

# Knotting Matters

The Magazine of the International Guild of Knot Tyers



Issue 86  
March 2005

# Guild Supplies

## Price List 2005

<b>Item</b>	<b>Price</b>
<b>Knot Charts</b>	
Full Set of 100 charts	£10.00
Individual charts	£0.20
<b>Rubber Stamp</b>	
IGKT Member, with logo (excludes stamp pad)	£4.00
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Long, dark blue with Guild Logo in gold	£8.95
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Blazer Badge	£1.00
Enamel Brooch	£2.00
Windscreen Sticker	£1.00
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**Telephone: 0121 453 4124**

# Knotting Matters

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

**Issue No. 86**

**President: Jeff Wyatt  
Secretary: Nigel Harding  
Editor: Colin Grundy  
Website: [www.igkt.net](http://www.igkt.net)**

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*Front Cover - Lonnie Boggs helps  
another young girl make rope at Beale  
Park, venue for this year's AGM.*

*Back Cover: What started out as a simple  
picture frame, this piece of sailor's art  
took Louie Bartos about a month and half  
to finish. Made of cotton and hemp  
twine, it is built up on oak laminate.*

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# Notes from the Secretary's Blotter

**B**y the time you read this it will be early April, the winter will be over, and spring will be on its way. As I write these words, the sun is shining on recently fallen snow. We don't get much snow near the Sussex coast, so we are surprised when it arrives, it looks so pretty, until it is time to have to go out in it. Despite all the cold weather, the heated debates at our recent Council meetings have made up for all that.

The main topic of conversation has been our current financial situation. Whilst it is not chronic, for a couple of years we have just about broken even, however last year there was a significant shortfall, and a prediction that the situation will continue to deteriorate. We have trimmed our planned expenditure to the bone, however with continually increasing printing and postage costs, the two largest items of expenditure for us, then it is essential that we increase our membership fees, that being more or less our only source of income. There is more about this in the papers associated with the AGM, but we are offering two options, an increase of five pounds to take effect from next January, or a two-pound increase, every year for three years. I know which I would prefer, if only from an administrative point of view. Over the years, we have not increased our subs very often, perhaps once every five or six years, however looking back, I believe that our last increase, in January 2004, was too conservative, leaving us little alternative but to do it again quite soon. In my last blotter, I did invite observations from the membership, to which I received just two

replies. One UK member said simply, if that is what it costs, then that is what we must pay. The other letter was from Canada and compared the relatively high cost of IGKT membership with other similar organizations.

Moving on, those members who pay Income Tax in the UK can help a little, by completing a Gift Aid form. This is a much simpler system than the 'Deed of Covenant' that it replaced, and all we need is a signed statement, giving your name and address, confirming that you are a UK taxpayer. In anticipation, I have enclosed a form, which I would urge you to return to me, so that we can claim something back from the government.

Another way for UK members to help reduce our operating costs would be to pay their subscriptions by Direct Debit, through the good offices of the Charities Aid Foundation. I have taken the liberty of including a Direct Debit form, which again, I would urge the UK members to complete and return to me.

Looking back over this blotter, it all seems a bit boring, (but then, isn't it always, I hear you say). I ought to be telling you about all the exciting demonstrations and exhibitions members will be holding this summer. The AGM in May, the Festival of the Sea at Portsmouth in June/July, the October meeting at Den Helder in The Netherlands and many others, all of which are listed on our web site, - assuming of course, that you have told us about it! Must finish now, otherwise the snow will have melted, and I won't be able to play snowballs.

*Nigel Harding*

# Letter from the President

During the past year I have had the pleasure of attending various Branch meetings, including Essex, Solent, West Midlands, North Yorkshire, North American and France (this last was to the inaugural meeting of IGKT France at Fecamp) - and very enjoyable meetings they were too. It has been great having many such opportunities to meet other members and exchange knotting ideas, amongst other things.

I have been invited to give several talks to local groups - attempting to spread the word about knots and knotting far and wide. Although that part of my involvement will, of course, continue, sadly my term of office as your President is coming to an end. I would like to thank all those who have given me so much help and support over the past couple of years especially members of our Committee as well as the Committees of other branches both in the UK and overseas. "All good things come to an end" as the saying goes - I've thoroughly enjoyed every moment of representing the Guild as your President and feel very privileged at being given the opportunity. I will be handing over the reins, at the AGM in May, to a very competent and likeable member of the Guild who I believe is well-known to many of you. Ken Yalden has served on the Committee as Chairman and general committee member for many years.

I suppose my one disappointment was that we were unable to fulfil Brian Field's dream of a travel scholarship. This was due in part to the ramifications of English charity laws and the initial

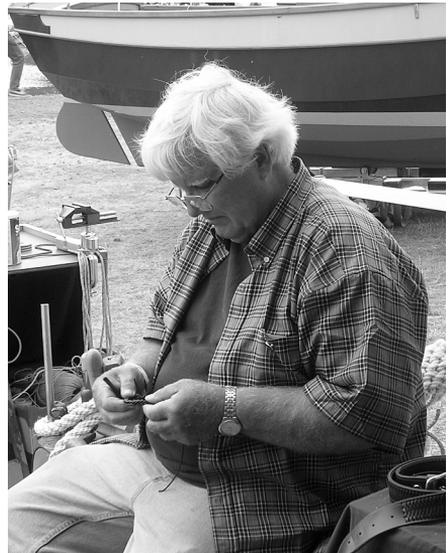
cost of setting it up. Who know, some day it may still come to fruition.

During my time as President I have managed to see many members both here in the UK and abroad, as far away as Australia and America - of course my wife, Lesley, had to be dragged there kicking and screaming. She will be relieved that my tenure is over - I'm not sure how much she enjoyed being the President's Lady - anyway she'll be handing that title over to another Lesley, Ken's partner.

In signing off this, my last President's letter I would like to repeat my thanks to everyone for your support.

Good luck and best wishes

*Jeff Wyatt*  
*President, IGKT*



# The Guild Website (www.IGKT.net)

Many thanks to all those members who actively contribute to the Guild's website, both by sending photos for inclusion in the Galleries, and for maintaining an active interest in the Forum. However, there are well over 500 online members of the Guild, but of just over 200 people signed up for the Forum, only a small proportion are Guild members. The Forum is a really good way of communicating with other knotters all over the world. Registration is quick and painless, and FREE! We still need more photos for the Galleries!

I have many photographs of Guild members, taken at various meetings, which I have often thought would be nice to share with you, but I've been reluctant to have them available for general viewing. Having consulted our Web Mistress I discovered that we can have a "Members Only" section of the site, which can only be accessed using an ID name and a password. The ID name will be "member" (without the quotes) and the password you will find in the 2004/05 Members Handbook, on Page 2, both all lower case. It is the 3rd word of the 3rd line. Security has been a big consideration in setting this up, and as distribution of the Handbook is restricted to members only, but as non-members can buy Knotting Matters, I thought this would be a safer option. Any problems with accessing this section please contact me. If you see your photo there and would rather it wasn't, please

contact me and I will have it removed forthwith. Also please contact me if any of the captions are incorrect or incomplete and you can correct them. And finally, if any Guild member has a problem finding the password, please feel free to get in touch with me.

Can I also request contributions for the Events Reports section, please.

Email: [www.lesley.wyatt@ntlworld.com](mailto:www.lesley.wyatt@ntlworld.com)

Phone: 0044 (0)1582 664504

*Lesley Wyatt*  
*Web Administrator*

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## Supplies Box

KM is building a database of suppliers of materials, tools and books. Details should be brief, i.e. name, address, telephone, website or email address and brief details of what is available. Here are some more:

### **Union Industries**

Angel's Wing

Whitehouse Street, Leeds, LS10 1AD

Tel: 0113 2448393

[www.unionindustries.co.uk/trading](http://www.unionindustries.co.uk/trading)

Cord, rope and fittings

### **www.makerope.com**

Rope-making machines and books

### **Beck & Rep**

Fardhem ÷verburge 123, SE-620 12 Hemse, Sweden

Tel: 46+ (0)498 480637

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[www.beckorep.com](http://www.beckorep.com)

Cords, Rope, Tools, Books.

# DVD Review

**Scott's Knots** - by Scott Baker

Published in 2004, by Bosun's Mate Entertainment. \$19.95 available online from [www.bosunsmate.org](http://www.bosunsmate.org), and from boating stores in the USA and Canada.

Here is something slightly different on the knotting scene, a DVD demonstrating how to tie some 20 practical knots, splices and whippings. Scott Baker has sailed on tall ships and belongs to the Canadian Auxiliary Coastguard, so he is well placed to teach practical knot tying. Scott has teamed up with television producer Jeff Barringer to produce this high quality DVD presentation on knot tying.

With a simple to use menu, it is easy to find the knot you require and follow the instructions, even repeating them, or pause at the touch of a button and concentrate on the task in hand. Scott shows the knots in close up, using good sized natural fibre rope rather than thin cord. He demonstrates in a clear and concise manner, showing how to dress the knot correctly and giving uses for the knot, even drawing the student to some of its pitfalls, or failings.

If I could find any fault with this excellent DVD, it would only be that the student is facing the teacher, rather than looking over his shoulder.

It may not suit all Guild members, but it does give a good introduction to the beginner and aspiring sailors the art of tying practical knots.

*CG*

## Obituary

### John Dunne (1934-2004)

John Dunne, whose death after a long illness was announced on Sunday, 28th November 2004, was a popular voice on British radio, presenting a regular early evening programme of chat and light music.

About 25 years ago his discussion on air with me of Hunter's (or Phil D. Smith's) Bend was one of the factors that led to the creation of the IGKT. I was interviewed (twice) about knotting by him in his studio at the renowned Broadcasting House, London, where I found him to be a very large man with a quiet and courteous manner. On the first occasion - after he had finished questioning me about the 'new' knot and during a musical interlude - I went to leave but he called me back and said;

'Now teach me how to tie that knot.'

'Really?' I asked.

'Well, I told the listeners you would,' he reminded me.

John Dunne was also, evidently, a man of integrity who did what he undertook to do.

*GB*

# Entwined & Twisted Plait

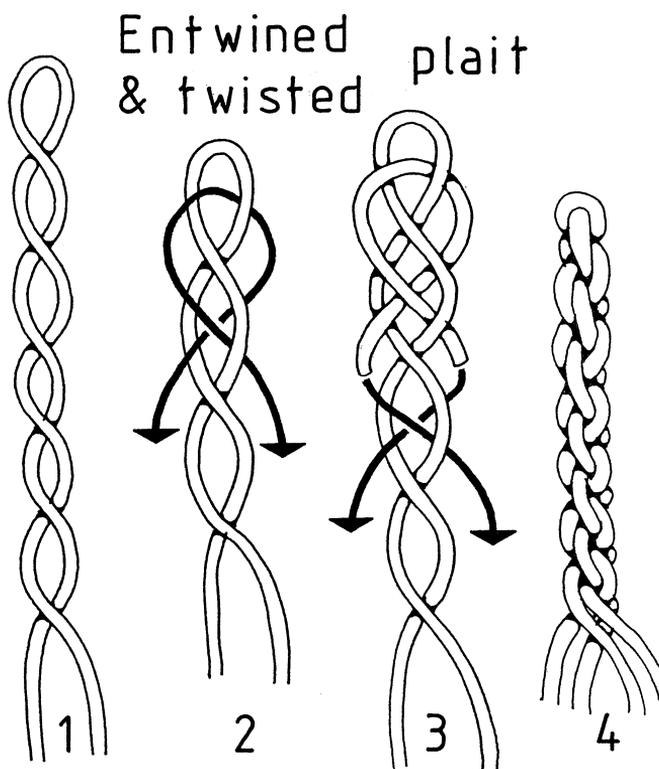
from Geoffrey Budworth

Clifford Ashley features a 'false braid' (A#25851/2 [sic]) in his Chapter 33: Tricks and Puzzles, and again (as A#2993) in Chapter 38: Plat Sinnets. I based my 1990 booklet *Plaited Moebius Bands* upon this gimmick.

There is another illusory plait, however, which does not appear in knot books. Tie it as follows:

- Middle a length of cord, then wrap the two parts around one another, left-handed or S-laid (fig. 1).
- Double a second cord and insert it as shown (fig. 2).
- Continue to tuck, as directed, through succeeding loops of the first strands (fig. 3).

