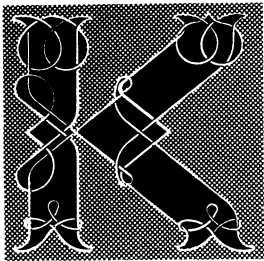
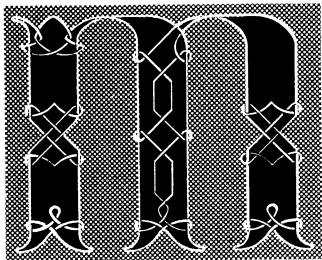


Issue No. 1  
Autumn 1982

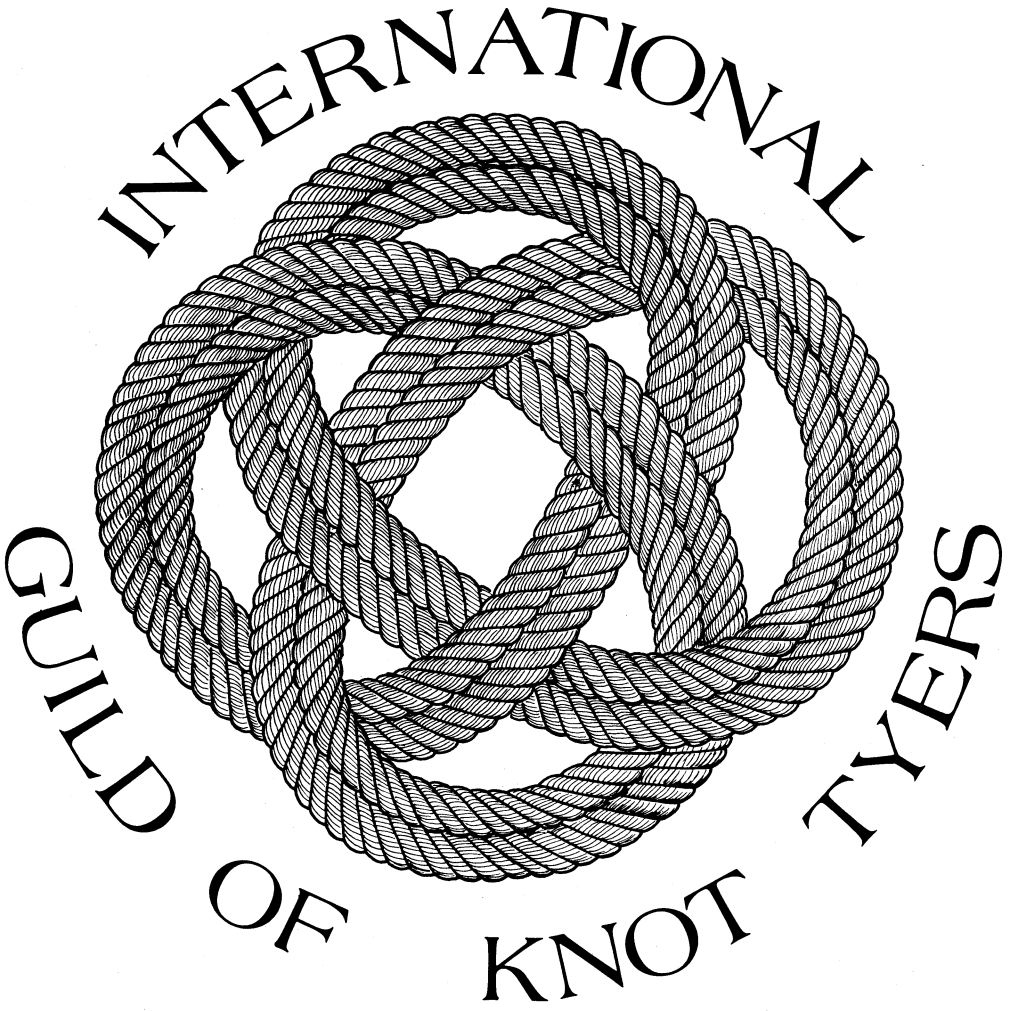


Knottling



Matters

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE



'KNOTTING MATTERS'

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF KNOT TYERS

Issue No. 1  
Autumn, 1982

Hon. Secretary & Editor,  
Geoffrey Budworth,  
45, Stambourne Way,  
Upper Norwood,  
London S.E.19 2PY,

Tel: 01-653 8757 England.

- - - oOo - - -

EDITORIAL

Here is the first quarterly newsletter. Preserve it. In years to come it will gain curious appeal to collectors.

During each year the aim is to include Guild news and business - members' letters - knotting tuition, both basic and advanced - useful tips or tricks of the trade - sources of materials - book reviews an exchange and mart for members' hoping to swap or sell anything concerned with knotting or ropework generally - odd fragments of knowledge which add to the lure and lore of knotting - profiles of members - information for collectors of tools, books, etc. - puzzles -maybe competitions - instuction in how to draw knots - advertisements for anything of use to members in connection with the Guild - and so on.

The Guild dates from an inaugural meeting of 25 individuals aboard the Maritime Trust's vessel R.R.S. 'Discovery' berthed in St. Katharine's Dock in the lee of Tower Bridge, on April, 17th. 1982. It was a sunny Saturday afternoon and the gathering was captured in a group photograph taken by a Mr. HITCH!

The founder members able to be present on that day were Dr. Harry ASHER, Mr. Roy E. BAIL, Mr. C.G. BELLINGHAM, Mr. Geoffrey BUDWORTH, Mr. John CONSTABLE, Mr. Bernard J. CUTBUSH, Mrs. Anne DEVINE, Mr. Ron W.EVANS, Mr. Sid EVANS, Mr. Eric FRANKLIN, Mr. Frank HARRIS, Mr. John HAWES, Mr. Paul HERBERT, Dr. Edward HUNTER, Miss. Jill JENNER, Mr. Albert KIRBY, Mr. Allan McDOWALL, Mr. Desmond MANDEVILLE, Mr. Graham MOTT, Mr. Des PAWSON, Mrs. Liz PAWSON, Mr. Douglas PROBERT, Mr. W. Ettrick THOMSON, Mr. Don WOODS and Mr. Quinton WINCH.

Two further individuals, keen to be present at that meeting but prevented by distance, who had expressed the wish to be involved from the outset were Mr. Robert CHISNALL of Kingston, Ontario, Canada, and Mr. Charles H.S. THOMASON of Queensland, Australia.

