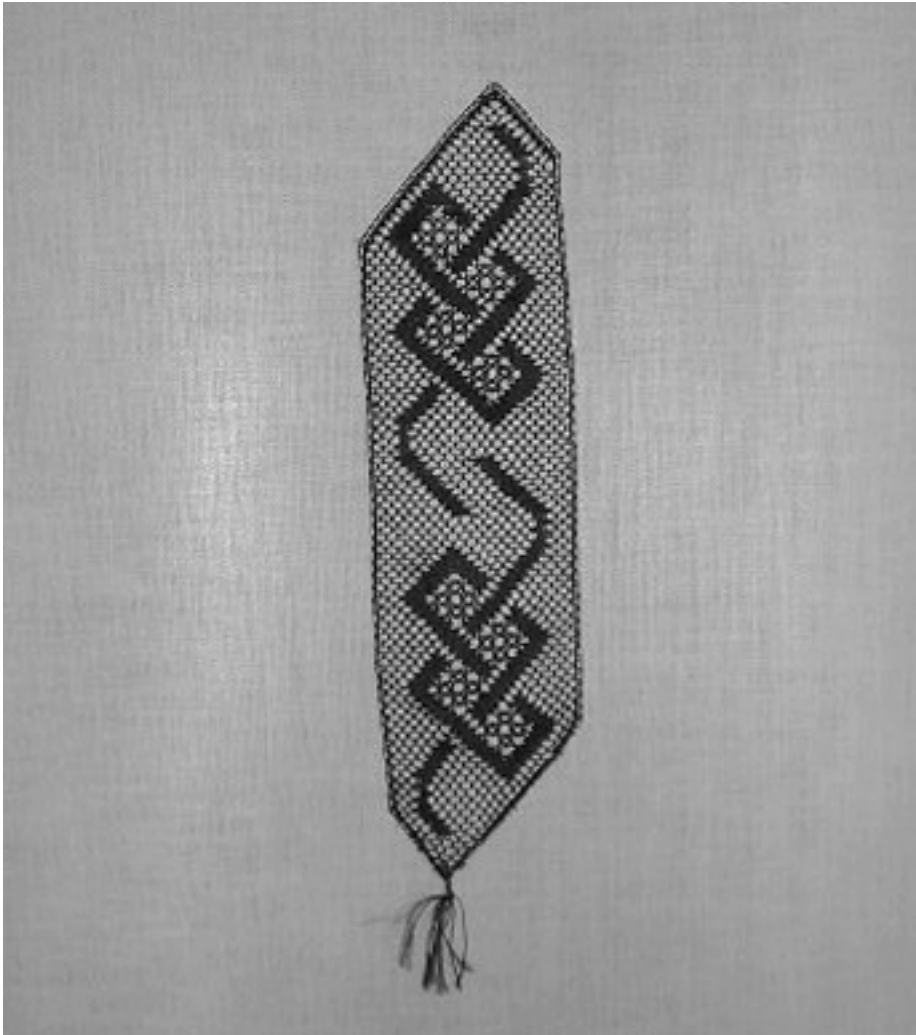


Above - Bellrope by Marty Combs, donated to the 'USCGC Cochito.'
Left - A set of reigns, part of the leather braid work of Geert "Willey" Willaert.
Overleaf - Three necklaces with button knots and African glass beads by Suzen Milodot.



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Above - More of the fine lacework by Europa Chang Dawson.

Right - "Why do they call it a 'Figure of VIII' knot, Dad?" (photo - Maurice Smith)

Overleaf - A sailor's whisk, containing the 'Bird of Paradise knot' by Joe Schmidbauer.



Bowstrings - Part II

Modern bows and longbows

by Richard Hopkins

Modern bows consist of a handle and two limbs, which can be taken down for ease of transport, and usually require a bowstring with a loop at each end. The traditional longbow is made from one piece of wood, although some American versions now employ laminated bodies, and the string only has a loop at the top and is fixed to the lower limb with a timber hitch. Compound bows stay in one piece and utilise mechanical cams to improve performance. The centre part of a compound's string is very similar to a small crossbow string, connected at each end to a cable that passes over the cams.

Examination of a bowstring reveals that it has only about two twists per inch, unlike a laid cord. The twists are sufficient to keep the strands together, but do not allow too much stretch, maintaining the strength and stability of the strung bow. The length of the string affects the degree of curvature of the bow and this can have a critical effect on performance - in addition it is very easy to break an overbraced bow (too short a string).

Provided that the string is of the correct length, fine-tuning can be carried out by putting a few extra twists in the string to adjust the length fractionally. This is of no use if the string is too long and can only be done when tuning on the

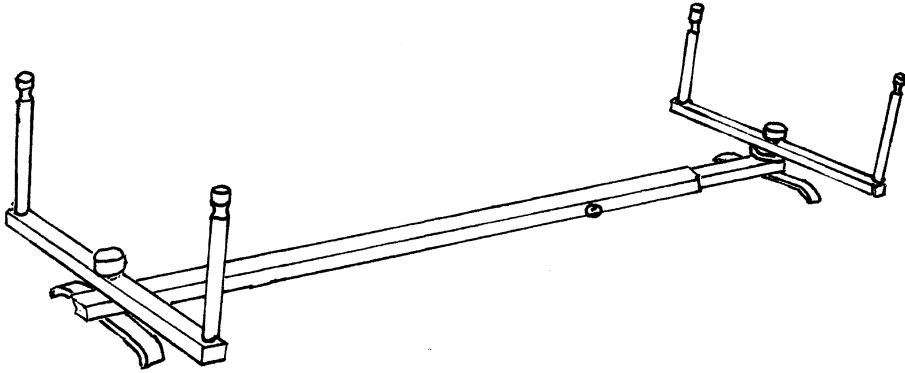
range, as it is necessary to see the effect of different variations of length on the arrow placement and flight. When all is as close to perfection as can be, waxing of the string, and rubbing in the wax with a piece of leather, holds the strands and twists in place so that the string may be removed safely and will be ready for the next time.