Plait tighter than - for clarity - I have illustrated and the result will



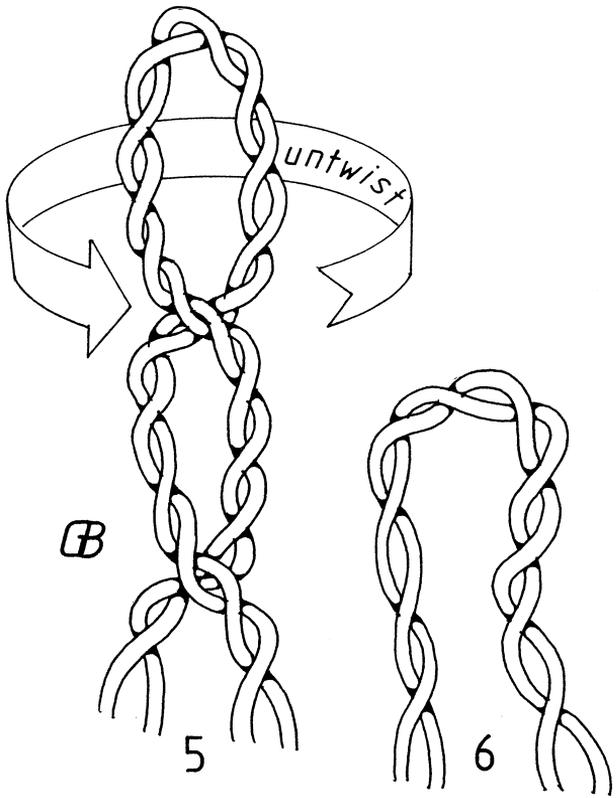
superficially resemble the orthodox 4-strand sinnet or sennit [the spelling depends upon whether you are a disciple of Ashley or Graumont & Hensel] of the kind seen in the flex of old-fashioned telephone handsets (fig. 4). It is actually quite different.

Use two different coloured cords and what becomes obvious is that each pair of strands spirals left-handed or S-laid, while the genuine 4-strand plait alternates left-handed (S-laid) with right-handed (Z-laid). Twist the arrangement forcefully in the direction indicated (fig. 5) and what appeared to be a woven plait

unwraps to reveal merely a couple of entwined and twisted cords (fig. 6).

The Z-laid version will result in a Z-lay overall. Either way, it is the opposite of rope-making, where twist and counter-twist generate the characteristic adhesion required; although - inconsistently - the related 'ligature knot (twined & twisted)' described in my 1999 book *Hamlyn Fishing Knots* does wrap the opposite way to the initial twisted cords.

Anyway, the twist imposed by the entwined pairs of strands is tight enough for this maverick bit of finger-work to be employed as yet another usable plait.



# A Ropy Chess Set

by Frank Brown

Many members will remember pictures of chess sets made with fancy knotting that have appeared in KM a couple of times. These were, and still are, examples of ultimate skill in the craft. I cherished a hope to emulate these master knotters, but realised I would have to put in a few years practice before being able to produce a comparable product. Then I realised that I had the means to build a set, but in an utterly different style. My experience in developing a menagerie of animals using various braiding and other knotting techniques had shown the capacity of the methods to sculpture a wide variety of forms. Apart from nearly twenty animals, I had developed all the figures of the zodiac. Why not use the same method to build chess pieces? A few hours spent in the workshop showed the viability of the concept. A few early

problems were easily solved and from there on it was just a matter of putting in the hours to make the thirty-two items. A suitably embellished board and ditty box completed the ensemble. Reactions to the set have been uniformly complimentary from both knotters and chess players. The compliments are inevitably accompanied by broad grins, because the pieces definitely have “attitude”.

The instructions for building a similar set are to be printed up in a sequence of articles in KM. This first article describes the construction of the King, Pawn and the Knight (sans horse).

## Materials

A white, synthetic, three-strand string of approximately 1-mm dia. is recommended. I used polyester netting twine made with long fibres. This gave

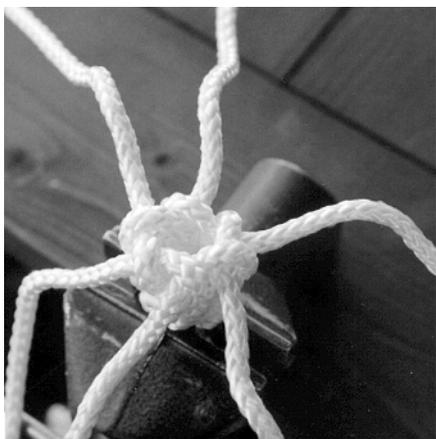


Fig. 1-1

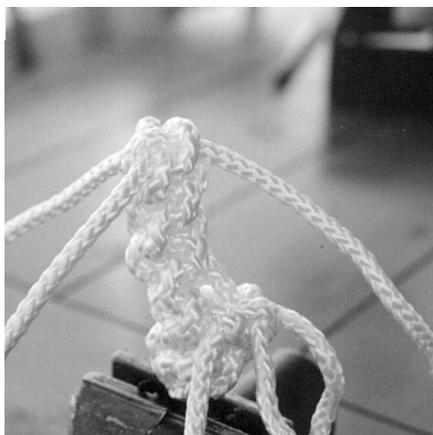
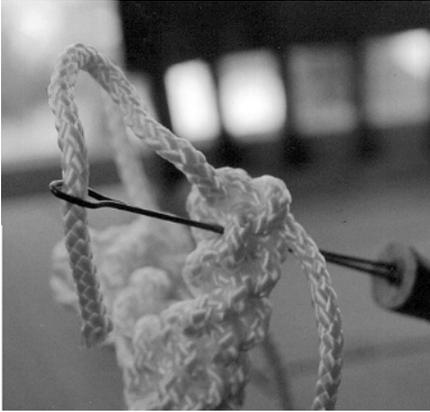
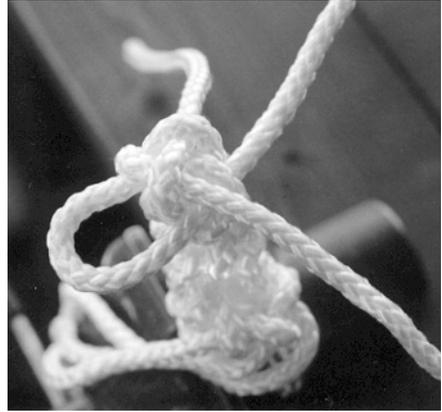


Fig 1-2



*Fig 1-3*

a fairly smooth finish better suited to the application of paint. I have used braided cord for the pictures in this article series, but only because I need to use a larger diameter material to show details. The different sizes of the pieces are achieved by untwisting the strands so that the Pawns are made with two-stranded twine, and the Knight with single strands. The single strands are used for certain other items as well.



*Fig 1-4*

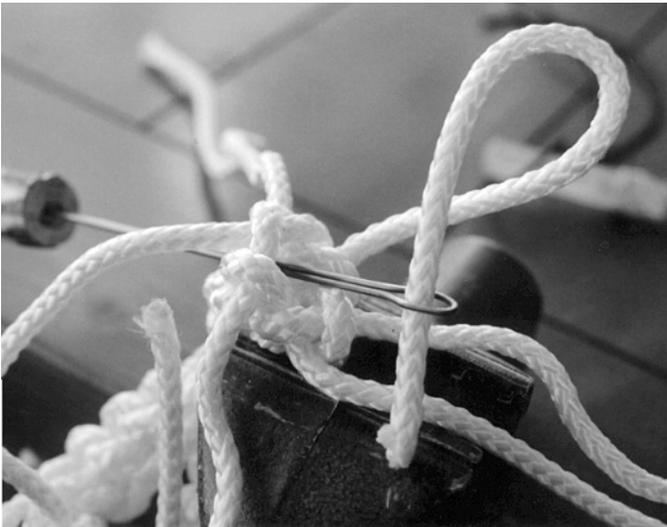
An extremely fine monofilament nylon sewing thread is recommended for attaching some of the items to the pieces.

Black and white enamel paint.

Wood dowel for the bases. I used a pine dowel, but a hardwood would be preferred due to its greater weight.

Araldite or similar resin or glue.

Black and white enamel paint.



### **Tools.**

A small modeler's vice was used to hold pieces during construction. It is possible to carry out most of the work "in the hand", but the vice literally gives you a free hand.

Line needles, specifically the leather worker's "Live Eye", are nearly essential

*Fig 1-5*



Fig1-6

for this work. However, wire loops, latch hooks and grip fids are all viable alternatives.

Small wire cutters as used by electronics technicians.

Gas cigarette lighter or other flame source.

### 1 King, Pawn and Knight.

The construction of these three pieces is essentially the same. The pictures show the basic techniques where a torso,

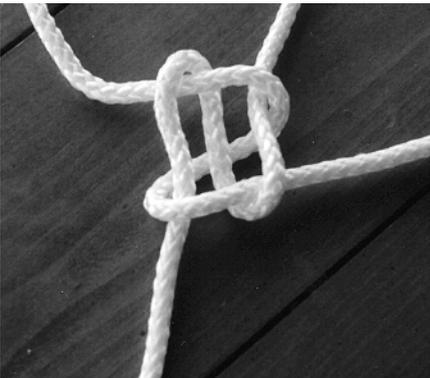


Fig 1-7

legs, feet, shoulders, arms and head are constructed.

Cut six lengths of your construction material about 300 mm (1 ft.) and seal the ends. Middle and seize. Commence crowning and make four rows (Fig 1-1). Crowning may be either to the left or right continuously, or alternately, according to the knotter's wishes.

To make the first leg, take three adjacent lines and crown continuously in one direction for six to eight rows (Fig1-2).

Note. It is advised to tie eight rows for the legs of the King and have the same number for his torso. This will make him nice and tall and easily distinguishable from the lowly Pawns.

Make the foot by drawing one line through the "leg" as in Fig 1-3 and Fig 1-4. Crown for at least two, but preferably three rows. Cut line and seal with flame.

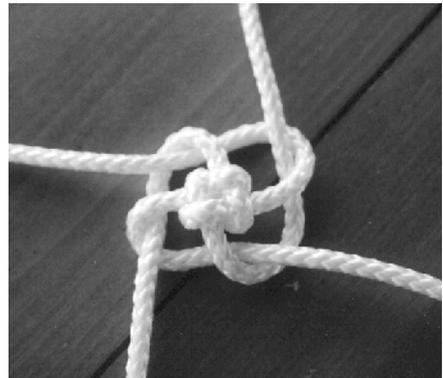
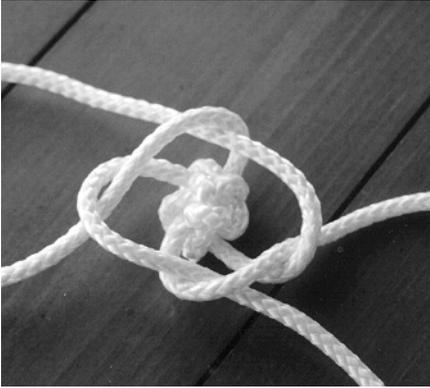


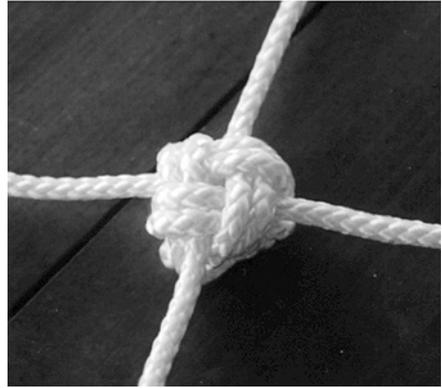
Fig 1-8



*Fig 1-9*

Judicial molding of the melted plastic will achieve a bond to the adjacent lines.

Repeat process for the other leg. Remove seizing and crown with the



*Fig 1-10*

six lines for another four rows. Draw the lines located centrally on the torso through to the sides as in Fig 1-5. Crown for two rows to form shoulders. Draw top line through and as in Fig 1-6, and

crown for six to eight rows to make the arm. Trim excess and seal.