The idea for a knotting association of some kind grew from the contact between two people. Des PAWSON was a retail manager for a large stationery firm based in Ipswich and also no mean knot craftsman. Geoffrey BUDWORTH was a Metropolitan Police Inspector and knotting consultant. Des first wrote to Geoff on 8-10-78. They met before the month was over, and - if it was not mentioned then - the idea of contacting other knotting enthusiasts WAS raised by Des in a letter dated July, 1980, when he pressed for a suitable venue.. .and suggested the Maritime Trust. Even then, 1981 went by without further development; and this is a source of regret to them both as it was the centenary of Clifford W. Ashley's birth.

(n.b. author of 'The Ashley Book of Knots')

So, 1982 saw the creation of the I.G.K.T. It was also the year when Pope John Paul II visited the United Kingdom; when Prince William of Wales was born; when Connors beat McEnroe at Wimbledon, and Spurs won the F.A. Cup at Wembley. And as the Guild's founders assembled on the upper deck of 'Discovery' for their photograph, the ship was flying the ensign of a Royal Research Ship - defaced by the badge of the Falkland Islands - above her port of registry, Port

Stanley. Ironically, within weeks the 'Falklands crisis' was to deteriorate into armed conflict between Great Britain and Argentina, for 1982 was also the year of the Falklands war.

A steering committee was appointed and met on May 15th. 1982, to agree a name, constitutional rules and membership conditions, and these were confirmed by a postal ballot on July 17th. 1982.

Membership has grown from the original 25+2 and is now 45, with representatives in the U.S.A., Canada, Australia, Asia and Europe. The Guild's members will keep in touch through newsletters and a couple of meetings a year; although it is hoped regional groups will form and get together more frequently.

Now, an all-out recruiting drive is called for. Display a handbill in your local library showing yourself as the local representative. If you travel, distribute handbills along the way with the Hon. Secretary's address. Secure space in your local paper; chat on local radio or T.V. if you can. Spread the news about the I.G.-K.T. It really is the most exciting prospect since the Ashley Book of Knots.

- - - oOo - - -

#### BOOKS

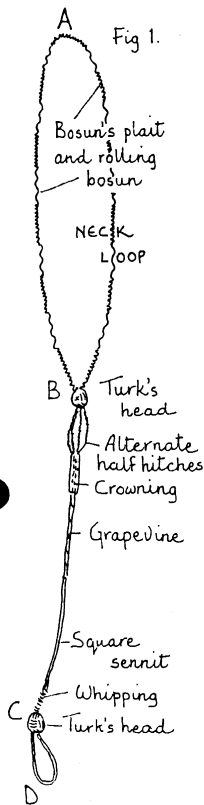
KNOTS, SPLICES & FANCYWORK, by Chas. L. Spencer, pub. by Brown, Son & Ferguson Ltd. (1934), and reprinted every few years right up to the present day. Although dated by the text and illustrations with a not unpleasant aura of sailing ships and riggers long-gone, it remains a methodical and easily understood treatment of basic and some fancy knotting, splicing, lashings, seizings and whippings, blocks-and-tackles, pointing and grafting, plaiting, Turk's heads...even wire rope. This comprehensive book started off many an I.G.K.T. member off on a deeper look into knotting and is highly recommended.

KNOTS USEFUL AND ORNAMENTAL, by George Russell Shaw, pub. by Bonanza Books, New York (1924 and 1933). You need to enlist the help of a dealer in second-hand books to track down this collector's item for you since it's long out of print. It won't cost a lot but you'll value it. 193 pages of the author's sketches and a sparse text show you how to tie all kinds of knots. It pre-dates Ashley and portrays a lot of work generally assumed to originate with him.

Knotting books may be found in better book shops under 'Maritime', 'Hobbies & Crafts', 'Leisure' and - of course - 'Boating' ; and also in yacht and boat stores. Second-hand book shops also keep them. So do Scout shops. But also look on the 'Magic' shelf for books on con- jurors' rope tricks; 'angling' for fishermen's knots; even a book on poaching or falconry will depict a knot or two. University book shops will have works on 'topography' , a sort of 3-dimensional geometry which leads to an esoteric discussion of 'knot theory' for those I.G.K.T. members whose math's is up to it. Meanwhile, members with more than one copy of a publication will usually sell or swap the spare copy. Use the newsletter to let us know what you have or need

# Making a LANYARD

(Reproduced with kind permission of I.G.K.T. member Miss Jill Jenner)



## LENGTH

A to B and B to C are approximately the same — about 17 inches ( $\approx$  42 cm)

A to D is approximately 36 inches ( $\approx$  91 cm)

OR A to D is the distance from the back of the neck to the down-stretched hand

OR, if D is threaded through A, then A to C will go easily round the waist.

## MATERIAL

Peacock's chalk line — "PLATERS" size — sold in 30 ft hanks, if obtainable, or similar cotton (preferably) or nylon line.

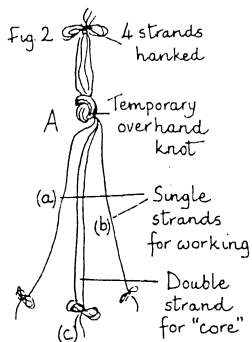
## AMOUNT

100 feet ( $30\frac{1}{2}$  m) divided into  $4 \times 25$  ft ( $7\frac{1}{2}$  m) strands.

## PREPARATION

- (i) Middle the 25 ft strands.
- (ii) "Hank" the 4 strands at one end

- (iii) At the other end, hank two single strands separately, and one pair of strands together, as illustrated.



## STAGE I

Knotting is started at point A (Fig 1.), which is the back of the "neck".

Proceed to point B with Bosun's Plait and Rolling Bosun alternately, using the two single and one double strands.

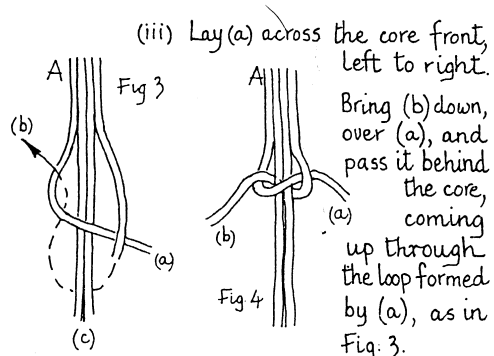
When point B is reached, untie the temporary

overhand knot at A and prepare the strands as in PREPARATION (iii). Complete the other side of the neck to B, matching the pattern as you go.