The first requirement when forming a bowstring with two eyes is to get the pins, around which the strands are led, to be the correct distance apart. This distance depends firstly on the size of the bow, and then on the properties of the material used, as the degree of stretch, number, strength, thickness and tensile strength of the thread affects the final dimensions.

For the professional manufacturer, producing a range of strings in increments to match bow lengths, the final result can always be sold. For the amateur, however, a degree of trial and error usually occurs until the ideal positions are found.

Strings with one eye are simpler to make, provided that they are long enough to tie the timber hitch securely.

The second requirement, as described in part one, but repeated here because of its importance, is to get an even tension



on all the strands making up the string. If one is loaded more than its fellows are, there is a likelihood of it breaking and the others will not be able to maintain their integrity. The weakness will probably cause the string to break at an embarrassing moment, and might lead to breakage of a limb of the bow. This can be highly disconcerting to the shooter and anyone else nearby. It is also potentially dangerous.

There are a number of ways of setting up the strands to make a bow but they all involve a means to get the threads to the correct length.

I shall describe two methods of making a bowstring. One, using a jig, gives a string with two eyes for modern bows. The other method produces a Flemish eye on one end of the string for the traditional longbow.

We will take the easiest method to get the string length correct for this example.

Let us assume that you have the old, worn but unbroken, string from your bow. Loosen the wing nuts on your jig and place the swivel arms in line with the central shaft. Put one eye over the furthest pin and adjust the shaft until the other eye just fits over the opposite far pin (*fig a*). Tighten your nuts and note

the distance for future reference. Remove the old string and shorten the central shaft a little. How much you shorten it depends on the trial and error mentioned earlier and the material you will be using. Note this position also for future reference.

Tie one end of the thread to the end pin and wind the thread around the jig until you have a sufficient number of strands. This will depend on the material but must be sufficient to give a strong enough string for safety and which is also thick enough to be comfortable on the fingers. Cut the thread and tie the ends together. You now have an endless loop, which you will slide gently around the pins in both directions for a few inches to help equalize the tension in the strands.

Slacken the wing nuts and rotate the short arms to a position at right angles to the main shaft (*Fig b*). The string now forms a rectangle.

Using a serving tool, apply a serving to the strands at the centre of the short arms. The length of this serving depends on the limb size of your bow and should be just over an eighth of an inch longer than the bow nock loop groove. This may be different for the top and bottom limbs. The ends of the serving are

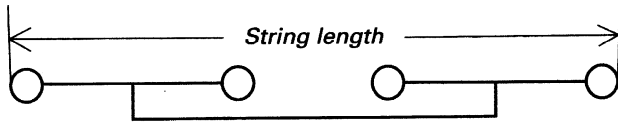


Fig a

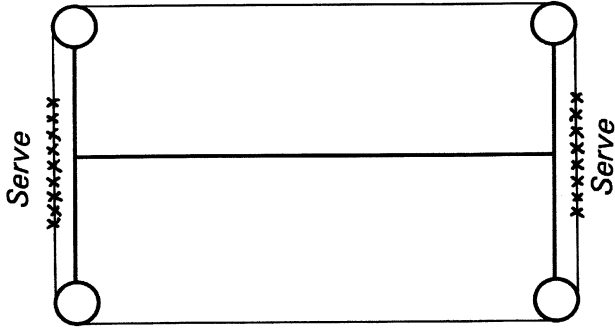


Fig b

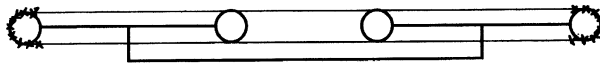


Fig c

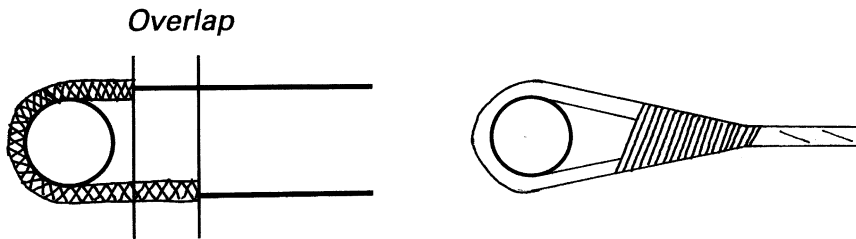


Fig d

finished off with a simple whipping. You may wish to use different colour serving thread so that the upper and lower loops can be distinguished. The top loop will need to be about 3/8 inch longer than the lower loop as it needs to be able to spread wide enough to slide down the upper limb when unbracing the bow.

Turn the arms until they are once again in line with the shaft (*Fig c*). Slide the string around the pins until the served portions are centred on the outermost pins. Now slide a little more until the ends of the served portion overlap by about an eighth of an inch. (This means at the ends of the jig.)

Starting at the overlap of the first serving, apply another serving down the length of the combined strands for about four inches and finish off as before (*Fig d*). Do this at both ends.

Using your old string as a guide, apply a serving of about four or five inches to the middle of the string. This will not be central; two thirds of the serving will be on the lower half of the string and the remainder on the upper section. This serving takes the strain and wear of the fingers when shooting. This step is probably best carried out when the string is actually fixed on the bow and more precise positioning will then be possible. A gauge is available from archery suppliers to assist in positioning the serving and to give guidance in locating the nocking point but it is not essential.

Rubbing the string with beeswax and then with a bit of clean thick leather, to melt the wax through friction, completes the process, but it is worth putting in a few twists when the string is on the bow and re-rubbing the wax to hold all together. If you don't use leather you will burn your fingers.

Apart from positioning the nocking point, which enables the back of the arrow to be placed in the same place every time, the string is ready to shoot. There are several different ways to fix a nocking point and each archer has to learn to do this for his or her self. The simplest way is to build up two little lumps of thread or dental floss in the correct position. This is part of tuning the bow and not within the scope of this article.

To produce a Flemish eye in a length of cord is a very old technique, as might be expected for such an old weapon, and will not be a revelation to most knotters, but I am including it to complete the story of bowstrings.