The head is made from a knob knot. I prefer to make up the Wall and Crown method, but any spherical knot should suffice.

Take two lengths about 250 mm (10 inches) and seal ends. Middle and make a square knot as shown in Fig 1-7. Dress down firmly and commence construction of knob knot as shown in Fig's 1-8 and 1-9. Double each line to



*Fig 1-12*

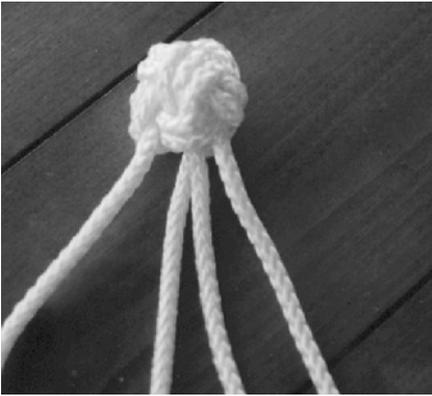


Fig 1-11

produce knot as in Fig 1-10.

Draw two of the lines through the knot so that they emerge close to the other two as in Fig 1-11. Draw all of these lines through the torso as in Fig 1-12, pulling all lines through till the head is firmly located. Trim and seal excess line.



Fig 1-13

Fig 1-13 shows the completed piece, which is finished by the addition of a crown, as in Fig 1-14, for the King. The crown is simply a series of loops held in place with the monofilament thread.

The Pawn, is created from two strand marline following the same procedure as for the King. Single strands are used to construct the Knight, while the method for building his horse will be described in a later issue. Two Kings, four Knights and sixteen Pawns are required.

*To be continued.*



Fig 1-14

# Frustrated Knot Tyer.

by Chris Selfe

Murray Mosher is a frustrated knot tyer. Until quite recently when I moved here, he was the only member of our Guild on the island of Newfoundland, the easternmost province of Canada. That's not to say that there are no knot tyers in a place, which has depended on the fishery for centuries, they just haven't found the Guild yet. Or maybe they share the same frustration as Murray, the lack of proper materials to further his hobby.



My husband Ben and I visited Murray at his home in a little outport village called Rocky Harbour, where once fishing was the main source of income. Murray said, "It's a shame Newfoundland being such a seafaring place, that there's not a lot of marine

places and not much rope." Getting rope and string here is practically impossible and what you do find is expensive.

Murray shows me an ocean plait table mat made from manila; "This rope was at a friends house, I asked if he was doing anything with it," he pauses, "wherever I can get it." Some of his pieces are even made from venetian blind cord and most things he has made are small. "Lack of material forces you to do smaller stuff," he said. Murray's home is sparsely decorated with knots, Turk's heads at the end of the curtain rail in the dining room, a mat on the table and not much else.

Murray has been a member of the Guild for about 3 years. He found the Guild on the Internet. His interest in knot tying stems from the Boy Scouts where he rose to patrol leader. He mostly ties practical knots and is only beginning to branch out into the decorative area. But if rope is hard to find tools are an impossibility, he can't even find a seine needle. There is also a lack of knot tying books to be found. Murray does have the *Ashley Book of Knots* and also Geoffrey Budworth's *Encyclopedia of Knots*, but when he wants a book he has to have it ordered from the bookstore or he orders them himself on the Internet.

Murray also laments the lack of a knot-tying group. He finds learning from books is not enough or easy and misses the social aspect that a group with a common interest can provide. Ben and I had brought some rope with us and we



held an impromptu session, where Murray asked questions and learned a few new knots. He eagerly awaits his copy of *Knotting Matters* and finds it invaluable for keeping up his enthusiasm

and helping him to feel in touch. Murray would also like contact with other knot tyers and welcomes any help he can get to improve his knotting repertoire and share his love of knotting.

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## Knotmaster Series No. 24

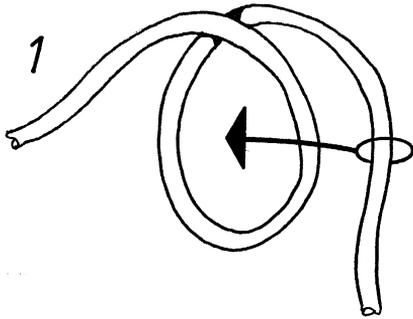
*'Knotting ventured,  
knotting gained.'*

### **Harness loop**

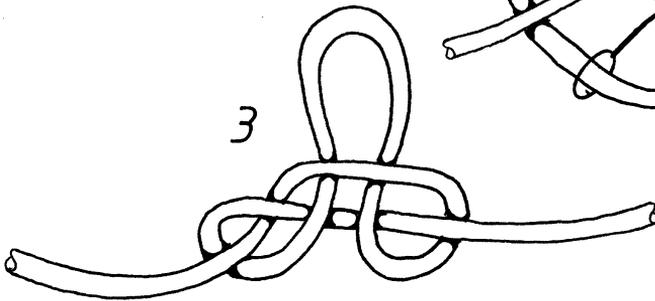
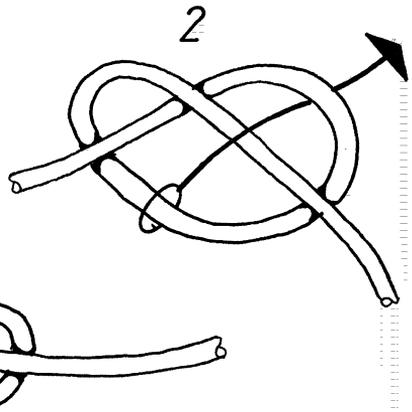
This loop used to be recommended - as its other names (artilleryman's hitch and man-harness knot) imply - to drag or haul carts, carriages, wagons or army ordnance uphill and over difficult terrain. These days It is a quick and easy way to improvise, in the bight, a hand-hold, foot-loop, or point of attachment for snap-hooks, rings, carabiners and other items of hardware.

Make a loop (fig. 1) and lay the lower part of the line across the top of it (fig. 2). Pull the part of the loop indicated over-one/under-one to create the final knot (fig. 3) and tighten it (fig. 4)

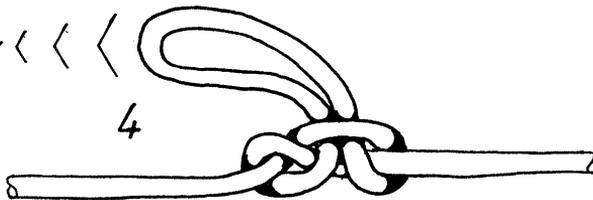
NOTE: Whether or not this loop can withstand a pull from any direction is debatable. Knotmaster has always assumed it to be a one-way knot - as shown - but may be wrong.



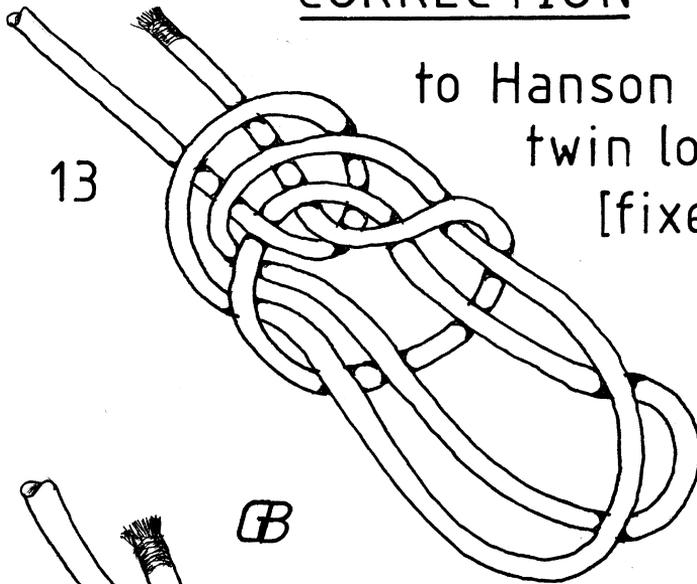
# Harness loop



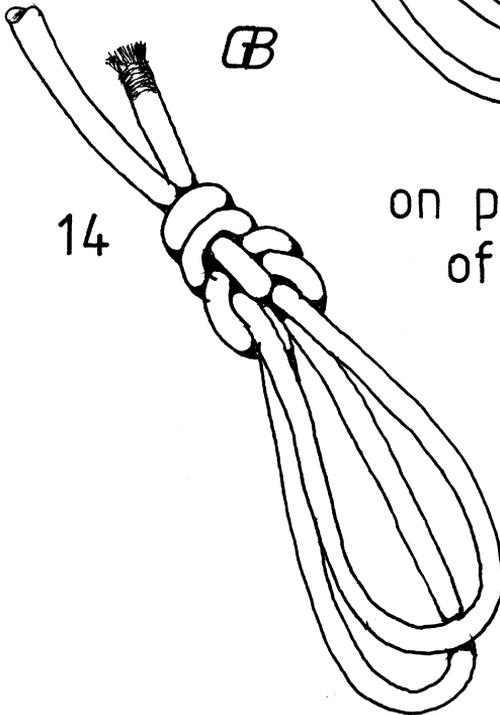
Load  
this way < < <  
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CORRECTION



to Hanson  
twin loops  
[fixed]



B

on page 21  
of *KM* 84  
(Sep 2004)

# Double Monkey's Fist

by Thomas Simpson.

**D**ue to a spate of requests here are the instructions for constructing a double monkey's fist, which appeared in *Knotting Matters* 82, page 33.

The regular monkey's fist is a 3 bight x 3 part construction with six faces/panels (constructed from 3 interlocking circles). The double monkey's fist is a 4 bight x 4 part construction with twelve faces/panels (constructed from 4 interlocking circles); described in the *Ashley Book of Knots* as #2206. My drawing is a variant of Ashley's drawing #2206; for the sake of clarity it only shows 3 windings/turns, as opposed to the five or six required for the actual knot.

My memory-jogger notes for a double monkey's fist.

To give the four-circle fist its distinctive monkey's fist appearance it must be given five or six windings/turns on each circle anything less and it looks like an ordinary spherical Turk's head.

The knot is constructed from a single strand.

In monkey's fists each circle is completed separately with its full complement of windings.

In the drawing, the order of construction proceeds as follows: the 1st circle is at 12 o'clock, 2nd circle at 3 o'clock, 3rd circle at 9 o'clock, and 4th circle at 6 o'clock.

Each circle is constructed in the opposite direction to the preceding one.

Refer closely to the drawing when reversing direction at the start of each new circle.

Lay down the circles (about 10 inches/250mm diameter for the knot described later in this article), five windings in each circle, on a flat surface - a table, or the deck will suffice. Use a fid, or something similar, to assist with the interlocking, so as not to disturb the circles too much, or "maze fatigue" may set in.

1st circle is laid clockwise - five neat windings (one on top of the other is ok in practice).

2nd circle is laid anti-clockwise with an UNDER - OVER interlock x 5 windings.

3rd circle is laid clockwise - OVER - UNDER - UNDER - OVER interlock x 5 windings.

4th circle is laid anti-clockwise - U - 0 - U - 0 - U - 0 interlock x 5 windings.

Then one more final under with the working end, as the arrowhead in the drawing indicates. This gives a total of 24 unders and overs plus a final under for the working end.

With the knot still in the construction location, start reducing the size of the circles (don't be too concerned in keeping their 1-5 order). When they reach a manageable size to insert and comfortably hold the heart/core, one can pick up the knot and gently manipulate the windings into their correct 1-5 order within each of the four circles; then the

final tightening down procedure can commence.

To fashion, an optimum sized double monkey's fist for a ship's heaving line, I use the following measurements.

6mm diameter/ $\frac{3}{4}$  inch circumference rope.

57mm diameter heart/core.

5 windings on each of the four interlocking circles.

Material required to construct the knot = 55ft/16.8m.

Actual amount of material in completed knot = 16ft/4.9m.

At the construction stage, the four circles on this specific sized knot, should each be around 10 inches/250mm diameter - to handle the progress of the interlock.

When completed this will give a perfectly covered knot - 75mm/3 inches diameter.

With this construction (5 windings), the diameter of the heart should be close to 9.5 times the diameter of the rope.

