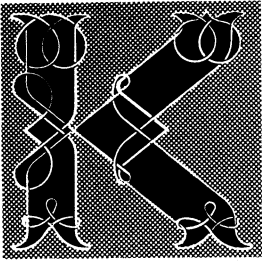
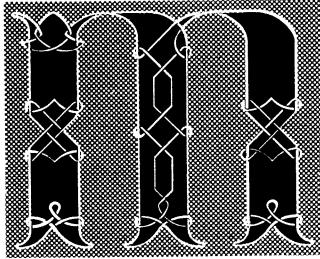


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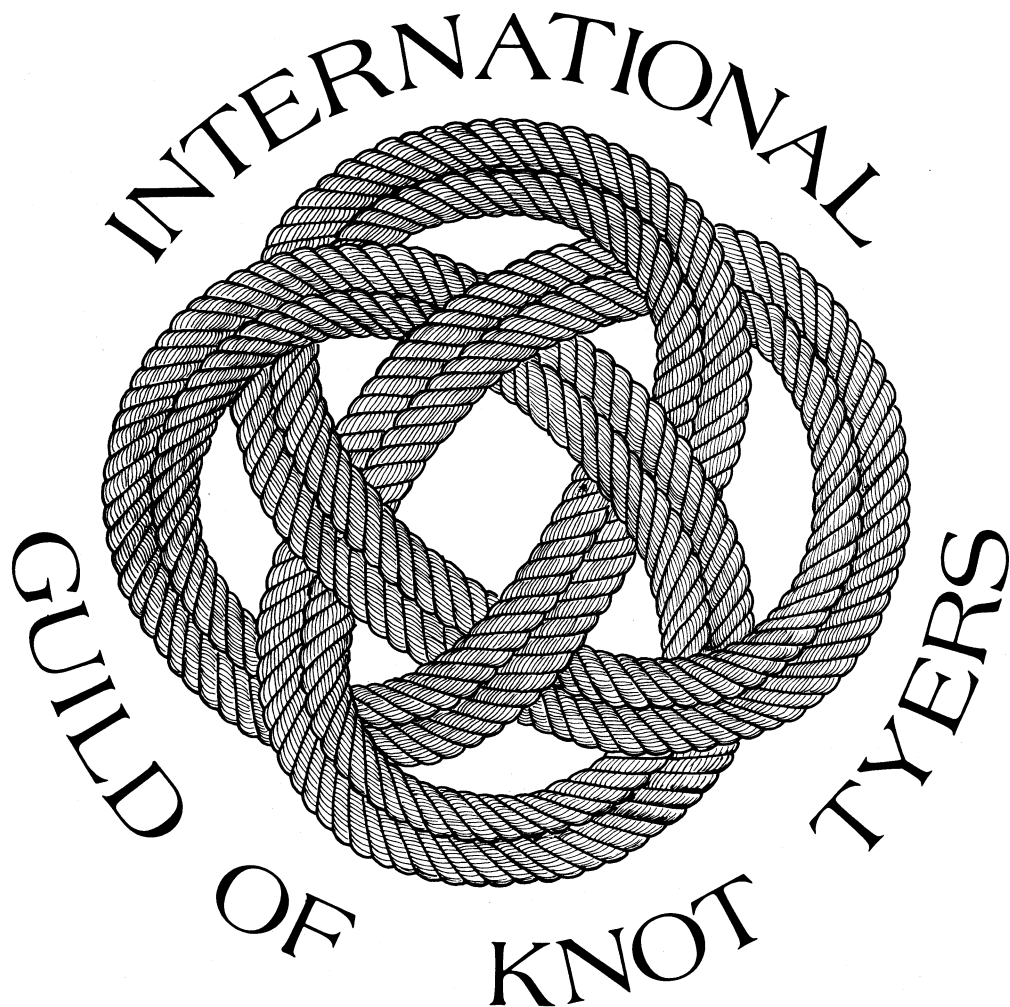


Knott



Matters

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE



'KNOTTING MATTERS'

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF KNOT TYERS

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Issue No. 2

Winter

January, 1983

EDITORIAL

Membership is now 65 and steadily increasing. Remote members include Andrew HALCROW in Hamnavoe, Shetland, Robert HARLAND of Pokfulam, Hong Kong, and J. H. MASON who is a bank manager in Borneo.

The Guild must evolve to cope with this essentially scattered membership. Perhaps national and regional representatives should be appointed. Where solitary I.G.K.T. members are situated there may be no other way than to delegate to them powers to promote the Guild's aims to suit local conditions. In some parts of the U.K. a scan of the membership list reveals small clusters of individuals forming. In these areas an energetic person with broad knotting interests could emerge as a local organiser. What do you think should happen? Make your views known at April's A.G.M.

It is understood that many may never attend the meetings or outings, so this newsletter and other correspondence will be vital...and our greatest expense. The 5 subscription agreed at the inaugural meeting aboard 'Discovery' equipped the steering committee to do its work ("You can send a lot of letters for 5 a person," someone said). True, but you cannot photocopy and distribute four issues of 'Knotting Matters' plus other correspondence during the year for that sum. The Guild needs to cover its costs and - presumably - to accumulate a small surplus. How much should the annual subscription be to do that? A decision will be sought at the AGM in April. -

The steering committee should be disbanded at the AGM and the proper officers and committee appointed in accordance with the Guild's constitution. As a temporary measure the posts of Hon. Secretary; Hon. Treasurer, Hon. Editor and Hon. Archivist/Publicity Officer have been covered - adequately - by the same person. This cannot be good for the Guild and ought to be rectified at the AGM

ON HITCHES by John Darby, of Carlton, Australia

In the ordinary use of the terms bend and hitch, a bend joins one rope to another, and a hitch joins a rope to another object. It is a pity that the only departures from this usage should be that most important

of hitches the fisherman's bend and its relatives the topsail-halliard bend and the studdingsail bend; for it, and its other relative the round turn and two half-hitches, together are to other hitches as the bowline is to other end loops... all that the sailor needs. That is said in spite of the great use - overuse rather - of the clove hitch, which, presumably owing to the ease with which it can be tied, has spread too far to sea from its position ashore of universal hitch. It is significant that square-riggers used clove-hitches only in ratlines.

The possible faults of the clove-hitch when misused are those of any other knot misused - slipping and jamming. If one puts a clove hitch on a square post and carries one taut end around the post the hitch will be found to slip surprisingly easily; on the other hand if it is heavily loaded, especially on a round post, it will jam. This happened to the present writer in a calm, when a launch that offered a tow clove-hitched the towline to its stern bollard, and afterwards took minutes to release it after the towing load had drawn it tight. In that case the unjustly despised cow-hitch would have been better, as it would have been just as secure and easier to release, but if the user had known that he would also have known of the "virtue in a round turn", and used one or two.

Although two half-hitches have the same form as a clove-hitch the names refer to different applications. The clove-hitch is taken round the object, two half-hitches round the standing part of the rope after the end has been passed round the object. Thus in the clove-hitch the full load comes directly on the knot, but with a round turn the load on the hitches is much reduced, by a factor which simple theory suggests may range for common materials from about twenty to over a thousand.