We start, as before, in getting a series of strands of the correct length. This can be done by looping the thread over hooks on the wall, or by using a board with pegs or nails in the proper places.

If making a single Flemish eye there is more scope for playing with the length, but for a two-eyed bowstring the dimensions must be more precise.

I shall only describe the single eye cord, as making the second eye involves the same process and it is only a case of how to sort out sizes.

Assume that we are making a string requiring twelve strands of Dacron. The strands should be about fifteen inches longer than the finished string would be.

Separate the strands into three bundles of four, and hank them, leaving a long end on each of about 18 inches which you wax. Some authorities now add further tapered strands of about 12 inches to this part of each hank in order to reinforce the loop. This could also be done when using the jig described earlier, and was no doubt helpful in

extending string life when using linen thread. It is not so vital with modern materials. Using different coloured strands may be of assistance later.

You can also taper the eye by cutting your main strands to different lengths.

Hold all three hanks in one hand, usually the left if you are right handed, with the waxed ends together and pointing in the same direction, either away from you or to the right.

With the other hand, reach for the strand furthest away from that hand. Grasp the strand between thumb and first finger about an inch from the end, and twist it strongly away from you until you feel it tighten. Now pull it towards you, over the other two skeins and hold it in place with the left thumb. Repeat this process with the next strand, and again with the third strand. Don't lift your left thumb to see what has happened. Continue this process, twisting hard and keeping the skeins in the same order as you twist, lift, and pull. Make sure all the twists are the same way.

Very soon you will find that you have created a small three strand laid cord, or small rope. The wax will help the strands to stay in place. The short cord is made long enough to fit around the bow nock, perhaps three inches or between 12 and 16 twists.

Unwind a little more from each hank. Bend the cord around your thumb so that



the ends of the roped section are level. There will now be three short waxed strands going to the ends, and three longer ones from the hanks, side by side. Arrange them so that each short strand is lying alongside a long one, preferably from a different hank. The last inch of the short strands is probably not twisted so should lie comfortably with the long strands. Wax these pairs together to form a loop with three strands. Laying in different coloured telltale or reinforcement threads for each hank at the start of the loop would make it easier to ensure that the short and long strands are from different skeins. It would not be possible to remove the colours afterwards.



Holding the three strands as previously, continue twisting exactly as you did before, ensuring that you maintain the direction of twist and an even tension.

If the short strands have been cut a little to stagger the ends, you will find that you have made a beautifully tapered Flemish eye. Do not take the cording too far down the bowstring. A taper actually improves the strength of the eye and looks good.

Go to the other end of the string and repeat the cording process, but this time do not make a loop but just a short cord of eight to 10 inches, which will make tying the timber hitch much easier and



safer. Once again, the exact length depends on the finished dimensions. The bowstring will probably be a little too long, but can be trimmed to size if necessary, after adjusting the timber hitch. Too short a string would have to be thrown away or used on a smaller bow.

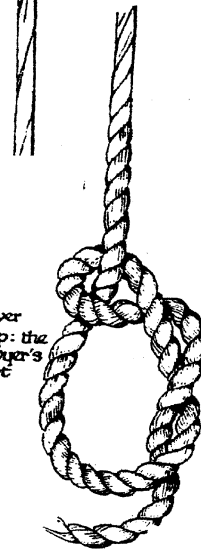
With the eye hooked over a peg or nail, introduce a few twists into the body of the bowstring and rub with wax and leather to set the string.

This bowstring will still require a central serving and nocking point where the fingers and arrow touch it, but this will be done on the bow when the bracing height has been adjusted with the timber hitch.

A perfectly shootable string may be made if only two groups of strands are twisted into an eye, but does not look as attractive as a three-stranded eye.

I would like to conclude with a comment that I used to tell people when instructing in archery - Any idiot can shoot an arrow from a bow, but to get it to go where you intend requires attention to detail, concentration and practice. Making a bowstring also requires these qualities to ensure that you make a safe product that will give consistent performance for shot after shot.

While the above has touched on a little



history and covered the general

principles of bowstring making, there are bound to be many details that have been left out through ignorance, error, laziness or my stupidity. For this, I apologize.

Should you decide to make a bowstring yourself, I can only recommend that first you take up archery, under proper instruction, then any points which you have not fully understood will become immediately obvious. Making a bowstring if you are not an archer is a relatively pointless exercise, as you will never know if the product is effective, and there is no scope for ornamental work.

I consulted many books on archery when preparing this article but my principle references were:

The Traditional Archer's Handbook by Hilary Greenland 1996, ISBN 0 9524627

The Archer's Craft by Adrian Eliot Hodgkin 1951 reprint 1995, ISBN 1 897853 80 7

The Longbowstringmakers by H.D. Soar. Article in *Instinctive Archer Magazine* Summer 1997

Bowhunter's Digest 1974

Archer's Digest 1971

A Glossary of the construction, decoration and use of arms and armour. G C Stone 1934.

