

# Knotting Matters

The Magazine of the International Guild of Knot Tyers



Issue 89  
December 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<br>(excludes stamp pad)   | £4.00        |
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| Long, dark blue with Guild Logo in gold  | £8.95        |
| <b>Badges - all with Guild Logo</b>  |              |
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# Knotting Matters

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

**Issue No. 89**

**President: Ken Yalden  
Secretary: Nigel Harding  
Editor: Colin Grundy  
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*Exquisitly made chest becket by  
Barry Brown*

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# Presidents Letter

This year the 'Immortal Memory' of Horatio Lord Nelson has not been far from the thoughts of many Englishmen and sailors world wide, this being the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar.

What has that got to do with knot tying, I hear some say?

Well, many organisers of events celebrating the battle have finally worked out that sailors hoisted flags, sang songs and fired cannons; and with some prompting they also realised that sailors tied knots as well. What a busy year we have had, I shall journal some of the events.

Having blown the cobwebs off my memory of 45 years ago when first I worked with serving and heaving mallets, Gordon Perry and myself made a set of rigging shrouds to scale, with the rattling down being completed by the IGKT Solent Branch. This was part of the Flower Festival commemorating Trafalgar which was being placed in St Mary's Church in the Castle Portchester. One memory worth keeping was the sight of IGKT members in the church sitting on a step in a row with their backs against the altar rail, bent to the task of tying Turk's heads onto lantern supports.

The Royal Navy Boatswains Association had their annual meeting and dinner on 21st May in Torquay, with a toast to the 'Immortal Memory'. Two Guild members, Ken Elliott and Bob Pearce presented the poem 'Why Knot' by Dee. With Bob performing animated knot tying that stopped people in their tracks.

For the 5th International Festival of

the Sea at the end of June, Portsmouth was host to a large international fleet of both warships and tall ships. The Guild was represented in at least four areas of this four-day event. Gordon and the Solent Branch where on the South Railway Jetty, with myself and the Starbolins a mile away on 'West Wall'. (Did I say Big Show!)

One Guild member was knot tying on the ship the *Grand Turk*, and during his rest time joined in with the Starbolins tying more knots for the public. Derrick Babington was busy afloat pulling the *Victory Cutter*, not to forget the hard work over the years by Johnny Hayes and the Victory Riggers preparing for this day. Many contacts were made, and possibly we have a new Russian speaking member.

One tall ship worthy of note was the *Gloria Buquescucla* ARC, from Columbia, because of the blending of maritime and national craft skills the ships fancy ropework was outstanding; so with high hopes we left guild literature and details of our web page.

Meanwhile, while we were about our business in the UK, work was in place overseas to make ready for the IGKT NAB 2005, which was to be held on the waterfront, South Carolina, USA. I joined company to travel out with some of our members, with Bruce and Linda Turley arriving a day or so before we did.

With supper out of the way we returned to the hotel at 10.50pm only to find bright lights shinning out of a window and a low hubbub of voices, which could only mean one thing knot tyers!! I stepped though the door and



it was just like a family gathering, with conversations picked up that had been started two years before.

In the middle of the room on a table was a 'rats nest' of small stuff. Which was placed there by Keith Hudson. These were the off cuts from R & W Ropes in New Bedford, and this was perfect therapy for knot tyers and a wonderful way of bonding. With knot tyers hands in a mass of coloured string up to their elbows the various conversations floated over the table whilst sorting it out. Over the next day various members turned up, including my friend John Cushman with his wife Carole together with a supply of 'Sam Adams' just in case I had forgotten what it was like.

The AGM on the Friday included reports from the various branches attending the meeting. As well as giving an International welcome I reiterated my thoughts already covered in KM87 p3. During the AGM it was proposed that the Guild, in the name of NAB should sponsor the project *Spirit of South Carolina* which is a pilot schooner being built for sail training. Raising funds with the 'Plank Ownership' program, at \$50 a foot of plank.

A hat was passed round there and then, on counting up it was found that we fell short by just a bit, so Skip Dickens very 'generously' said we could do it again, so we passed the hat one more time. It now shows on the ship's log that the IGKT has sponsored five foot of planking, well done NAB.

On Saturday night in the boat yard beside the *Spirit of South Carolina* we had our Knot Supper. Then Tuesday saw us back in the yard again to witness the first plank laid.

All in all it was an excellent meeting one you should all be proud of. The

raffle raised some \$750, with many items contributed by Bud Brewer, and I won one of your spikes, which is in my ditty bag right now. So thanks Bud.

On our way home we met at Newark airport a man with a Turk's head on his wrist, Patrick Buttner. So as knot tyers do, we started chatting and with a bit of luck we will shortly have a new member in San Francisco.

Having shaken off any jet lag we just had time for the October Solent Branch meeting were we welcomed two fresh faces, thanks to the 'Festival of the Sea'. Then it was time to repack our bags and travel to Den Helder in the Netherlands for the IGKT Half Year meeting. Lesley and I flew with out any hitches to Amsterdam from Bournemouth (nearest and cheapest); others unfortunately experienced problems with fog, vehicle breakdown and unexploded WW2 bomb (an English one) on the runway at Amsterdam airport.

Set up day was Friday- again walking through the door was just like the meeting in South Carolina, the family coming together with a wonderful *bonhomie* with faces from Italy, Belgium, Germany and the UK and that was just the day before the meeting. We had a visit in the afternoon to a fender maker who makes the rope 'rubbingstrake' which is fitted on the Dutch work boat that has been donated to the *Spirit of South Carolina* project, small world. The fender makers son, Joost Wezelman was a very able knot tyer and delighted to see the workshop full of like minded folk, and was thrilled to have Des Pawson sign his book. He then attended the meeting the next day, and stayed all day.

At the half yearly meeting I was pleased to be able to pass on the regards

from Garry Sessions and others from the NAB meeting. After the formal meeting I was chatting with Dave Walker, Charlie Tyrrell and Nicola Chandler, regarding our Youth Forum. Concerning possible plans for a page in KM also one on our Web Site.

....A special request from me to the gifted writers....

I know you can write six pages on one knot, BUT can you lower your sights and produce one page that Nicola can use for the Youth Forum, in other words K.I.S.S.

The Knot Supper was excellent, held on a floating restaurant- with good food and good company and a toast to absent friends all following a good meeting.

Afterwards Lesley and I managed to fit in a culture visit to Amsterdam, catching up on diamonds and art, subjects missed as a young sailor but Lesley soon educated me! We also visited Floris Hin who made us very welcome, unfortunately he had been working at a wooden boat show during the main meeting so couldn't attend.

Back in England, all this still leaving time for me to visit Lincoln with Gordon, the Two Boatswains and the rigging, for a black tie and medals 'Trafalgar Day Dinner' on the 21st, raising funds for the King George V fund for sailors. With a 07-00 start the following morning to put up the rigging and stand, adjacent to the *Brayford*, ready for a small boat Trafalgar re-enactment. It was a good little show with folk keen to join the Guild.

During the dinner I was asked, "What's happening in San Francisco next June, Ken?" So it sounds like I had better start saving again.

**Ken Yalden**

# Col's Comment

Please look at page 19 of this issue of *Knotting Matters*. Guild member Nicola Chandler has been tasked with producing ideas for our younger members. The idea being that as well as appearing in this magazine, the simple project will also be posted on the Guild website. Hopefully, this will encourage new and younger people to join the Guild - none of us are getting any younger, so we need new blood.

Her first offering is from a previous *Knotting Matters*, by Tim Field - 'Solomon Man'. So please, help Nicola by sending in your contributions.

It's now only just over a year away to 2K7, the 25th anniversary of the Guild. Our President, Ken Yalden, the Council and the Solent Branch are busy beavering away to make this a momentous occasion and once more take knot tying to the public around the world. Our last big event, 2K2 at Fareham was an enjoyable and memorable time. Start making your plans now!

Finally, on a personal note, I was honoured to receive a Diploma in Lifelong Learning from Coventry University at their recent graduation ceremony. What has this to do with knot tying? Well, among the subjects studied to gain the award, were writing, journalism and *Photoshop*, all of which are used in the production of your magazine.

# STUART GRAINGER (deceased) - a tribute

compiled by Geoffrey Budworth

*'I would like to urge everyone who knows about knots to use their imagination to establish new uses for the old techniques, because I believe it is only in that way that the beautiful old knots can be brought back to real life outside museums.'*

(Stuart Grainger, 15th May 1985)

Stuart Grainger, who died on 30th June 2005 at the age of 72, was a qualified foreign-going Master Mariner who served 10 years at sea in the merchant navy before he 'swallowed the anchor' and settled back home in the UK. Here he became a freelance author and craftsman of some renown.

He devised, made and sold maritime safety equipment (including the lifejackets used aboard the ocean liner QE2); aids for the disabled; and pyrography ware; also ornamental knotted products as diverse as door stops, key fobs and fenders, lamps and laundry baskets. He contributed regularly to such magazines as 'Popular Crafts' and 'Woodworker'. And he wrote books: *Making Aids for Disabled Living* (1981); *An Introduction to Pyrography* (1982); and *Handmade Helps for Disabled Living* (1990).

In 1984 Stuart was persuaded by Glad Findlay<sup>IGKT</sup> (Surrey, UK) to join the International Guild of Knot Tyers. As he already belonged to more than enough organisations, including the Devon Guild of Craftsmen, and was Chairman of Governors for a large comprehensive school, he agreed with a smidgen of reluctance to enrol for a trial period of twelve months - and remained a member

for 21 years. He played an active role in the Knotting Extravaganza (1986) and the Bradford Textile Art Festival (1990); and he served as IGKT President in 1991 and 1992, presiding over the Guild's 10th AGM, a milestone birthday celebrated with champagne and cake. Then he nominated, as his successor to the presidency, the individual who had brought him into it, Glad Findley.

He could be a hard-headed businessman when dealing with the Guild; but he shared tips and techniques freely with individual members, while others from whom he sought advice and guidance discovered a generous and helpful collaborator.

To those who never met him, Stuart is known for his unbeatable books and booklets on knotting: *Solly's Single-Strand Star & Variations on the Theme* (1985); *Ropefolk* (1986); *Knotcraft* (1989); *Turkshead Alternatives* (1991); *Knotted Fabrics* (1997) and *Creative Ropecraft* (2000); all of which are enhanced by his masterful illustrations. Several of these publications continue to generate cash for the Guild and most, if not all, of them remain in print. He also created for the Guild more than one series of postcards featuring knots and an IGKT promotional leaflet or flyer.

He drew and donated an improved cover design for 'Knotting Matters', which first appeared in April 1987 [KM #19] and was used for 16 years until June 2002. He wrote more than 30 articles and letters for the magazine, including two instalments titled 'The Business of Knotting' [KM #19 & 20] that distilled - for those members contemplating making money from their knot work - his own hard-won experience of selling direct to the customer, or through retailers and by mail order.

Stuart invented the 'Gripspike' (or 'Gripfid'), made in polished brass with a Turk's head handle, which was a tool to cherish. He produced several small batches, selling some and giving away others. So useful have they proved themselves for basketry, knotting, ply-splitting, weaving and other handicrafts, that some individuals now make their own. One day - who knows - they may be mass-produced.

In the late 1980s he began to teach himself computer graphics and went on to create one of the first videos of animated knots with commentary and background music.

Stuart believed that the best knot work deserved a place alongside other traditional crafts - such as cabinet making, embroidery, lace making, pottery, and weaving - whose practitioners are duly acclaimed; but, when he tried to promote it, he came up against a substantial minority of established craftsmen who did not wish to know about the IGKT. In the summer of 1988 he initiated a debate to change our name to 'The International Knot Crafts Guild'. The Committee (as our Council was then called) voted 7-to-3 in favour of putting this motion to a vote by the members, whose conservative

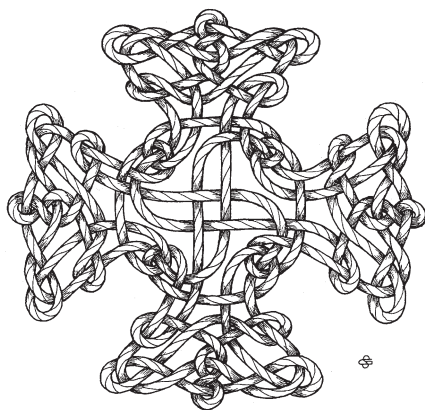
opposition then defeated it.

On the issue of an IGKT education-&-training scheme, he was against any complex system of examinations, badges and diplomas, because it would be expensive to administer and manage. There was, in his experience, miniscule demand for knotting courses. What beginners needed, he declared, were sources of published information, supported - if possible - by personal advice on a one-to-one basis.

Stuart's final years were blighted by a physical deterioration which - sadly - robbed him of the ability to do the creative work at which he had been so adept and accomplished.

He is survived by his wife Ann, their son and daughter Edward and Claire, and four grandchildren; but he will also be remembered by knotting devotees around the world.