Incidentally, the very useful round turn and two half-hitches surely deserves a shorter name (fisherman's hitch?), and if possible an attractive one, but even if one could be found how could it be introduced?

For attaching to a post, spar, rail, ring or the like, the first choice should be the fisherman's bend.. As Day. (Cyrus Lawrence Day - 'The Art of Knotting and Splicing' - New York, Dodd Mead, 1947) truly says; "a beautiful example of simplicity, security and strength." The essential part of the knot and its relatives is the first tuck, fig. 5, and the variations arise from the different ways of disposing of the end so that the knot will not tend to work loose if the standing part is slackened and worried. Day gives four ways - a hitch on the standing part, fig. 5, to form the standard fisherman's bend, a tuck under the first turn to form the studdingsail bend, a seizing to the standing part for semipermanent use and a bowline to the standing part, which Ashley (Clifford W. Ashley - 'The Ashley Book of Knots' - New York, Doubleday, 1944; London, Faber & Faber, 1947) also recommends as a practical anchor hitch for small craft.

However, on the same page as the variations of the fisherman's bend, Day illustrates the buntline hitch, fig. 18, which suggests combining the two to achieve an even more secure disposal of the end. This can be done in several ways, fig's 7, 11 and 1.5, which differ in the tucking of the hitches under and over the turns on the spar. Furthermore the similarity of the lobster-buoy hitch, fig. 19, to the buntline hitch suggests the variations in fig's 8, 12 and 16.

The system contains two hitches, which can be formed in the same or in opposite directions ("direct" or "reversed") and with the second (nearer end of the rope) inside or outside (nearer or further from the

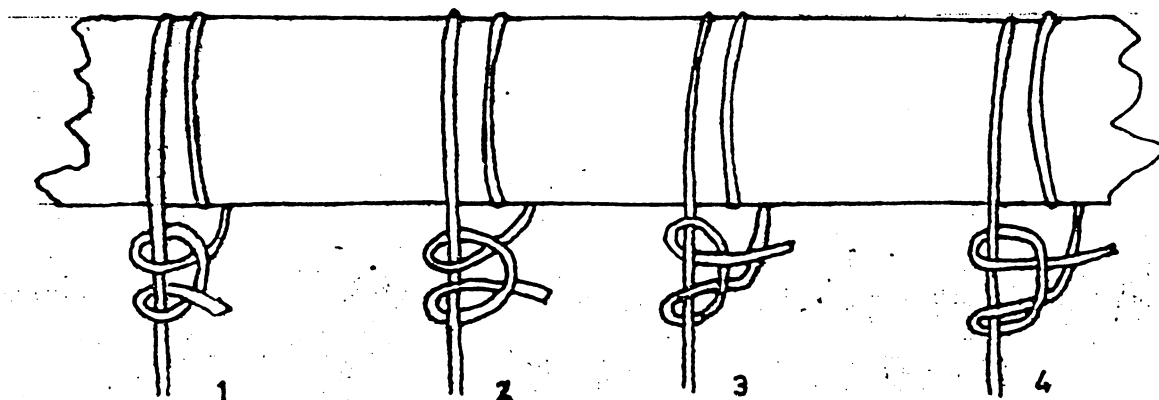
turns round the spar) the first, so there are four ways of forming them. Ashley shows the four ways for the round turn and two half-hitches, fig's 1 to 4, but clearly the same can be done with the fisherman's bend, fig's 5 to 8. In addition the outer hitch can also be tucked under the turn around the spar, so eight more variations are possible, fig's 9 to 16.

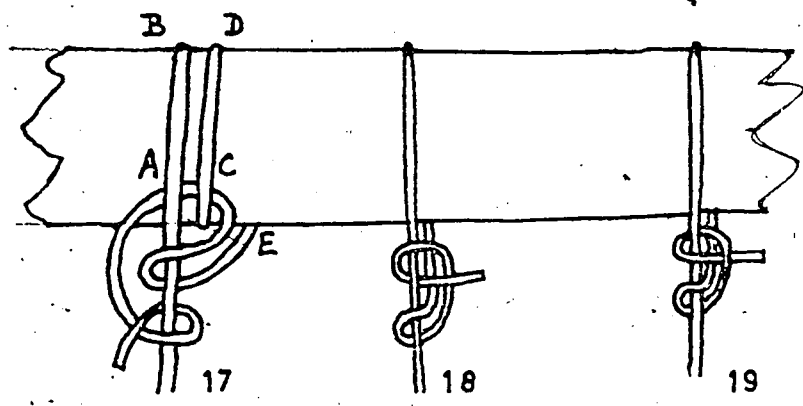
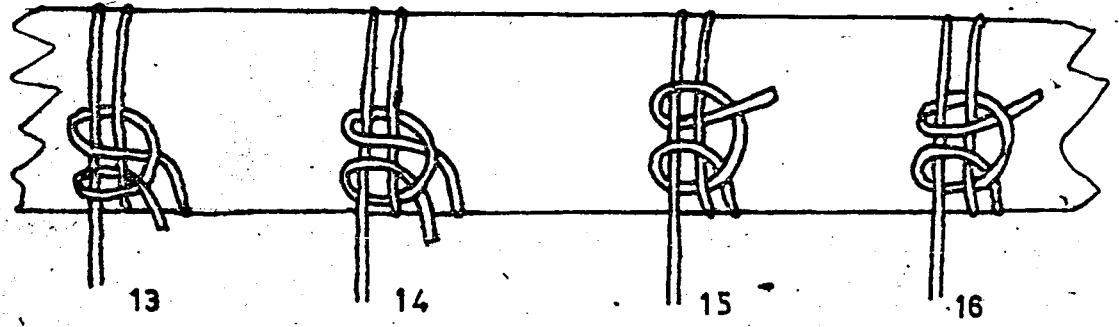
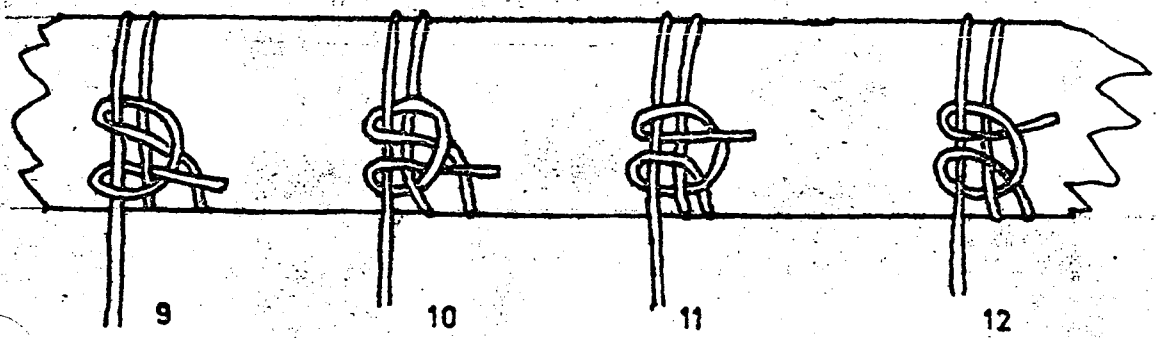
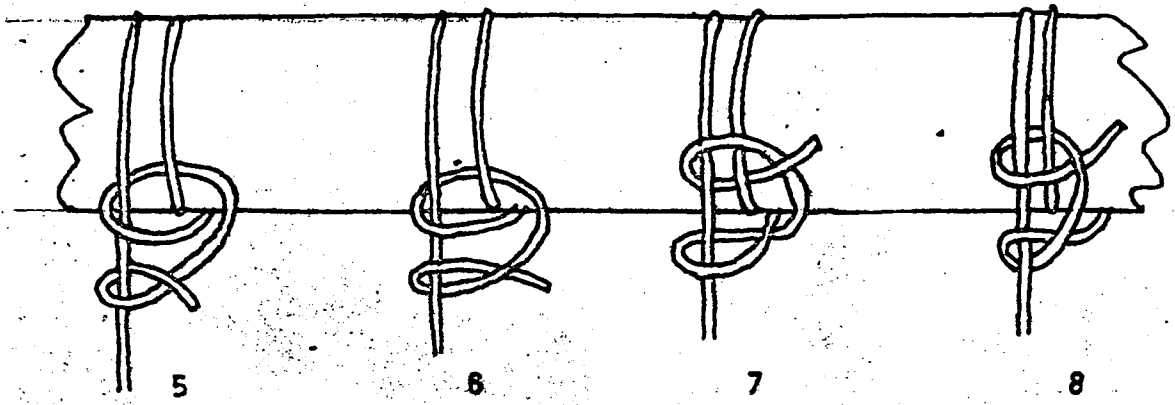
Taking the first hitch in the opposite direction doubles the size of the family to 32; but most sailors would reject, for example, fig. 17 as a lubber's way of bungling the fisherman's bend. However if the front AB is lifted to the right over CD and at the back DE is lifted to the left over BC, to form two crossings in the turns around the spar, the correct form is regained at the front, and the extra crossings at the back should mean extra security.