A Guide to the Crossbow W.F.Patterson



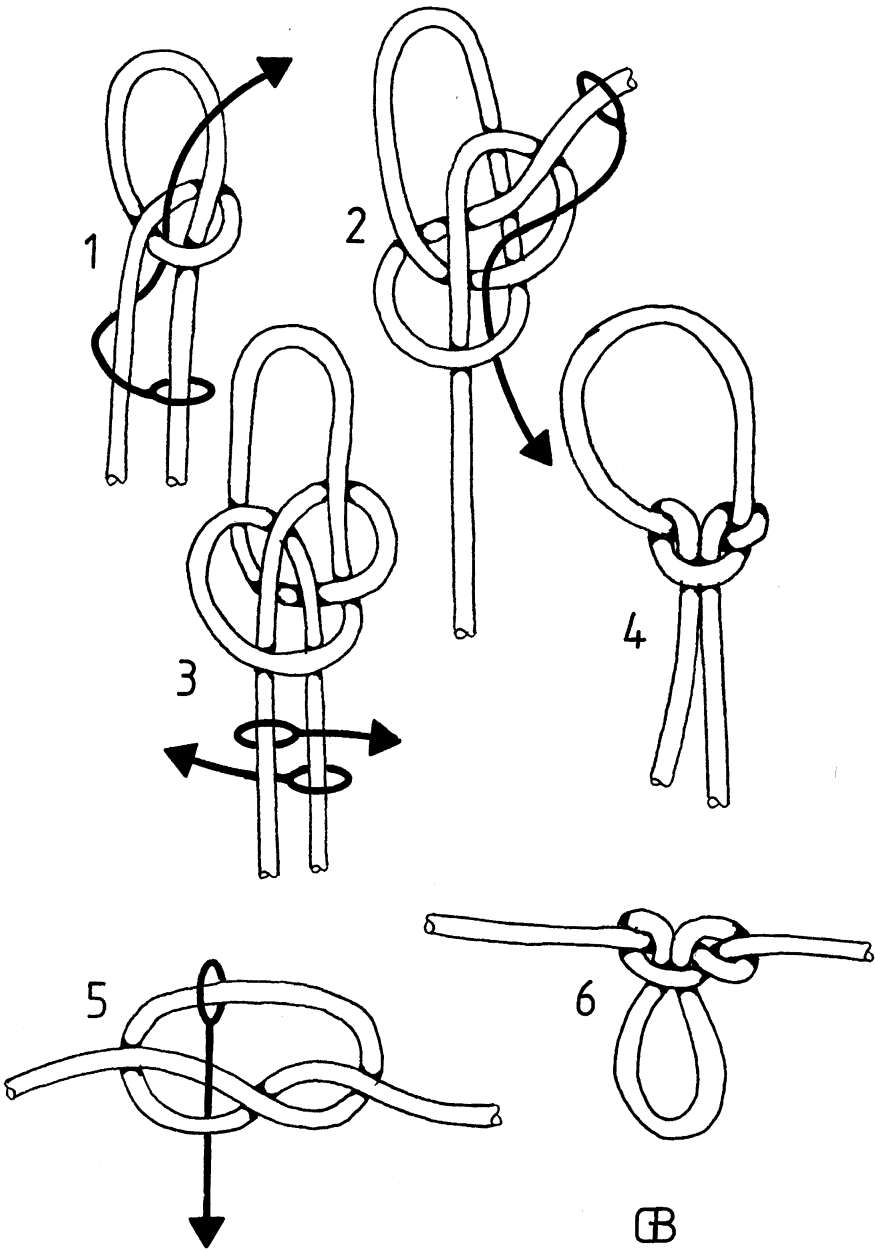
The Sandy Douglass Knot

reported by
Geoffrey Budworth

After a recent dive into my copious files, I surfaced clutching a single page from the May 1963 issue of what appears to be a magazine (name missing) for yachties. It is headed GADGETS & GILHICKIES, with the byline Ham deFontaine ... a couple of clues that may enable someone to identify the journal in question.

The written article opens with fulsome praise for the invention of a knot (see my illustrations 1 - 4) by 'the outstanding racing helmsman Gordon "Sandy" Douglass', who - we are told - used this knot to attach twin jib leads to the clew of his jib sail; and which he 'untied 'with no effort, after it had been in use for a full season'. The columnist adds, although *KM* readers may disagree, that this knot is 'a member of the bowline family'

So, there it is, the so-called Sandy Douglass knot. Observe its similarity to the neglected manharness knot or artilleryman's loop (fig's 5 and 6) which was once recommended by the British Army and the Boy Scout Association for hauling their field guns and trek carts, and - unlike the Douglass variant - could be handily tied in the bight. This is surely another instance of the parsimony principal (Cy Canute - *KM* 68 - September 2000), which proposes that knotted configurations recur in different guises.



Identity Card Necklaces

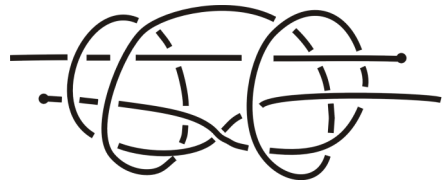
by Dick Clements

Our esteemed secretary, in his “Notes from the Secretary’s Blotter” (KM 75), describes how he has replaced the utilitarian chain provided by his employer to suspend his identity card with a more decorative item. I, like him, have an identity card to display when on my employer’s premises. The chains provided to suspend the cards round our necks have proved to be of poor quality, frequently breaking and needing to be replaced. But our Safety Officer has pointed out that this is deliberate - the chains are designed to break under a modest tension in order to protect the wearer from injury if the chain should get trapped in machinery or caught on, for instance, a door or cupboard handle. Further, a strong chain could be used by an attacker as a fortuitous garrote, so again the identity card chains are designed to break to avoid such a possibility (hopefully, for most of us, remote but nevertheless real).

Now, with modern man-made fibres, even relatively thin cord has too high a breaking strain to be truly safe for an identity card necklace. So, if one wishes to replace the utilitarian chain with a more decorative substitute, a weak link or some other release mechanism must be designed in. The two possibilities which immediately occur to me are

- 1) to include in the necklace a length of some weaker material, or
- 2) to complete the necklace with some form of knot which will normally grip sufficiently to keep the identity card secure but which will, under higher tension, give way in some fashion (unravel or otherwise allow the two ends to part).

To me, the most obvious solution of the second type is to complete the necklace with a modified form of the well-known double fisherman’s knot (see Pawson, Owen or Budworth). If the knot is tied in one end only and pulled sufficiently tight it will grip the other end sufficiently for normal purposes but a firm pull will cause the unknotted end to slip out of the knot. Of course the number of turns can be increased from two to three or four or even more to improve the grip. My brief experimentation suggests that three turns is normally sufficient in a braided nylon cord (see diagram). It is also important that, if the end of the cord which is intended to slip through the knot is heat sealed, then the sealing is done carefully in such a way that the sealed end will not snag but will slide smoothly through the knot.



But this is a challenge which I know that the members of the IGKT will take up with enthusiasm. There are, I am sure, much better solutions to this problem using one or other of the principles I have suggested above, or maybe other mechanisms which I have neglected. Perhaps other members would like to suggest some more decorative and more inventive ideas.