[This has been a wholly personal perspective on Stuart Grainger. Those Guild members who recall other aspects, that I have omitted or overlooked, may now like to let us know their own reminiscences through the letter pages of KM.]





# **Denis ('Spud') Murphy**

## **Lieutenant Commander, Royal Navy (Retired)**

### **(1923 - 2005)**

**D**enis 'Spud' Murphy died in hospital at Plymouth on 27th June 2005 after a period of declining health. He has left an enduring legacy, however, in the fields of knotting and Sea Cadet Corps activity! As a very practical man of action and deed in both spheres he set an example that may well prove to be unique. For most of the time that we in knotting knew him he worked industriously, and with admirable skill, without calling attention to himself. From time to time though, we had a glimpse of the contribution he was making, and had made over a long period, through the masterly organisation of an event or the presentation of yet another magnificent knotboard.

Here in the UK's West Country Branch of the IGKT we presented 'Spud' with a certificate of life membership some years ago in recognition of his generous and tireless work. It was only in the last couple of years that he found the journey from Plymouth to our meeting place near Bristol more than he could manage. Within the current Branch membership we have the member (another Plymothian) who introduced 'Spud' to the existence, and immediate membership, of the Guild in the mid '80s. She used to run across him at sales where he and his wife Barbara would be searching for miniature perfume bottles to be decorated with his magnificent needle hitching. There is also another highly skilled member who joined with equal alacrity as soon as he learned about the Guild from 'Spud' who by then was an ambassador for it. Their point of initial contact was The Sea Cadet Corps

(SCC) but a shared passion for knots soon developed.

'Spud' was a Naval man through and through having joined the Royal Navy as a young man where he entered the Gunnery Branch. Throughout WWII he spent most of his time at sea in the Mediterranean and suffered hearing impairment from constant close exposure to the sound of gunfire. Later, he secured a commission and reached the rank of Lieutenant Commander by the time he retired from a long Naval career. From that background he developed the strong sense of commitment that led eventually to his contribution to the SCC and towards the well-being and training of young people. His last appointment was as South West Region District Officer for the SCC. Every SCC unit in the South West was given a knotboard that he had made, and he maintained close links with the Corps long after his official retirement. A fine example of 'Spud's' artistry can be found by a visit to *T.S. Weston* in Weston-super-Mare where it hangs in the entrance hall. He also presented (I quote) stunning knotboards to various Naval Establishments. *HMS Raleigh* has several in Vigilant Block, which is the main Sea Cadet Training Section of the establishment.

'Spud's' wife and constant companion pre-deceased him, to his enduring sadness. He is survived by three children, three grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

We recognise a great loss!

***Vernon Hughes...on behalf of all  
members of the West Country Branch.***

# Notes from the Secretary's Blotter

After what has been a relatively dry and warm spring and summer, it has now started to rain, and is continuing to rain, and rain. The answer to that of course, is to bury myself in my little office, and start jotting down lots of notes on my blotter, so, as they used to say on the wireless many years ago, 'If you are sitting comfortably, then I shall begin'

My summer has been quite busy, what with visiting France and taking an ancient knot tyer to inspect the ropewalk in Rochforte, then back at work for a week and on to Turkey to attend a friends wedding. Then, in June we were invited to spend some time with some friends in Sweden. Naturally I tried to make contact with those knot tyers in the vicinity, but as it was midsummer I suspect that they were all enjoying the festivities. As the seasons rolled on, October arrived, and it was off the Den Helder in the Netherlands for the Autumn meeting, which was hosted by the Dutch Branch. At this gathering the attendance figures were the best that we have ever had for an Autumn meeting, and this was despite the problems experienced whilst travelling from the UK. Whilst I was on my way to the meeting the cam belt on my car broke, wrecking the engine, and I had to hire a car to complete the journey. There was also the fog, which had settled on Schipol Airport, disrupting all incoming flights.

Having told you all about my summer, if any of you have had to wait an eternity for a reply to their correspondence, that

was the reason why, - and if you are still waiting, - perhaps you had better write to me again.

As one would expect, the increase in membership fees has not proved popular. I did invite comments from the membership earlier in the year, and that resulted in just two communications, one in favour and one against. We do value your comments on the way the Council runs the Guild, for without them, we can only hope that we are doing it 'for better', rather than 'for worse'.

Changing the subject completely, there are in circulation a number of colourful postcards bearing the Guild's website address. If you have any of these, please destroy them as the website quoted no longer exists. It did have a link to our new site, thus for a long time it continued to work, however this is no longer the case. For those of you who may have forgotten, the website address is [www.igkt.net](http://www.igkt.net). For those who are much more Internet literate than myself, you will have noticed that we don't have a Chat Room facility. Until we create our own we have been offered the use of Dan Callahan's, which is accessed via the link from our own site where Gordon Perry, recently elected Council Member and once editor of *Knotting Matters*, is hosting a three-hour session on a Sunday afternoon. Gordon has also agreed to take on the duties of 'Overseas Co-ordinator', a role originally created by Brian Field.

As with the obsolete postcards, some members are still handing out

membership leaflets with the old subscription rates quoted. I do have plenty of the current leaflets should you require them, alternatively, if you do wish to use up your old stock, would you please ensure that the fees have been corrected.

It is now less than two years away from our twenty-fifth birthday, and mention has been made of a celebration to mark the event. If this is to be anything like the success of the 20th birthday, then we are looking for some serious sponsorship to finance it. If you have any suggestions, contacts, donations, etc, I would be very grateful if you would let me know; otherwise the event may not be financially viable.

I must take this opportunity to mention the passing of two well-known members of the Guild, Denis Murphy MBE and Stuart Grainger. Both members served

the Council for several years, Denis having been the Secretary of the South West Peninsular Branch, whilst Stuart was the President of the IGBT from 1992-4. In addition I must mention Ian Murray who died some time ago, as he left the Guild a small legacy in his will. We thank him for that, and leave you with the thought that you might consider doing something similar.

Finally, Darrell McNurlan had made an instructional CD called *Basic Knot Tying*, which aims to teach children eight basic knots. He has just a few left and is making them available to members for \$10 (US dollars) plus postage. If you would like one, please contact Darrell at 27469 El Rancho Dr, Sun City, CA 92586, or ring him on 619 992 3487, (unfortunately his name does not appear in the 2004/5 edition of the handbook).

*Nigel Harding*

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## Inca bean counters used string theory

**T**he mystery of a string-based communication system used by the Incas may be unravelling the enigmatic string bundles, known as khipu, consist of a strand from which dangle sometimes thousands of subsidiary strings, each featuring a bewildering array of knots. Of the 600 or so khipu known, most date from between AD 1400 and 1500, but a few are 1000 years old. Spanish colonial documents suggest that khipu were used to keep records and communicate messages. But academics have puzzled over how to read the information. The Incas did not develop writing.

Now anthropologist Gary Urton and mathematician Carrie Brezine at Harvard University think they have begun to unpick how the knotty code was used. The pair built a database containing key information about individual khipu, such as the number and position of subsidiary strings and the number and position of knots.

They used this to search for similarities between 21 khipu discovered in 1956 at the key Incan administrative base of Puruchuco, near Lima in Peru. They found that information encoded in some of the more complex khipu appeared to be a collation of information from strands on simpler ones.

“Local accountants would forward information on accomplished tasks upward through the hierarchy, with information at each successive level representing the summation of accounts from the levels below,” Urton says.

*New Scientist* - 20 August 2005

# Ropy Chess Set - Part 4

by Frank Brown

## Rook

**T**his piece is the only one in my little creation that is made using classical fancy knotting. It is constructed using eight lengths of cord, which are seized in the middle. Commence crowning for four rows and then construct one of the diamond sinnet knots as shown in Fig 4-1. The particular knot chosen is entirely up to the knoter, and I found the one shown, being a variation on a wall knot, suitable

for the purpose. The ends are drawn into the body of the piece and cut to length. This completes the base of the piece as seen in

Remove the seizing and crown four more rows. Commence tying a star knot as shown in Figs 4-3 and 4-4. I suggest that any knoter who is unfamiliar with this knot consult *The Harrison Book of Knots* by P.P.O.Harrison, ABOK 727, or Stuart Grainger's *Creative Knotcraft* for details.

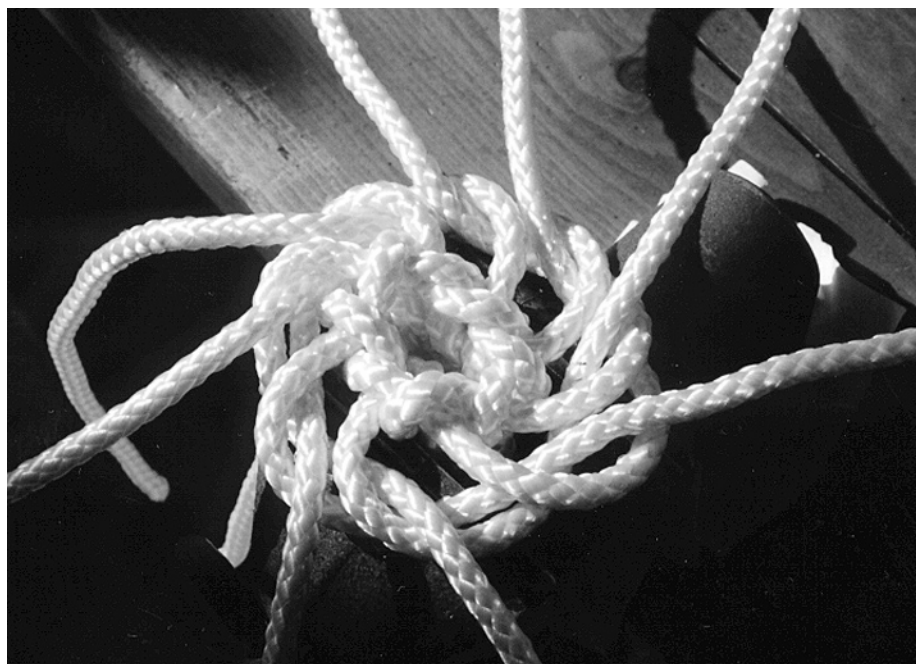
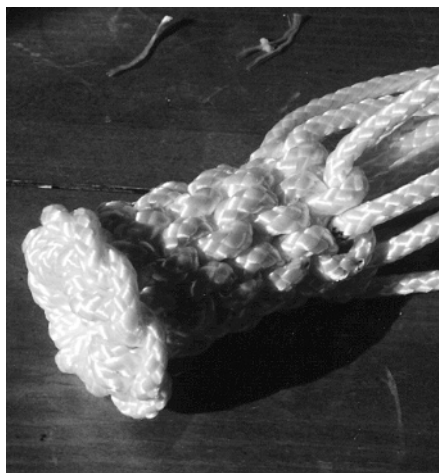


Fig 4-1



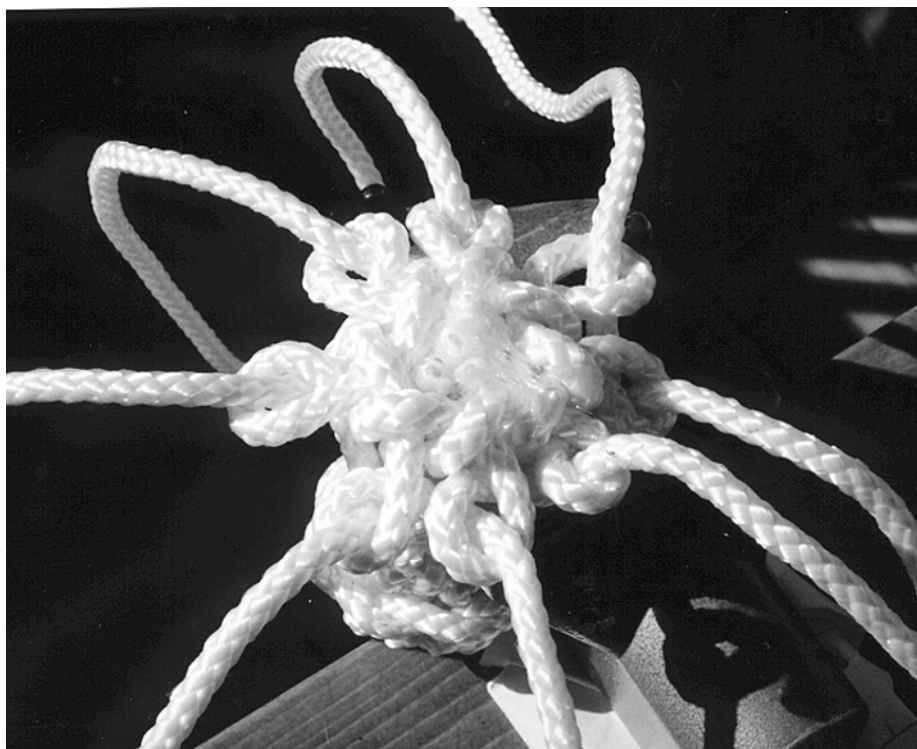


*Fig 4-2*

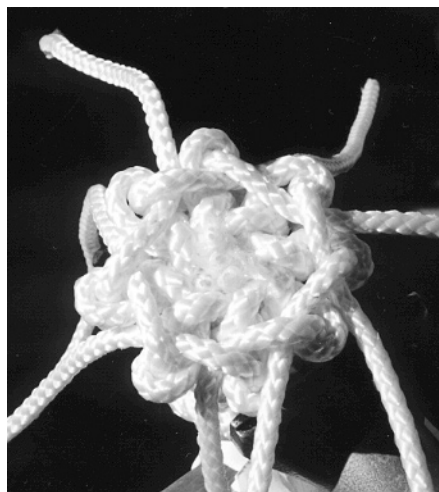
I apologize unreservedly for not giving detailed instructions for this knot, but those in references are far better than any I could deliver. The finished piece, sans base, is shown in Fig 4-5.