Again, if the turns on the spar are taken to the left, instead of to the right as in fig's 1 to 16, another set is formed, which in plaited or braided rope are mirror images of fig's 1 to 16, but which in laid rope are not. The reader must decide for himself whether the consequent difference is enough to double the size of the family yet again. Lovers of variety may also like to notice that taking two round turns on the spar allows each hitch to pass under none, one, or two turns, giving  $3 \times 3 \times 4 = 36$  primary forms to choose from.

The forms 6 to 16 are not given by Ashley, Day or Graumont and Hensel (Graumont and Hensel - 'Encyclopedia of Knots and Fancy Work - Cambridge, Massachusetts, Cornell Maritime Press, 1964) which suggests that they have been little used, but is this because they have not been noticed or because they have faults other than slipping or jamming, which do not occur?

Samples in 5/8 line loaded to half the breaking stress - the author's weight - have all been found easy to undo, and slipping could not be induced even in PTFE (teflon). That was in an attempt, which unfortunately failed, to rank the set in order of security, by the method which Ashley used for bends. This requires a smooth material that will slip under load before it breaks, so hitches were formed in PTFE-coated wire on a rod covered with a PTFE sleeve; one then measures the steady load or the number of jerks of a chosen size required to spill the hitch. However in all cases the wire broke first, so the set can be called all adequately secure, even though they cannot be put in order. It seems therefore to be left to readers to try them and reach their own conclusions.





FOR SALE -Still available, four colour prints 10" x 7" (250mm. x 180mm.) of founder members aboard R.R.S. 'Discovery' on 17th. April, 1982, @ £2.20p. each. First-come-first-served (with preference to anyone in the photograph). Apply to Hon. Editor

## PROFILE OF A KNOTSMAN by the Editor

JAMES NICOLL has produced more magnificent knotting than anyone else I know. Whether he was splicing stubborn wire steering gear aboard river police duty boats, or pointing-and-grafting the individual yarns of a fine cotton braided rope's end, his craftsmanship was unequalled. He made tassels for circus horses, repaired an acrobat's trapeze, and - later - even rigged a hot air balloon. His fancy knotting included intricate show-piece bell ropes, table lamps, a fanciful mayoral chain, chest beackets, buttons, bottle coverings, mats, ornamental rope lettering and miniature blocks and tackles for model-makers. Jim is now 80 and, sadly, no longer fit to cope with knotting. The Guild has come too late for his active involvement but he will read of our activities with interest and help in any way he can.

Jim Nicoll was born at Largo in Fifeshire (home, too, of Alexander Selkirk. . . the real Robinson Crusoe) and his interest in knotting was aroused as a boy watching fishermen in the bay mending nets. When his father, a grocer (like Clifford W. Ashley's, incidentally), was clearly going to apprentice him to the shop, young James escaped to sea and learned many ropeworking skills aboard merchant navy tankers of the old Eagle Oil Transport Company.

Coming ashore in 1925, he joined the Metropolitan Police and, in 1928, was seconded to Shanghai as a detective engaged to combat the violent crime wave there. He served for 3 years before returning to a beat at King's Cross. In 1935 he transferred to Thames Division (London's river police), where he was known as 'Chang', remaining there until 1944. A spell with the Coal Board at Victoria preceded his early retirement on ill-health grounds to Surrey, where - at some stage - he was actually under the medical care of I.G.K.T. founder member and physician Dr. Edward Hunter!

The 1940s and 50s were perhaps his busiest knotting years. A resourceful and inventive man, he designed his own knots and made the tools to tie them. Dissatisfied with anything less than the best, his experimental work was often thrown straight onto the open fire. Completed efforts were superbly original, and so firm and tight they seemed to be sculpted from something solid. Loose ends were buried beyond recall; even he couldn't spot them. "My knots aren't tied," he'd grin. "They just happen."

Jim's strong hands could force a virtually invisible splice into thick wire; but his fingers could also cope with miniature fancy-work when the finest of needles in a handle would serve as his marlinespike. He was never without a length of line which, when it was not in his hands, he kept in his pocket. He had one piece in his dressing gown, another in his gardening trousers, and yet another in his car. Each piece was neatly whipped at both ends or finished with small tight Matthew Walker knots. His favourite was always a 6' length of cotton 'banding' (or magician's cord).

Examples of his work are displayed in the Thames Police Museum, 98, Wapping High Street, London E.1, where they may be viewed at any time (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) by applying to the Station Officer for the key. Better still, arrange a tour of the entire museum with the curator, P.C. Danny Lines. Prior notice is always best as it's an operational police station.



Profile. . . James\_NICOLL

QUOTATION

"In Winter Kathleen and I would each have a skipping rope; this was a piece of ship's rope, there being no other kind. How we skipped and jumped through that rope. We took it everywhere with us and had great fun inventing different skipping games."