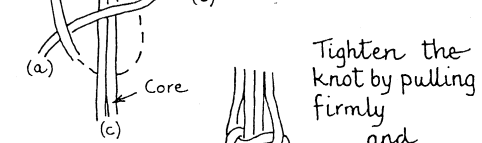
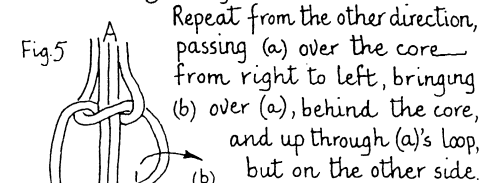
## Bosun's Plait

Study Fig. 2. (i) Secure the overhand knot (A) to a suitable firm object.

- (ii) Secure the two strands (c) to your waist. This is the CORE — and it is important that it should always be TAUT and not twisted while working with strands (a) and (b).

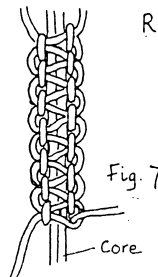


Tighten the knot by pulling firmly and evenly — Fig. 4.



Tighten the knot by pulling firmly and evenly. Does fig. 6 (c) remind you of something?

Repeat these two knots until you have completed 2 ins (5 cm) of 'plait', which will look like fig 7, but tighter.



Remember — KEEP THE CORE TAUT and UNTWISTED.

Like people, no two lanyards are really identical.

Place each knot with care.

# Rolling Bosun

This knot is similar to Bosun's plait, but instead of taking left and right strands across the core alternately, you work from the left (or the right) every time, depending on whether you want a left or a right spiral.

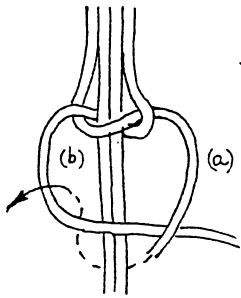


Fig. 8

The spiral occurs naturally, so do not force it. Just turn your work as needed.

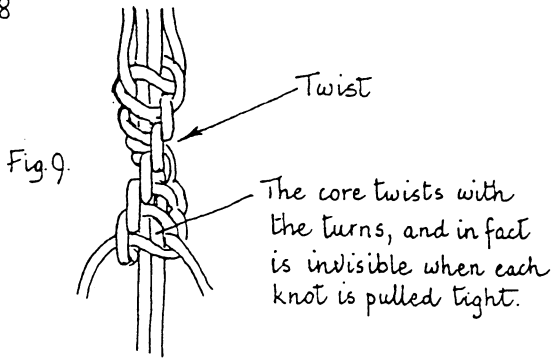


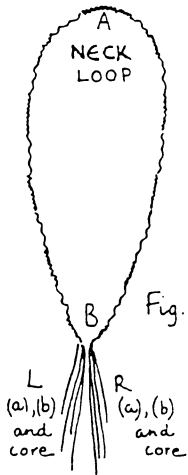
Fig. 9

The core twists with the turns, and in fact is invisible when each knot is pulled tight.

Continue with this knot for  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " (4 cm), then alternate with  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " of Bosun's plait and  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " of Rolling Bosun five times.

This will bring you to B (Fig 1)

Go back to A, (Figs 1 and 3) and repeat the operation, thus completing the "neck", taking care to match the two sides, and finishing with the "plait".



## STAGE II

Now bring 4 strands from the left of neck to join 4 strands from right of neck at B.

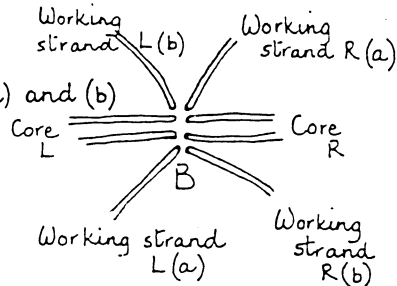


Fig. 10(a) and (b)

Hank each strand separately. Work in pairs as follows:-

1. L(a) with R(b)      3 Core L
2. L(b) with R(a)      4 Core R

# Alternate half-hitches

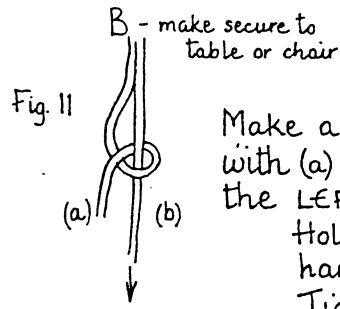


Fig. 11

Make a simple half-hitch with (a) over (b) — USING the LEFT hand. Hold (b) taut with RIGHT hand as in Fig. 11. Tighten (a) on (b).

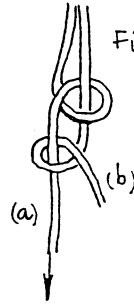


Fig. 12

Holding (a) taut with the LEFT hand, make a half-hitch with (b) over (a), using the RIGHT hand, pulling tight, as in Fig. 13.



Fig. 13

Continue working with left and right hands alternately for 3 inches (7½ cm)

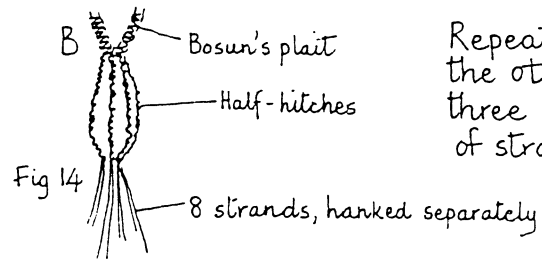


Fig. 14

Repeat for the other three pairs of strands

## STAGE III

Bring together the 8 single hanks and re-hank them in 4 pairs.

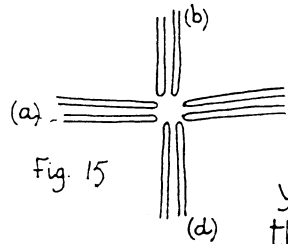


Fig. 15

The strands will be of varying lengths but do not cut them.

You are now ready for the double crowning plait.

At this stage it might be a good idea to practise with 4 single strands, making a "SINGLE CROWNING PLAIT". (See over)

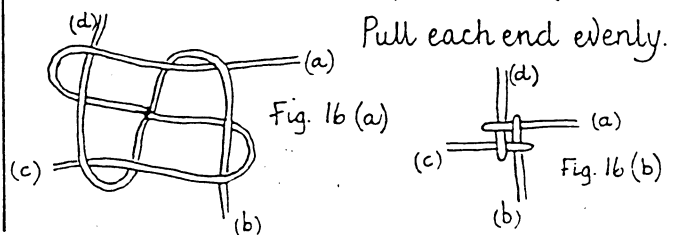


Fig. 16(a)

Fig. 16(b)

## Double Crowning

is similar to single crowning, working the two strands as one. Take care to lay the strands side by side, without crossing

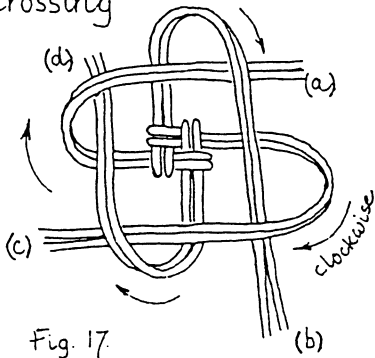


Fig. 17

Work as follows:-

- (i) Make a loop with (a), passing the end over (b)
- (ii) Make a loop with (b), passing the end over (c)
- (iii) Make a loop with (c), passing the end over (d).