### **Bases, board and box.**

Once all the pieces have been constructed, they are glued to their bases. I made mine from 25-mm pine dowel, cut using a jig to obtain uniform thickness. After sanding, the pieces were glued to the bases using a 5-minute Araldite. Each piece was then painted with enamel, using a pin and string to hang each one out to dry. Two coats appeared to give an acceptable finish.



*Fig 4-3*



*Fig 4-4*

The board was made for a piece of 12-mm MDF allowing for 40-mm squares with shallow saw cuts delineating the squares. This action helped considerably when painting as it aided the placement of the masking tape. The squares required about three coats of black or white paint and were finished with a satin Estapol spray. To give the board a very ropey appearance I glued lengths



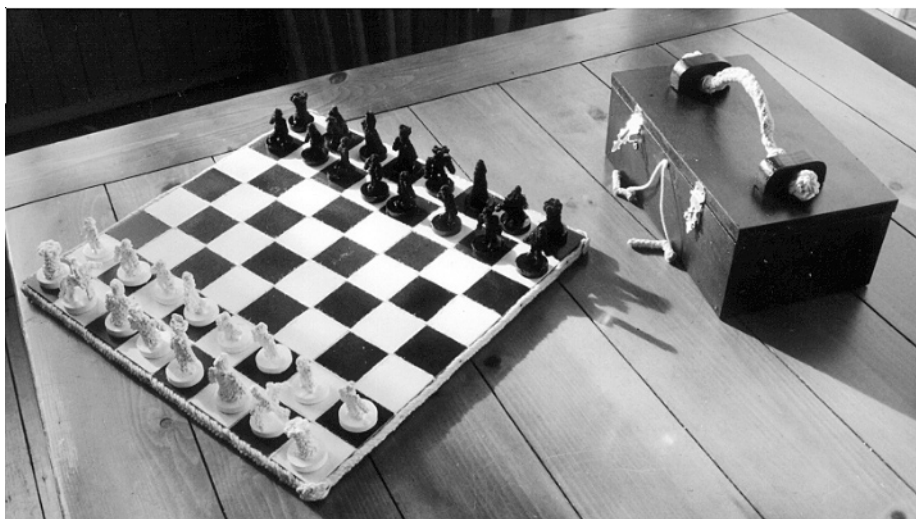
*Fig 4-5*

of string in the saw cuts and covered the edges with a 7 strand flat plait. The corners were covered with ocean plait mats. All these decorations were made using the same netting line.

The box was also constructed from the MDF. It is approximately 240 x 140 x 90 mm. A simple becket handle, well soaked in paint and sinnet "pins" for the brass latches finished the rope work. The



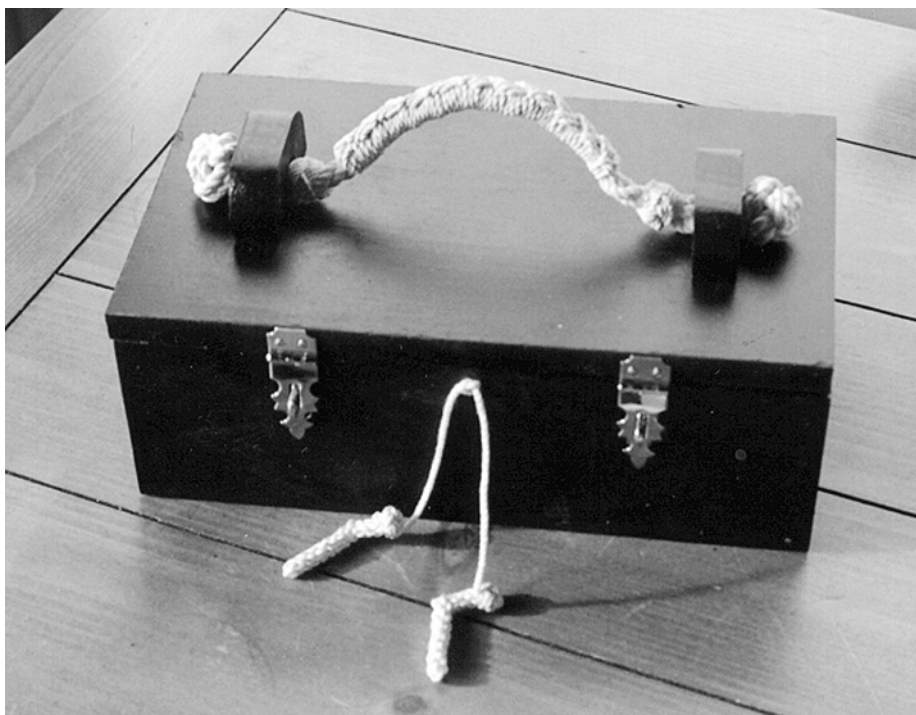
*Fig 4-6*



*Fig 4-7*

results are shown in Figs 4-6,4-7 and 4-8.

All I have to do now is learn how to play.



# No Sailor, I

by 'Jennifer Wren'

'You must have been a sailor,'  
They declare with a know-all air,  
Every time I knot a rope's end  
With my customary care.

It irks me, I can tell you,  
This mentality so threadbare,  
Which assumes one must go boating  
To be able to tie knot ware.

Save for trawlermen at sea,  
Knot-tying mariners are rare;  
But knots thrive on terra firma  
From the Falklands to Finisterre.

On land in every region,  
Be it Benares or Bonaire,  
There are those who practise knotting  
With accomplished savoir faire.

In Chad, Chile and China,  
Not to mention London's Mayfair,  
In Vietnam and the Vatican,  
They're knot-adept, I dare swear.

Most ardent knottologists  
(As I am sure you are aware)  
Live out their lubberly lives on land,  
And acquire all their knotting there.

So I rebut the slander,  
That would brand me a bêche de mer.  
I learnt my knots from a how-to book.  
Now the truth is out ... I don't care!

# Knotmaster Series No. 27

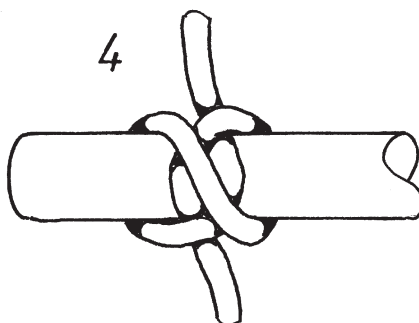
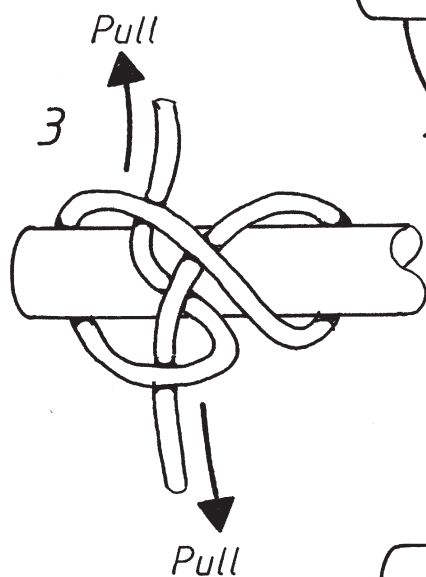
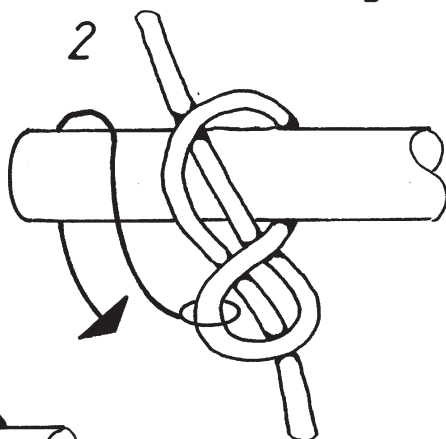
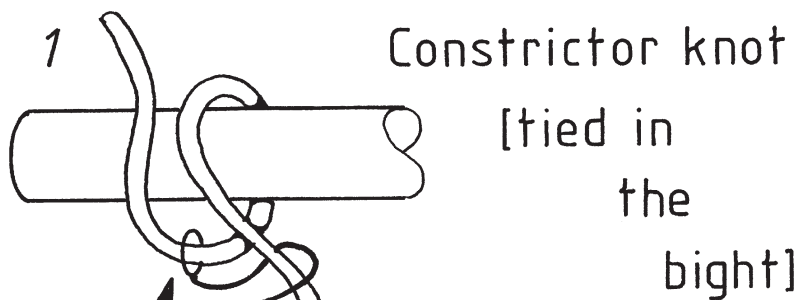
*'Knotting ventured,  
knotting gained.'*

## Constrictor knot (tied in the bight)

On rare occasions, when it is necessary to attach this knot to a ring or endless rail, it must be tied with a working end. Otherwise tying it in the bight like this is quicker, slicker and preferable.

Take a turn with the working end around whatever is to be seized (fig. 1). Pull out a bight, as shown (fig. 2), and pass the loop over the end of the foundation (fig. 3). Tighten (fig. 4).





# 2K7 Walking Staff

by Glen A Dickey

In KM, Issue 81, December 2003, Page 45, John Kennaugh said “Today Scouts no longer feel embarrassed if they are not too good at knots.” This is true in the United States also. But with 2K7 on the horizon I feel the IGKT has an opportunity to make some positive changes. I’ve found that if you ask a Scout if he would like to learn how to tie an ocean plait or a Turk’s head knot, the answer is usually no. But if you show some of your knot work at a Scouting function, you will be surrounded with Scouts eager to learn how to tie the knots you’ve displayed.

One of the most successful projects for Scouting I’ve been able to do is a walking staff decorated with hitching. It’s something that catches the eye of everyone who sees it, isn’t that hard to do, is inexpensive for the Scouts’ wallet, and is a great conversation piece. Scouters who complete

their walking staff show them with pride. After making a staff, Scouts are eager to learn other knots and work on knotting projects.

I use standard walking staff blanks which are available at Scouting stores throughout the USA. They are inexpensive and readily available to the scouting community. The cordage I use is cotton cordage which can be hard to find, but a 5/32” nylon cord is available at most hardware stores in the USA and can be substituted. I choose to varnish the wood on my staffs to give them a dark color which makes a pleasant contrast to the light colored nylon or cotton cordage.

The cotton cordage is a #72 three stranded cotton cord. It is slightly smaller in diameter than the 5/32” nylon cord. The cotton works up well and can be varnished when it’s done. This “freezes” the hitching making it into a permanent handle for the staff, sealing



out dirt and moisture.

For the top part of my walking staff I use ringbolt hitching. (See photograph #1) To start the ringbolt hitching, I first lay down three parallel strands and cover the three strands with French / grapevine hitching for about an inch. (See photograph #2) This gives me a secure base from which to start. I



then ringbolt hitch for about a foot, lay the three strands as flat as I can, and French/grapevine hitch for another inch to secure the end of the ringbolt hitching. After this part is completed, I use a paint brush and all of the hitching is “painted” with two coats of Minwax® clear Polycrylic varnish allowing the cotton dry thoroughly between each coat. The cotton soaks up the varnish, becomes impervious to water, and fuses the hitching to the walking staff.

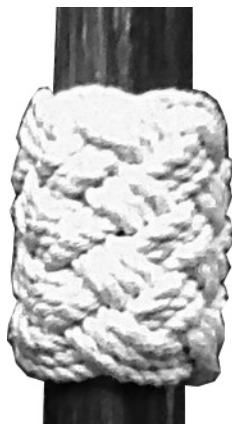


After the two coats of varnish have dried, the French / grapevine hitching at each end of the ringbolt hitching is covered with a 3L4B Turk’s head knot. (Also called the Boy Scout woggle.) The woggles are “painted” with two coats of varnish and after they have thoroughly dried, all of the hitching is covered with a final coat of varnish.