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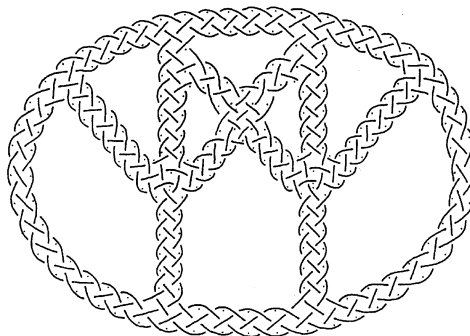
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And being a Part of The Guild,
As I hope, With Favor, You look
On the Total Knotcraft You Build.

Skip Pennock



Portrait of a Branch - West Country Branch (UK)

by Vernon Hughes

The first of our founding fathers was Chris Oliver who came away from the October 1991 IGKT meeting with approval to sound out interest in forming a branch serving the Bristol Channel and West Country area. He wrote to all potential members on 4th January 1992, and although that initiative did not succeed it opened hearts and minds to the concept.

Roger Starr (founding Chairman) and Les Baker (founding Secretary/Treasurer) made renewed efforts the following year and brought the Branch into existence despite a faltering start. They both put their backs into it but Les deserves a particular mention and great credit! He claimed (and no one argued) that his administrative skill far outweighed his knotting ability, and the records of all his work bear out the claim.

Amongst all the superb documentation of every detail was a draft constitution, so good that it was adopted as a model by the IGKT Executive Council. It included the concept of associate membership open to people interested in knotting but not yet ready to join the Guild proper. Curiously, Les gave up IGKT membership altogether once we were established and functioning efficiently.

The number of members stands now at 20, but fluctuates. Of these, about a

dozen or so can be found at our Branch meetings held on the last Saturday afternoon of every odd numbered month. Our catchment area covers the former Avon district including the cities of Bath and Bristol plus the counties of Somerset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire. The branch has also attracted members from Devon, South Wales and Staffordshire though, and this encourages us to feel that the friendly spirit and varied programme that we aim to offer have brought their own reward.

Last year we awarded Dennis (Spud) Murphy of Plymouth, Honorary Life Membership (complete with certificate) in recognition of his enormous contribution to Branch and Guild over the years.

Meetings; after trying out a rotational programme initially in different locations we soon settled on just one - the Almondsbury Scout Headquarters on the A38 north of Bristol. This gives a fairly convenient location across a quite wide-ranging geographical area (as measured by UK concepts of distance), at which visitors will always be welcome!

The early records have been preserved immaculately. For example, the original questionnaires that were completed by interested IGKT members in the area, in the run-up to the inaugural meeting on

25th September 1993, are held neatly in a transparent sleeve and give the impression that they were filled in yesterday. There is also a typed summary of all the main answers and associated comments, and one or two of these have particular continuing relevance today for the IGKT at large and not just at our local level. In summary one of these focussed on the essentiality of attracting newcomers to knotting and pointed out the long-term dangers in failing to achieve this objective. Another dealt with the need for quality and discipline in the teaching process in the face of enormous demands on people's time from competing attractions and the general decline in interest in craft work. The need to have a well-ordered supply of demonstration (and roadshow) material was also mentioned.

At our six club afternoons per year we have a mix of in-house teaching, learning and discussion sessions and 'illustrious visitor' days. Richard Hopkins makes virtually all the arrangements for the latter activity, having by far the closest liaison with a wide-ranging array of contacts. Many of the top names in the Guild have been our valued visitors but rather than try to list them all I will mention just one - our so very highly respected President, Brian Field! The range of high quality display material grows steadily and includes Jumper Collins' work/teaching table, an increasing number of 'hinged double-drawer' display cabinets, Dave Pusill's display unit, Richard Hopkins' six-knot challenge, my solid sinnet table and much work by them and a range of other members including Tug Shipp, Eddie Maidment, Gordon Court, Fred Venn etc. Over the year our specialists get to a

wide range of events across the area and show the flag for hours on end. We have to admit that the 'new recruit' level is not high but the enthusiasts keep on responding to the challenge. As reported earlier in KM we were the fortunate recipients of one new member (Ken Bird) who learned of our existence when a quote from KM was used on the *Have I Got News For You?* TV programme. Whilst TV is in mind, most of you will be well aware by now of Richard's contribution to the chariot reconstruction episode in the *Meet the Ancestors* series.

Looking ahead a major forthcoming event here will be to host the IGKT AGM at Weston-Super-Mare in 2003. At the time of writing I have just judged the entries in a challenge issued to the members six months ago. If the photographs come out well I will send one to Editor with a short article.

Now, rather abruptly, I will draw to a close in order to avoid giving Editor too great a challenge in accommodating this piece. All members please be assured though that if and when you are in the area at the right time, there will always be a warm welcome at our Branch meetings. If you would like to come and give a demonstration or talk we should be very pleased to hear from you!

ROPE ENDS

"I've always thought that the Turk's Head's beauty, range of usefulness and elegant mathematical underpinnings qualified it as a miraculous knot."

*Brion Toss,
The Rigger's Apprentice -
1984*

Branch Lines

Essex Branch

These friendly gatherings - arranged for 10 years now by Don Woods - are a rare chance to relax and chat with other Guild members. As if that was not enough, they are held in the National Motorboat Museum located in Wat Tyler Country Park, at Pitsea (near Basildon), where we can roam freely around the unique collection of vintage racing and recreational craft on display, also browse in the museum's library of boating books and manuals, and hear behind-the-scenes anecdotes from Julie (the curator) who knows us well.

The latest session, held on Sunday 8th September 2002, was attended by regulars Terry Barns, Geoffrey Budworth, Europa Chang, Brian Field (IGKT President), Don Woods and Jeff Wyatt (IGKT President-elect). Notable guests were John Fisher (President of the New Zealand chapter) and his wife Carolyn who has won a teaching job at an Essex secondary school here in the UK. John will be working on the running rigging of the replica *Golden Hinde*, in her south London dock alongside the River Thames, and perhaps later aboard the *Endeavour* lying at Whitby on the east coast.