Also, the diameter of the heart, plus 4 times the diameter of the rope, approximately equals the diameter of the completed knot.

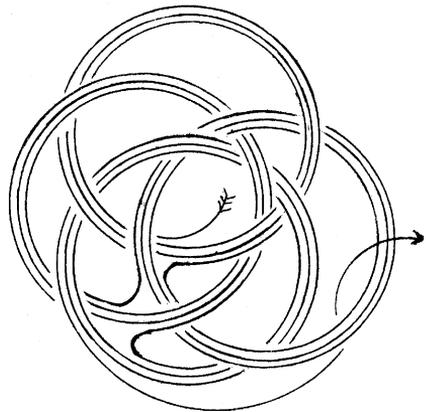
When, or if, fashioning a 6 windings double monkey's fist, the diameter of the heart should be approximately 11.5 times the diameter of the rope.

If making a detachable fist for use on several heaving lines: allow approximately 2 feet for a bight. Join the two ends by palm-and-needle whipping each end; then diagonally cross-stitch across the two whippings to marry the rope ends; this forms the bight. Work the join back into the double monkey's fist to hide and bury it.

The heart/core I leave to your imagination, with one proviso - not too much weight!

Not to cause too much confusion I've followed Ashley's way of constructing the knot. In actual working practice a more hassle-free way to construct the knot is to follow the drawing in reverse. Start at the outside winding of the bottom circle and proceed in a clockwise direction. This is all straightforward and easily followed in the drawing; it only requires reversing the interlocks: over/under - under/over/over/under - over/under/over/under/over/under. And also dipping the start strand under circle 2 at the completion of the knot (the arrowhead, as depicted in the drawing). You'll realise what I'm on about when you start constructing your first knot. Ashley had a very occasional inclination to start knots at their centre, which sometimes complicates the knot's practical construction (this is one such knot).

After fashioning your second or third "double monkey's fist", you'll wonder what all the fuss was about.



# The Versa Vice Bend and its Loop Knot

by Dick Clements

In R E Miles' book *Symmetric Bends* (World Scientific, 1995) two related bends appear, the Vice Versa and the Versa Vice. Miles attributes the Vice Versa to Harry Asher, but it is effectively a re-discovery, by Harry Asher (see *The Alternative Knot Book* Adlard Coles, 1989), of the Reeve knot described by C E I Wright and J E Magowan in *Knots for Climbers* (Alpine Journal, vol 40, 1928). I discussed several variants of the Vice Versa in a recent article in this journal (*The Vice Versa Bend and the Reeve Knot*, KM 85). Miles' Versa Vice bend is similar to the Vice Versa but the working ends take a turn around one another before the final tuck. Figure 1 shows the Vice Versa bend (or Reeve knot) and figure 2 shows the Versa Vice.



Fig 1



Fig 2

Like the Vice Versa/Reeve knot, the Versa Vice is a lanyard bend (defined by

Miles as a knot in which “two ends of equal status emerge from the knot in each of two opposite directions”). Hence we can derive two variants of the Versa Vice as straightforward bends for joining two cords. We can choose the two ends marked A in figure 2 as the standing parts and both ends B as the working ends or we can choose the reverse. However, choosing the ends B as the standing parts seems to be a poor choice because of the severe curvature of the cords where the B ends cross and turn around one another very shortly after entering the knot. This severe curvature, occurring at a point in the knot where the cords are still under considerable tension, is likely to be a point of weakness in the knot.

The effect of turning the working ends around each other before the final tuck is that, in the Versa Vice bend, the working ends emerge from the opposite end of the knot from their own standing part. Asher, in his discussion of loop knots, points out that one or more loops can be derived from almost any bend by splicing together two of the four cords which emerge from the knot. But not all bends yield good loops. Asher points out that “The best, but rare, arrangement is where the running (working) end lies parallel to the opposite standing part, ...” (Asher, op cit p82). The Versa Vice

bend meets this desideratum and a rather attractive loop can be derived from it, shown in Figure 3.



Fig 3

This Versa Vice loop can be tied in a simple manner. Start by forming the rope as figure 4a and then thread the working end as shown in figure 4b. Now, as shown in figure 4c, grasp the small loop from the righthand side and twist it 180° anticlockwise, then thread the large loop down through the small loop. Work the knot up tight by pulling alternately on diagonally opposite ends as they emerge from the knot. The view of the knot shown in figure 3 is the reverse side of the knot as formed in figure 4c.

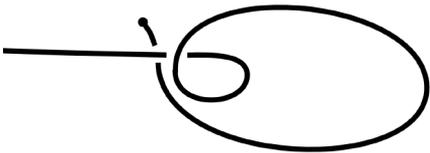


Fig 4a

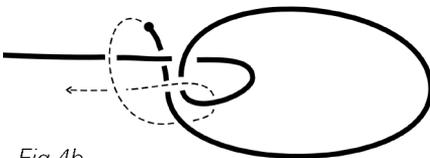


Fig 4b

This loop is more secure than the commonly used bowline. It is also a very slim knot from which the ends emerge very much inline with the standing axis.

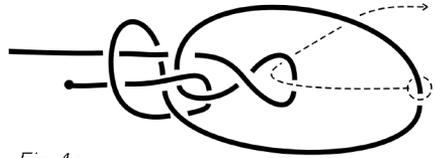


Fig 4c

We might expect it to run through a fairlead much more smoothly than many loop knots when pulled in the forward direction but, unfortunately, the working end would probably jam if it were pulled in the opposite direction unless the working end were seized to the standing part. But overall the loop is secure, easy and quick to tie using the method described, it is readily recognized that the knot is correctly tied and its compact and streamlined form can have significant advantages in some applications. In my view it deserves a place alongside many better known and established end loop knots.

**References**

Asher, H, *The Alternative Knot Book*, Adlard Coles, 1989  
 Miles, R E, *Symmetric Bends: How to Join Two Lengths of Cord*, World Scientific, 1995  
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ROPE ENDS

‘... flimsey inexpensive bits of twine can be made structurally significant with tension.’

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

# Elusive Knot Books

that irk Jack Fidspike

I fret that the itch to tie knots latent in some (perhaps many) individuals may never develop, unless they come into contact with an infectious Guild member, or handle a knotted artefact ... or a knot book. And the odds on this third possibility ought to be better than they are.

For, while there are more than enough knot books, it is my experience that rarely do small book shops stock even one. The informed knotting enthusiast can, of course, order and obtain most titles easily enough; but the uninitiated browser is unlikely to happen by chance upon anything that might turn him or her on to knots.



Staff in larger shops and libraries seem to struggle with the genre, generally putting any knot book they do have in the 'sailing' section (where only a committed boat person will encounter it). So insidious is this practice that I recently found *The Waterproof Book of Fishing Knots* there, despite the fact that

the angling or fishing books were less than an arm's length away. I have yet to see knotting - other than macramÉ - located under 'crafts' or 'pastimes'. Worse, I have never found a knot book in the children's section of any bookshop or library. Now that is dire.

Desperate to obtain a solution to this situation, I drove to my nearest giant retail mall, but *Ideas R Us* was closed. So - I ask you - how might the Guild persuade book lenders and sellers to do it differently?

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## Confused

I think that a fisherman's knot's a bend  
As it's used to join ropes end to end.  
So a fisherman's bend must be a knot.  
But It's not!  
It's a hitch.  
I'm confused. Which is which?

N.B. - From the guru Ashley:

'At sea, the whole subject of knots is commonly divided into four classifications: *hitches*, *bends*, *knots* and *splices*.

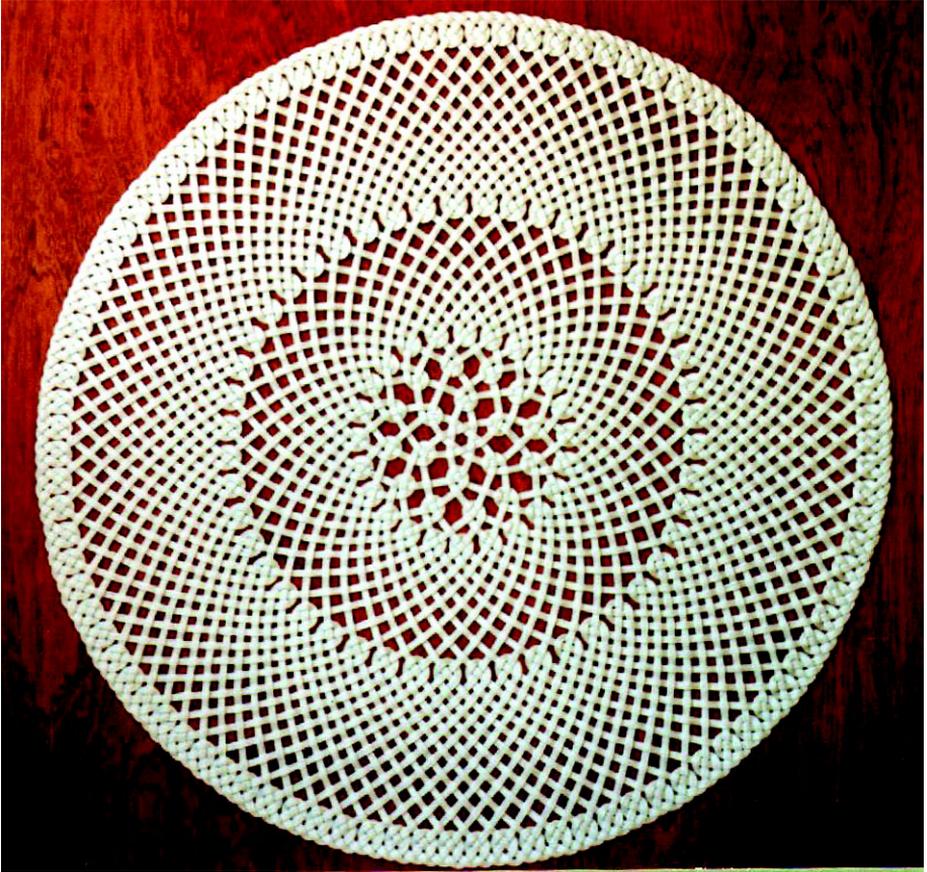
A *hitch* makes a rope fast to another object.

A *bend* unites two rope ends.

The term *knot* itself is applied particularly to *knobs* and *loops*, and to *anything not included* in the other three classes.'

*Tim Fish*

# Knot Gallery



*Just for a change in this issue of Knotting Matters, I have chosen a number of works that have either appeared in early editions of KM or have come from the Guild archives. Digital enhancement now makes it possible for these pieces of work to be seen in all their glory.*

*Above - Celtic Mat (96 bights, 540m x 3mm nylon) - C. Tuk*

*Facing - Original Ornament by Eric Dahlin, California*





*Above - Ear Rings - Ken Yalden*

*Facing - Ropework Riddles - knots in a bottle by IGKT founder member Roy E. Bail of the Isle of Wight.*