(iv) Make a loop with (d), passing the end down through the first loop, made with (a).

Each crown is thus made clockwise.

Variations- Double Square Crowning is made by working clockwise and anti-clockwise alternately. (Fig 18)

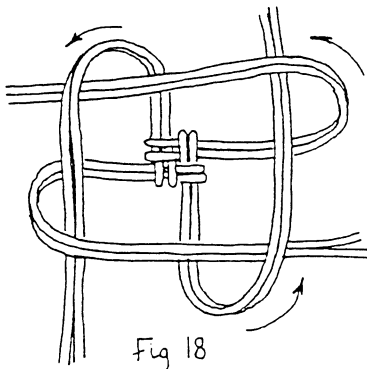


Fig 18

Crowning Round a Core

Four single strands form a crown round a core of 4 strands, as in Fig 19.

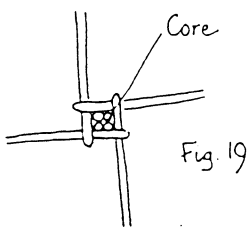


Fig. 19

Square Crowning round a Core

The four single strands are knotted clockwise and anti-clockwise alternately.

Continue the CROWNING for 3" (7½ cm)

## STAGE IV

Choose the longest strand available and use the other seven strands as the core.

NOTE :- If it is necessary to replace a 'too-short' strand a new end may be inserted in the core during the next knot.

## Grapevine

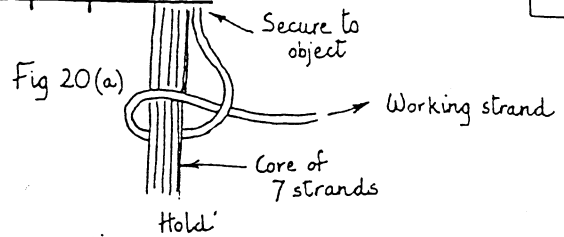
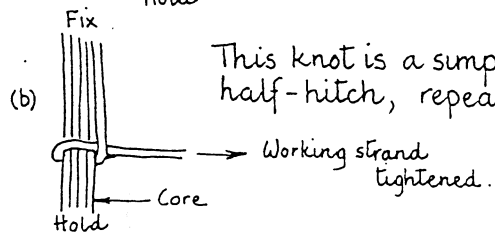


Fig 20(a)



(b)

This knot is a simple 'half-hitch, repeated.

Like the Rolling Bosun, this knot will WANT to twist... so let it!

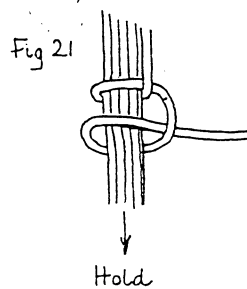


Fig 21

Like most 'simple' knots, it may prove 'difficult'.

Pull each knot evenly, and twist the core as you work.

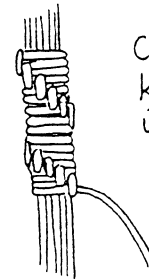


Fig. 22

Continue the knot for 3 or 4 inches (7½-10cm).

## STAGE V

Re-cap - You have used the following:-

- |                        |                             |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Bosun's Plait          | } Neck bight                |
| Rolling Bosun          |                             |
| Alternate half-hitches | } 9 to 10 ins<br>(22-25 cm) |
| Crowning (any variety) |                             |
| Grapevine              |                             |

The next plait will need to be about 14 inches (35 cm), allowing 4" (10 cm) for the penknife loop!

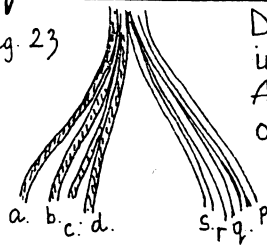
It is usual for a lanyard to taper from B to C (See Fig 1) and the next knot, though using 8 strands, is a slender, pliable sennit.

You may now undo all the hanks and cut the strands evenly. 30 to 36 inches (76 to 90 cm) are now needed for working.

← See Stage IV Note about replacements.

# Square Sennit

Fig. 23



Divide the eight strands into two groups of four. At each stage, strands on the left will return to the left and those on the right will return to the right.

Hold a, b, c, d in left hand and p, q, r, s in right hand.

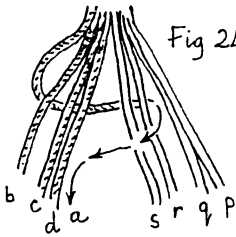


Fig 24(a) Pass a. behind b, c, d and s, r and return to its own side below d.

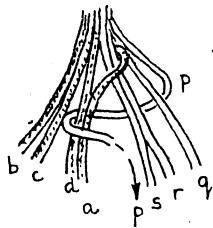
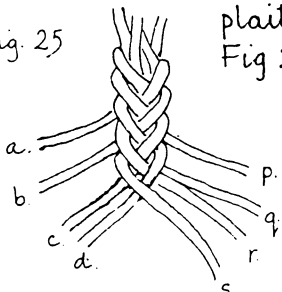


Fig 24(b)

Now pass p behind q, r, s and a, d, and return to its own side below s.

Repeat these strand movements —  
 (i) passing b. behind c, d, a and p, s, and returning to its own side below a.  
 (ii) passing q. behind r, s, p and b, a, and returning to its own side below p. The plait will appear as in Fig 25 on 4 sides.

Fig. 25



## WARNING!

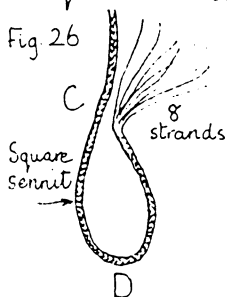
Beware of crossing the strands. In fig 25, note that a. is the next strand to

be used and it will come up between the middle pair on the right, namely r, q, before returning to the left, below d.

## STAGE VI

When you have completed 14" (35 cm) of square sennit, bend the plait to form a bight approximately 2 ins. (5 cm. from C to D.