Terry demonstrated a pair of pliers incorporating a Stanley knife blade that, with a single squeeze, could sever a single monofilament or a six inch circumference hawser. Jeff applied 'Butane whippings' with a miniature blow torch, the size of a disposable cigarette lighter, the roaring blue spike of a flame generating 1200 Celsius. John showed us a rigger's short splice. Brian explained how the regular knot tree chart made sense of enlarging the Turk's head; and we concluded with an informal workshop involving everyone in tying the Spanish ring knot.

The meeting ended all too soon, but we look forward to seeing the same faces - and anyone else who can make it - at our next session on Sunday 9 March 200

(Assemble from 12 noon, for a 1 p.m. start. The meeting will end at around 4 p.m. Bring a packed lunch and cold drinks, if required. Tea and coffee are provided.)

South East Stringer

West Yorkshire Branch

Our stall at Huddersfield National Canal Boat Festival over the August Bank Holiday weekend was one of our best to date. We started off with some trepidation as to whether we could staff such a big event and set out to do it. Our long term planning called in Dave and Ann Walker from Chester and Norman and Lesley Cockburn from New Marske and it just snowballed from there. Ken Nelson took charge of the bookings and we put the word around that we needed help. Ian Schofield came up from the Surrey Branch and we mobilised our

regular display team of Graham and Christina Smith, Tim Field my wife Sheila and myself, we also had Owen Nuttall come and join us for the weekend.

We had a bit of a problem because the organisers decided to put the open days on Friday as well as Saturday, Sunday and Monday and we were all working on Friday. Ken Nelson sorted out this by doing Friday, helped out by his grandsons Liam and Adam, who are both members of the Guild.

We went along on Thursday evening to set the stand up, with a pioneering structure alongside, made of poles lashed together with string and a canvas cover, to accommodate the “Wild-on-water” base that we were to run for the young people attending the event, and we were set to go. Graham managed to get a half-day off on Friday so he was able to go and help Ken.

The whole thing seemed to go perfectly, Tim, Graham and Ian did sterling work on the “Wild-on-water” base teaching young people to tie knots and have fun with them. Dave Walker had a lot of interest shown in his fender making, and the ropewalk created quite a lot of interest.

The ladies helped enormously by watching the stall and referring questions to knotters. They also kept us supplied with drinks, as dehydration can be a problem at these events. It was hard work and was very rewarding, we met lots of old friends and made several new ones. Having plenty of staff meant that we were able to go and see the rest of the stalls and exhibitions. We managed very well to achieve the criteria of the West Yorkshire Branch, and had fun doing knotting!

David Pearson

Pacific Americas Branch

Our last Branch meeting was attended by six of our most committed members. We enjoyed the company of three visitors to our group and we welcomed their comments and participation. Our new potential member is only 12 years old and has shown a remarkable ability to absorb and learn the art of knot tying, which attitude is most refreshing!

Charlie Bell has refined the art of cat o’ nine tails to something that can be done really inexpensively. If we were to believe that the real cat was made overnight, then the object most assuredly would not have matched any of those in display cabinets today!

It was also decided at our meeting that we would purchase a digital camera from Branch funds so that we could catalog our complete collection as well as the many events that we attend on behalf of our little group.

We gave our master rigger, Joe Soanes, a good celebration enjoyed by several of our Branch members on the occasion of his second retirement as a rigger at the young age of 82. Joe is a master rigger in the true sense of the word “master”. We enjoyed a cake and several glasses of wine and/or beer at Lindsey’s house. Later Joe’s wife, Evelyn, wrote us to say that seldom had she seen Joe surrounded by so many who shared his interests! They are both very gracious people and we memorialized the occasion with a plaque awarded to Joe by the Branch and delivered by Joe Schmidbauer to commemorate his generous giving of his time and talents to so many grateful people, who will all ensure that the craft lives on!

The latest event attended by the Branch was the Toshiba Tallships



IGKT-PAB Secretary Joe Schmidbauer is explaining for the 'nth timethat, no, this is not a stirrup, it is a sea chest handle or becket . . .

Festival in Dana Point, California, where we entertained about 30,000 people (as stated by the organizers, the Ocean Institute) over a period of two days. Our knot-tying contest was attempted by only one contestant, the others backing away when realizing just how fast our champion was! The Ocean Institute have now agreed to house part of our collection in a revolving display that will be changed from month to month, and be on display to each of the 80,000 children who take part in their programs each year.

Our display and member demonstration also took part in the Exploration Exhibition that took place in June this year at the Los Angeles County

Museum of Natural History alongside such international treasures as the story of Shackleton. We put our display in front of an estimated 2,000 people each weekend of five separate weekends. We will continue to bring the stories and demonstrations of knot-tyings to an ever-interested world where something new of something old is as welcome as a cool breeze in warm weather.

We are looking forward to seeing England again or wherever the next International Guild meeting takes place.

Lindsey Philpott

East Anglian Branch

Following a long hot summer 17 enthusiastic members and two guests gathered at the Museum of East Anglian Life at Stowmarket Suffolk our usual meeting place on a lovely early autumnal Saturday afternoon the 28th September.

Apologies for absence from our President Brian Field was accepted and Ken Hawkins of Norwich who was apparently teaching juniors at Shotley near Ipswich.

We were entertained by our associate member Irene Warner from Lowford, Essex on the relationship between knotting, knitting and netting. This was of intriguing interest. It highlighted the fact that history records that while the women folk spun and twisted twines, cords and ropes in the early communities; quite often the men did the knitting! And how 'tatting', 'crocheting' and 'macramé' methods developed over the centuries.

Our newly enrolled member Duncan Bolt of Thornham, introduced a piece of netting and a very interesting 'Poncho' type shawl cum vest that he had made, which brought forth some comical remarks. His knotting interests stem from his agricultural lifetimes work etc.

Barbara Watson our member from Terrington St. Clement, impressed us with her lovely red hand-knitted cardigan and exotic red hat to match which our senior member Des Pawson very nearly levied a licence 'copyright' fee on. It was considered that his wife Liz ought to consider buying it to compliment Des's image!

