

# Knotting Matters

Newsletter of the



INTERNATIONAL  
GUILD OF KNOT TYERS

# 'KNOTTING' MATTERS'

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF KNOT TYERS

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PRESIDENT - Jan VOS

Issue #28  
July (Summer) 1989

*GUILD ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES*  
*RENEWABLE 1ST. JANUARY:*

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## EDITORIAL

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

- Geoffrey Budworth, Issue #1 Knotting Matters, Autumn 1982. Geoff... all proved worth preserving, all have genuine appeal, all are a credit to you as editor.

I hope to follow Geoff's example, especially in not printing material from published work on knotting. Since agreeing to take over from Geoffrey I have received articles (or good ideas) almost daily.

All will be welcome - they will appear sometime, as will those in the four boxes of papers I have inherited.

If you telephone me you will probably cut into my telephone answering machine, simply because I am rarely in. It responds after four complete rings so if you hear a voice before then it may be the real me speaking. To leave a message wait for the tone to end, say the day, the time (roughly) and your name - after that it won't matter if your vocal chords lasso your tongue. I will know you rang, and when.

NEW I.G.K.T. PRESIDENT

At the Guild's 7th annual general meeting in the old Royal Navy dockyard town of Portsmouth, Hampshire, England, Jan VOS was duly installed as 4th Guild President.

Our new President is 26 years old, and Dutch, signalling clearly to our international membership that the Guild is for all ages...and NOT run by the British only for the British.

The Dutch branch deserves this recognition because of their good work for the Guild - and Jan VOS is their choice -but he has also earned selection on his own merits. He joined the Guild on 17 May 83 and from the outset was active in Guild affairs. He made a real impact, however, when he arrived for the I.G.K.T. Knotting 'Extravaganza' in 1986, filled an entire room at Charlton House with his knot display boards transported from Huizen where he lives, and spent the day entertaining visitors.

Since then he has, with other loyal and stalwart Dutch members, organised and taken part in impressive displays and demonstrations of the Guild's work in The Netherland; and had a hand in producing the excellent Dutch Scouting book 'Pionieren' (which contains a substantial reference to the Guild).

Jan VOS is an established knotsman who actively promotes the Guild. He is also an educated professional man who is equal to all occasions, including making speeches in English. The choice is a sound one, bringing due honour to the Dutch Branch and credit to the Guild.

Proposer:	Jan HOEFNAGEL	Previous Guild Presidents:-
Secunder:	Louis HOEFNAGEL	1987-9 Geoffrey BUDWORTH
		1985-7 Eric FRANKLIN
		1983-5 Percy W. BLANDFORD

#### GEOFFREY BOWS OUT

The new President's first duty was to present to Geoffrey BUDWORTH, the immediate Past President, a memento of his invaluable work for the I.G.K.T. from 1982-9. This was a circular wooden tray engraved with the Guild's logo and Celtic knotwork designs, and edged with a single-strand Star Knot Turk's head. The unique gift was created by Guild craftsman Stuart E. GRAINGER and marked on the underside with a suitable message of appreciation.

Geoffrey will not disappear totally from the scene but his tasks as Guild librarian and archivist have been taken on by George ALDRIDGE, while past President Percy BLANDFORD keeps an expert eye on Guild publicity.

## More Housekeeping

At each A.G.M. there are new faces elected to the committee (now termed Council) and others who retire. This year in particular has seen change. The acceptance of the new IGKT constitution by the A.G.M. reduced the size of the council to ten.

This year in addition to Jan Vos and George ALDRIDGE, we must welcome Mrs Linda TURLEY as our new Treasurer. In proposing her nomination, the retiring treasurer explained that Linda's professional banking experience is such that she will be well able to look after the Guild's expanding finances.

Co-opted to the council is Barry DARKINS who has volunteered to look after the Guild's sales activities. His predecessor, Mrs Ivy Blandford, handled many hundreds of orders for Guild books, knot charts, ties and badges from all over the world - wherever the name of the Guild has spread. Our many thanks to Ivy, and best wishes to Barry as he is likely to be kept quite busy.