Scouts who have seen a walking staff finished this way are eager to make their own. They are amazed that most of the knotting has been done with just half hitches. The walking staff serves as a great teaching tool, is not too difficult to teach, and is a tremendous confidence builder for young Scouts. Most importantly, after they’ve made their own staff, they can truthfully say they’ve done the work. I’ve had over 70 Scouts who have made their own staff using ringbolt hitching. Most were more than eager to go on and learn other knotting projects.

Of course, as a Scout leader and trainer, I have to be able to do more than my students. In addition to the ringbolt hitching, my walking staff has the following:  
St. Mary’s hitching, (See picture #3)



Zigzag hitching. (See picture #4)  
An 8L5B Turk’s head. (See picture #5)

The ends of each section of hitching are covered with different Turk’s heads. These help teach the scouts there are different types of Turk’s heads which sometimes lead into further knot projects.

I hope fellow IGBT members will find this an acceptable project and can use it as a way to get Scouts interested in knotting for 2K7.

Ringbolt hitching: Descriptions of how to tie ringbolt hitching can be found in: *The Pocket Guide to Knots & Splices* by Des Pawson (ISBN: 007858-1446-9) page 93. ABOK #3605.

Note: What I call ringbolt hitching is also called common three stranded coxcomb. This is documented in *The Handbook of Knots* by Raoul Graumont. Published by Cornell Maritime Press. Page 115, knot number 344, plate 36. ISBN: 0-87033-030-6. It is also documented in *Fisherman’s Knots and Nets* by Raoul Graumont and Ehner Wenstrom. Published by Cornell Maritime Press. Page 119, knot number 248, plate 49.

ISBN: 0-87033-024-1

French or grapevine hitching: Also called French whipping or Grapevine whipping. ABOK #3450.

St. Mary's hitching:

(Also found in *The Pocket Guide to Knots & Splices* by Des Pawson (ISBN: 007858-1446-9) on page 95.

ABOK - explains this as French whipping with three strands but doesn't show it.

Zigzag hitching: ABOK #3610. Ashley explains this can be done with two to five strands.

Boy Scout Woggle: It is also a XLXB Turk's head. ABOK #1283.

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## NEWS REPORT

from our South of England stringer

There is a Norfolk-based wholesaler here in the UK who trades through 13 retail shops called Hawkin's Bazaar. These are currently located in towns and cities south of a line from Bristol to Norwich, although others are planned, and they sell a tempting range of traditional toys and novelties of the sort that grandparents recall from their own childhoods (and so cannot resist buying for their grandchildren).

Hawkin's cornucopia of a catalogue for Christmas 2005 features several new products, however, and these include three knot-tying kits - one for basic fishing knots; another for boating & sailing knots; and a third for rock climbing knots. Each kit comes in a slim display box measuring 6½ x 4½ x ½ inches, containing an instruction booklet for 16 knots, and two 24-inch x 5mm pieces of sheath-&-core cord, plus (depending upon the kit) either a giant blunt hook, a small cleat; or a miniature karabiner, with which to learn and practice the knotting.

These products, made in China, are manufactured for Hog Wild Inc.

([www.hogwildtoys.com](http://www.hogwildtoys.com)) and it looks as if inspiration for the contents may well have been one or other of the numerous knotting manuals compiled by IGKT members, although there is no printed acknowledgement to any particular source. The kits are basic but not bad, simple yet sufficient, well-made and worth the asking price of £4.99 each. I smiled at the disclaimer printed on two

of the three boxes (NOT the rock climbing one, which sensibly warns of potential hazards and the possibility of accidents or injuries) announcing: 'Hog Wild and its distributors are not responsible for the unbridled happiness caused by the use of this product.'

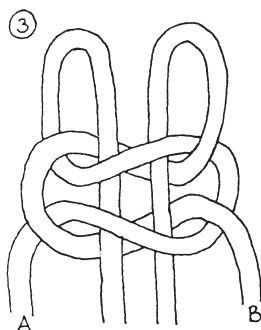
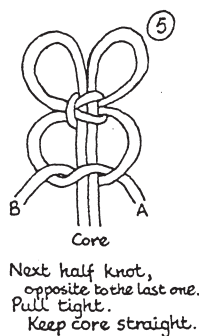
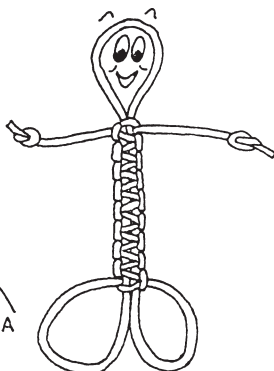
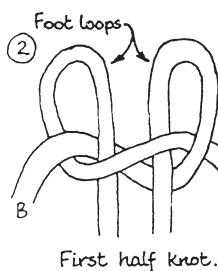
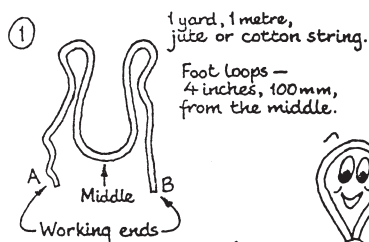
To obtain by mail order any one, two or all of these kits, contact Hawkin's Bazaar, St. Margaret, Harleston, Norfolk, IP20 0HN, England. Tel: +44 (0)870 429 4000; fax: 0870 444 6441; or point-&-click on [www.hawkin.com/shops](http://www.hawkin.com/shops) for new locations and special events; location maps; opening times; stock levels, quoting catalogue numbers EA-08694 (fishing knots); EA-08695 (climbing knots); and EA-08696 (sailing knots).



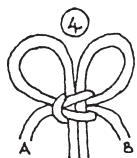


# The Solomon Man

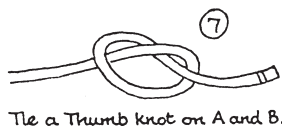
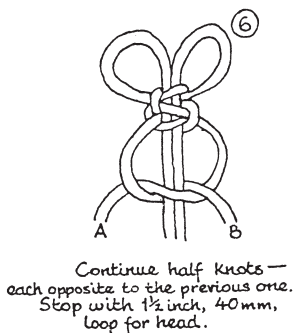
Here is something for the young or young at heart. This new page will be for the up and coming knot tyers amongst us. We will also publish it on our web site, so get all your friends to log on. First produced in *Knotting Matters*, issue 49, it is reproduced with kind permission of Tim Field



Second half knot,  
opposite to the first,  
one complete flat (square) knot.



Pull tight,  
leaving loops for feet.



TJF.

Try different materials and colours.  
Flat knots (square knots) on a core are also  
called Solomon bars — hence our friend's name.

# Who Was R. Scot Skirving?

by Des Pawson

Some of you will know of the little book *Wire Splicing* by R Scot Skirving, first published in 1932 by Brown Son & Ferguson and still in print today [although the last printing was 1980 it is still available] But who was R Scot Skirving?

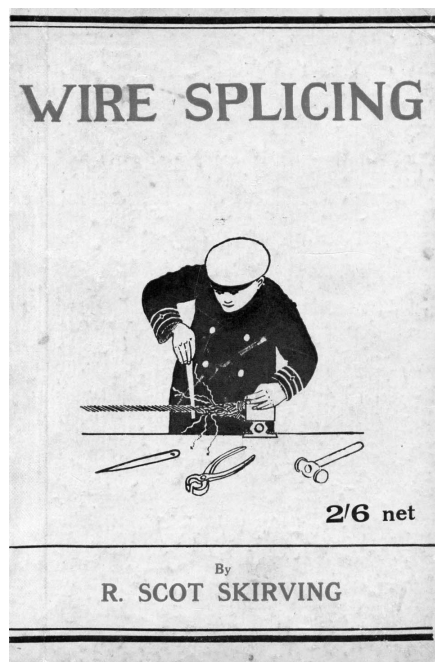
He was born in 1859 in Campton near Haddington in East Lothian Scotland. At the age of 12 he went to Eastman's Royal Naval Academy in Southsea [near Portsmouth, Hampshire, England] The idea was to join the Royal Navy as a cadet, but, due to a difficulty in getting a sponsor, he passed the upper age limit for joining as a cadet. Nevertheless, at the age of 14 he made a couple of voyages to Iceland in a small cargo ship before returning to England and joining the *Cadet Ship Conway*, then berthed at Birkenhead.

When he was 15 he became an apprentice in the sailing ship *Tantallon Castle*, visiting the Cape, Calcutta, New York, Australia and rounding the Horn. It was on his way back from Australia that he was taken ill with beri-beri and, at the age of 17 was invalided out of the Merchant Navy.

On his return to the UK he studied medicine at Edingburgh University On graduation, he discovered that yet again his age was against him. Being just under the required age of twenty-one he was unable to take up the post of House Physician at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary for which he had applied. Until he met this stipulation he studied additionally in Dublin and Vienna.

In 1883 he sailed for Australia on the emigrant barque *Ellora*. In Sydney he set up in private medical practice, and became honorary physician and later consulting physician at the Price Alfred Hospital, Sydney, a post he held for over 70 years. He served in South Africa in the Boer war and in the RAMC in London during the first world war. During his lifetime he published many papers on medical matters

He was still in medical practice when he died in Sydney on the 15th of July 1956, aged 96.



He never lost his love of the sea, and ships and owned a series of yachts in Sydney. He published his little book *Wire Splicing* in 1932, at the age of 73. The only clue to his medical background is perhaps the skiagram of an eye splice, that is the first illustration. A "Skiagram" is a photographic image produced on a radiosensitive surface, by radiation

other than visible light (especially by X-rays or gamma rays). About the time he wrote his *Wire Splicing* book he was also working on his memoirs, which were later edited by his grand daughter, Ann Macintosh and published under the title *Memoirs of Dr Robert Scot Skirving 1859-1956*, published by the Foreland Press, Sydney, in 1988.

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## Book Review

**Knots - A Complete Guide**, by Lindsey Philpott

first published (2004) by New Holland Publishers Ltd (London, Cape Town, Sydney, Auckland)

www.newhollandpublishers.com

ISBN 1 84330 455 4 (hardback)\*

ISBN 1 84330 456 2 (paperback)

\* UK price: £17.99

Lindsey is an avid knot tyer with a large knotting library at his Long Beach home, who has provided forensic knot analyses in several criminal cases. He is also a licensed US Coastguard captain, a voluntary rigger and mate aboard many of the square-rigged vessels in the Southern California area, and a Staff Commodore of two yacht clubs in Marina del Rey where he and his wife keep their own boat. He is also President of the Pacific Americas branch of the IGBT which he helped to found in 1997.

His glossy 160-page book - a sizeable 28.5cm x 22cm (11 x 8 7/8 inches) - is a first-rate effort of the kind we have come to expect from Guild members, containing a sensible selection of over 100 knots from the Aibright Special to the Zeppelin bend.

An opening section outlines the basics of cordage construction and use, care and coiling, with a brief history of

knotting, its tools and techniques.

The main contents are sorted into sections - stopper knots, ioops, hitches, bends, special knots, bindings, braids, splices -with tying instructions augmented by nearly 700 step-by-step, hands-on, full colour photographs. Extra advice, tips and lore appear in boxes outside the text. There is also a quick-reference system of icons or pictographs to indicate special applications (climbing, camping & outdoor pursuits, decorative, fishing, general purpose, and sailing).

Supplements include a glossary of terms (from 'Abseil' to 'Z-laid'); an index meticulously cross-referenced, but with two frustrating page numbers omitted.(insert:

Bunny-ears, see Figure-of-Eight Loop - page 54; French Bowline, see Portuguese Bowline - page 44); recommended further reading; and a bibliography (totalling nearly 70 books, ranging in dates from 1644 to 2003).

For anyone looking to buy their first, second or third knotting manual, this is as handsome and helpful a product as you will find anywhere. If you have seen it all before, but still buy knot books (because they contain knots), you ought perhaps to wait until they see this one reduced in price at a discount store.