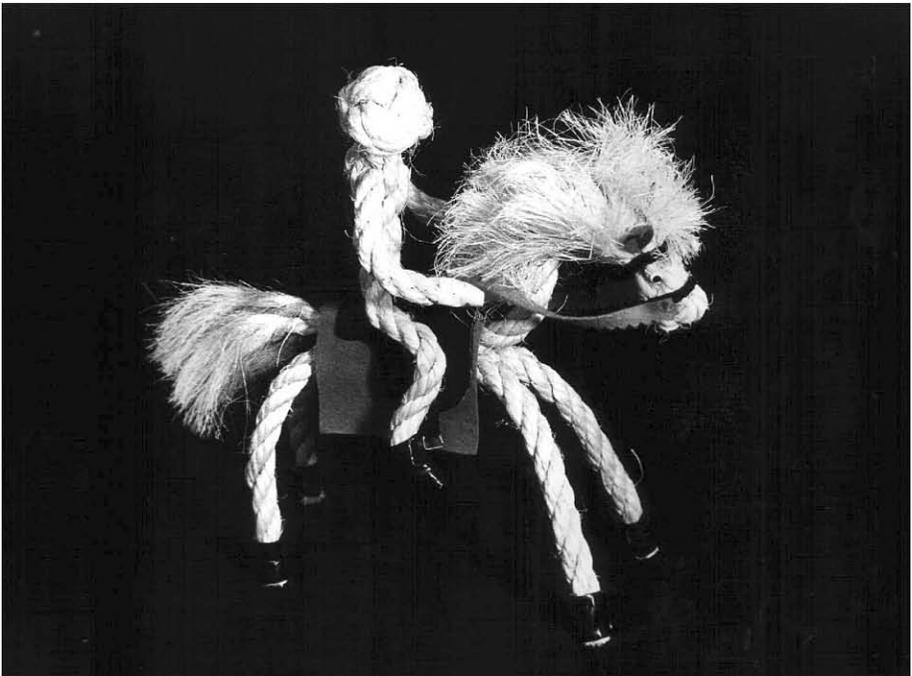
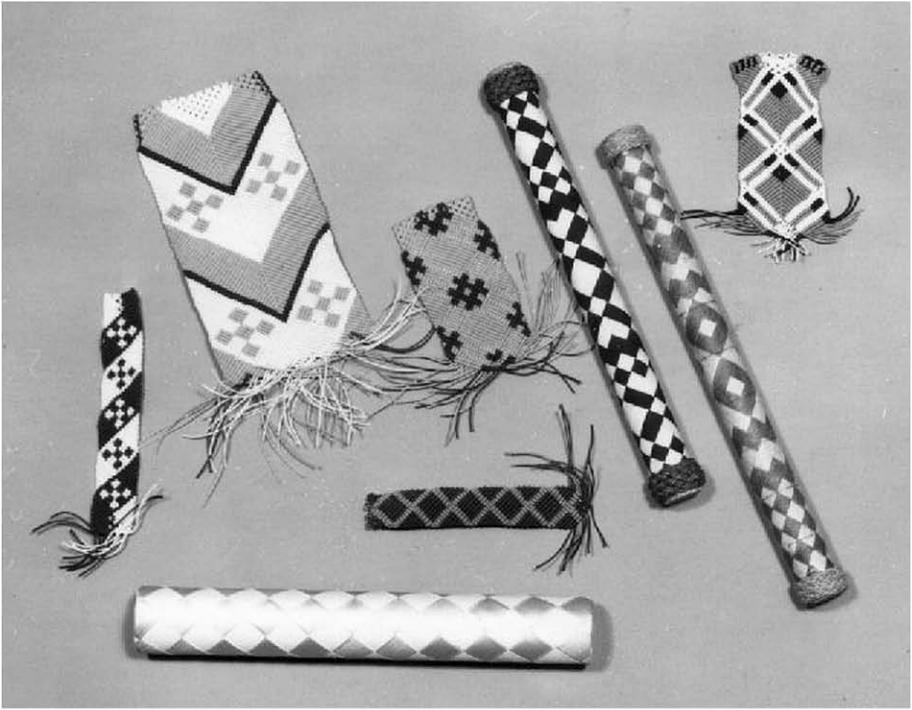
*Overleaf - Bellropes used aboard Her Majesty's Yacht Britannia - the centre one was tied by Guild founder member Charles H. S. Thomason of Queensland, Australia.*

*Overleaf top - A selection of ropework by Jim Nicol*

*Overleaf bottom - Sisal Horse and Rider - Stuart Grainger*







# Rope Access

by Robert Chisnall

Many thanks to Tony Fisher and everyone else involved, for a great two-part article on rigging and rope access work. It's nice to see something very specialised and practical in *Knotting Matters*, and the topics covered relate to almost everything I do professionally and on a recreational basis. I was prompted to add comments and further details.

Time is very short for me, so I offer the following very brief comments and details as an adjunct to the Guild's record in this area, and as feedback to Tony Fisher.

The maxims outlined by Tony Fisher are very useful, and I could go on at length about each one. (I have ample material to assemble a work-at-height manual, but that will have to wait until I retire and have more time to catch up with the far-too-many writing projects I have on file right now.) However, I will restrict my comments to those points I can expand on relatively succinctly.

**“Anything above 10 feet is hazardous, anything below 10 feet is dangerous.”**

This is a very insightful way of approaching the problem of fall protection in a general way. It is my understanding that most workplace injuries occur close to the ground. The International Society for Fall Protection devotes most of its attention and energy to slips and falls on stairs and walkways

- the dangerous zone. It is also interesting to note that various standards and laws identify work areas at lower heights as those requiring fall protection. Canadian federal regulations site 2.4 metres or 8 feet as the critical number. (Also, temporary structures that are more than 6 metres or 20 feet in height require workers to use fall protection.)

**“Avoid vocal distractions.”**

Brief, accurate and unambiguous communication is essential to safe work procedures at height. I have used modified climbing calls (“On belay!” “Off belay!” “Slack!” “Tension!”) and hand signals (similar to those used to direct crane operations) to communicate effectively. When we were working on the CN Tower several years ago (the Radome replacement project at 1,100 feet), we employed a Rescom™ hardline communication system (the transmission line runs through the core of the belay line) to communicate over city noise and lake wind, and because workers were frequently out of sight.

**“Twice as hard, twice as long.”**

I couldn't agree more. In fact, it could be said that the length of work time involved is proportional to the height of the work site, the access difficulties, and the amount of material and equipment that must be transported to a specific work location. The job could take three of four times as long.

Naturally, everything should be tied off and tethered. I recall a colleague commenting that having a detached steel carabiner in his hand felt like holding a loaded gun. If any gear has to be detached, I try to have no more than one item in my hands at a time, and that I reattach immediately. SPRAT (The Society of Professional Rope Access Technicians) recommends that a second rope be employed to support any materials or tools weighing more than 10 pounds.

### “Risks”

Managing miscellaneous hazards in the work environment often falls under what’s called ‘Lockout’ here in North

America. If a worker must enter an area (especially a legally-defined and identified confined space, which involves rope access techniques) all sources of energy (electrical, mechanical, pneumatic, etc.) must be traced and catalogued. The source of energy has to be de-energised, blocked, locked and tagged. With all lockout and confined space areas, proper sign-in, documentation, and air testing and monitoring procedures must be utilised. As well, reliable communication and rescue systems must be in place prior to entering the work area.

I am reminded of a story I heard about a fellow who was re-shingling his roof. He had secured his safety line to the family car, but he failed to inform his wife of this fact. She hopped in the car to do some shopping, and drove off with her husband in tow, after he had been yanked from the roof!

### “Harnesses are for real riggers.”

I too use several types of Petzl™ full-body and bo’sun’s-chair-style harnesses for prolonged work while suspended. Here are a few more details about the pooling of bad blood in the legs resulting in suspension trauma:

### Harness Induced Pathology (Suspension Trauma) First Aid

Source: *Harness suspension: review and evaluation of existing information* prepared by Paul Seddon for the Health and Safety Executive, England, Contract Research report 451/2002

#### What is it?

“Everyone who is suspended in a safety harness runs the risk of shock and



R. Chisnall working at 1,100 feet on the CN Tower (Toronto, Canada) in 2002; Photo: Pierre Gagnon

unconsciousness due to blood flow inefficiency. Unconsciousness can become life threatening after only a few minutes, Shock, caused by a lack of blood flow, is due to the blood accumulating in the lower parts of the body as a result of the musculature of the legs relaxing and the so-called ‘muscle pump’ stopping.” (*Rescuing people who have fallen and first aid following suspension in a safety harness*, M. Lieblch and W. Rensing (1997) Unconsciousness is caused by reduced blood flow to the brain (*Orthostatic syncope*). Laying an unconscious suspension victim horizontally right away can result in right ventricular heart failure, or rescue death. Furthermore, an unconscious suspended victim may have a closed airway owing to the tilt of the head.

### **Conscious Climber - Signs and Symptoms of Suspension Trauma**

Look for these warning signs:

- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Loss or “greying” of vision
- Breathlessness
- Sweating
- Paleness
- Hot flashes
- Increased pulse rate and blood pressure
- Followed by a low pulse rate and a drop in blood pressure
- Onset of unconsciousness

### **Complicating Factors:**

These factors may hasten the onset of suspension trauma:

- Exhaustion
- Hypoglycemia

- Trauma, shock
- Technical complications
- Psychological complications
- Hypothermia (outside)

### **Rescue and First Aid measures for a Conscious Victim**

Note: Death can occur in less than two hours.

- Advise the suspended climber to move and work the leg muscles.
- If possible, have the climber stand on or against the wall.
- Alternatively, provide one or two webbing slings as foot loops.
- Lower him or her as soon as possible.

### **Rescue and First Aid Measures for an Unconscious Climber**

Note: Death can occur in less than 10 minutes. The climber’s head can tilt back, restricting his/her airway.

- Lower to ground immediately; release the climber from suspension quickly.
- Prop up the upper body for 20 to 40 minutes.
- If a fast lower is not possible, support the head and get the victim into a sitting position using slings, a chest harness, or whatever is available.
- Hospitalise, even with minor symptoms

Medical personnel should:

- Stabilise circulatory system, then increase blood volume carefully.
- Determine blood sugar level.
- Administer oxygen.
- Transport with upper body raised.

- Use diuretics to prevent kidney failure.

### **“Climb - do - descend.”**

I often compare rope access jobs and rigging to chess. The tasks involved are very sequential and strategic. Planning and logistics are vital to ensuring success and safety, and to maximising efficiency. How can you minimise the number of times you have to go aloft? What is the optimum complement of gear to carry? Although every job is unique, and there are often exceptions to models and rules, it helps to have a basic framework. Here is a simple one I use: Plan, Assemble Gear, Access, Position, Work, Clear, Return, Clean-Up. (I haven't come up with an elegant acronym as a mnemonic yet.)

### **Additional Maxims**

Here are some additional or related maxims I follow:

- **Try to do the simplest and safest thing first.**

A few years ago I heard about a particular rescue situation involving a rock climbing accident. The climber had fallen to the base of a 30-metre crag and rescuers were called in to evacuate the victim. They spent several hours rigging a complex lowering system for the stretcher and litter attendant. A rescuer was lowered down, he packaged the victim, and the rescuers hauled him and the victim back up to the waiting emergency vehicle. It was later pointed out that rescuers could have walked down the path and carried the victim out by stretcher in a much shorter period of time. The victim was DOA.

When teaching rope access and rescue courses for Multi-Trek Rescue and Safety (Ottawa, Ontario, Canada) we adhere to provincial and federal guidelines and emphasise the following priority sequence:

1. If you can eliminate hazards by doing the work without exposure to a fall, do so. This may mean lowering the work to the ground or some other strategy.
2. If work must be done at height, attempt to use platforms and walkways with railings.
3. If railings are not possible, use a travel restraint system (a harness with a retractable lanyard) that will prevent a fall.
4. The next option is a work positioning or fall restricting system. A bo'sun's chair, and a pole climber's spurs and belt are examples of this approach. (The potential fall distance onto equipment can be no more than 0.6 metres or 2 feet. I believe this standard is much stricter in the U.S.)
5. If work at height is unavoidable and a fall of more than 2 feet is possible, a fall arrest system must be utilised that keeps the impact force below 8 kN. (224 lb.= 1 kN.). The impact force upper limit is 6 kN. in Europe.
6. The last option is to work above nets, and this is deemed the riskiest option.

- **Use the right equipment for the job.**

There are many examples of this throughout the various rope-related disciplines and attendant standards. Here are a few. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has designated static lines with a tensile breaking strength of at least 4,500 lb. as

suitable for one-person loads (with a Safe Working Load (SWL) of 300 lb. at a Safety Factor of 15:1). This rating doubles for two-person loads in rescue situations like pick-offs, litter raises and lowers (9,000 lb. with a SWL of 600 lb.) Similarly, aluminium alloy carabiners are typically rated at just over 20 kN. and are suitable for one-person loads; whereas two-person loads require heavy-duty steel carabiners tested at double that force. All of this is related to Component Load Ratios and System Safety Factors, standards now being drafted by the ASTM in North America.

- **Use the right technique for the job.**

Any job should have written policies and procedures that specify the techniques - like proper belays and knots, progress capture systems, and so forth. For example, mechanical ascenders are not suitable as fall-arrest rope grabs because they will damage the safety line. Post-bight loop knots - like the simple bowline - are not secure enough as harness and litter tie-ins because they can capsize to insecure overhand slip loops (and there have been many stories and accident reports about just this sort of thing happening).