The other members of the council are:

Mrs Penny BODGER  
Mrs Pat WILLIAMSON  
Stuart GRAINGER  
Des PAWSON  
Charlie SMITH  
Frank HARRIS  
Ken YALDEN

Formal details will be circulated in the minutes of the AGM.

RLJ

## OBITUARY

We wish to express our sympathies with Mrs Glad FINDLEY whose husband Vic died recently after a long illness.

Vic's skills in metal and wood complemented and assisted Glad's professional presentation of macramé, setting standards not easily achieved.

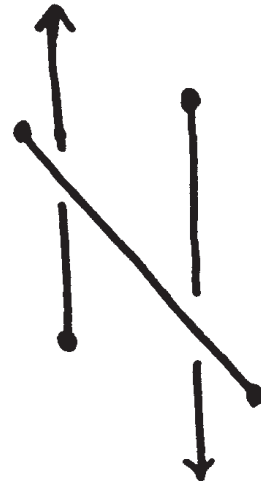
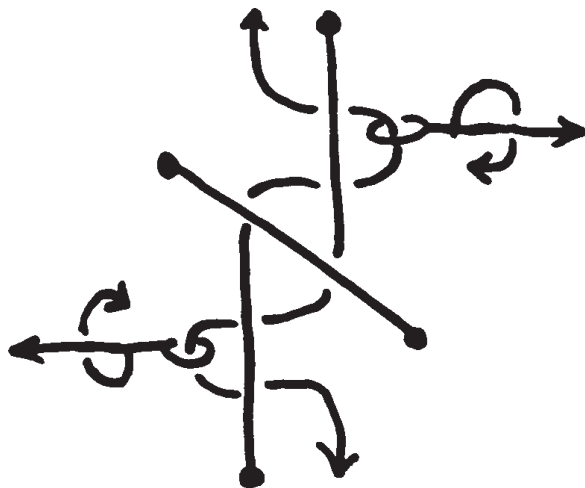
Vic will be remembered mainly by members of the Surrey Branch, and the officers and committee who knew him for his patient and generous hospitality when giving over his home for lengthy committee meetings.

FGH

## KNOTS IN CHINA

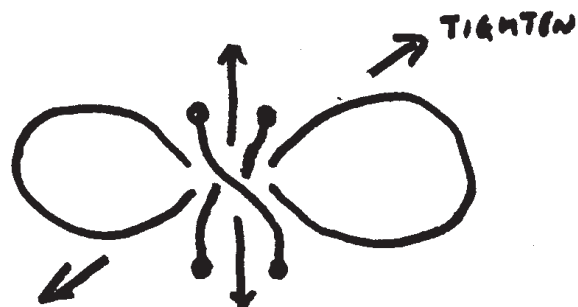
Amongst the antiquities amassed by Scottish shipowner Sir William Burrell, now displayed in Glasgow's Pollock park, is a Tang Dynasty porcelain horse. A decorative butterfly binding subtly derived from a clove hitch is moulded on the horse's tail.

Start with a normal clove hitch tied, as guild member Desmond Mandeville would say, for driving on the left hand side of the road. The blobs in the diagrams are in the fashion of Ashley, the cord disappears down into the plane of the paper.



Form bights in both ends near the crossover. Draw these through under the adjacent leads, left side under the right and vice versa. Give each a half twist in the sense of a left hand corkscrew, ie twist your hand clockwise as you pull the bights through.

Tighten the binding by pulling on the near left and far right edges of the loops. Arrange the ends to emerge centrally and tidily along the line of the knot, with the loops symmetrical on either side, butterfly fashion.



On the Burrell horse, the ends of the clove/butterfly binding are trimmed rather short. Pulling the loops further so as to draw the ends fully through the knot leaves a double overhand knot (or strangle knot, as it is used as a binding) - suggesting why this decorative form of the clove hitch works so well.

## *LETTER*

Dear Geoffrey,

Working as I do for a cutlery manufacturer I think I can throw some light on the scissors with a dog leg offset owned by Howard DENYER and mentioned in the minutes of the half yearly meeting 15th October 1985.