**G.B.**



# Knot Gallery

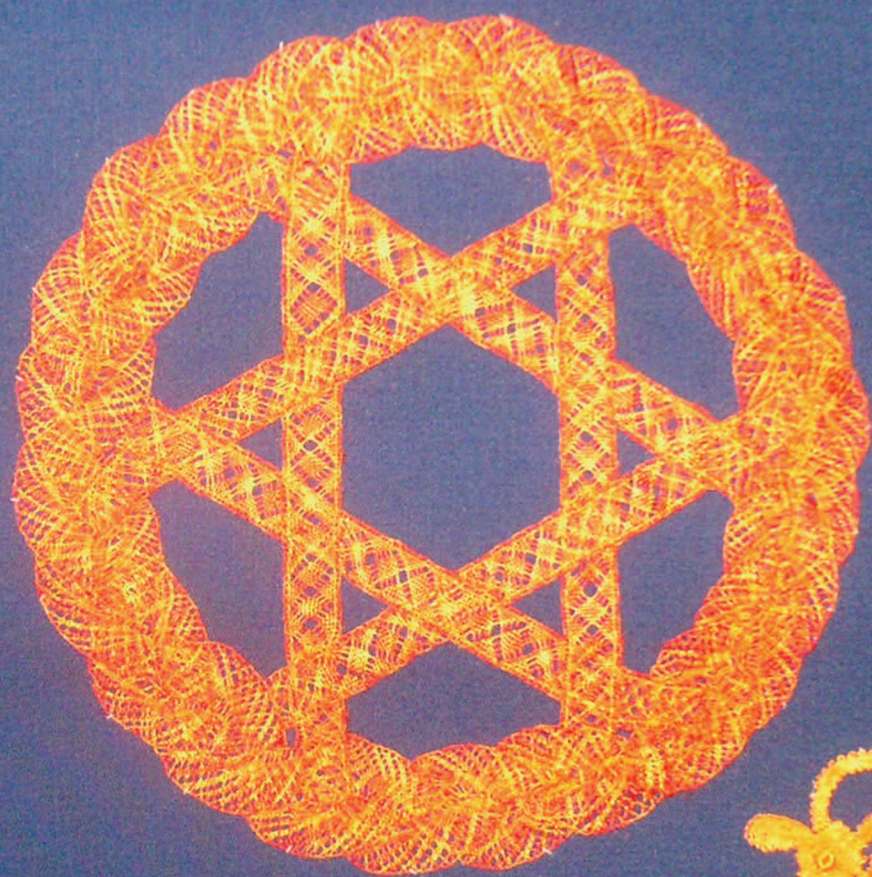


*Above - Taken at an archery tournament at Guildford, Sussex on 9/6/95 the property of Mrs Shirley Jones of Earley, Reading, Berks.  
Photos by Don Lewry (UK)*

*Facing - Sea chest constructed from mahogany by Gary Sessions (USA). Dimensions are 12.5 inches wide and 9.5 inches tall. The front of the chest is decorated with a carved eagle appliqué and two carved stars.*

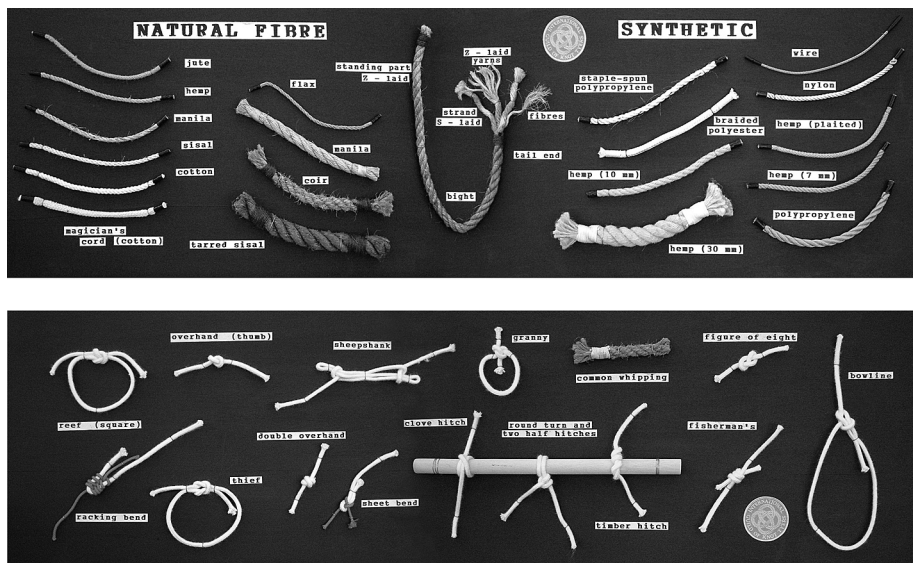
*Overleaf - Intricate lace work by Europa Chang Dawson (UK) from a design of 'Skip' Pennock (USA)*











*Above - Two knotboards made by Alan Hemmings (UK) for the Sherbourne Abbey Fete. The boards measure 5 foot 3 inches long and are mounted back to back on an easel.*

*Overleaf- A good example of practical rigging, serving an eye. Photo - Graham MacLachlan (France)*

*Facing - A two-tone boatswain's lanyard made with four strands by Robert Black (USA). The work consist of four-strand braids, Mathew Walker, Star and double diamond knots.*

*Back Cover - Members, Willeke van der Ham, Dave Walker, Gordon Perry and Colin Grundy enjoy a chat in the sunshine at the Guild AGM, Beale Park. Bill Meakin meanwhile spends his time working away at a hammock. Photo - Barry Brown*



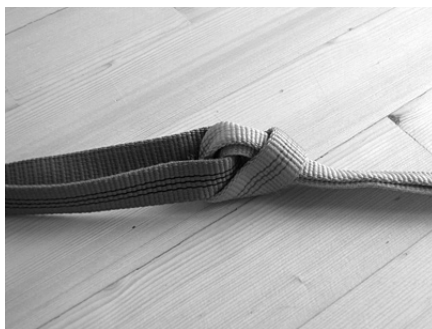


# Sling Bends for Climbers

by Joshua E. Buhl



*Figure 1 - a strop bend*



*Figure 2 - one sling "girth hitched" to the other*

The bending of two webbing slings is a frequent problem for climbers. Most often this is accomplished using a strop bend [3](Ashley #1493 [2]), or by “girth hitching” one sling to the other, as a climber would say, by which is meant a girth or ring hitch tied with one sling onto one strand of the other sling. The strop bend is topologically equivalent to a girth hitch but is tied and lies differently. The girth hitch often spills into a strop bend when pulled tight or tied quickly, and since these knots don’t lie well in webbing, it is sometimes difficult to say whether a given knot is a strop bend or a girth hitch. See figures 3 and 4.

The advantages of the strop bend and girth hitch are their ease of tying and absolute security. However, they have two disadvantages when tied in webbing: 1) there’s no canonical form and they don’t lie well in most forms, especially when tied quickly, and 2) they are not adjustable in length. Also, there

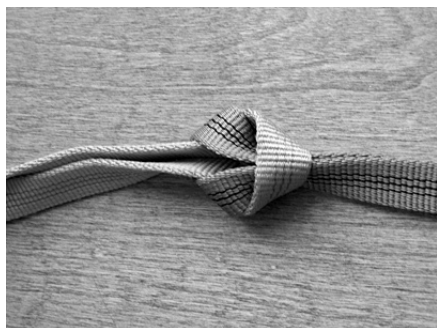
is the serious question of the strength of the strop bend and girth hitch when tied in webbing, as they tend to become very angular. Compare figures 3 - 6. Former Black Diamond Quality Assurance Manager Chris Harmston has conducted tests of the strength of brand new nylon and spectra slings joined with a girth hitch. The results show that the girth hitch reduces the strength of the slings by approximately 30%. [4] Chris has stated that, “Girth hitching is not recommended by Black Diamond”. [6]

Karl Lew of [www.climerware.com](http://www.climerware.com) has proposed [5] a variation of the strop bend which is essentially a strop bend “with a twist” and is one of the “simple Simon” variety of knots published by Harry Asher in 1989 [1] applied to slings. See figure 7. Karl’s “climer hitch” lies better than the strop bend and appears to be stronger. It has been tested by Chris Harmston and was found to reduce the strength of the slings by only 12-20%, although only three samples





*Figure 3 - girth hitch pulled tight and half spilled into a strop bend*



*Figure 5 - an angular strop bend*



*Figure 4 - a quickly tied girth hitch spilled into a strop bend*



*Figure 6 - a flat lying strop bend*

were tested. [5] As in the case of the strop bend and girth hitch the climber hitch is not adjustable in length.

The adjustability of length when joining slings can present a serious problem for climbers. Climbers often have the problem of having one sling be too short, which results in the connected rope rubbing over a corner of rock, or not running straight, etc., increasing rope drag and abrasion, while two joined slings are often too long for the application, which is impractical or amounts to a safety risk, since it can result in shock loading. Climbers must sometimes resort to joining one of the

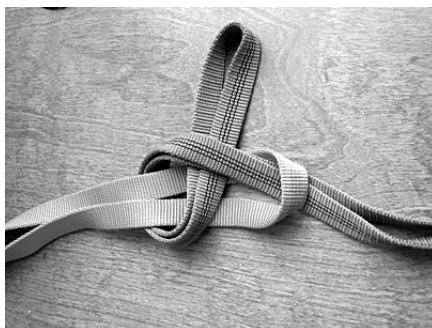


*Figure 7 - Karl Lew's "climer hitch"*

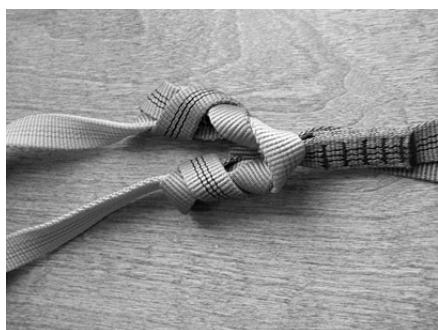
slings prusik style to the other with many wrappings, usually resulting in a big tangle, bulky and prone to snags, wearisome to untie, and a considerable safety risk, since such a knot can



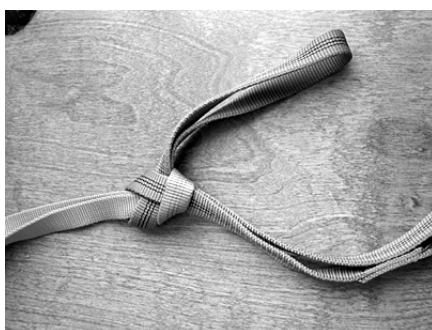
*Figure 8 - a "Prusik bend"*



*Figure 10 - step 1: tie a becket hitch*



*Figure 9 - pulled tight, it's a Prusik mess*



*Figure 11 - step 2: snug up the becket hitch*

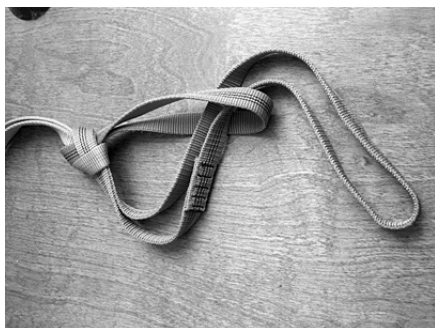
no longer be visually inspected for correctness.

A sling bend then which is easily tied and untied, adjustable in length, easy to check visually, and secure would be a an important addition not only to the climber's repertoire, but to that of any knot tyer. The bend presented here has not, to our knowledge, previously appeared in the literature, and is certainly not well known.

The simple steps required to tie this bend are shown in figures

10-13. This bend is easily seen to be closely related to the classic sheet bend, or more specifically to the becket hitch (Ashley #297), and is a variation of a

strap bend given by Ashley (#1492) with the important difference that the tampen, being an eye, is passed back over the standing part, as shown in figure 12. This last step, which is not strictly necessary for non-critical applications, is the critical feature of this bend for any application where safety is a factor, as it makes what otherwise would be an very unsecure knot in slick nylon or spectra webbing, 100% secure. If for some reason, the third end is not available, it also possible to secure this bend with a carabiner as shown in figure 16. The total length of the joined slings is easily adjustable by varying the length of the tampen loop, snugging up only



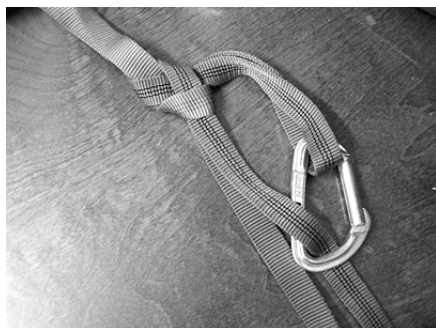
*Figure 12 - Step 3: pass the tampen loop over the standing part*



*Figure 15 - compact form, back side*



*Figure 13 - Step 4: finished knot, adjustable form*



*Figure 16 - secured with a carabiner*



*Figure 14 - compact form, front side*

the “sheet-bend-part” of the knot. If adjustability is not required, the tampen loop can be nicely snugged up onto the knot body as seen in figures 14-15 providing a flat, compact form.

Slippage of the tampen loop when not snugged up to the body of the knot is of course possible, but our experience has shown that this bend does not slip even under heavy loading. Slippage under shock loading could even increase safety for climbers by acting to absorb energy. We ask sling manufacturers with the necessary testing equipment to investigate the strength of this bend compared to the strop bend and girth hitch as well as slippage conditions.

## References

[1] Harry Asher. *The Alternative Knot Book*. Nautical Books, A. & C. Black, London, 1989.

[2] Clifford W. Ashley. *The Ashley Book of Knots*. Doubleday, 1944.

[3] Geoffrey Budworth. *The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Knots & Ropework*. Anness Publishing Ltd., 1999.

[4] Karl Lew. *Black diamond girth hitch test*. <http://www.climerware.com/knot5.htm>.

[5] Karl Lew. *The climer sling hitch*. <http://www.climerware.com/cknot1.htm>.

[6] Tradgirl.com. The tradgirl climbing safety faq. <http://www.tradgirl.com/climbingfaq>.