- **Make everything reversible and release-able.**

Build the rescue into the system. Every raising system should be easily converted to a lowering system. Every rappel system should be quickly modifiable so that the descending worker can ascend the rope. (An ideal technique for this is the RADS - Rope Ascent and Descent System.) Every fixed line should be release-able, in case

a suspended worker becomes incapacitated. Many of the new belay and progress capture devices - like the Petzl Grigri and I'D, the Trango Cinch, and the 540 - are capable of release and conversion. Such versatility should also be written into workplace and rescue policies and procedures.

- **Have and use a proper crisis management plan.**

In a paper entitled, *Wilderness Crisis Management*, James Raffan proposed that a complete Crisis Management Plan is like a stable triangle with three sides or components. This model is applicable to any task, and I use it when guiding students on rock climbs or tackling a rope access job.

### 1. Skills and Knowledge

I devised this breakdown to emphasise the essential types of skill and knowledge.

(a) Primary - The skills and knowledge that keep you safe and prevent accidents - like proper gear use, knots, anchoring, belaying, rappelling, ascending, etc.

(b) Secondary - Emergency skills and knowledge that allow you to deal with emergencies - like pick-offs, hauls, first aid, CPR, and so forth.

(c) Tertiary - Skills and knowledge associated with following-up a close-call event or accident: how to investigate and document an event, identify contributory factors, learn from the incident, draft a report, and ultimately make effective recommendations and changes that will eliminate those contributory factors and thereby prevent similar events from ever happening again.

## 2. Hazard Awareness

Being aware of prevailing hazards is critical to workplace safety. Identifying potential contributory factors - things that could cause an accident, like fatigue, inclement weather conditions, poor lighting, lockout situations, confined spaces, communication problems, and so forth - and subsequently avoiding, eliminating or mitigating those hazards can go a long way in preventing close calls and accidents. Here are some other examples of hazard awareness: the need for edge padding, sun screen, and specialised PPE; the presence of toxic and biological hazards; details pertaining to electrical grounding and wet work; and the effect of chemicals on gear. The trick is to be vigilant and objective. Even conditions that seem merely inconvenient at the outset may escalate into full-blown hazards. Prevention is the most important part of workplace crisis management.

## 3. An Emergency Plan

But having an emergency plan in place is important as well. If something does go wrong, everyone involved should have a clear understanding of how to deal with the situation. Who will do what? How with the injured party be accessed, immobilised, lowered or raised, and evacuated? Where are the emergency equipment and first aid kit stored? How do you contact emergency services and get the injured party to the closest medical centre? Are there any mitigating factors, like hazardous materials or a power failure, and how do you deal with them? Of course written emergency policies and procedures are required, and all rope access personnel should learn and practice emergency procedures.

- **Rescue - E.N.A.B.L.E.**

Here is a simple procedural mnemonic I follow when teaching and planning rescue procedures. It's a handy system for rope access emergency situations.

**E** = Equipment - Assemble all the gear you will need in a safe staging and command area.

**N** = Near-Edge Safety - Wear your harness and helmet. Clip in near the danger of fall area.

**A** = Anchors - Identify and establish all of the anchor points you will need.

**B** = Belays - Set-up all of the safety ropes and backup belays required.

**L** = Lowering and Lifting Systems - Build the rescue system, which must be reversible.

**E** = Execute and End - Check the system, perform the rescue, and clear all personnel and gear from the rescue site.

- **Strong, secure, redundant anchors are the foundation of the entire safety system.**

If you do not have good anchors, the rest of your system is unreliable because a chain is only as strong as its weakest link.

In industrial situations, potential anchor points are often divided into two categories:

**Structural** - Steel girders and framework components of a building or tower. A single point is sufficient as an anchor point.

**Secure** - Solid anchor points that are not primary frame work components. These might include solid, metal railings and stairs, support brackets and eyebolts. Of course considerable judgement must be used with this type of anchor, and the workers need to evaluate each potential anchor point and have specialised

knowledge of the structures and equipment involved. At least two secure points must be connected to create something equivalent to a structural anchor point.

Of course steel anchor slings and appropriate padding are essential,

especially when using anything with edges.

In wilderness climbing and rescue practices there are several useful anchoring mnemonics, which can be applied to workplace rope access tasks. Here is one:

### **Anchoring Principles: S.E.R.E.N.E. I.D.E.A.S.**

<b>SOLID</b>	= STRONG AND SECURE
<b>EQUALIZED</b>	= ANCHORS SHARE THE LOAD
<b>REDUNDANT</b>	= EVERYTHING IS DOUBLED
<b>EASY</b>	= SIMPLE AND FAST TO SET UP
<b>NO EXTENSION</b>	= MINIMIZE POTENTIAL SHOCK LOADS
<b>EFFICIENT</b>	= MINIMAL FRICTION AND TWISTING
<b>INTEGRATED</b>	= EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED
<b>DIRECTION OF FORCE</b>	= ANCHOR, BELAYER, CLIMBER ALIGNED (ABC)
<b>ELIMINATE BIG FORCES</b>	= AVOID PULLEY EFFECTS
<b>ANGLES SMALL</b>	= LESS THAN FORTY-FIVE DEGREES
<b>STANDARDIZED</b>	= RECOGNIZABLE AND VERSATILE TECHNIQUES

As some of these details emphasise, anchor and system set-ups must eliminate unnecessary increases or multiplication of forces - things like high fall impacts, large load angles which create large force vectors, pulley effects that multiply the initial load, and critical system components that do not absorb shock in a resilient manner

- **Use two ropes.**

Redundancy means an extra margin of safety. Contemporary practices recognise the need for two ropes: a main support or working line, and a backup line in case the main line fails. Similarly, two Horizontal Life Lines (HLL) for Tyrolean Traverse Lines for Telfers and Highlines are more effective than one - although many folks still rely on a single

HLL with back-up Tag Lines or Pilot Lines.

- **Create friction to lower, reduce friction to raise.**

When lowering or belaying another worker or a load of materials, friction is essential, and there are a variety of techniques and devices available. In general, working with gravity is the best strategy. But working at height often entails climbing a fixed line or raising a load. Lifting another person or an industrial load is much harder, and the key is to minimise friction and use a mechanical advantage. It is obvious that high-efficiency pulleys are necessary when performing hauls, but there are other subtleties that deserve attention. Make sure the lines do not rub against

beams and edges, and keep the system clean and uncluttered so that there is no twisting in the system and there is no unnecessary rope-on-rope friction. As well, give yourself plenty of space to operate the haul system, even if it means redirecting the haul line with an additional anchor point and pulley to a more advantageous location.

- **Keep records.**

Keep track of all equipment. Retain purchase invoices and maintain accurate equipment logs to track how each item is used. Inspect gear regularly and note any damage or wear. Most important, retire gear when suspect and follow manufacturer's guidelines regarding longevity, care and retirement.

Furthermore, as Tony Fisher recommends, keep records of your work. This is important from a business and legal standpoint, and it is also important to keep records of your work and professional experiences for insurance and certification purposes.

- **Get proper training and gain experience under safe supervision.**

Anyone contemplating rope access work should get proper training and certification. However, I firmly believe that a piece of paper is not enough. Training and certification are no substitutes for experience and common sense. These can be acquired only by logging many hours on rope. Work with experienced rope access people. Gain experience safely.

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## **Short CV**

My background includes more than forty years of rock and ice climbing, wilderness rescue, industrial rescue, confined space rescue, rigging and rope access, stage and stunt rigging, challenge courses (aka aerial or ropes courses), square-rigged sailing vessels, arborist techniques, and miscellaneous climbing and rope-related activities throughout North America, with some experience in Morocco and Korea.

- A Past President and Founding Member of the IGKT.
- Society of Professional Rope Access Technicians certified rope access technicians and evaluator.
- Certified Ontario Rock Climbing Association Level II climbing instructor.

# Turk's Head Cross

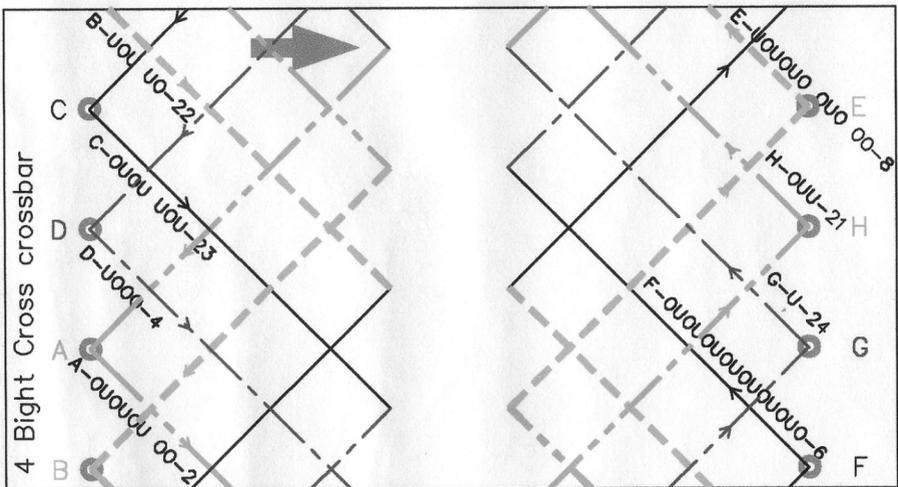
by Patrick Ducey

This is a loom that I have created to tie a four bight Turk's head cross, which resembles Ashley #1397. However, there are some notable differences between this knot, and Ashley #1397. Most obvious is the addition of a 3L x 8B Turk's head at the bottom of the knot that makes a nice base. Also, Ashley #1397 has a six bight Turk's head used in the upright, and four bight Turk's Heads for the cross members. I think this makes Ashley #1397 look non-symmetrical. This four bight cross has a nice symmetrical look about it, and will stand unaided.

I would hate to think that anyone would take a pair of scissors to an issue of *Knotted Matters*, so please make a copy of this page before you cut out the guides. I have drawn each lead through the knot as a different line type, so if you have a black and white copy, it will still be easy to follow.

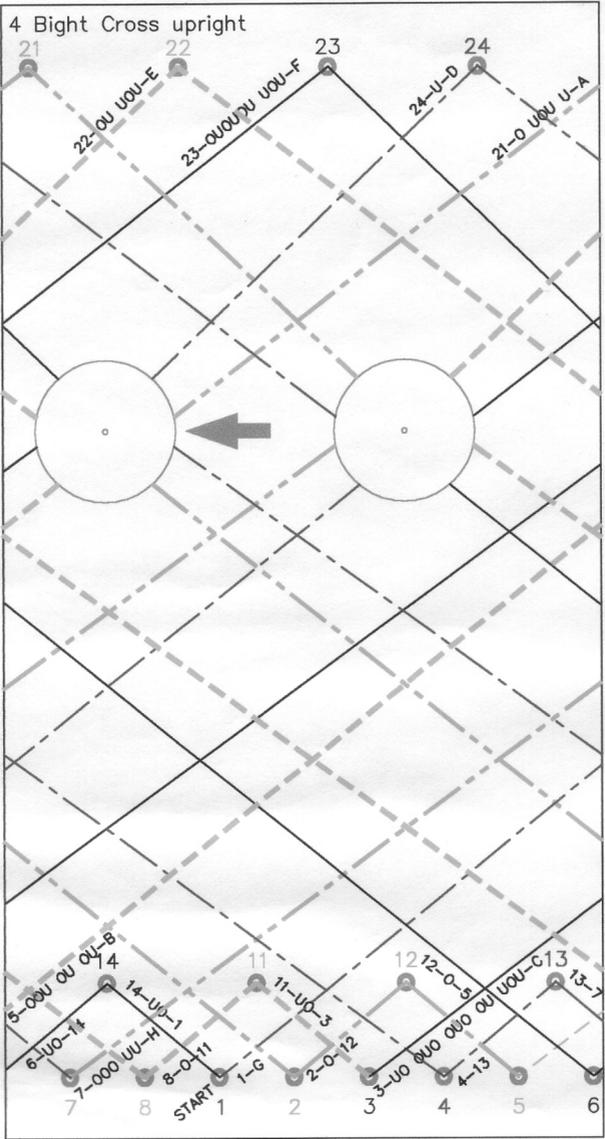
To make this loom I have used PVC pipe in English dimensions. The upright is 8" (200mm) long of 1" class 200 pipe, which has an OD of 1 5/16" (33mm). The crossbar is 5" (125mm) of 3/4" Schedule 40 pipe, which has an OD of 7/8" (22mm). I then tape the paper to the PVC so I have a nice drill guide. I drilled the large hole in the upright with a 1" (25mm) hole saw. The nail holes are sized for the brads I used. I stuffed newspaper into the pipe to hold the nails steady.