The technical description would be "Cranked Shank" and assuming they are standard production items the scissors in question are cattle marking scissors intended for clipping out a pattern in the hair on an animal's hindquarters for identification purposes. A small version of this is made and usually known as poodle trimming scissors; in a heavier version, fetlock shears, also, known as tall scissors or main and tail scissors, usually with large bows. Used for trimming the hair of main, tail and legs when preparing a horse for show. These latter are sometimes made 'bent blade' like a pair of nail scissors in addition to the cranked shank.

The above find their way into other industries which find them suitable for some particular process and other cranked shank patterns are, or at any rate have been in the past, produced for specific needs. We used to do a very heavy one for the carpet industry.

The description 'Tail lopping scissors' interests me - it suggests their use for tailing lambs, done to prevent soiling and subsequent infestation by maggots which proceed to eat the animal alive. Although we supply many agricultural merchants, etc. I have never heard of them being used for this purpose and am inclined to think that to be effective they would need to be made serrated one blade like a pair of kitchen scissors.

Regards,

Tony

A.P.Bloomer

23rd Jan 1989

## *QUOTE*

History is a tangled skein that one may take up at any point and break when one has unravelled enough.

*The Education of Henry Adams* - Henry Adams 1907

LETTERS

14th Jan. 1989

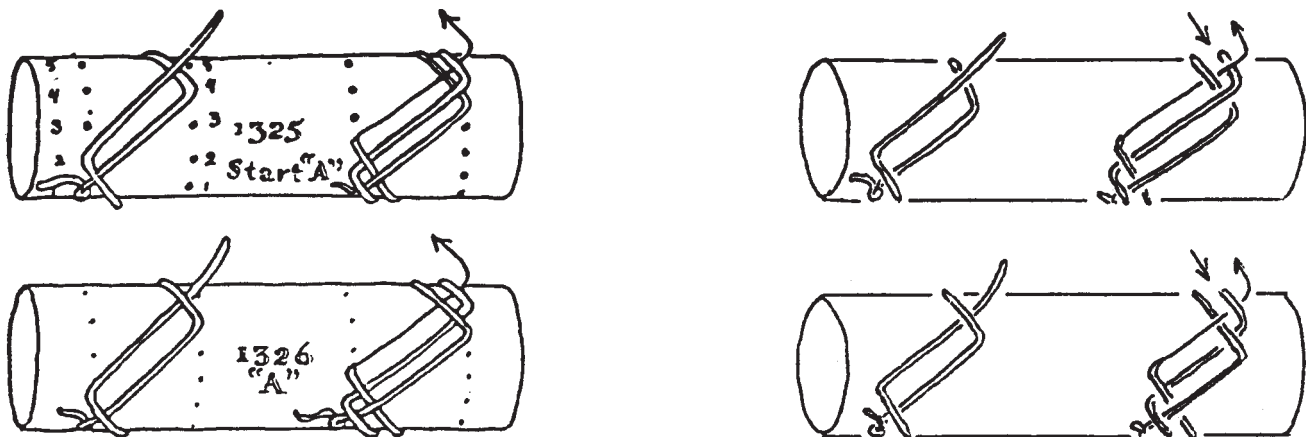
Dear Geoffrey,

In your last letter you mentioned that you had always taken 'ASHLEY' as gospel. This is a general outlook that could confuse as over the last twenty five years I have come across several errors in 'ASHLEY' in different sections.

The drawings are corrections to knots 1325 and 1326, Ashleys version is on the left and the corrected diagrams on the right. The Ashley diagrams are from the 1979 reprint.

There are enough newcomers to 'Knotting' to warrant pointing out known errors so I will send the ones I am aware of across in due course. Members who disagree with me can take me to task.

The arrows indicate where the variations occur.