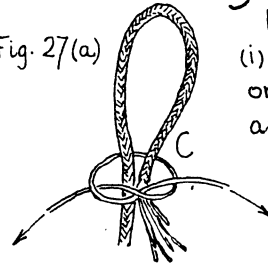
Fig 26



The working strands at C will now be secured with a "West Country" whipping. As you proceed, cut away the strands, one by one.

# West Country Whipping

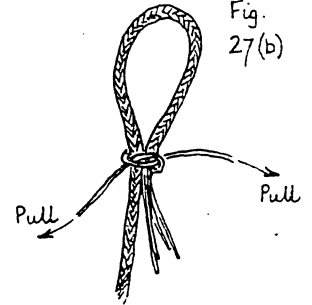
Fig. 27(a)



Use either :-

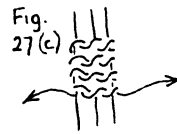
- (i) 2 of the working strands
  - or (ii) a fresh strand,
- and tie an overhand knot.

Fig. 27(b)



Make a similar knot behind, then in front again, and continue for about 1" (2 1/2 cm), by which time all strands should be cut away.

Fig. 27(c)



Be careful to lay each knot in position, pulling tightly, and repeating the method used for the first knot each time.

Finish with a reef knot.

## STAGE VII

A Turk's head should be placed wherever needed — possibly at B and C.

## The Turk's Head.

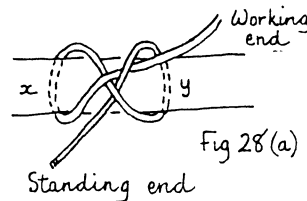


Fig 28(a)

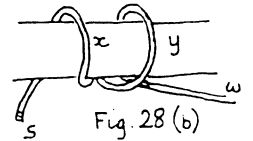


Fig 28(b)

Fig. 28(b) shows a different view, with the knot turned, so that the loops x, y, are on top.

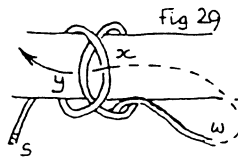


Fig 29

Lift loop x over loop y and lead the working strand (w) over x and down through the 'hole' and under y.

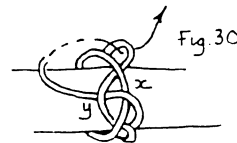


Fig 30

Turn the knot towards you, and pass the working strand to the right as shown in Fig 30.

Turn the knot again, and it will be seen that the working end (w), and the standing end (s) are now parallel. The knot is now complete.

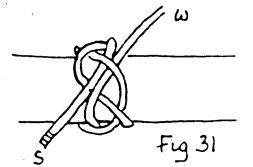


Fig 31

The knot may be doubled and then trebled by following round, thus making a Turk's Head of three parts and 4 turns.

If the knot is too loose, start at s and follow round, tightening as you go.

AMBITIOUS JIMMY HICKS, by John Masefield (1878 - 1967)

".....I made a spring, slipped, steadied myself, cast the painter around the mooring hook, and made the boat fast. "A round turn and two half hitches," I murmured, as I passed the turns, "and a third half hitch for luck." "Come off with your third half hitch," said one of the sailors. "You and your three half hitches. You're like Jimmy Hicks, the come-day go-day. You want to do too much you do. You'd go dry the keel with a towel, wouldn't you, rather than take a caulk? Come off with your third half hitch."

"Well, of all the red-headed ambitious fellies I think Jimmy Hicks was the worst .... ,He wasn't never happy unless he was putting whipping on ropes' ends, or pointing the top-gallant and royal braces.....Always doing something..... Always doing more than his piece.....If he was told to whip a rope, he pointed it and gave it a rub of slush and Flemish-coiled it.....You want to be warned by him.....You hear the terrible end he come to.....So as they was coming home they got caught in a cyclone off the Mauritius.....So it was all hands to the pumps.....By and by the pumps choked..... "Lively there," says the mate, "Up there one of you with a block. Out to the mainyard arm and rig a tackle. Lively now....She's settling under us." So Jimmy Hicks seizes a tackle and they hook it onto the longboat, and Jimmy nips into the rigging with one of the blocks in his hand. And they clear it away to him as he goes. And she was settling like a stone all the time. "Look slippy there, your" cries the mate, as Jimmy lays out on the yard. For the sea was crawling across the deck. It was time to be gone out of that."

"And Jimmy gets to the yard-arm, and he takes a round turn with his lashing, and he makes a half hitch, and he makes a second half hitch. "Yard arm, there!" hails the mate. "May we hoist away?" "Hold on," says Jimmy, "till I make her fast," he says. And just as he makes his third half hitch and yells to them to sway away - ker-woosh! there comes a great green sea. And down they all go.....All the whole lot of them. And all because he would wait to take the third half hitch. So you be warned by Jimmy Hicks, my son. And don't you be neither red-headed nor ambitious."

(MORAL: Always use the simplest knot that will do the job.Ed.)

-- - oOo - - -

ROPEWORK SIGNATURES, by 'Cy Canute'

Can you recognise your own ropework if it is presented to you years later? Can other people? Artists sign their paintings. So how could we put our personal signatures into every piece of knotwork? A friend once put his name and address and the date on a typewritten slip of paper inside a bellrope he tied. It was a whimsical gesture, because his particulars would only be discovered if the bellrope was untied. Should we stitch our initials on afterwards? Or insert during the tying process some code of hitches peculiar just to our own knotting?

Our work shouldn't be anonymous. Much of it will outlast us, to acquire antique value in future years. If only it was identifiable. I can imagine an art critic scrutinising a piece of old knot work. "Ummm. Let me see. Ah, yes! The work of Jack Fidspike, I do believe. Look, you can see the curious irregularities in the over-under sequence of the Turk's Heads. That was his trademark (although there were his detractors, now happily discredited, who claimed he'd



Never learned to tie them correctly). This would have been during his exploratory white cotton period when he was living in a flat in Walworth. Of course he really came to prominence later, when he moved to a craft commune in a disused Rotherhithe warehouse, and began creating definitive contemporary statements in orange polypropylene."

Seriously, if anyone decides to mark their work in any way, your Hon. Secretary will be pleased to maintain a register of such marks. The information will then be available to identify the originator of a particular piece of knotwork; and any subsequent request to register similar marking will be informed that it is already in use and the member will be advised to seek an alternative.