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# The flag of the International Federation of Vexillology.

(The federation of organisations devoted to flags, their design, history and tradition).

from Richard Hopkins

A knot tyer would describe this design as a yellow sheetbend with the ends pulled down going sideways across a blue background.

How much symbolism has been missed in this description. An account of the competition to design the flag and the reasons given to justify the pattern are quite amazing.

The blue background evokes the maritime origins of many flags while the knot itself represents the halliards, which support flags and the way they may be joined.

The two loops of the knot recall love knots often used to decorate heraldic displays and symbolise the friendship of vexillologists of all lands.

The loops of the knot represent the two hemispheres and in adding the four ends of the halyards we get six for the six parts of the world. This emphasises the international character of the federation. (Presumably the six parts of the world are Europe, Africa, Asia, Australasia, North America and South America.)

The fact that the ends extend across the flag and disappear beyond either end expresses the almost infinite extent of vexillological studies in time and space.

The two interlaced cords also symbolise the combination of fellowship and scholarship, which is supposed to infuse the activities of the vexillologists.

Phew - and I just thought it was a picture of a knot.

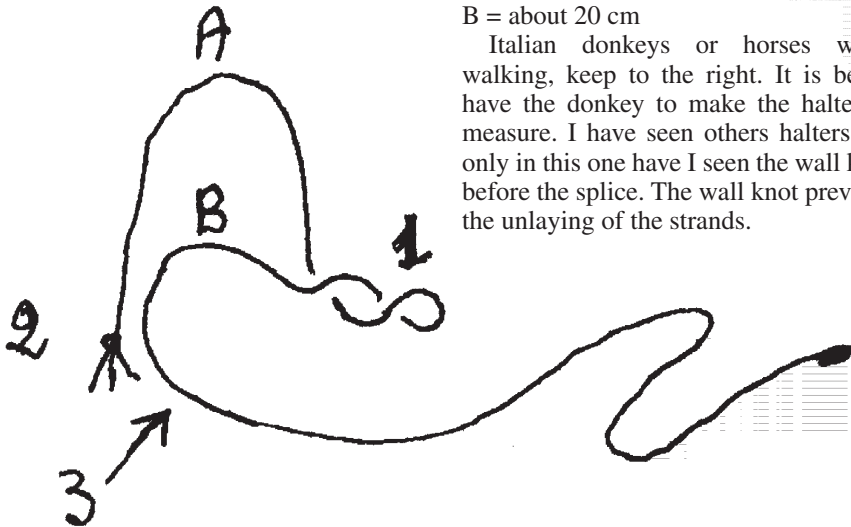




# How to make a Halter.

by Gino Pietrollini

An old woman of Marcellina (Rome, Italy) shows me a halter made as follows. Take 5 metres of rope and tie it as the following drawing:



- 1 Tailor (cobbler, tucked, marline) splice
- 2 Wall knot
- 3 Splice
- 4 Reversed splice

A = about 60 cm

B = about 20 cm

Italian donkeys or horses when walking, keep to the right. It is better have the donkey to make the halter to measure. I have seen others halters but only in this one have I seen the wall knot before the splice. The wall knot prevents the unlaying of the strands.

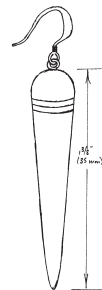
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# The Fiador Knot

by Geoffrey Budworth

*'Most all other knots can be traced to sailors and sailing ships - but not the fiador. It came hundreds of years ago from the Argentine Pampas and up through Mexico and into the Southwest - and it came on horses and not on ships.'*

(Bruce Grant - 1972)

A fiador knot [say 'fee-adore'] is an indispensable part of the fiador rope which links a horse's noseband, bridle and reins or lead rope to create the hackamore used to break and neck-rein the animal without using a bit. It is a knot with a reputation, however, being one that few individuals can tie. This is because the fiador resembles a 3-part x 4-bight diamond knot or footrope knot; but, while either one of those knots is easy enough to assemble using four separate strands, the fiador must be achieved with a single strand. Nevertheless, learn both of them first.... and the fiador will follow.

See how a footrope knot [A#693] has four ends emerging from a 4-part crown at the TOP of the knot but each of its four strands leaves one of 4 bights at the BOTTOM of the knot. The diamond knot [A#696], conversely, has the 4 bights on top and the 4-part crown beneath. Turn one knot or the other upside-down and they appear identical. Only the person who tied them will know otherwise. Alternatively, one loosely tied knot can be converted into the other by

rearranging [or 'flying'] the 4-part crown so that it swaps places with the 4 rim parts. This manoeuvre was described on pages 2-3 of KM#14 [January 1986], by John Smith who aptly labelled it the 'umbrella flip.'

When fluency with diamond and footrope knots has been acquired, try a fiador. Middle the rope or cord and make an overhand loop in one part (fig. 1). Interweave the other end as shown (fig. 2). Then tuck the two resulting bights down through the square central compartment, at the same time lifting the long ends up alongside the larger third bight (fig. 3). Take care to allow the final shape to form (fig. 4). Tighten the knot.

Well done. Anyone who can tie this classic "ole" fiador - if only as a part piece - has tackled extreme knotting and survived. To discover other ways of tying the basic knot, as well as many more ornate and elaborate fiador knots (including the three shown), locate and study:

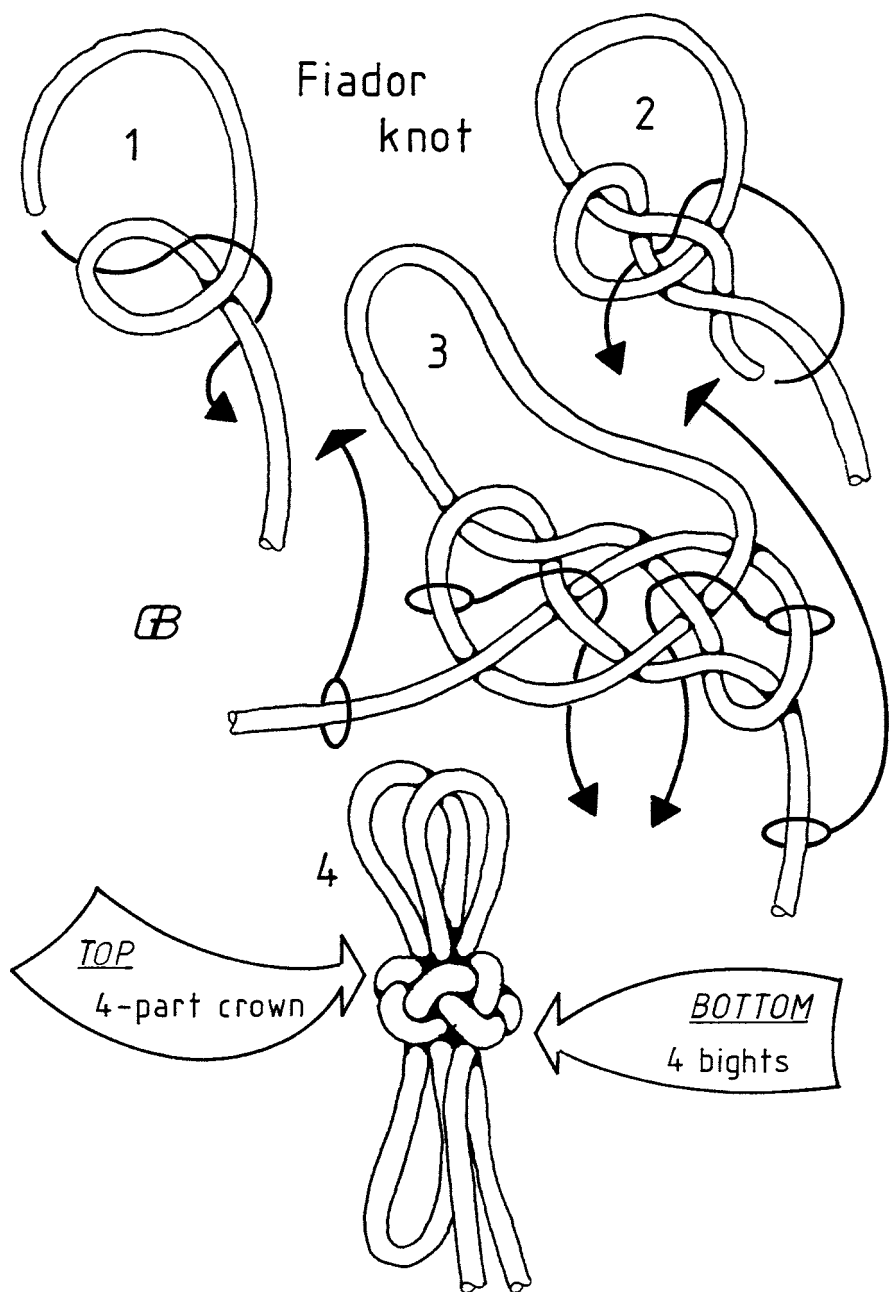
Edwards, Ron - *Knots for Horse-Lovers*, published (2001) in Australia by The Rams Skull Press

Hall, Tom - *Western Tack Tips*, published (1987) in the USA

Hall, Tom - *More Western Tack Tips*, published (1998) in the USA

Perry, Gordon - *Knots*, published (2002) in the UK by Grange Books plc ISBN 1-84013-493-3

Schaake, A.G. (et al) - *Braiding - Regular Fiador Knots*, published (1990) in Hamilton, New Zealand, by the

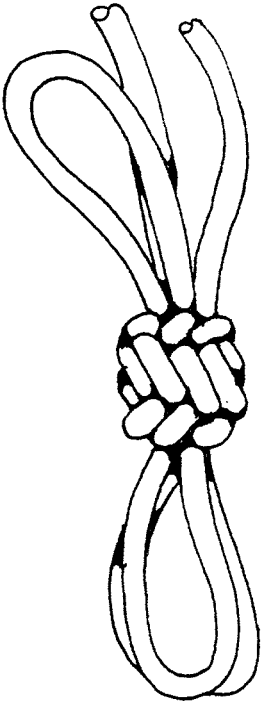


Department of Mathematics and  
Statistics, University of Waikato ISBN 0-  
908830-02-5

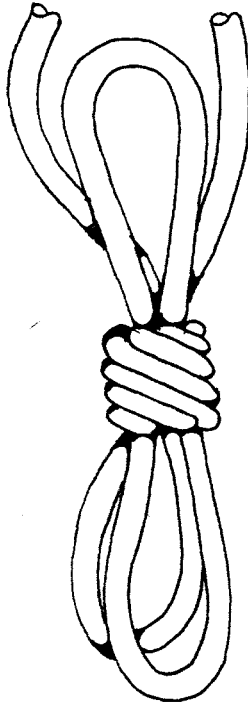
Ulrich, Eugene - *Four Methods of Tying*  
*The Hackamore Diamond Knot - plus*

*The Knot in a Bottle*, published (1986) in  
the USA by Owl Printers, Box 272,  
Faith, South Dakota 57626

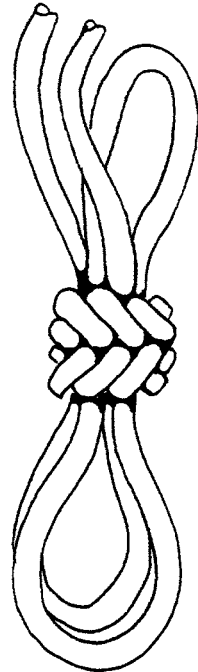
## Some more elaborate



*Headhunter*



*Matthew  
Walker*



*Spanish ring*

*B*

fiador knots

# The Kemp's Trident Eye Splice

by John Kemp

I thought it was about time that I explained in more detail 'The Kemp's Trident Eye Splice' which I mentioned in my article in KM83 p42.

I have experimented with various designs but have finally decided on one that I feel looks and performs the best, which I have called 'The Standard K T Eye Splice'. Below I will endeavour to explain the method - you will find it helpful to refer to my original article mentioned above, in particular the drawing on page 43, whilst reading my method below.

## Method

1. Make a Kemp's trident. The length of the trident legs need to be long enough to form the desired eye size plus enough to carry out the splicing tucks (if you are using say 8mm 3 strand rope you would need your trident legs to be approximately 300mm long for a small eye).
2. Take one of the trident legs and form the size of eye you require. At this point put on a temporary whipping.
3. Unlay the free strand of the leg, leaving the other two still joined as a crows foot, to the point of the temporary whipping.
4. Do the same for the other two trident legs.
5. Take one of the trident legs (the crows foot part) and make a splicing tuck against the lay in the standing part of the rope. Pull the working end through until the point at which you temporarily whipped is against the standing part.
6. Do the same for the other two trident

legs, using adjacent strands in the standing part of the rope, as you would in a normal eye splice.