This was followed by our usual canteen break provided by Barbara Watson to whom we are continually grateful.

The second half was filled with our very own skilled craftsman from Felixstowe, Ken Higgs who kept us intrigued with his prowess on the subject of 'half-knotting' (the foundation knot of most of our craft, commonly known as the 'overhand knot') with at least two methods of tying 'Turks heads' commencing with that knot!

Our next meeting is scheduled for Saturday 12th April 2003.

Our member from East Hanningfield, Europa Chang has volunteered to talk about 'Woven Structures' followed by 'Show & Tell' and 'How to' session. Will members therefore bring along examples of their work accordingly? If you are shy about your accomplishments then just come along and learn from others!

Back to Duncan Bolt who has expressed a wish to host an extra curricular summer meeting at his residence at Thornham, Hunstanton, and provide a buffet. An event to look forward to which will make it easier for those members of North Norfolk and up into Lincolnshire to join in; but of course involve a longer journey for Suffolk and Essex members. A date has not been fixed for this 'get together' event. In as much that I am not funded by local subscriptions to mail/contact all members of Essex, Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk would they please liaise with Duncan directly with a view to setting up this extraordinary social occasion during the next six months and before our next branch meeting? His telephone number is: 01485 512508

Our continued good wishes to all members of our guild, worldwide where ever they may be!

John Halifax

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.

The Cost of Knotting

We received our copy of *Knotting Matters* in the post this morning. Over our first cup of tea we read about the meeting at the Hanover International Hotel in Bromsgrove, Worcestershire in October. After checking the prices for accommodation and food I am saddened to say that we will not be attending.

From what I have read it would seem that being a knot tyer is now an elitist hobby with meetings only to be attended by those with lots of extra cash to spare.

This is not the case in our house. We are both avid knotters, but money for us is a rare commodity to be spent on necessities such as heat, electricity and a bit of string to twiddle.

We were able to attend the 20th anniversary in Fareham because living in Dorset meant it was right on our doorstep. We even saved up a bit of cash to buy a mug each and a smock for Ben. Unfortunately, we could not afford the meal in Fareham and nor could a few others who grumbled their discontent in my ear.

This, of course, is not the first meeting that was priced out of our reach and from the look of things it won't be the last. If I remember correctly, Guildford in Surrey was another of those not so cheapies. We couldn't afford to go there either.

I'm not suggesting that we hold the meetings in a pup tent in a field and share a flask to keep costs down, but I for one do not have the money to pay £1.50 for a cup of tea. There must be a middle ground somewhere that would make meeting like-minded knot-tyers easier. We have been members for almost five years and hope to remain so forever as we have really enjoyed the benefits and friendship of the Guild, but if prices continue their upward spiral, I'm afraid we will have to forfeit going to meetings in the future unless our fortunes change dramatically.

I do hope that everyone who can afford to go there has a real good time. I've got to run now. There's a sale on teabags at Tesco that I can't afford to miss.

*Christina Selfe
Poole, U.K.*

The Council is aware that some of the meetings may be a little up-market for some members and they try to strike a balance. This year was an exception, with the Guild's 20th birthday celebrations. On the other side of the coin, there are many members who prefer a venue that can provide better facilities than many a cadet/Scout base can supply. Next year's AGM will be at TS Weston - Ed.

Nettle Yarn

I am very much interested in the history of knots and knotting and the use of ancient yarns (as well as being a knotting addict). In particular I would like to use nettle yarn, but am having difficulty obtaining it. I am asking as many people

as I can in the hope of finding this rare item.

Having recently become a member of the IGKT and discovered its many delights, I wonder if any Guild member can help.

*Wendy Smith
Peterborough, UK*

Recycle Old CD Cases - Save the Planet!

Do you have old CD's lying around and you don't know what to do with them? I've found that CD cases make excellent low cost displays for flat knots.

Carefully remove the plastic insert and the paper liner just leaving the clear case.

Next cut a piece of thin card which should be just large enough to be bent up to form a shallow U shape and fit snugly in the CD case. Next cover the inside of the U with Fablon velour (self-adhesive material available from ironmongers) and trim to size. Use a small needle and thread and pass it through the card anchoring the free end of the thread with an electric glue gun. Stitch your knotting masterpiece firmly to the card and finish off with the glue gun.

I've used computer sticky labels to identify the knots but these do not adhere well to small hairs of the velour. Model shops sell packets containing narrow plastic strips and these are cut and stitched on as described above. The

computer label can be stuck to the plastic strip and does not become detached. Stick another piece of Fablon on the back of the card to hide your embroidery and trim to size.

To finish off cut a piece of balsa strip and paint it matt black and stick it to the velour to fill the gap made when you discarded the original plastic insert. Finally print an identification label for the "spine".

The description takes almost as long as the making the knotting case. CD cases have the advantage of having a large surface area but a small volume and so you can cover a typical display table with about twenty CD cases and when not in use kept in a small standard CD storage case.

It is possible to buy small clear plastic display stands from shops selling fossils these make an excellent secure method for standing some of your knotting CD's at an angle.

*David Monk
Chobham, UK*

Great Knots, I Think Not!

Regrettably, the review of this book given by Tony Robinson (KM76) gave some slight promotion to a book that ought to be roundly censured; I quickly write here to set the record straight on this. The Lewis book contains only cursory information about each of its "175 knots", in many cases just a sentence to equate one name with another entry. The computer-drawn images for steps in tying each knot crude, often unhelpful, and sometimes

incorrect. The photos purportedly of the tied knots in use are often of unseemly materials for the knots, and also often incorrect--sometimes egregiously so!

One can find errors on nearly every page. I've identified errors (from minor to severe) in 91 of the individual knot entries, as well as in the front matter of the book. There are surely further errors yet to be found e.g., for haywire twist - an angling knot for wire, something so simple to both illustrate and describe - Lewis shows a comical twisted bit of cord through a fishhook (not in any way resembling the knot), and provides diagrams & textual advice equally lacking in accuracy: "Make a bight and twist the end around standing part. Bring standing part up through first twist to secure"; and then he shows a knot that looks like a figure eight stopper! Or, for the hangman's noose, his photograph shows, rather, a hank of rope (with its multiple coils and an end, hanging down, and two ends running up off the top of the photo)!