'Between High Walls' - A London Childhood, by Grace Foakes, pub. Shephard-Walwyn (1972)

A KNOTTY PROBLEM by Bill Beavis

(reprinted, with kind consent of the author, from his column 'Looking Around' in September 1982's issue of 'Yachting Monthly')

A fair number of beginners and day trippers sail in my boat and we have a few surprises. Some I would rather not mention like turning up with a tin trunk and boots and asking where the washing-up liquid lives - after three days aboard that is! But the most usual fault is their shared inability to tie a simple knot.

I am at a loss to understand this. Man walks on the..moon, makes machinery the size of a match-head, and can even make himself into a woman if he wants, but get aboard my boat and he can't even tie a round-turn-and-two-half-hitches to stop my dinghy drifting away. Honestly then, how far have we progressed?

Basic knots are part of the first principles surely? Instinctively almost. A natural follow-on from telling the time, reaching the doorknob and crossing the road by yourself. How does anyone get along without them?

They must have led pampered lives that's all, first their mothers then their wives, always behind them. Always ready to do up their laces, knot their ties, and open their Christmas parcels. But how then did they get on between these two havens, the delicate stage of courtship for example? I bet that doesn't go down very well with the lover, standing in the moonlight struggling with a granny knot in your pyjama cord. Youth, manhood, dotage. I still fail to see how anyone can struggle through these without the accomplishment of a couple of knots. But they do...they clearly do, and most of them end up on my boat.

(Bill Beavis would warm to our Eric Franklin, an Assistant District Scout Commissioner and a member of the Magic Circle, who had considerable success with his book 'Tying Knots', published by C. Arthur Pearson. And we must all admire the ingenuity with which he placed a written article on knotting in the Winter 1972 issue of wine merchant Peter Dominic's magazine 'WineMine')

NEVER LOST A BOTTLE by Eric Franklin

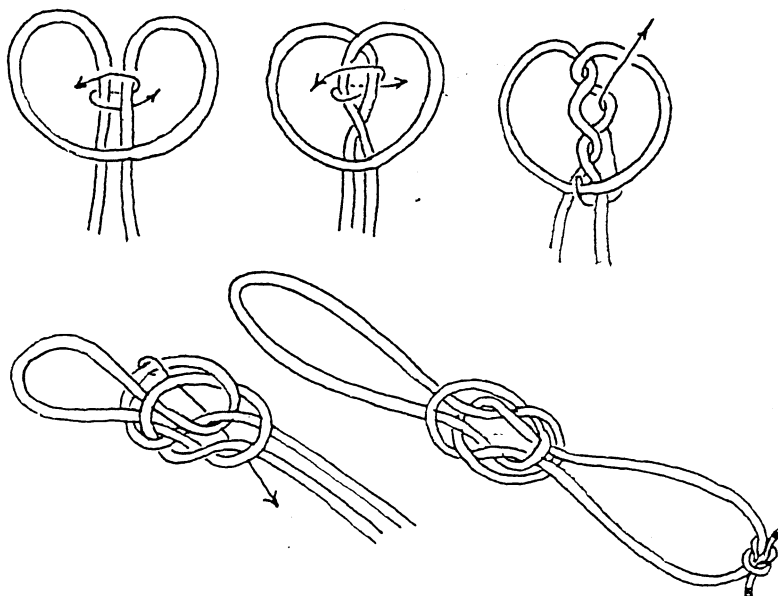
Reading with my usual enjoyment the Winter 1971 issue of WineMine, I was intrigued by the article by William Mann, 'Music Critic in a Tent'. As a fellow camper for the greater part of half-a-century and one who also considers a bottle of wine an essential part of camp equipment, I approved Mr. Mann's use of camping and can match his horror stories. Like him, I occasionally dangle a bottle on a string in a convenient stream to cool it but I have never lost a bottle in this way, and I never shall! The answer lies in one of my particular hobbies - tying knots.

The average person faced with the need to tie a length of string round, for example, the neck of a bottle or that of a jam-jar (some youngsters always want to fish for tiddlers or tadpoles) just has no idea how to set about it. Yet, to the initiated, i.e. the person who knows his knots, the answer is so simple. There is a knot designed for just this purpose - the Jug or Bottle Sling. With its use, any bottle, jug or jar, provided it has a collar or projection at the neck, as does every wine bottle, of course, can be securely slung or carried. In fact, with a ball of string and the necessary practice, there is no easier way of toting several bottles in each hand.



How do you tie this paragon among knots? Just follow the instructions here in conjunction with the illustrations, with a length of string in your hands, and you will never lose another bottle.

Take a length of string, any string, but nice white cord is preferable, about six feet long and middle it; that is a sailor's term for folding it in half. Now fold the loop you have made towards you to produce two loops, Fig. 1. Twist the two inner members of these loops, right over left, twice to produce



Fig's 2 and 3. Take the tip of the initial loop back between the two legs and up through the centre of the twisted portion from the rear, i.e. follow the arrow in Fig. 3 to produce Fig. 4. Fold the top loop at the rear downwards to the bottom of the knot, as shown by the arrow in Fig. 4 and with a little adjustment, the knot is complete, Fig. 5. Just slip the middle 'hole' of the knot over the neck of the bottle and pull tight, and tie the two loose ends together.

This may sound complicated, but with a little practice it is so easy and will certainly astonish those young Scouts camping near you who think they know something about knots!

#### QUOTATION

"Blunt wedges rive hard knots."  
(Ulysses - 'Troilus and Cressida', by William Shakespeare)

#### BOOK REVIEWS

'The Cockpit Book of Knots' by David Weatherston and Patrick Brophy, published by Tarka Press, Ontario, Canada (1980), 2nd. impression 1981 - price £3.95p.

...at some point one wishes to call a halt to the purchase of expensive stainless steel gimmicks claimed to perform functions adequately served by a few feet of line." So say the authors who go ahead and portray 10 'Must Knots' and 15 'Maybe Knots'. Few surprises, except the Farmer's Loop (c.1912) given new life as part of a tensioning device with a Rolling Hitch.

Advice on using the knots is easy to absorb, together with facts on synthetic v. vegetable fibre ropes, breaking strains and safe working

loads, protection from chafe, heat-sealing, whippings and seizings, laid and braided line splices.

This book aimed to encourage "muscular memory", speed and dexterity...and fails to do so. Only 18 of 75 photo's even show hands, often static and meaningless.

Attractively packaged in waterproof covers and on splash-resistant pages to fit it for life afloat, the large print can be read by the dimmest chartroom lamp. Instructions adjoin illustrations, with a spring binder so that pages lie open even in a sailing breeze. It's an obvious gift for knotting and boating beginners but a trifle expensive at nearly £4 for 52 pages so that 3 pages on furling sails seems an intrusion. Avid knots(wo)men will buy it anyway; and it belongs upon the bookshelves and by the bunksides or (as the title infers) in the waterproofs of all boating types.