It takes about two fathoms of rope to tie one pass through the loom. Line up the arrows, tie off at 1, and follow the instructions to the next nail. Each nail has instructions on the over (O) and under (U) sequence to the next nail. When you have tied your knot, take out the nails, slide out the cross bar, and carefully tighten it up. I typically hide



the ends in the upright, with one coming out the top, and one coming out the bottom.

*Members who wish to obtain a copy of the guide to make this Turk's head should contact the author (address in the Membership Handbook) - Ed.*





# Branch Lines

## East Anglia Branch

Eighteen members, friends and associates attended our autumn meeting at Stowmarket on Saturday 23rd. October 2004 which was managed, chaired and presided over by our inimitable stalwart and colourful associate 'Tuffy' Turner from Battisford, near Stowmarket, Suffolk; who is relieving me of some of the responsibility owing to other equally pressing matters in my life and onset of growing old!

New member Timothy Lupton and keen guest/friend Sara Rae from Bury St. Edmunds area were welcomed to the meeting and notable member Richard Hopkins from Keynsham, Bristol, was also made welcome.

Our time honoured and long standing founder member of the Guild, Des Pawson; presented the much looked forward to, talk and demonstration about Chest Becketts and Handles. Des displayed a large variety of chest-becketts that included a pair of becketts on a small sea chest. He presented two rope-grommet becketts mounted in wooden cleats, one of which was carved in the shape of a human hand! It is believed that one of the becketts was at least 150 years old.

Des explained that really elaborate chest becketts were a sort of advertisement or certificate in days gone by; to the proficiency of the craftsman's skill in matters relating to rigging and seamanship. Apparently both the French and Royal Navy issued plain chest becketts and then individuals customised and embellished them to their own taste and to prove their proficiency and inspire others!

Des and helpers demonstrated how to prepare, form and twist the wire core heart method of forming the chest becket handles made up of the bale (wire strop or the selvagee strop method), bolt and the pinked leather washers, knots and sennets mounted on wooden cleats etc, see Ashley page 572. Then discussed differing methods of fattening up the centre area of the becket described as 'puddening' or making a 'mouse' in Ashley. Various methods of final coverings by needle hitching; ringbolt hitching/coxcombing and coachwhipping were discussed!

Norman Southgate, Geoffrey Youngman, Europa Dawson, Brian Walsh and Tuffy Turner all produced examples of their work and explained their methods of working.

Our next meeting was agreed for Saturday 9th April 2005 at the same venue.

*John Halifax*

## Pacific Americas Branch

Greetings from the PAB. We have gotten through the dark of winter and even begin to see some sunshine. Most of our interaction has been by phone, internet and snail mail. We have added quite a number of new members, referred

through the web site [www.igkt-pab.org](http://www.igkt-pab.org) or by word of mouth. We have also been active on the IGKT web site and another site [www.khww.net](http://www.khww.net) that is hosted by non-member Brian Kidd. Brian has set up a Forum with an IGKT-PAB page. Of course he links to our web site and to the international site so there is one more place where newcomers can find the Guild.

I've also been writing to some members through the message service at the IGKT site, to continue discussions out of the Forum.

The major thrust of my PAB efforts this quarter has been to assist our AGM chairman, Dennis Armstrong, with our plans for July.

This year our AGM will be held in Seattle Washington at the Center for Wooden Boats, during their 4th of July Festival. This is a wonderfully salty venue. We will have covered display space and both an indoor and outdoor demonstration/lecture stage. Our AGM dinner and meeting will be Saturday evening, July 2nd.

Seattle has many events going on over the holiday weekend so families and spouses can find other entertainment away from the AGM and Wooden Boat Festival. Farmers markets are open through the summer and the city will be bustling (which is good reason to consider booking your lodging soon). The fireworks shows on the night of July 4th are spectacular and we will have the perfect location to view them from. Airport shuttle service is abundant.

Our 2004 AGM was in Bellingham WA (about as far north as you can get in the USA). Now we will move 96 miles southerly, in Seattle for 2005. I hope to move the AGM another 190 miles

further southerly for 2006. I am already prompting one of our Portland area members to consider being 2006 AGM chair. It is difficult to provide opportunity for members along 3500 miles of coastline to feel connected. I hope the "traveling AGM" will help.

We would like to offer an open invitation for any and all to visit us at the AGM weekend. We would very much like to add your displays or demonstrations to the program. Join us for dinner if you can. I am sure everyone will find something to enjoy in the area, from whale watching and float plane trips to wine tasting and fine dining... and of course plenty of time with a bit of string!

*Roy Chapman*

## **Dutch Branch**

The year 2004 has come to an end and therefore I would like to give you a brief overview of what we have been up to this year.

Many of you probably already know that the Dutch branch is having its meetings in Rotterdam, every last Saturday of the month.

We come together in a small boat called *De Hoop* which is located on the quay side of the open air harbour museum (near Rotterdam Maritime Museum).

The Dutch branch is actually a guest of the museum, and we can only say that we are very lucky to have this little ship at our disposal for a meeting place.

Last year was also a very active year. A slightly increasing number of

members showed up at the meetings throughout the year which is a nice thing to see.

We also had a couple of guests visiting from abroad, and I must say that it was very pleasant to have met Dave Walker and Roger Riddle from the UK and Willy Willaert and Ronnie from Belgium. Thank you all for taking the trouble coming to Holland to visit one of our branch meetings !

At the meetings we normally discuss all kinds of topics, we do not have an agenda which means that the atmosphere is a very informal one. If you would like to see what our meetings are like, please take a look at the photo albums on the internet.

We also would like you to know that we are still busy with making preparations for the 2005 AGM in Holland. Everything is looking good so far. All available information about this meeting can be found on the internet (Dutch and English text) at [www.dsv.nl/~salmaj](http://www.dsv.nl/~salmaj) If you have any questions about the 2005 meeting, please send an e-mail to Willeke van der Ham at [willeke@knopen.ismijnhobby.nl](mailto:willeke@knopen.ismijnhobby.nl).

She will be more than happy to answer them.

Last but not least we would like to wish all of you a very happy 2005.

*André van der Salm*

## **German Branch**

### **German IGKT-Members Meeting**

20th - 22nd May 2005

Square-rigger *Passat*

Passat-Hafen Lübeck-Travemuende,  
Priwall

The majestic Flying-P-Liner was built in 1911 by Blohm & Voss Shipyard, Hamburg. She served for many years in the "Saltpetre and Corn-Trade" from Germany to Chile and Australia. *Passat* has been one of the best square-riggers that battled "The Horn" in record times. Still today she is main point of interest at the harbour front of Travemuende for tourists and visitors.

We, the German IGKT members, would be glad to have Knot Tyers of the IGKT with us and to welcome them onboard the *Passat*.

Bunks on board are 13,00 euros per person and night, breakfast can be ordered for 7.50 euros.

For further arrangements please contact Peter Willems

Email: [peter@fancyworks.de](mailto:peter@fancyworks.de)

*Peter Willems*

## **French Branch**

Our French Meeting will be taking place in the fishing port of Granville, in Mont St Michel Bay, on the border between Normandy and Brittany, on the 26th and 27th March.

All knotters of any nationality are most welcome, the more the merrier and please contact me by 'phone (+33) 02 33 07 67 04 or email [igktfrance@club-internet.fr](mailto:igktfrance@club-internet.fr) or by letter: Graham macLachlan, La Verneuillerie, 50200 ANCTEVILLE, France. I look forward to seeing you!

I would also like to thank on behalf of all our French and France-based colleagues the West Country Knotters for having moved their AGM to the first Saturday of April, so that their members will be freed from their duties to participate in our AGM which takes

place on the last weekend of March. This is a very kind gesture and we appreciate it immensely: thanks. What a good idea and opportunity for all branches of the IGKT. Maybe each branch could submit "empirical" AGM dates (e.g. 3rd Saturday of November) to the secretary for publication in the form of a list in the Membership Handbook. In that way everyone would know where they stood and it would give some more freedom to branches to juggle their AGMs and to branch members to visit other branch AGM's. Is this already in the pipeline?

All in all IGKT France had a quiet year 2004. Everyone seems to have been very busy with work, but we did manage to have a very successful AGM in Rouen Maritime Museum with about 30 participants including some new faces.

The IGKTF's own newsletter was inaugurated and we shall try our utmost to increase twofold the frequency of publication, thus making the Sac de noeuds a bi-annual affair! The big thing in the summer was the IGKTF stand at the Douarnenez boat festival taking place over four days in July. Organized by our Luc, a healthy number of members took part to present a dynamic knotting activity to the visiting public, and we had good fun too. The final bit of national knotting for us was in the form of the Paris Boat Show where as usual our friend Pat Moreau provided a pivotal point of call on the Voile & Voiliers magazine stand, conviviality assured.

*Graham macLachlan*

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## 5th French Knotting Weekend

**26th & 27th March 2005**

**Location: Station Voile Granville-Chausey, 269 boulevard des Amiraux,  
50440 GRANVILLE, France**

General contact: Graham macLachlan  
Tel: 02 33 07 67 04; Email: [igktfrance@club-internet.fr](mailto:igktfrance@club-internet.fr)

Accommodation on site: Valerie  
Tel: 02 33 91 22 60 FAX: 02 33 50 51 99  
Email: [crng50.valerie@wanadoo.fr](mailto:crng50.valerie@wanadoo.fr)

Calling France: prefix 00 33 and knock off the first 0 of your correspondent's number

Communication: Valerie can take calls in English

Accommodation Prices:  
One night in shared room (4 people): 13 euros/person  
One night in shared room (2 people): 17 euros/person  
Breakfast: 3.65 euros/person  
Other meals: 11.25 euros/person  
Hire of bedclothes for stay: 4 euros/person (or bring sleeping-bags)

# Knot Tyers Meeting in Holland,

**7-9 October 2005**

Some Dutch members of the IGKT are now organising a Knot Tyers Meeting in Holland for the year 2005.

The date for this event will be from Friday 7th till Sunday 9th of October. We are hoping to have the building of Scouting Jutters Willemsoord (<http://users.scoutnet.nl/~jutters-willemsoord/>) in Den Helder at our disposal. It is a great venue for this event. The program for the three days is as follows

## **Friday:**

Welcome to guests

Time to talk

A visit to the fender making workshop of Boatswain Peter Wezelman

Dinner in an “informal atmosphere” if possible, start setting up the exhibition tables

## **Saturday :**

Arrival of members and other interested people, coffee and setting up the exhibition.

11:00 Meeting for IGKT members.

11:30 - 12:00 Portrait of a knot tyer and perhaps a short lecture/workshop.

12:30 Lunch.

After lunch the Scouting HQ will be open to the public.

In the afternoon there will be several, more or less formal, workshops / presentations. Because of the bilingual character of the meeting most presentations will have a particularly visual character.

16:30 Raffle. Prizes donated by the members.

19:00 Knot Tyers Dinner.

## **Sunday :**

Workshops (if the venue is still at our disposal.)

Saying goodbye and for those who want to: a “guided tour” to one of the many attractions in Holland like *De Hoop* in Rotterdam, Batavia Yard, a ropewalk or even a windmill to name a few. Members of IGKT will be your guide.

The organisation would like to invite IGKT members to come to Holland for a whole week if possible. You have a splendid opportunity to combine this meeting with a short holiday. There are beds available to those who do not want to stay in a hotel, so a place for the night shouldn't be a problem.