One gets the sense that there was some separation of two or more persons responsible for this book, with one supplying text and other images, which often conflicted, though each seems equally ill informed. I cannot imagine a Scout or other student doing a knot project, with such errors as Lewis makes, getting a passing or satisfactory grade, rather than being rebuked for the shoddy work and told to start over! In short, it is the worst knot book I have ever seen: as the first review of Lewis on Amazon.com says, "buy something else - anything else!"

R. Danford Lehman
Falls Church, VA USA

Wire Rope Eyes

In reading Roy Chapman's interesting article in KM74, it made me refer to my *Rigging Trade Theory* book and it has some more facts on the wire rope eye.

In South Africa, it is known as the 'Superloop' or Flemish eye. It is quick to make and can be made in a matter of minutes. It is very handy when the tools and/or the expertise are not available to splice an eye in the wire. It is used in various fields of engineering in South Africa including mining and salvage operations.

After completing the eye, the wire rope eye will pick up the safe working load (SWL) of the rope without the ends being served up or spliced.

In emergency situations where there is no time to serve up the ends, I myself have used the wire rope eye and it is very reliable and I have never seen it fail. The thickest wire rope I have made the eye in is 32 mm with no tools, just an assistant helping me.

Andrew S Lyle
Simonstown, South Africa

Clean Rope

During my daily walks with my dogs on the local beaches I come across quantities of jettisoned rope and cordage, especially after stormy weather. Unfortunately some of the most attractive and useful is often stained with tar and oil. So far my attempts to clean it with soap, washing-up liquid, washing powder and a mild solution of bleach have failed.

Can any fellow knoter out there help me?

*Alan Hughes
Llansteffan, Wales*

An Olympic Event?

Knotniks everywhere will be delighted to learn that Beijing has chosen a Chinese Knot to represent their city for the Olympic Games in 2008.

In the accompanying photo you can see two examples of the knot above and below the Olympic Emblem of five circles, made especially to commemorate the upcoming Games. It is already being sold in China.



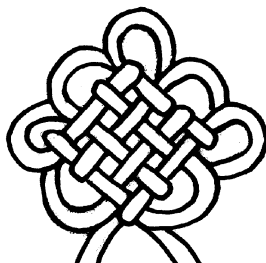
The knot is the Pan Chang knot, also known as the mystic knot and the endless Knot. It is so highly regarded that in ancient times it became one of the Eight Buddhist Treasures. It's continuous and

seemingly endless pattern represents the cyclical nature of all existence (birth-death, light-dark, summer-winter) which is a very important concept in Chinese Buddhism, and a symbol of longevity.

The basic Pan Chang knot has fairly narrow loops arising from and returning to the same side, (see diagram). For the Olympic emblem the knot is slightly different. The square body of the knot is larger and the loops are broader, linking one part of the knot to another. It symbolises reunion, is also known as the reunion knot, and is traditionally used for family occasions and festivals, perfect for the coming together of athletes from many nations for the Olympics. The five circles represent five great continents of the world.

This memento is not only very attractive but meaningful as well, combining a very ancient symbol with a relatively recent one to commemorate an important world event. This writer for one, being very keen on Chinese knots, hopes that they will continue their revival from an art that almost disappeared (after the Cultural Revolution) to becoming an art which is recognised and appreciated by many people, not only in China. This Olympic memento is an important step in the right direction.

*Suzen Millodot
Tel Aviv, Israel*



Knotting Diary

AGM's & 1/2 YEARLY MEETINGS

21st AGM

TS Weston, Weston-super-Mare
9th - 11th May 2003
Contact: Nigel Harding
Tel: 01825 760425
E-mail: nigel@nigelharding.demon.co.uk

NAB 2003 Meeting

17th - 19th October 2003
Mariner's Museum, Newport News, Virginia
Contact: John Burke
Tel: 313 562 4393
E-mail: knottyrope@prodigy.com

BRANCH MEETINGS

Midlands Branch

10th February & 14th April 2003
The Old Swan (Ma Pardoes), Halesowen
Road, Halesowen
Contact Nick Jones
Tel: 01384 377499

East Anglian Branch

12th April 2003
Museum of East Anglian Life, Stowmarket,
Suffolk
Contact John Halifax
Tel: 01502 519123

German & Dutch Members

21 to 23 March 2003
Exhibition and Displays of Ropework
Binnenschiffahrtsmuseum, Duisberg,
Germany
Contact: Peter Willems
Email: peter@fancyworks.de

West Country Knotters

25th January & 29th March 2003
Almondsbury Scout Hall
Almondsbury, Nr. Bristol
Contact Tugg Shipp
Tel: 01275 847438

EVENTS

Von Hundepints, Schweinsrücken und
Neunschwänziger Katz (Pointing,
Cockscumbing and Cat o' Nine Tails)
May - September 2003
Flensburg Schifffahrts Museum, Flensburg,
Germany
Contact Karl Barethur
E-mail: jacktar@foni.net

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The Knot Book	£3.99
Plaited Moebius Bands	£2.50
Knot Rhymes and Reasons	£1.50
Brian Field	
Breastplate Designs	£2.50
Concerning Crosses	£1.50
Eric Franklin	
Turksheads the Traditional Way	£1.50 *
Nylon Novelties	£2.00 *
Stuart Grainger	
Knotcraft	£3.60 *
Ropfolk	£1.30 *
Turks Head Alternatives	£2.20 *
Creative Ropecraft (Hardback - 3rd Ed.)	£9.95
Knotted Fabrics Hardback <i>price includes UK postage</i>	£9.00
John Halifax	
Something Different <i>with over 50 Button Knots</i>	£3.20
Colin Jones	
The DIY Book of Fenders	£9.95
Harold Scott	
On Various Cruciform Turks Heads	£2.50
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Decorative Woven Flat Knots	£12.50*
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