Contact the sole U.K. distributors, Bruce Coward and Nicolette Coward, OBE., 'The Harbour Bookshop', 12, Fairfax Place, Dartmouth, Devon TQ6 9AE (tel: 080 43 2448).

'Nets and Coracles' by J. Geraint Jenkins (Keeper of Material Culture, Welsh Folk Museum), pub. David & Charles (1974) - £6.25p.

This is a scholarly work, the result of many years ethnological and historical study of traditional methods of Welsh river fishing, detailing every kind of net, how they were made and used, the legal requirements, and even precisely how many licences were issued in given years.

The obsessive student of nets will find it a rich source of esoteric facts; while, for the rest of us, it's worth a skim through if you can locate it in a library.

#### QUOTATION

"Louise had tied Shooting Star's reins with a slippery fisherman, it was a sailor's knot, a quick-release knot for a fast getaway."

'Men of Men' by Wilbur Smith, pub. Wm. Heinemann Ltd. (1981)

#### THE RUSSIAN CONNECTION

Czar Peter the Great (he was 6' 7" tall) was the first yachtsman in his country, for in the late 1600s it was remote from the remainder of Europe and had no easy access to the sea. Having discovered Dutch and English shipbuilding by chance, and been spellbound by it, he set about teaching himself every aspect of the trade...including rigging.

The centre-spread overleaf comes from a modern Russian yachting magazine sent to Jack Heming, editor/publisher of 'Multihull International'. He gave the original three-colour piece to Des Pawson who enlisted the help of Robert Lovejoy to produce the black and white print which is reproduced herein.

#### LETTERS-



Dear Mr. Budworth,

I think your Newsletter is terrific I see lots of newsletters from clubs, etc., but this has got them all beat, none of them have anywhere near the amount of interest and useful exchange; I'll bet members really look forward to that each quarter. I would be flattered to have my piece re-printed in it... thanks again for writing and the newsletter which I plan to mention in YM shortly.

Best wishes, Bill Beavis 27-10-82  
(Yachting Monthly)

Dear Geoffrey,

A word to say how impressed I am with the vigour and enterprise evident in the record of meetings of the Guild. My absence so far - I must admit - is due as much to pressure of work as to a certain reluctance to expose my almost total lack of real expertise in knots in such an august and knowledgeable company. However I feel privileged to belong to the Guild and am delighted to see it flourishing.

At the moment the only contribution I can envisage on my part would be a five-minute account of the knot garden, which is disappointingly far short of what I originally hoped for (I mean the garden itself). Plus possible help with any graphics.

Surprisingly the two panels of knots graphics at 125, Rotherhithe Street are among the few things not to have been vandalised - when they are in fact extremely vulnerable. Vandalism has removed the secondary ropes from the three large sheet bends which now exist only as three meaningless large hair-pins. My own technique was adrift here: I have in mind to look into the possibility of replacing the missing ropes with pre-bent gas pipe - or even scaffolding tube. I am still active there and next week-end hope to complete yet another round of repairs to satisfy Southwark before they take over from the GLC.

Would the Guild be interested in manning an I.G.K.T. exhibit for a couple of hours during Rotherhithe Gala day, which is generally in mid-June - a Saturday? It is centred on the stretch between the Knot Garden (and Brunel Engine House) and the Mayflower and beyond. It has become a successful event over the few years of its existence, with local interests showing on stands and bands, actors, etc. A live demonstration of knot tying and fancy work would go down well, I am sure.

It occurred to me to seek ideas from any interested members for the improvement of 125 before I noticed that there is at least one Rotherhithe member - Paul Herbert: do you think any useful purpose would be served in my approaching him? I think there is still potential at the Knot Garden: the Guild might like a permanent board announcing its existence and purpose.

With best wishes, Yours, Tom Meddings 24-10-82  
Dip. Arch. RIBA  
Wadhurst, Sussex.

Dear Mr. Budworth,

I was very pleased to learn of' the formation of a "Guild of Knot Tyers". I have been toying with the idea of starting a Macrame Guild. I would like more information on The Guild please and an application form to join.

I teach macrame in my studio (which is in my garden). I have 49 ladies and 1 man at the moment with a waiting list for places. I design and write my own patterns as well as adapting others. This is the 4th. year for me. Also I've trained two ladies to teach. One now has 24 students of her own. I would be pleased to welcome you to my studio.....Further to our telephone conversation I enclose my cheque for membership of the Knot Tyers Guild. I look forward to meeting you on Sunday, 5th. December. Could I please have some leaflets on the Guild.

Yours sincerely, Glad Findley 13-11-82  
(Witchcraft' s Studio,  
Pyrford, Woking, Surrey)

Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter.. ...Knots took me into netting, and then somebody asked how do you secure the cod end. I wrote to the "Fishing News" and they suggested I buy the "Fishermans Manual". It was in there. I have never seen it in any knot book.

....during the Summer I made myself a wood turning lathe and made a fid with a recess for a Turk's Head. I used a scraper. I cannot use chisels, but I am pleased with it. Then I see one of the members Des Pawson is a wood turner. Maybe he will put something in the news letter.

My first name is Jim ... I served in the Royal Navy and then in the Merchant Navy. I could knot and splice as much as needed but was never in a Bos'n's Party I now regret. The interest in fancy knotting only surfaced in the last few years, although I used to get 1/6 to plait nettles and graft hammock lanyards.....I have put the leaflets you sent me in the local library and art centre. I am trying to think of a way to get it into a Glasgow newspaper. I was thinking of making a rudder yoke to put tiller lines on.

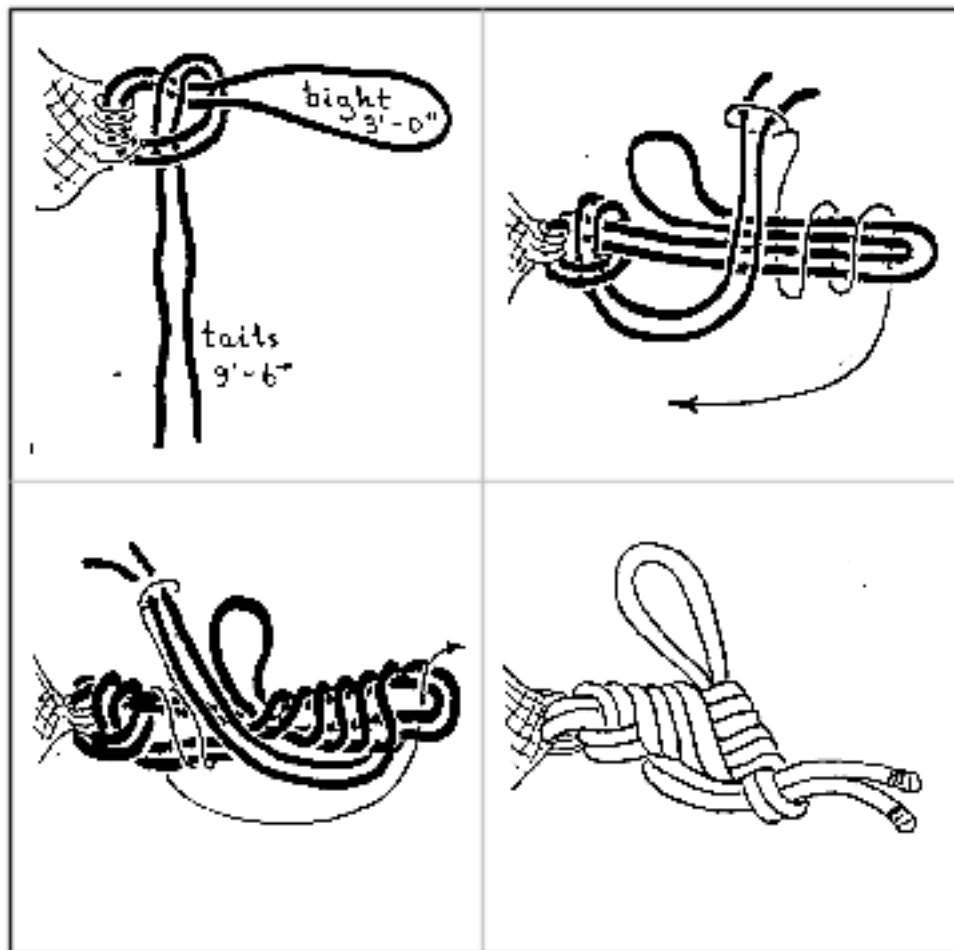
Yours faithfully, J. Garsides 26-10-82  
(Airdrie, Scotland)