- - - oOo - - -

QUOTATION

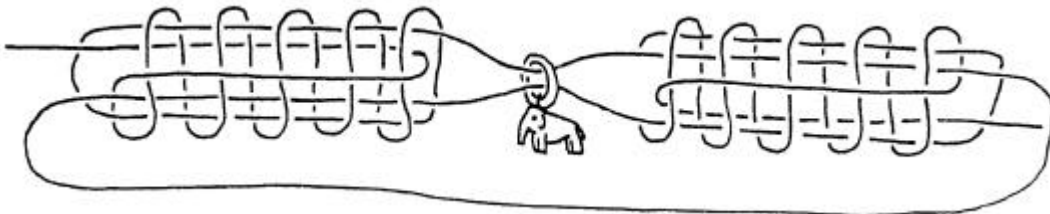
".....he would lie in bed all morning.....practising knots with the cord he kept by his bedside....."

the character 'Steerpike' from 'GORMENGHAST' by Mervyn Peake, pub. by Eyre & Spottiswoode, London (1950)

- - - oOo - - -

AFRICAN BRACELET

During 1961, a number of Metropolitan Police Officers were seconded to Nyasaland. One of them, a Sergeant from Thames Division (London's River Police), returned wearing the bracelet shown below. It was tied directly onto his wrist by a native servant and couldn't be removed as sliding the knots apart tightened it more. The elephant charm was carved from a fragment of tusk ivory-, and the bracelet tied in a coarse, plastic-like, hair from the animal's tail.



LETTERS

Dear Geoffrey,

So nice to hear from you again - I hope all is well. As much as I would like to attend, it won't be practicable for me to be present at the April meeting. I am greatly in favour of forming a club or association, and once things get under way sure I can interest others in this area (namely Ontario, and perhaps a bit further). If I can help in any way, please let me know; I'd be happy to contribute what I can to the newsletter.

I'll get this note into the mail as quickly as possible, leaving news and other items for a later and longer letter. Best of luck with the meeting - greetings to fellow 'Knot Tiers'.

Your friend, Rob (Robert Chisnall)

Kingston, Ontario, Canada.

Dear Geoffrey,

You can certainly put me down as a member!...Now for the amazing parallels that have taken place...I have been a member of MENSA since 1969...of the 46,592 American members....only 15 claimed an interest in ropework. This letter is typed on the back of the same message that I sent to the other 14 ropeworkers last April 15th. Each letter also contained a Theodore knot that I tied in some nylon cord.

To date only 4 of the 14 have answered my letter. These four were all supportive of my goals. I will send all four of them a xerox copy of your letter and perhaps they may choose to contact you directly about membership....It is most interesting that I mailed my "fleet" of letters on April 15th. and your meeting took place on April 17th. I look forward to hearing about the progress of the Guild.

June 5, 1982

Best regards,

Frederick D. Browne,  
Cambridge, MA., U.S.A.

An Open Letter to Mensa Knot Tyers

April, 15, 1982

I just received my copy of the 1981-82 American Mensa Register. The Register lists 15 people, including myself, who are interested in rope work. The purpose of this open letter is to ascertain if any of my fellow knot tyers have any plans in motion that are parallel to mine..

I became virtually a fanatic about knots around 1940 when I was first exposed to shoe laces. By the time I entered the first grade, I knew hundreds of knots from memory. By pestering every person I met to show me new knots, my collection grew over the years. While visiting New Mexico in 1952, a cowboy named Lawrence Sanchez showed me the knot that is enclosed with this letter. A few years after that, I bought my first copy of Ashley's book and learned that Sanchez had told me about the "Theodore" knot.

Over the years I have attempted to purchase every book on knots and ropes that I could locate and now the collection is fairly extensive. When I first moved to Massachusetts in 1963, I visited the whaling museums in New Bedford and Nantucket to learn about new knots. I found that my collection was more complete than those of the museums.

It became clear to me in 1963 that if a museum did not have a staff person who was naturally interested in knots, it would be futile to will my knot books to a museum because they would merely be put on a back shelf and never heard of again. I have been trying since 1963 to find several people younger than myself to serve as custodians of the rope lore that I have learned over the years. None of the younger members of my family have any interest in knots nor do any of my friends know of any younger people who seem to be interested in knots.

I am not too concerned about rope lore that is in books because the book will survive. But there are many things that I have learned that are not capable of being put into a book and must be taught in person.

I am sure that some of you must have thought about how you would pass on your knowledge of rope lore in a way that will keep it from being lost forever. Perhaps we can pool our efforts, in some way. I will welcome any comments or suggestions that any of you care to offer,

Thank you,

Frederick D. Browne

Dear Geoffrey,

Thanks for your letter and enclosures dated 22 May(!). This is all very efficient - I wish some other organisations I belong to had got off the ground so well.

Enclosed is my voting form. I look forward to meeting some of the people involved. Like Eric Franklin, I have a lifetime involvement with the Scout Association.

Maybe you should have a bit of background. I am now 70, but still working as a journalist and author. I am on my 78th. book. Much of my recent output has been for America. My wife and I go over there and work there frequently. About two of the past five years we have been in the USA and we may be going back again about the time of your next proposed meeting. We seem to run a writing factory, doing our own drawings and photographs as well.

Those stodgy ropework books by Brown, Son & Ferguson have all been corrected occasionally by me, but they would not let me rewrite and redraw much. The best of them is Spencers 'Knots, Splices and Fancywork!' (n.b. See page 2 - Ed.). I wrote 'Netmaking' for Brown in an air-raid shelter in 1940. It is still going strong and seems to be regarded as the authority. I wrote 'Your Book of Knots' for Faber, intended for young people and that is still available, I think. The book I like is the recent k00-page 'Practical Knots and Ropework' published at \$9.95 by Tab Books Inc., Blue Ridge Summit, Pennsylvania, USA. It is my idea of a comprehensive treatment of all the worthwhile knots, splices, etc., leaving out the fringe things that clutter up many books. Even so, the number of entries is not far short of one thousand. Unfortunately, the book is not readily available in Britain. I have a few copies. -.

Best wishes,  
22 June 1982

Sincerely,

Percy W. Blandford,  
Stratford-upon-Avon.

- - - o0o - - -

Dear Mr. Pawson,

I was most interested to read in the April issue of Yachting Monthly of the proposal to form a 'knot-tiers' association.

My father is a sailmaker in England and, in his 40 years of experience, he has probably forgotten more knots and pieces of fancy work than I'll ever know. I have been very conscious of this, and despite the distance between Hong Kong and England, I have endeavoured to learn something from him.

The proposed association is therefore of great interest to me, and should it be formed I would very much like to become a member.