As soon as there is new information it will be made available on the website -(<http://www.dsv.nl/~salmaj>). For questions and/or reactions please write an e-mail to Willeke: [willeke@knopen.ismijnhobby.nl](mailto:willeke@knopen.ismijnhobby.nl)

# 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 Bitter End?

When working with rope, one end is referred to as the "working end". In looking through knotting books and IGKT articles, another end of the rope is called the "bitter end".

I thought the working end was pretty self explanatory. And the bitter end would be the other end of the rope - i.e. non-working end. However in going through some of the knot books the working end and the bitter end refer to the same end of the rope. So which is it? Is the end with which you are working the "working end"? And the other unused end of the rope the "bitter end"? Or are both the "working end" and the "bitter end" one and the same?

*Webster's Dictionary* gives a definition of the bitter end as, "the inboard end of a ship's anchoring cable". Also, "the turn of cable around the bitts".

In the movie, *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*, they sang a song of which some of the lyrics were....

He's my friend and he'll stay my friend, unto the bitter end, even though the bitter end is a million miles away!

Has anyone else heard this song? Anyone know the title?

**Glenn Dickey  
Troy, Ohio, USA**

## Bell Ropes

I've got a party interested in a new bell tower pull rope, so am looking for a sketch, specification, or description for a bell tower bell pull rope. It should list the lengths, diameters, and materials for the different portions of the assembly, relative to the size of the bell, height of tower, etc. Several years ago, a fellow whose family owned a company in England still making bell tower pull ropes on rope walks had a website listing some of this data. The website appears to have been taken down. If anyone might know the name of this company, I would like to hear from you.

**Greg Davis  
Crowley, Texas, USA**

## Siberian Knot

In response to John Woosey's letter in KM 85, may I point you in the direction of Ray Mears' book *Bushcraft*. In addition to other fascinating information on a range of survival topics, this book contains a section on bushcraft knots, with other references scattered throughout.

The knot to which you are referring could have been one of two knots. The first is shown on page 133 and is called the 'Evenk slippery figure-of-eight hitch' (the Evenk are nomadic Siberian tribesmen), which is effectively a slipped figure-of-eight knot tied around the standing part. The other is shown on page 153, and is called the 'Evenk overhand hitch'. This is basically a slip knot tied about the standing part.

Both knots can, with practise, be tied in a matter of moments, as the Evenk live in freezing environments, which means that their knots are all quick-tie, to minimise

the time they must have their hands out of their thick mittens for, and are all quick-release for the same reason.

As a matter of fact, the book is worth trawling through, as it contains several other unusual knots, which I have not seen elsewhere.

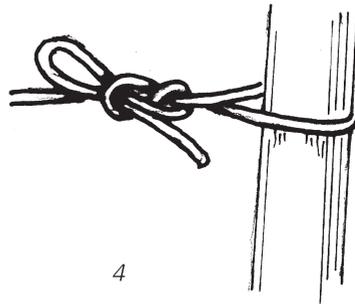
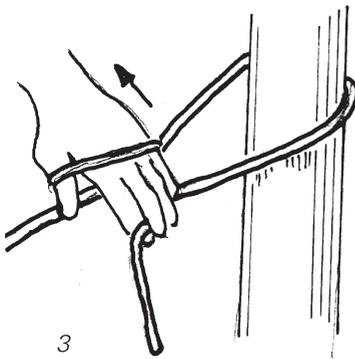
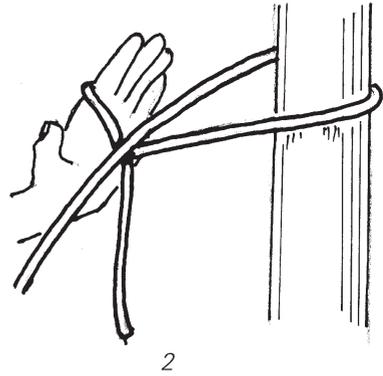
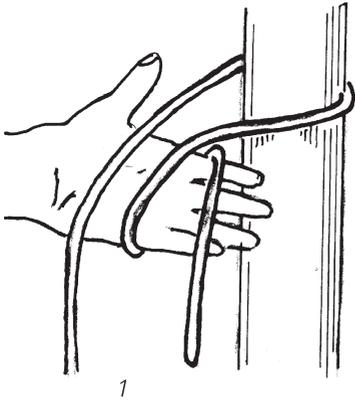
I hope that this answers your question.

*Reuben Green  
East Hanney, Oxfordshire, UK*

## More Siberian Knot

In answer to John Woosey's letter in KM85 about the above knot, I was first shown how to tie it when attending a bushcraft course run by Ray Mears seven years ago.

He was shown how to tie the knot by the Evenk reindeer herders of Siberia, who use it to tie up reindeer when used



as a beast of burden, as it can be untied quickly using mittens.

When putting up a shelter or hammock, it is used in combination with a slipped adjustable hitch.

The Evenk knot is tied first on one tree, the slipped adjustable knot is tied on another then drawn up to tighten the cord. Slipped hitches are used so that the shelter/hammock can be taken down with just a tug.

The only publication in which I have seen the knot is Ray Mears own book *Essential Bushcraft*, Hodder and Stoughton, ISBN 0340 829710.

The knot is shown on p135. The book also has a useful chapter on cordage, producing it from natural materials such as nettle fibre, also knots bends and hitches.

*Tom Crittenden  
Edenbridge, Kent, UK*

## **Just Say Yes or No!**

As Guild members we all receive our copies of *Knotting Matters*, and get information that leads us to take interest in other aspects of knotting. These articles are great because they frequently show us subjects that we are not familiar with and give us opportunities to extend our own knotting skills.

We also get the chance to attend two international meetings a year and the UK has fifteen branches that hold regular meetings. At any of these meetings there are always people who are ready to share their knowledge and give help if you have any knotting problems. I have spoken to various members who have tried to arrange meetings at a local level with different degrees of success. One

of the biggest problems seems to be that they are unable to get much response from the letters that they send out.

As a member who has attended some local meetings I would like to encourage any member who has not taken the opportunity to support a local branch, and give a positive response to any contacts you may receive. It would be helpful to Branch organizers and the Guild as a whole, if they received response to these letters: -whether it be to say “no thank you, please cross me off your branch list” or “yes I’m interested, please keep me informed of meetings.

Most people attending meetings get great enjoyment and inspiration and keep coming back for more. Next time you receive notice of a meeting why not respond.

Thank You

*Name and Address supplied*

## **Nothing New?**

Jim Caswell’s article on Turk’s heads (KM85) is very interesting. However I hope that he will not be offended if I point out that his approach is not new. The use of a pegged former, the rule of leads divided by two equals working end advance, and the calculation of types of crossings, were all published in the article in KM54 and the page of printer’s errors in KM56.

*John Constable  
Pershore, Worcestershire, UK*

## **What is it Called?**

The last issue of *Knotting Matters* (p33 ‘Today we have the naming of parts’) had a figure with the question “What is it called?” A figure like that is referred

to as a “cont” whatever. ABOK shows a cont splice.

Dana’s *The Seaman’s Friend* has “contline” a similar space created when casks are loaded bilge to bilge. Biddlecombe in *The Art Of Rigging* lists contline as the line between the strands of rope. You inspect for a proper eye splice by opening the legs and seeing if the cont hole is there. The last is how bosun Elms taught me as a cadet back in ‘45. Along with that goes the caution that sailors are frequently earthy speakers so draw your own conclusions.

As an aside, I would vote for correctly naming knots according to how they are called in their associated field of use, as sea related or climbing related, etc. It would be nice to have knots also described by how they were used in their respective places.

*David Damon  
Jacksonville, Florida, USA*

## News Snippet

Geoffrey Budworth, IGKT member and freelance author, received a rare present on Christmas Eve 2004 from the Open University...a B.Sc. degree. This the outcome of five years of extra-mural undergraduate biology studies focussing on: evolution, form & function; brain & behaviour; and animal physiology. He will receive his award formally in academic dress at a degree ceremony in April 2005.

Geoffrey wryly told us; ‘I was immature and woolly-headed at school; and now it seems, as a 68-year-old alumnus, I have become a late (very late) developer.’

## Computer Knots?

On the subject of illustrating, and belonging to the majority of the populace who are completely inept at drawing, I’m wondering if anyone within the guild is aware of any computer generated software capable of producing respectable examples of free-hand drawings of knots and ropework.

Around four years ago, I came across an intriguing item on p52 of Cyrus day’s *The Art of Knotting and Splicing* (1947 edition), which I had on loan from the local library. It piqued my curiosity enough to photocopy the item, and the recent article on the Hanson Patent Knot (KM84) reminded me of it. To quote, ‘Hikoichiro Mizugoshi of Tokyo patented the granny knot in 1940 as a knot for producing a net with square meshes (US Patent No. 2,194,865). I don’t know just what this proves about the alertness of the Patent Office’.

By the way, did you see the very good review of the *Ashley Book of Knots* that appeared in *The Times* newspaper just before Christmas (Saturday 18th December). Guild member, Philippe Petit, who lives in New York, wrote it. The Guild gets a good mention in a terrific review.

*Thomas Simpson  
South Shields, UK*

## Correction

KM85, page 33, ‘Today We Have Naming of Parts...’, line 2, *amend* ‘flicrum’ *to read* ‘philtrum’. (My mistake! - GB)

*[Older IGKT members may recognise the title to that piece as a quotation from the poem by Henry Reed about an army instructor’s dialogue to recruits on the rifle.]*

# Knotting Diary

## AGM & 1/2 YEARLY MEETING

### 23rd AGM

13th - 15th May 2005  
Beale Park, Pangbourne.  
Contact: Ken Nelson  
Tel: 07836 722198

### Half-Yearly Meeting

8th October 2005  
Den Helder, Netherlands  
Contact: Willeke van der Ham  
Tel: 025 121 3285

## BRANCH MEETINGS

### 5th French Knotting Weekend

26th - 27th March 2005  
Station Voile Granville-Chausey,  
269 boulevard des Amiraux,  
50440 GRANVILLE, France  
Contact: Graham macLachlan  
Tel: 02 33 07 67 04  
Email: igktfrance@club-internet.fr

### East Anglian Branch

9th April 2005  
Museum of East Anglian Life  
Stowmarket, Suffolk  
Contact: John Halifax  
Tel: 01502 519123

### Midlands Branch

11th April 2005  
The Old Swan (Ma Pardoes), Halesowen  
Road, Halesowen  
Contact Nick Jones  
Tel: 01384 377499

### German IGKT-Members Meeting

20th - 22nd May 2005  
Square-rigger *Passat*  
Passat-Hafen Lübeck-Travemuende, Priwall  
Contact: Peter Willems  
Tel: 04 61 73176  
Email: peter@fancyworks.de

### Pacific-Americas AGM

2nd July 2005  
Center for Wooden Boats  
Seattle, Washington  
Contact: Dennis Armstrong

### SECRETARY:

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Uckfield,  
Sussex, TN22 2BY  
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E-mail: nigel@nigelharding.demon.co.uk

### Guild Annual Subscription rates:

Juniors	£5
Seniors	£18
Families	£22

Corporate by arrangement  
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card or Visa. Taxpayers in UK - we would pre-  
fer a covenanted subscription.

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### Advertising Rates:

	Members	Non-members
Full page	£32	£49
Half page	£19	£22
Quarter Page	£10	£15

# Guild Supplies

## Price List 2005

<b>Item</b>	<b>Price</b>
<b>Geoffrey Budworth</b>	
Knotlore - 2 a miscellany of quotes from fact and fiction	£2.50
The Knot Book	£4.99
Plaited Moebius Bands	£2.50
Knot Rhymes and Reasons	£1.50
<b>Brian Field</b>	
Breastplate Designs	£3.50*
Concerning Crosses	£2.00*
Eric Franklin	
Turksheads the Traditional Way	£1.50 *
Nylon Novelties	£2.00 *
<b>Stuart Grainger</b>	
Knotcraft	£4.00 *
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
<b>Colin Jones</b>	
The DIY Book of Fenders	£9.95
<b>Harold Scott</b>	
A Guide to the Multi, Single-Strand Cruciform Turk's Head	£4.00
<b>Skip Pennock</b>	
Decorative Woven Flat Knots	£12.50*
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Knotted Matters copies of past editions	£2.50
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Cheques payable to IGKT, or simply send your credit card details	
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