Regards

Neil Hood

*IT's likely that other titles could benefit from this kind of attention too; errors can be very-'frustrating for knot tyers of all levels. But let's keep distinct errors from differences of opinion.*

RLJ



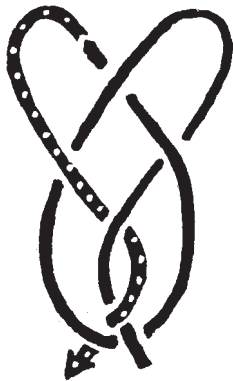
## *Brian Field*

Serendipity continues to rule over my spare time doodles with my fathom of codline (actually its 2m of polyester braidline).

The enclosed mat combines the end bights of the American Mat and the side bights of the Thoro Mat - both after Kai Lund, Matter og Rosette - and can be made in the hand with little difficulty. I had thought of calling it the 'Thorican' Mat but finally decided it was good enough not just to be regarded as a hybrid so have called it the MALDON MAT. As far as I'm aware both method and mat are original and owe nowt to nobody. If they aren't and do, someone's bound to let us know ASAP.

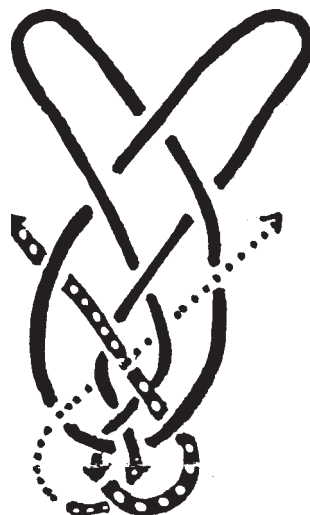
### *MALDON MAT*

Start with a half knot on its side - a regular over and under weave.



Lead end as shown. It helps to work a fair amount of spare material into the two top bights at this stage. Everything is over one/under one.

Cross the working ends (continuing the over one/under one weave) and pass the ends as shown. Note the first end will pass either over or under two in the centre of the mat. This will be corrected by the second pass.





Twist the bights so as to continue the over/under weave

Overlap the twisted bights as shown on the right and use one end to complete the knot by passing it in a regular under/over weave. Double or treble as required.



### *Scottish Knots*

*OBSERVANT* travellers on the tortuous A7 road through the Scottish borders from Carlisle to Edinburgh will spot a pair of massive carved stone overhand knots adorning the entrance to Selkirk's Sherriff's Court House. Similarly, masonry knots and cables girdle the eaves of Glasgow's Haggs Castle - all rather different from the more familiar Celtic mats and two dimensional carved patterns.

Does any learned soul know their significance or origin? Are they simply a substantial 3-D variation on Celtic or heraldic themes?

RLJ

July 1989

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*LETTER From CALCUTTA*

Geoffrey Budworth

Dear Sir,

I - Brijes Day - have been engaged in mountaineering since 1983. At present I am an instructor in the Rock Climbing Courses of Calcutta.

I have consulted many books on knots and hitches including The Knot Book written by you. Nevertheless I have failed to get a satisfactory explanation regarding the basic principles to differentiate a knot and a hitch. If there are any such principles by which we can differentiate a knot and a hitch, then please do let me know.

I will be obliged to you forever.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely

Brijes Day.

24/1, Maharshi Debendra Road  
Calcutta - 700007  
INDIA

18th May 1989

*LETTER From AUSTRALIA*

16 Jan 1989

Dear Frank Harris,

I am sorry to have to tell you that the definition of the metre noted by John Smith in Knotting Matters #20, p14 as offered by the Cambrian Small Boats and Chandlery is out of date since 1983.

The correct definition is: La metre est la longueur du trajet parcouru dans le vide par la lumière pendant une durée de 1/299792458 de seconde. No doubt this correction will be as useful as the original.

With best wishes for the coming year,

John Darby.

8/50 Bourke St  
Melbourne 3000  
Australia

TWO NEW KNOTS . . . ?