Kind regards,  
June 29, 1982

Yours sincerely,  
Robert Harland,  
Hong Kong

- - - o0o - - -

Dear Mr. Budworth,

Thank you for your letter about the new knotting association. I am certainly interested in its aims and objects.....

Yours sincerely,  
E. T. Davies,  
St. Austell, Cornwall  
(n.b. Mr. Davies is author of 'An Introduction to Knots - Ed.)

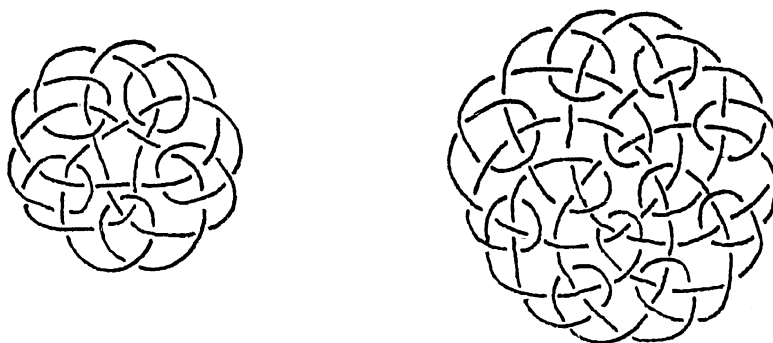
Guild member Sir Frederick Harmer of Saxmundham, Suffolk, wrote in the Winter of 1981 to the Editor of 'Seafarer', the Marine Society's magazine concerning circular mats. His letter is reproduced here:-

"The two mats in the centre of Mr. Berghout's excellent display are members of a family which I came across nearly 50 years ago in a Danish seamanship manual and have never met since in actuality or in print until last week.

They are characterised by concentric rings 4 nodes (loops), each ring having half as many nodes in it as the next outside it. You can designate any one of them by 2 numbers - for example the two specimens I enclose (see illustration) are 1-5 and 2-4. The first number in order is the number of rings of nodes and the second the number of nodes in the innermost ring.

The choice of either number is practically unlimited - there are one or two restrictions which I won't bother with - but in practice it is best to limit the order to 1, 2 or 3. I have made them up to 5 but it is very laborious and requires an incredible amount of time.

I should be very grateful for references to any descriptions of them in print if anyone knows any."



Mr. Kaj Lund, Secretary of the Danish Merchant Navy Welfare Board, who is himself a well-known author of books on ropework and knotting, responded: -"The Danish seamanship manual mentioned was written in 1902 by Captain Jens Kusk Jensen. The book has been reprinted many times. Following his system I have made experiments with mats from 6 up to 96 loops (5 concentric loops), and one of my books shows the use for several purposes. Prepared with shellac followed by waterproof boat varnish the hemp will take a consistency like teak wood, and this system is excellent for baskets."

(Details of how to construct drawings of these circular, interlocked knot patterns can be found in 'Celtic Art' by George Bain, a 1951 book republished by Constable in 1977. It is also featured in two places in the 'Encyclopedia of Knots and Fancy Ropework' by Raoul Graumont and John Hensel, 1st. edition 1939 but reprinted by Conway Maritime Press in 1981; they call it the Centre Piece design. Capt. Paul Harrison also illustrates such work in his 'Harrison Book of Knots' (1964) reprinted several times by Brown, Son & Ferguson Ltd. I feel this may be an original design by Leonardo da Vinci. . .does anyone have facts to support that hunch? Ed.)

Dear Geoffrey,

A query, if I may, about CARRICK BENDS:and some comments on their treatment in Ashley.

The query first. What is the origin of the name? Ashley on p. 263 says it was used by Lescallier in 1783. That was a French book, it seems. The Oxford English Dictionary gives its first use in English as occurring in 1819 and surmises a derivation from 'carrack' meaning an armed merchant ship. But in Carrick Castle, Co. Tipperary, this summer I saw with my own eyes the full Carrick Bend represented over and over again in decorative plasterwork -not as a frieze or border, which might be some sort of Celtic decoration, but as separate bends, showing all four ends; a sort of heraldic symbol in fact. I was told it was the family knot of the Earl of Carrick, the Butler family (related to Queen Anne Boleyn) who once inhabited the castle. There seemed to me little doubt that the plasterwork was original, i.e. of the 16th. century. Now this Carrick is a Gaelic name, and means 'rock', The local town stands at the head of the tidal reach of the river Suir, and was once quite a significant port. So I begin to suspect that the name Carrick Bend has a history that goes back far beyond 1819 or even 1783, and has an Irish, or at least Anglo-Irish origin. Can you throw any light, please?

Now about Ashley's treatment. He shows four knots at 1439-1442, and the same four at 1549-1552. Why he repeats them, he does not say; and the intervening pages are on quite other matters. (Has he any system? I do not know. I have never understood why the Chapter on Bends, which are highly important for sailors themselves, and are what most of the rest of us understand by the word knot, has to wait to page 257 and follow all that abstruse stuff on Turks Heads!) Now, he is probably correct to show the Reef laid out on the pattern of the same-side Carrick Bend (1428), because these can be converted into one another, using some considerable sleight of hand and just a single tuck - I will show you what I mean, if ever we bring off that meeting! But it is plain foolish, and confusing into the bargain, to show the Granny Knot on the same pattern. The one cannot be converted into the other except by untying completely and beginning again. The Granny is however closely related to the diagonal Carrick Bend (1439), needing just a single tuck to effect the conversion. So it should be shown, which is perfectly easy to do, laid out on that pattern and not on the same-side pattern as at 1442 and 1552.

(Incidentally, you'll have noticed I expect that knots 1557 and 1558 are illustrated out of order; and this has led to an error in the numbers given to them in the Table on p.273; also that the illustration to 1544 is wrongly numbered)

I'm inclined to dispute his judgement on Single Carrick Bend 1445. This is a handy bend, because it is what you get by forming a Constrictor in one rope, leading the other through it, and 'pulling the Constrictor sharply tight. A useful 'short-end bend', in fact. If pulled up tightly, it will jam and hold fast (in soft line that is) just like a Granny. It will slip with hard or springy material, just like a Granny, too. In cable (where it would be seized) it is more compact than the full Carrick Bend, and I would have thought quite serviceable.

Kind regards, Yours sincerely,  
Blackheath, London S.E.3

Desmond Mandeville  
14th. February, 1982

Dear Mr. Budworth,

I'll be only too interested to turn up to your meetings if physically possible (slight mobility problems)

I'm interested in nautical knotting and fancy-work and supplement invalidity benefit by roping tillers and making display boards of knots, mats, fancywork, etc., bellropes, lanyards, dog leads or whatever the customer wants! I think my work is of a reasonable standard but am always looking for opportunities to increase my somewhat limited knowledge and to fill in blind spots (such as my inability to construct a 6 strand round sennit!).