Cod End Knot -Double rope and pass bight through the cod end rings. The length at the bight end is 3'-0" and the tails 9'-6". Pass the tails up and over twice moving to the right leaving about a foot of the original bight sticking out. We now have single ioop on the left and a double loop on the. right. Continuing push the tails to the left and behind the single ioop -make 2 turns and then 2f turns to the right and through the double loop.

Why - 1. the knot must never come undone. 2. the man untieing is well clear before the load is released. He takes the tails out of the loop and runs away taking the tails with him (9'), the load opens the rest.

That is in "The Fishermans Manual", a World Fishing Publication, £10.00, a lot of money for one knot.

The other way is in an American book\* aimed at part time fishermen and he says; The pucker string knot is simply a chain of half knots that can be released no matter what the pressure. Tuck a loop of the right-hand end as though you were going to tie a square knot and pull both ends tight (n.b. a 'square knot' means a reef knot - ed.). Then tuck a loop of the lefthand rope through that loop and pull the right-hand



rope tight around that, alternating ropes as you go.

\* 'Making a Living Alongshore' by Phil Schwind, pub. International Marine Publishing Co., Camden, Maine, U.S.A. @ £5.95.

Dear Sir,

I have just learnt of the existence of your organisation, and hasten to send my fiver for Membership. Please send me all the current "bump" - including the first issue of your excellent Newsletter and the Minutes of the General Meeting.

It was with pleasure that I learnt of your formation on my old ship - R.R.S. Discovery. I lived aboard her for two and a half years from September, 1952 until May 1955. The first twelve-month I was Purser and Seamanship Instructor with the Boy Scouts Association - and then Ship's Husband for the London Graving Dock Company during the refit carried out for London Division, R.N.V.R.

Yours faithfully,

Mike Davis (Hereford)

26-10-82

Dear Geoffrey

.....I shall send you some of my bell ropes ... "dog watch" and "duty weekend" efforts the former are 12-15 hr. efforts and the latter 4.0-50 hr. efforts.

During my time in the Royal Australian Navy I was inspired to attempt some ornate ropework by some of the old hands ... I was always asked to do that bit of ornate ropework that the others could not do. Most times

I did not know how to do it either but I stuck at it and solved most of the problems and produced the work that the old hands had only ever heard about.

My first success was to discover the principles whereby continuous coachwhipping can be put on any diameter or for any length of any sized line.....I did this whilst working with 7lb. cotton gun line putting c.c.w. on the barrels of telescopes. C.c.w. is my name for any multi-numbered part Turk's head, i.e. 37 part. I discovered a lot about the knack of tensioning the line so that the work did not end up lop-sided or bunched up.

Since my aim has always been to produce a bell rope that could have hung on the "Victory's" bell, I have specialised in circular knots tied with a single line around the barrel of a bell rope.

I have also mastered the technique of creating an Imperial State Crown to sit atop my "warship" bell ropes. In the R.A.N.C. bellrope which I have made to celebrate the 30th. anniversary of my year's entry to the College, I have made it to look like a Parliamentary mace. It is about 4 feet long from the orb on the crown to the bottom of the tassel. It weighs about 10 lbs. and took about 400 hours of work although I could do something similar in about 200 hours such were the lessons which I learnt.

With my smaller "warship" bellropes I try to make them appear like a royal baton.

I do not know the names of most of the work that I do. I just assess the effect that I would like to achieve and with tensioning and proportion being almost second nature by now, I devise the knot to suit the need. I used to be bothered by the gap between knots and overlapping but you will see from my bell ropes just how I overcame this problem. I call it inverted crowned grafting over a grafted core. This barrel allows me to put ornate ropework where I please and the biggest challenge is to achieve an overall balanced effect.

....Our biggest problem these days is to find the right sort of line to work with. I will always consider that the 7lb. cotton gun line was old hands' ideal line .... I unlay the strands of 2 1/2" - 3 1/2" nylon hawser to graft for my cores. I use a 4- part crown knot and then straight into the graft upon itself until I reach the required length. Then the remainder is whipped until the bell rope is completed and the tassel is teased and trimmed to the required length.

Thank you for the copy of 'Knotting Matters', Issue No. 1, which arrived in yesterday's mail. I was impressed with the presentation and content of the issue. Well done on a fine effort. I am more than happy with the way in which you varnished my bell rope and presented it to the Marine Society to hang on their "Philomena Bell".

My last bell rope should now be displayed on the Queen's deck of the Royal Yacht 'Britannia'. The C.O. (Admiral Greening) and his flag lieutenant attended the launching of H.M.A.S. 'Ipswich' at the slipway, Cairns, while the 'Britannia' was waiting at Townsville for H.R.H. Prince Phillip to arrive for the cruise to Brisbane and the Commonwealth Games (it should appeal to Des Pawson having another 'Ipswich' in the fleet). The enclosed photocopy of the 'Britannia' thank-you letter.... is one of the few.....that I have ever had acknowledging the presentation of a

bell rope...you never know, one day the I.G.K.T. may go on board the 'Britannia' to view the 9 bell ropes as an outing.

I make a bell rope, ornamental lifebuoy centres and rope mats (in 1 1/2" sisal followed around 4 times in the expanded "True Lover's Knot" pattern) for each of the new 'Freemantle' class patrol boats as they are commissioned.....The ornamental lifebuoy centres are the circular patterns discussed on p.11 of 'Knotting Matters'..... they are 2-6s followed around twice in 6mm. white nylon line. I then go around the inside with either red or green 3-ply macrame cord to give the port or starboard effect. I used two 2-6s with one being the mirror image of the other. This is done by making one with overhand loops and the other with underhand loops. I edge the inside with blue synthetic line of the size of mackerel line. In my early days in the Service, we had three sizes of small cordage, cod, mackerel and whiting lines, so I am still a bit lost describing line in its metric designation.