7. Continue to splice the crows feet down the standing part (this bit is now the same as if you were making an eye splice in the middle of a piece of rope (Ashley p 416) as far as is appropriate for the type of rope you are using. A tapered finish always looks good.
8. The three remaining strands, one strand from each of the three eyes, is now spliced up the standing part for one tuck only. This is important - if you splice further it will cause a spiral deformation of the Standard K T Eye Splice.
9. After the above single tuck tie a manrope knot with the three strands and work it up tight before cutting the ends off close to the knot.

10. You have now made The Standard KT Eye Splice.

I hope the above makes sense and you have fun having a go. If you have any observations or comments I would welcome a chat (details in Membership Handbook)



# True Love Knot

by Capt. Grey Chisholm

Sometimes new ideas are not new at all, but combinations of old ideas. Over forty years ago, my father taught all us kids (maybe to keep us out of his hair for a while) how to tie a rope grommet and how to play quoits.



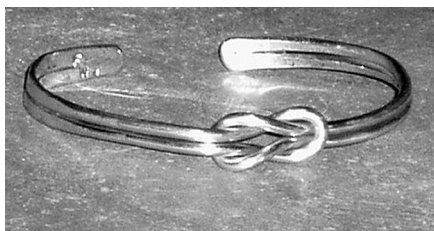
*Fig. 1 Grommet.*

The grommets were simple endless loops of rope. We'd unlay a piece of line then re-lay it on itself. Then sail maker's splice the ends of the strand back into the body of the ring. Thus making a ring four or five inches across with no visible beginning or end. Naturally, unlaid three strand line would make three grommets. We'd throw the rings (or try to) over a stick pounded into the ground and Dad would have a few moments peace.

He also taught us just about every basic knot we might need and how to use them. He taught us sheet bends, figure-eight's, bowlines, various hitches, and of course the ubiquitous overhand and square knot. To this day, when I teach

marlinspike seamanship, the art of knots and splices, I start with the overhand and square knot.

So how does the grommet, overhand, and square knot come together? I weave and tie knots, sennets, and Turk's heads in silver and gold as jewellery. A customer asked about a "True Lover's Knot." In my study and reading, I've heard of both the square knot and two interlinked overhands described as "Love Knots" or "True Lover's Knots." The description comes from both knots having equal and balanced parts interwoven and working together. She favoured the square knot.



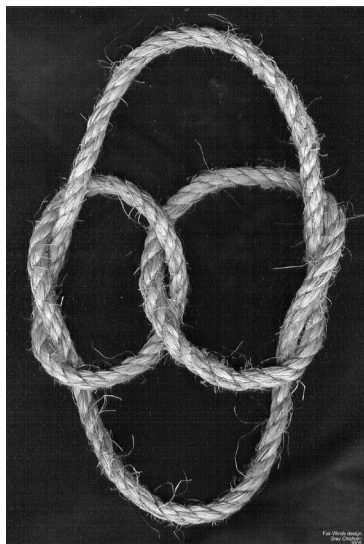
*Fig. 2 Square Knot.*



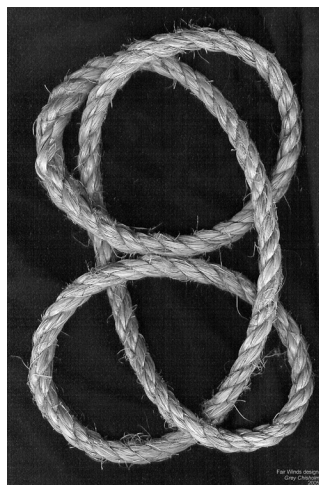
*Fig. 3 Linked Overhand knots.*



Though I started my knot tying career as an outdoorsman and a sailor working with manila, cotton, and leather, these days most of my knots are in metal. But this lady knew that her sweetheart



*Fig. 4 - Linked Overhand knots tied inside a grommet.*



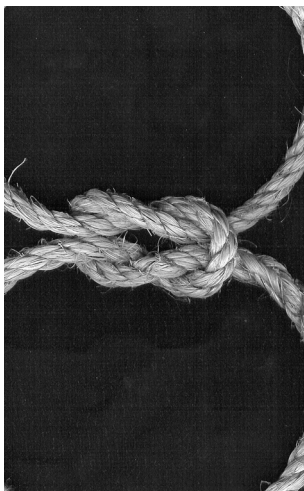
*Fig. 5 - Overhand knots tied inside a grommet.*

was unlikely to wear jewellery. Not an atypical male response (I make jewellery yet rarely wear more than my wedding band). So this lady wanted me to tie a Lover's Knot in regular line. I translated "regular" as to mean manila. As we e-mailed back and forth, an idea grew in my mind—what if I tied the square knot inside a grommet! Then you'd have a love knot tied in an endless loop. Or, two equal and balanced parts interwoven and working together woven inside of eternity!

I got excited to work in manila again. My customer

decided to go with the interlocked overhands, but I was already focused on the square knot. So I did both.

As we all know, there are no new knots—I am sure this has been done before somewhere. But still, I truly enjoyed the creative process and working in manila again.



*Fig. 6 - Pulling on the bights of the overhands in Figure 5, forms a square knot tied inside a grommet.*

# The 'Pretzel'

by KM's science correspondent

Anyone who watched instalment 6 (out of 9) of the latest BBC2 television documentary series 'Horizon', on the evening of Thursday 13th October 2005, about a multi-national team of scientists in the tropical rain forest of Madagascar - the large

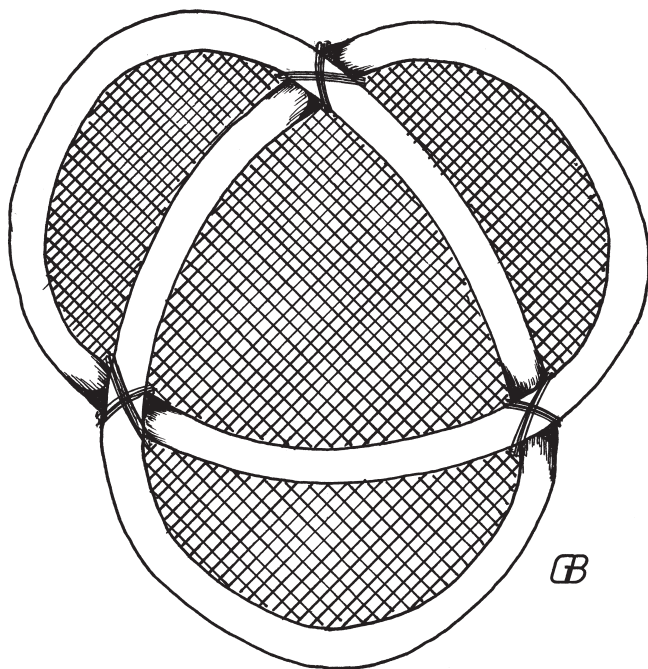
island off the east coast of Africa - cannot have failed to take notice of the 'Pretzel'.

This was an enormous semi-rigid inflatable tube-and-netting raft which was lowered onto the top of the forest canopy by means of an airship, to provide

a precarious platform some 100 feet above the ground from which botanists and entomologists could study the flora and fauna there. The programme, titled *Madagascar - a Treetop Odyssey*, covered a 3-month period of work to record and classify as much as possible of the biodiversity and biochemistry to be found in that rapidly diminishing habitat.

Of particular interest to KM readers, of course, will be the fact that the functional form the raft builders chose for the tubular frame was a trefoil knot.

THE 'PRETZEL'  
[viewed from above]



area: 400 sq. metres

# Branch Lines

## East Anglian Branch

Eighteen members, friends and associates from Essex, Norfolk & Suffolk attended the autumn gathering at Stowmarket on Saturday 24th September, which commenced at 1330 hours and were welcomed by the inimitable ‘Tuffy’ Turner who conducted the agenda, ably assisted by the members.

The topic this meeting was a general discussion about sailmaker’s splicing, presented by Geoffrey Youngman (in the absence of Des Pawson). The essence of the subject being that such splices are tucked ‘with the lay’ as ‘against the lay’ of the rope or wire’, similar to the Liverpool salvage wire splice.

The remainder of the meeting was taken up with, four roving workshops, discussion groups led by Europa Dawson on tatting; Ken Higgs on Scooby Doo, the latest (cool) in-thing, children’s plastic knot folding braiding. Norman Southgate on cross pointing, and ‘Tuffy’ Turner on the colourful art/craft of Turk’s head ball knots, which he usually makes from multi-coloured skipping ropes etc.

Our well known and time served branch librarian Ken Higgs and his wife Elizabeth are emigrating to Scotland. Ken is a well-known exponent of the ancient art of Japanese braiding and macramé in the Felixstowe and Ipswich

area and will be sorely missed. His leaving has left a vacancy for the post of branch librarian, which has been expeditiously filled by one of our Essex members, Irene Turner.

Our seasonal greetings are extended to member’s world-wide.

*John Halifax*

## Pacific America’s Branch

“The show season is over for IGKT-PAB (at least for the North folks, snow has come). We finished out with two fine shows in the Puget Sound area... the North PAB folks.

The first show was a “Family Fun Day” at our favourite venue, the Seattle Center for Wooden Boats. Other events in the area that weekend took “the crowd”. and a “first annual” may not be much anyway. But the folks who came had committed “to the day” so we had more time with each person. It was a wonderful event with about 2,000 visitors. The CWB went all out and the *Virginia V* was there (the largest wooden steam ship on Puget Sound) as well as one of the last remaining Foss Tuglines wooden boats, *George Foss*. With fewer people there was more time to spend with each visitor. We had a good PAB turnout (remember that we are far spread and few at that). Our “Clint Funk memorial training table” got plenty of use. Clint made a table with four stations, each with the basic knots, with rails, and bollards. It is an interactive knot board and a wonderful tool. Visitors will stop and play with it; but then you step over. “Hi, you can make the knots, now learn how they are tied in the working world”. It really grabs their interest, a matter of timing. Catch them after they have formed the knots to match the knot

board, but then show them how easy these knots are when tied as they are in the world of sailors and other knotters. We “hooked” many new members.

Next we went to Ballard for the Commercial Fishermen’s Fall Festival. This is a sentimental journey for us. It was here where we tied the huge cruciform Turk’s head on 9-11-04 and where Clint worked with his training table. This is a charity event and our donation of a cruciform (Patrick Ducey’s donation of his original design) went at auction for a blessedly unbelievable amount. This year we donated a bellrope. Might net a dollar. We had a great turn out (about 14,000) so there was not as much personal time with guests as at the family fun fair. Many new members were signed on. We all worked like slaves and once again learned to eat and tie knots at the same time. Just as at family fun fair. The food was provided to PAB as a gift as was our site. These shows are the heart of the northern turf of PAB. I would urge each branch to make a training table, that is an interactive knot board. Let the visitor mess about with it and then come in to show them (not embarrass them) how easy these seemingly difficult knots are made with just a flip of the wrist.

We got a contact for some wonderful cordage at one of the shows. Things just seem to present themselves when you put your best foot forward!

Nothing else on our PAB plate until the spring. Of course it is always spring in SoCA, so they may have RaceLA or other affairs.

*Roy Chapman*

## **Southern California**

Well, we all in Southern California have also been busy with our efforts at the Tallships Festivals in three SoCal cities

(San Diego, Los Angeles and Dana Point), as well as trying our hand at some new venues (Channel Islands Harbor where the ill-fated *Irving Johnson* went aground and the island of Santa Barbara - look it up, it exists!) and the always amazing Cabrillo Aquarium, trying to keep our heads above water.

We had a terrific three days at LA with a festival location that could not be beat and festival-goers coming in at all hours to sign up. We went to the top of the tallship *Cuauhtémoc* (pronounced ko-hwa-de-mock) and visited 12 tallships in all, then we went on to San Diego to enjoy the tallships again in the company of the tallship *Star of India* (formerly the *Euterpe*) and the *Californian* and *Medea*, enjoying the company of the dart players in the local pub, the Elephant & Castle (beat them, of course!). Our next stop was the Channel Islands Harbor where we introduced the locals to the monkeys fist, the Solomon bar and of course our very own interpretation of the now-famous baggywrinkle. We once asked the Japanese ship, *Kaiwo Maru*, what the name is of that famed material, only to be told it is known as “baggywrinkle”, about which we have been asked the most convoluted questions!

Our trip moved then through the northern Channel Islands group where we met with a German tourist whose children were dressed as pirates. They wished us well as they went on with their journey, only to return within the hour with a fishhook in the skipper’s thumb! We removed it with much rum and small needle-nosed pliers and we got his grateful response from Germany when we returned to port. Charlie Bell showed off his incredible skills at the tallships display in Dana Point, and we were blessed with having a visit by the

incredible Joe Soanes, following which we listened to the golden tones (if they could be called that!) of Lindsey, singing sea-shanties. All in all a most memorable Fall season (that's autumn to those others in the world) which could only be followed by the indefatigable Tom and Jimmy Ray thrilling the visitors to the Cabrillo Aquarium - thanks guys! Rock on SoCal!!!!