Looking forward to meeting you,

Yours sincerely,

Brian E. Field,  
Heybridge, Maldon, Ex.

June, 1982

- - - oOo - - -

Dear Geoffrey,

Congratulations on the launching of the Guild: I was sorry not to be able to attend.....I welcome the chance to join the Guild

I was working at the Knot Garden last week - vandalism is still a problem - but it is a place where there is a steady trickle of people visiting: perhaps it could be kept in mind as a place where exhibits could be mounted or where in some way the interest in knots could be furthered. It certainly has not reached its full potential yet.

I look forward to hearing of future plans and meanwhile wish you Good Luck.

Yours sincerely,

Tom Meddings,  
Wadhurst, Sussex

June 5, 1982

(n.b. Thomas Meddings, Dip. Arch. R.I.B.A. created the Giant Knot Garden on a disused riverside site at Rotherhithe - Ed.)

- - - 000 - - -

Dear Mr. Budworth,

Thanks very much for telling me about the knot tying association you have formed.

My interest in knots began when I was working for Trinity House and met an old sailmaker. He was an expert knotter and gave me a fid. I bought myself the Ashley Bock of Knots and have never looked back.

My own knots have been most useful in the various occupations I have - farming, dockwork, kite flying, etc. and it will be very interesting to meet and/or communicate with other people who have similar skills.

Yours sincerely,

Quentin Page,  
Manningtree, Essex.

August 16

- - - oOo - - -

QUOTATION

"As a matter of fact the wheel, fire, the cultivation of the soil, and other great pre-historic discoveries undoubtedly postdate the knot by countless eons of time."

(Cyrus Lawrence Day)

Dear Mr. Budworth,

Many thanks for your letter..... you certainly have our best wishes, and will get whatever support we are capable of.

I would say immediately that we are "basic knotters", not "clever knotters", and 95% of my waking time has to be devoted to running the business and making macrame things for sale (which have to be simple to do, or the price becomes outrageous, even at the trivial rate that I charge for my evening work!). But we do have some fancier work, done by some of the Navy's experts, and are always interested - and do sell some clever work (bottles, keyrings) on commission, which can also be done for "members" (the maker names the price, we take 25% when it goes).

Yes, we will certainly display your literature and produce an advertisement for your newsletters.

We could provide a venue for Portsmouth area meetings/outings, in our upstairs showroom - seats for about 15 (after shop-hours) but more could be borrowed.

I enclose 3 copies of our ordinary Price Lists - aimed mainly at the macrame customer, not the specialist cords (the list would be enormous, if we tried to put everything on.). But we do have a variety of hemp and cotton ropes and cords not listed. Possibly we would be able to produce a "Knot Tyers" addendum, listing the more specialist cords? Would welcome your advice on this, and in particular what materials do members want but find difficulty in obtaining? We are also happy to send samples to "match" customers' cords (s.a.e. please) - but please discourage people from writing for "samples of cords suitable for knotting"! -

We will also gladly put a handbill about I.G.K.T. in correspondance with any likely customers, but it would be foolish to include one in all correspondance since many of our customers are not in any way serious "knotters".

All good wishes to the venture, Yours sincerely,

John and Veronica Holliss, THE ROPE SHOP, 26, High Street, Emsworth, Hants PO10 7AW (tel: Emsworth 2642)

(n.b. Guild members John and Veronica will take an A4 page ad. in future newsletters, listing cords which may be of interest to knot tyers; meanwhile, contact them direct for their comprehensive mail order catalogue and book-list. Ed.)

- - - oOo - - -

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF KNOTS & FANCY WORK by Graumont and Hensel  
page 508, Plate 277, fig. 361

"A Four-Strand Racking Nipper is a very rare knot. It is a method of joining the bodies of four ropes together and was first found in China years ago by the authors among some ancient specimens of Chinese rope and knot work. The manner in which the Nipper is tied is so involved that even the authors were compelled to untie the specimen in order that they might understand how it was formed. For this reason an explanation of this difficult Nipper would hardly prove sufficient to give the proper understanding that is necessary to follow its construction."

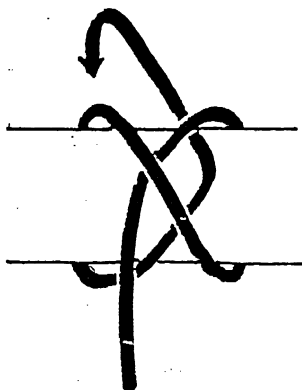
Dear Geoffrey,

I bought my first copy of Graumont and Hensel in the late 1940s. For almost 35 years I have been intrigued by the Chinese racking nipper that is supposedly "impossible" to describe, Please raise the issue of the Nipper in the Newsletter. Perhaps one of the other members may know how to tie it.

August 6, 1982 Best wishes, Fred Browne, Cambridge M&., USA.

- - - oOo - - -

'8 LEAD x 5 BIGHT TURK'S HEAD, tied direct



Although Turk's Heads may be enlarged from a few standard simple starts - or tied with a number of strands - the most fascinating are those tied direct with a single strand.

This method of tying direct an 8L x 5B does not appear in the books I've read, and was devised in the 1950s by James Nicoll from Largo, in the Kingdom of Fife.

Turk's Head exponents will know that, even given directions, patience is needed before all the misleading turns and tucks are avoided and success is granted. Knotting may not be difficult; but - it must be said - neither is it always easy! That's why it can be so satisfying.

So, patiently persist with this...

...from the start shown; over 2, turn, over 1, -under 2, turn, under 2, over 2, turn, over 2, under 2, turn, over 1, under 2, over under 1, over 1, turn, under 1, over 2, under 1, over 1, under 1, turn, over and under.

---oOo---

QUOTATIONS

"To me the simple act of tying a knot is an adventure....."  
(Clifford W. Ashley - 1944)

"It beats outer Mongolian politics."  
(Kevin Bumby, Lt. R.N. - 1978)

---oOo---

BOOKS by I.G.K.T. MEMBER ERIC FRANKLIN

'AN A.B.C. OF KNOTS', pub. by Brown, Son & Ferguson (1979)  
'A DICTIONARY OF KNOTS', pub. by The Scout Association  
'TYING KNOTS', pub. by C. Arthur Pearson  
'KAMUT - The Art of Making Pictures in String', by Academy of Recorded Art

- - - oOo - - -