The 'Ipswich' was commissioned into the Australian fleet on Saturday (13th. November) and the lifebuoy rosettes looked good but I felt the diameter looked a little small so I decided then and there to try a 2-7 which I did yesterday. This gives a seven pointed star in the centre and when followed around with the blue line, the blue traces a pattern in the centre of seven legs running around in a circle much like the Isle of Man crest. The legs would be going clockwise or anti-clockwise depending upon whether overhand or underhand loops were used. Overhand loops give an anticlockwise pattern of legs. I am so pleased with the result that I will make 2-7s my standard design for all future rosettes, made in mirror imaged pairs.

I have initiated the practice of having J25/52 engraved around the ring of the stainless steel eye bolts of my bell ropes, as this would identify me to all cadets who entered the R.A.N.C. as 13 year olds. I was 25th. in alphabetical order of my year's entry Jervis Year in 1952.

The enclosed centrepiece design 2-6 is forwarded for inclusion in the I.G.K.T.'s display.

I wish you and the other members of the Guild well and ask you to pass on my best wishes when you see them especially Des Pawson. Well done for the effort so far and best wishes for the future of the I.G.K.T.

Yours sincerely,  
Charles Thomason  
(Queensland, Australia)  
26-11-82

#### QUOTATION

"That's a boozers knot.. .it's as 'tight' as I can get it!."  
Frankie Holmes - 1976





at Brisbane

6th October 1982

H. M. YACHT BRITANNIA  
BFPO Ships, London

No: RY 603/2

*x Should be CUNNEEN*

Lieutenant Commander A Cullen, RAN<sup>x</sup>  
c/o HMAS CAIRNS<sup>xx</sup>  
Cairns  
Queensland

*xx Should be N.R.C.  
(Naval Reserve Cadets)*

*Dear Lieutenant Commander Cullen,*

Thank you so much for presenting to HM Yacht BRITANNIA a very fine Bell Rope. I compliment who ever had the skill and patience to make it. Rarely have I seen craftsmanship in these modern times, displayed in a traditional craft, to such a high standard. Not only is it made and finished beautifully the overall design is so attractive.

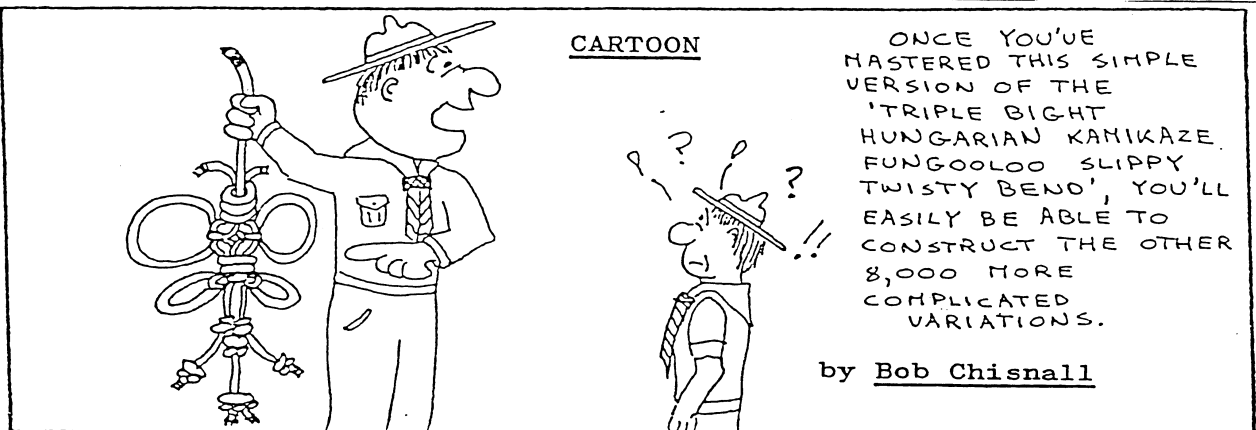
You will be pleased to know that it will hang permanently along with eight others from which one is always selected for use. So one day, who knows.

I enclose a photograph showing two other of our Bell Ropes which are made of natural cordage and date from the turn of the century.

Thank you once again.

*Yours sincerely,*

*Richard Grant*

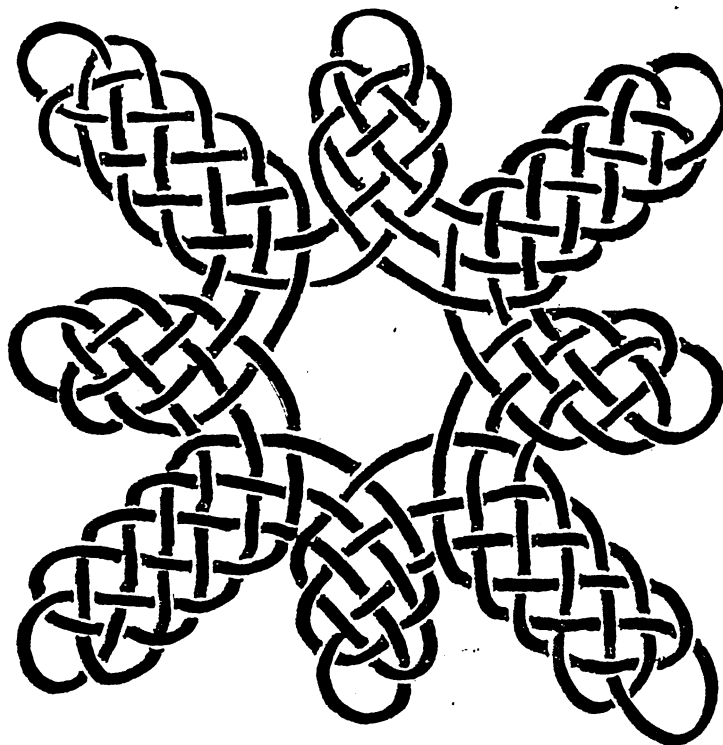


SHEILA'S STAR MAT by Des  
Pawson

Mike Burn had spent 4 years carefully restoring 'Sheila', a 25ft. Albert Strange designed yawl, built in 1905.

When he came sail her, he had one problem; there was a 16" square hatch cover in the cockpit that he used to slip on, so he asked me to make him a rope mat to go on this hatch cover to give a good foothold. When we started to talk about it, I found that he wanted a mat that would frame an 8-pointed star carved in the middle of the hatch cover.

At first his thought was just a square mat with a 'window'. But looking at the compass-point star, I said; "What about a star shape?" This was seized upon as being just the thing. This 'points of the compass' star motif was already repeated elsewhere.