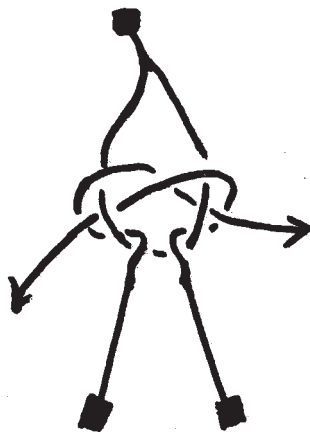
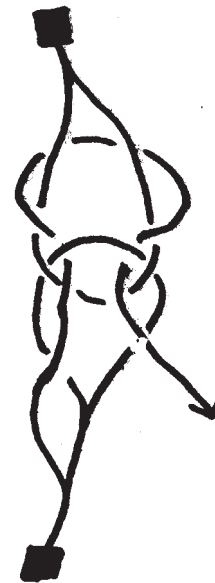
April 5th 1989

15 Richmond Grove  
Islington  
London

Dear Mr Budworth,

I have recently come up with the two enclosed Becket Hitches, to which I am unable to find any reference.

The first is particularly interesting in that it allows two eyes to be Joined without the use of toggles, yet without Jamming, and remains secure even when the load is released. Even though it is Just a collapsed form of Mr Clifford Ashley's toggled becket hitch #1924 fixed with a cord instead of with a toggle. The fixing cord is shown sidespliced into one of the standing ends for extra security. It also appears to be a variation of Ashley's three cord bend #1509.



The second becket hitch shows a fixing for two strands onto a single becket. Both lower standing ends must have equal loading.

I would be grateful for your opinion as to whether these hitches are sufficiently original for me to claim immortality.

Yours in hope,

Steve C. Finch

*WELL Steve, you have achieved a form of Immortality. Your knots are in the first edition of KNOTTING NATTERS under my editorship, or will that be notoriety?*

*LETTER From WALES*

Croft Bungalow  
Llantood  
Cardigan  
Dyfed  
SA43 3NN  
S. Wales

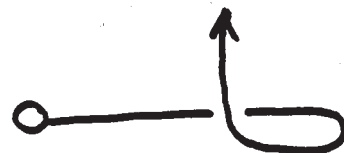
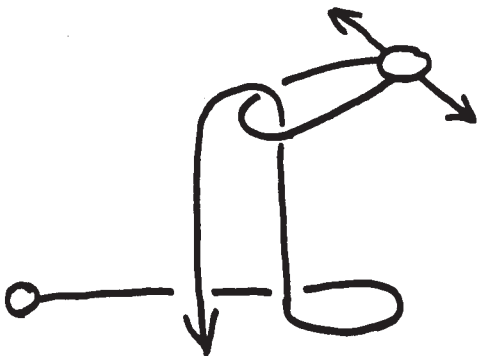
27 Jan '89

Dear Geoffrey,

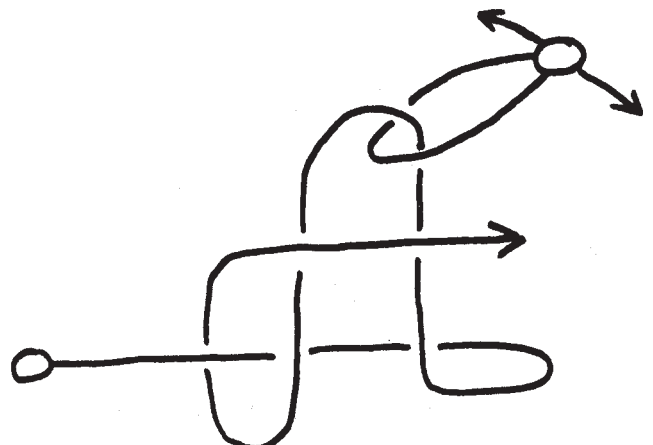
The other day I was in need of making a rope ladder. It had to be of quite a long length. I had to use the ladder to climb a piece of machinery. I did not have a single piece of rope long enough to make the ladder in the conventional way. So I started to think of the way to get around the problem using two unequal lengths. After a period of about half an hour it came to me. I will now explain to you what I did.

First, tie manrope harness knots in one piece of rope in the conventional way. Now the problem arises how to join in the other piece of rope so as to lock the two eyes together - the manrope harness knots are put in so that ones feet can rest on top of the loops.

STAGE 1 Make a bight, working from the left.