*Lindsey Philpott*

## North West

The Guild was well represented at this year's annual Inland Waterways National Festival, this year held at Preston Brook in Cheshire. As per usual, Ken Nelson had been busy before our arrival and erected the stand for us. Ken is the site 'chippy' (carpenter to the rest of us) for the whole of the show, so was always under pressure. Although the weather wasn't that bright, it didn't stop the huge crowds from coming.

The IGTK was well to the fore in running Craft Workshops. Ben Selfe taught Turk's heads, Ken Nelson did decorative narrowboat ropework, and Dave Walker taught boaters how to make their own button fenders. Sue Morris taught how to make dog leads, while Colin Grundy demonstrated splicing and side fenders.

Meanwhile back at the Guild stand, the public was entertained by Alex Carson,

Kate Nicholls, Roy Morris, and Clive and Caroline Sandrey.

Once again, the Guild did their part in WoW (Wild over Water) as the Nutty Knots base, where children came to either learn knots or made rope. WoW is an activity for children to learn all about boats and waterways. The children go around the show trying their hand at different tasks and gaining a stamp in their passport. A completed passport wins them a prize. Bruce and Lynda Turley had them making rope on a small-scale ropewalk, while Dave and Sheila Pearson, and Ian Schofield taught the finer points of Scoobi-do.

Among the many who showed an interest in knot tying, was Dawa Geljen Sherpa over here on a visit from Nepal. Who knows, perhaps we may have our first Nepalese member soon?

A number of the members either camped at the show or stayed aboard their boats, which gave a good time to relax during the evening with a quiet drink. Here's looking forward to next year at Beale Park.

*From our Midland's Stringer*





# 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.**

## Lost Member

It was good to meet up with you and the other knotters at the Preston Brook show. Your stand was most impressive, and it was good to talk to like minded people.

As I explained, my membership of the Guild lapsed. Being on a fixed income we have to watch our expenditure, and whilst we applaud and want to support the aims of the Guild, we do feel that we are not getting much out of it. The magazine is superb, well produced and very readable, but not much of it is relevant to us. We would like instructions on how to do some of the things that are photographed.

Not all of us are capable of the vision and expertise to design our own bits and pieces. If some instructions for simple objects were given it might help us to start. Also, if knotters could make small things easily they could pass this knowledge on, and it would prove more interesting to non-knotters that just a KNOT. Previously we have been involved with both Scouts and Sea Cadets and know how interested the lads would have been in producing something. Also small objects could be sold at fetes and school days, thus spreading the word about knots.

In the days of sailing, word of mouth was how knowledge was spread.

Years ago, before we came to live

on the boat, I had a knotting stall at our local fete. It was most popular, and it was surprising how many of the men said they had no idea knotting was alive and well! Some of them were ex-Navy and had not seen knotting since their sea days. I know there are meetings around the country, but without transport it is difficult to get to them.

*Judith Duckett*

*Narrowboat 'Nutwood', UK*

*Judith met me and other Guild members at the Inland Waterways National Festival during August, and challenged me over the content of Knotting Matters. See my response in the editorial of KM88 - Ed.*

## Hello All!

It's a few years since I did much knotting, but my enthusiasm was rekindled recently.

I was working long hours for little reward trying to get my new business running, when I decided a few weeks ago that I needed a break. Having loaded up the camper van with food, booze and a mountain of chord, books and tools,

I set off to find a quiet corner to relax in. I had a thoroughly enjoyable few days, relearning old skills and asking myself why I'd let things slip.

Ironically, it's my wife Sheila (not a knot tyer) who's missed the IGKT most! She always loved the meetings as she found guild members "such lovely people to be around", which I can't argue with.

It's with great sadness that I've read so many Obituaries in recent *Knotting Matters*. Some of those folks I was privileged to know, or at least meet, and it serves to remind me that we are here

but for a short time and should enjoy the company of friends rather more than we tend to.

I look forward to re-establishing old friendships!

**Phil Cook**  
*via Email*

(aka “Phil the Rope”, a nickname given to me by a dive boat skipper who wanted to distinguish between me and another regular diver called Phil, who didn’t spend all his spare time on the boat tying knots)

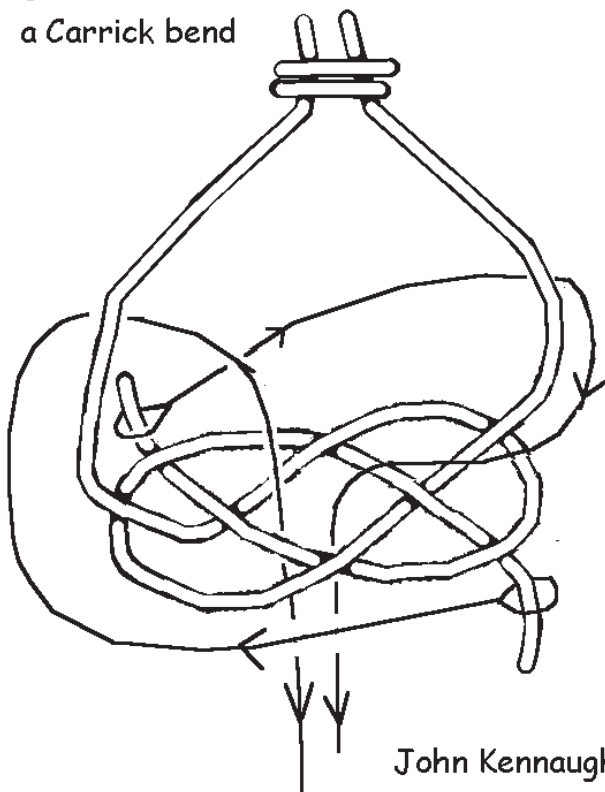
## Rosary Knot

Having followed Geoffrey Budworth’s instructions on tying the ‘Rosary Knot’ and then studying the result I have come to the conclusion it is the same as the ‘Sailors Knife Lanyard Knot’ described in Eric Franklin’s Knot chart No. 63 as published in Scouting magazine many years ago.

**John Kennaugh**  
*Callington, Cornwall, UK*

## THE SAILOR'S KNIFE LANYARD KNOT

Start with  
a Carrick bend



## St Mungo's Knot

I have a question that has been posted to me, I would like to post to the members of the Guild, re: Saint Mungo's knot. This knot seems to be a decorative knot (perhaps a plait) of Scottish origins and is applied to the tails of cows to keep them safe from witches spells, &c.

I have found reference to this knot in Sir Walter Scott's, *The Two Drovers*. ("She canna do that," said another sapient of the same profession. "Robin Oig is no the lad to leave any of them without tying Saint Mungo's knot on their tails, and that will put to her speed the best witch that ever flew over Dimayet upon a broomstick.")

It may not be indifferent to the reader to know that the Highland cattle are peculiarly liable to be taken, or infected, by spells and witchcraft, which judicious people guard against by knitting knots of peculiar complexity on the tuft of hair which terminates the animal's tail. )

I cannot find a knot by this name in ABOK. Is anyone familiar with this knot? Does it appear in ABOK by another name? Where can I find an example of this knot, if not in ABOK?

As for St. Mungo, he has a church named after him on Parson Street, Townhead, Glasgow. He was also known as Kentigern, Bishop of Strathclyde, the name Mungo means "dear one". If this helps or is a clue.

*Frank Rodrigues*  
New Bedford, MA, USA

## Bondage?

I noted two items of a similar vein in *Knotting Matters* 88, the 10-Point Knottological Health Check-up, and The Cost of Loving. Both articles referred to bondage.

I cannot recall any previous articles in *Knotting Matters* on this subject, and this got me wondering. Our Mission, is to:

- \* To promote the art, craft and science of knotting, its study and practice
- \* To undertake research into all aspects of knotting.
- \* To establish an authoritative body for consulting purposes.

Surely, then as a Guild, if we are to take our Mission seriously, then this is an aspect of knot tying that should also be studied?

Is there any stout-hearted member/s prepared to delve into this one?

*Stan Fromunder*  
Via email

## Stockholm Tar

Who doesn't like the tarry smell? My efforts to reproduce it at home have been a failure. I tried Stockholm (vegetable) tar with several different solvents. I contacted several rope suppliers and at least three nautical museums, but none could help except for a suggestion that I try bitumen paint and white spirit, which I haven't done yet. An IGKT member said I needed pine tar and meths. One company keeps its recipe secret.

So now the problem is obtaining pine tar. The EEC has banned it as being carcinogenic. I don't need cancer, but can anyone tell where this tar is available, please? I would travel a long way with a little tin to get some.

*Alan Hemmings*  
Sherbourne, Dorset, UK

## Bowline on a Bight

The bowline on a bight shown by Vic Burt (KM88) is a modified way of tying an Angler's loop (ABOK #1017). Izaak Walton first described the original knot

in his book *The Compleat Angler* in 1653 a loop tied in gut and called an angler's loop. It was later published by Genio C Scot (fishing in American waters 1870) who called it the perfection knot. Fishermen many, many years ago found it easier to tie as shown by Vic Burt. Today it is never used in modern lines.

The bowline on a bight described in the 1948 edition, *Training Course for Boatswain's Mate* and in the third edition 1964 *Marlinespike Seamanship* it is shown as an application of tightening a lashing.

This knot tied in laid up rope as a loop has a tendency to jam, even more so as a form of lashing (this can be eased by an extra turn around the bight.)

I find that the best knot for lashing is the Diver's hitch, which does not jam and pulls free with one pull.

**Owen K Nuttall**  
**Linthwaite, Huddersfield, UK**

## Pass it On

A few years ago I read a saying that was common during the age of sailing ships. I didn't copy it down, so I may not have got it just right. "Between you and eternity could be the right knot."

It would be just as important in this day and age to tie knots correctly - and the right knot for the situation - for sailors of course, mountain climbers, cave divers, riggers, iron workers and any other number of trades people.

Might I suggest the IGKT adopt the old saying - or one similar - to place on a letterhead, or the cover of *Knotting Matters*, or on a placard posted at IGKT functions. It makes a point.

For three months this summer I had the opportunity to teach advanced knotting to four crewmembers on the schooner

*Roseway*. (The first owner - 1915 - had a granddaughter "Rose" that always got her own "Way"). It was surprising to me how few basic knots were known. I taught the star, diamond and crown diamond, 3, 4, 5 and 6 strand Turk's heads, etc. The odd and even elongated Turk's head using jigs and "Cronan Rules" I have developed making the long Turk's head very simple, and lastly I taught wire rope splicing on the dock - ship's side, to nine crew including the Captain, plus three standers by from yachts at the marina. The *Roseway* operated out of the new marina one block from our home.

A year ago, Rohn Walberg, Captain of the tall ship *Bounty* came to our home where I taught him wire rope splicing. He had not spliced wire in over 20 years. He thanked me several times and told me how he would never splice wire rope any other way again.

In 1943, shortly after enlisting in the U.S. Navy I was sent to a Bosun's school. The Chief Bosun's Mate had retired, but called back in the Navy and taught wire rope splicing at the school. I got my first Petty Officer stripe out of that school. He said, A Bosun's job is to teach, to pass it on, and you don't know how to splice wire rope until you can teach it." Over the years since then, as a sailor I taught about 10-20 people how to splice wire. Every one of them thought splicing wire rope was difficult and were truly amazed at how simple it is. I was one of the lucky ones; the old Chief knew his stuff. I'm making notes, and doing sketches with the idea of doing a handbook on splicing wire rope - every step, start to finish. No guessing, simple.

Consider the quote about 'knotting and eternity', they go together.

**Jerry Cronin**  
**St Ignace, MI, USA**

# Knotting Diary

## AGM & 1/2 YEARLY MEETING

### 24th AGM

13th May 2006  
Lord Hill Hotel, Shrewsbury  
Contact: Alex Carson  
Tel: 01743 356466  
Email: geoknot@msn.com

### Half-Yearly Meeting

14th October 2006  
France  
Contact: Graham McLachlan  
Tel: 0233 076704  
Email: igktfrance@club-internet.fr

### 25th AGM

14th May 2007  
Fareham, Hampshire  
Contact: Ken Yalden  
Tel: 02392 259280  
Email: ken.yalden@igkt.freeseve.co.uk

## BRANCH MEETINGS

### East Anglian Branch

8th April 2006  
Museum of East Anglian Life  
Stowmarket, Suffolk  
Contact: John Halifax  
Tel: 01502 519123

### Midlands Branch

13th February 2006  
The Old Swan (Ma Pardoes), Halesowen  
Road, Halesowen  
Contact: Bruce Turley  
Tel: 0121 4534124  
Email: bruce.turley@blueyonder.co.uk

### Essex Branch

12th March 2006  
National Motorboat Museum, Wat Tyler Park,  
Pitsea, Essex  
Contact: Don Woods  
Tel: 01708 229178

### Netherlands

28th January 2006  
Rotterdam  
Contact: Jan Hoefnagel  
Tel: 078 614 6002

### SECRETARY:

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