I thought it would not be too hard to find a suitable star mat in 'Matter og Rosetter' by Kai Lund (the best book of mats there is, even if it is written in Danish). But there was nothing there that gave a hole in the middle to show the carving. Now, if I had made a square mat, I would have based it on the Prolong Knot, so I set about trying to draw something star-shaped using Prolong Knots for the long arms and Ocean Plaits for the short arms of the star. Drawing these first and linking them, I found a mat and, best of all, a mat that could be tied from one piece of line. This I proceeded to do. It took about 60-65 yds. of 4mm. braided white polypropylene cord; and it fitted perfectly when I had followed it round 4 times.

By the way, Mike gave me 3 weeks to do the job, so that he could have it by the Old Gaffers Race, which he hoped to win. Well, he came 5th. out of over 100 boats. Not bad for a 77 year old boat, with the 'help' of my Star Mat.

QUOTATIONS

"It was moored by something that looked at first like rope; but the hross cast off not by untying but by simply pulling the apparent rope in two as one might pull in two a piece of soft toffee or a roll of plasticine."

'Out of the Silent Planet' by C. S. Lewis, pub. 1938.

"It seems there must be a world shortage of bellropes."

'The Harrison Book of Knots' by Capt. P. P. O. Harrison, pub. 1964

### THE BOWLINE

The Bowline is the king of knots, or if you like it, bends; A Bowline on a bollard is the best of journey's ends;

And, as long as men are mariners, I think it safe to say This is a thing that never will be done another way.

What ancient hairy tar, how many centuries ago, Was author of the artifice we do not seem to know.

Maybe old Captain Noah, scarce aware what he was at, Thus made a grass-rope ready when he sighted Ararat;

Maybe 'twas wise Ulysses when he made the sailors fast Against the songs of Sirens with a bowline to the mast;

Maybe by Captain Jason was the first example tied, That some industrious Argonaut might paint the Argo's side;

Maybe the infant Raleigh, playing wistfully with string, Took one more turn by accident, and stumbled on the thing:

Or maybe after all 'twas no rough toiler of the sea, But some Mamma, who tethered thus some toddler to a tree;

Or at the earliest wife's remark, "Again you have forgot!" The earliest husband's handkerchief received this noble knot.

Maybe primeval monkeys in the equinoctial gales Preserved their equilibrium with bowlines in their tails.

At all events, as long as men are mariners, I say, Here is a thing that never will be done another way.

The sailor's knots have qualities he'd welcome in a bride - Hold firm when they are wanted, yet are easily untied;

The more the strain you put on them, the tighter do they stick; They are fastened in a flash, but you can cast them off as quick.

The timber hitch, the reef knot, the sheet and fisherman's bends, The clove, the sweet and simple hitch on which so much depends

Have each a special duty which they do perfectly discharge (Much more than you can say of men or matters, by and large).

All seamen in their memories preserve a secret niche For the nameless benefactor who conceived the rolling hitch,

While manly tears invade my eyes with which I can't contend When I discuss the Elackwall hitch or topsail halyard bend.

But the Bowline is the King of Knots, and it is grand to say - Here is a thing that never will be done another way.

A.P. HERBERT

(1890 - 1971.....scholar, lawyer, sailor-  
and riverman, Member of Parliament, reformer,  
poet, novelist, playwright and wit)

### KNOT NAMES by 'Cy Canute'

Matthew Walker - let's make it clear - was NOT the only man to have a knot named after him; nor was he the sole person to create an untiabable knot. What about the Gordian knot? Gordius, king of the Phrygians tied it in harness as a gift to his god and it became known that whoever untied it would rule all Asia. Many ambitious souls tried and failed (I guess the ends were hidden), until Alexander the Great slashed through it with his sword!

Recent examples of personal pronoun knots are found mainly in the rock-climbing world, e.g. Prusik knot (Dr. Carl Prusik -1931), Tarbuck knot (Ken Tarbuck - 1956), Hedden knot (Chet Hedden -1959), Frost knot (Tom Frost - 1960s), Spong knot (Ronald Spong - 1962, V-knot (Bill Varnedoe - 1965), Penberthy knot (Larry Penberthy and

Dick Mitchell - 1969) and the Penberthy-Pierson knot (Ron Pierson - 1973).

Between these historical knotting extremes other named knots occur. The Hercules knot was used by the Romans for a variety of medical and symbolic purposes. We call it the Reef knot. They believed wounds bound with it healed quicker. Today's first aiders still use it but have forgotten why. Roman brides had girdles ritually tied with Hercules knots which their husbands untied on the wedding night to ensure fertility. Well...they would, wouldn't they?

The Wake knot was the Carrick Bend and the heraldic badge of Saxon leader Hereward the Wake who refused to yield to William the Conqueror; just as the Staffordshire knot (a form of the Overhand knot) passed via a descendant of Hereward to Humphrey, Earl of Stafford to be adopted as the badge of that family. Several heraldic knots, while pleasing to the eye, may not retain their shape when actually tied. A few have personal pronoun names, however, such as the Annu of Bohemia knot, the Bocher knot, the Napoleon knot and the (smaller) Josephine knot.

Clifford W. Ashley named the Phoebe knot after his 7 year old daughter, and Geoffrey Budworth has published his younger daughter Julie's Hitch. Many knots and splices have been modified by riggers or authors and subsequently credited with their names, e.g. Diderot's single Carrick Bend, Aiston's bowline knot, Admiral Elliott's eye splice, Layer's bend, Layer's eye splice, and Admiral Knight's short wire splice...but my favourite for old world courtesy yet precise definition is Archie McMillan's Perfect Wire Rope grommet.

The Theodore knot makes a 'hackamore' or emergency bridle used by cowboys. The original Spanish name - Fiador knot - was corrupted for Theodore Roosevelt who popularised Western ranching. Thorough research would reveal other knots mined after people, and more mysteries. The Magnus (or Magner) hitch is a rolling hitch, but who was Mr. Magnus? We know about Hunter's Bend and Rosendahl's Bend, but there is a Solomon knot, a Martha's Vineyard knot, an Ichabod knot and even a Jacob's ladder. So, enough of this silly Matthew Walker story!

WILL KNOTS DIE? asks the Hon. Secretary

Knots and splices no longer appeal to young people; nor even (we are told by David ROGERS, Master Mariner, who is an instructor in the Department of Nautical Studies at the Merchant Navy College, Greenhithe) to boys training for a career at sea. They can see no use for them in the world today.

I don't blame them but it's a pity they're so wrong. Perhaps they've been misled by the names of outmoded devices like 'topsail halyard bends', 'shroud knots' and 'buntline hitches'. It seems to me we put too much stress on what knotting meant in the days of the square-rigged ships. Traditional knotting is a pleasant indulgence for the enthusiast. . .but producing knot display boards is insufficient, I suggest, to ensure knotting survives into the twenty-first century.

Ropemakers are keeping up with the technology of the times; so must we. John DARBY suggests, on page 2 of this issue, renaming the Round Turn & Two Half-hitches. Why stop at that one? What bends were used in the Falklands? What hitches do astronauts find useful? It's a challenge we must meet to make knots be seen to be relevant.