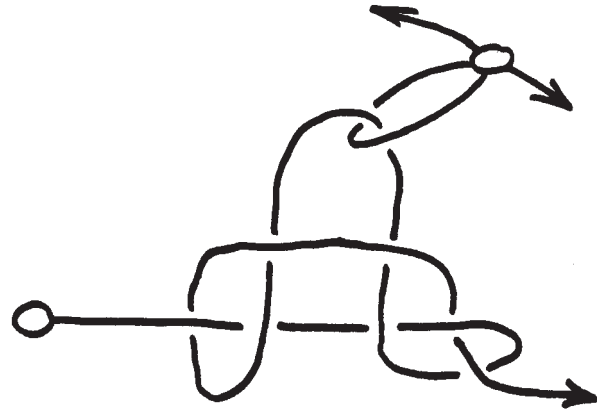
STAGE 2 Make a loop after threading the rope through a manrope harness knot loop in the first rope.



STAGE 3 Put the end of the loop across the base - thread up and under, then over two to the right.

STAGE 4

Then thread under the top of the first loop and up through the bight. One will then have a manharness knot locked with the first rope.



This worked very well and I could control the size of loop very easily.

I hope that this is of help to fellow members. I found it very interesting, quick and reliable, easy to undo and safe for me. It used almost the full lengths as well, with no broken bits.

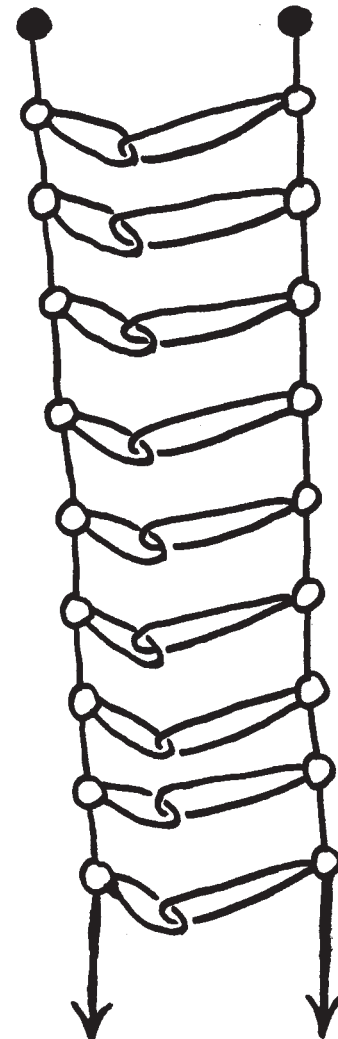
Your friend,

D. Claud Miggiano.

**SWINGING CAESARS!**

*Some of the more effeminate Emperors are said to have bathed seven or eight times a day. The last word in luxury were the pensiles balnese mentioned by Pliny, small baths suspended by ropes from the ceiling in which one could rock and roll.*

Clean and Decent      *L a w r e n c e Wright,*  
*Pub Routledge & Kegan Paul 1960.*



## **REPORT FROM HOLLAND**

Jan HOEFNAGEL presents his report on the activities of the Dutch IGKT members which, through lack of time, was omitted from the branch reports at the Portsmouth Annual General Meeting.

*This winter and last summer we met regularly at the community centre in Katendrecht - the room was free of charge and we had full use of its facilities. To return the favour, we put on a free eight week course of knotting for young folk on Monday evenings. Kees TUK, Louis HOEFNAGEL) and I devised and printed a programme of knots. We began with fifteen children aged between 8 and 14 years. Initial enthusiasm waned a bit and We finished with six children.*

*We made it known that we were looking for a location for an exhibition approached the BOEI and they put us in touch with the Buurtmuseum. The Buurtmuseum is a non-profit making museum run by volunteers. Its premises are paid for by a grant from the town's education programme for the area, which used to be a red light district. Exhibitions of hobbies and collections are given by local folk. After seeing the hall we agreed the period 9th March to 10th April for our exhibition. In the following month Kees Tuk, Louis and I organised sponsors and material.*

*Although the room was provided free other offers of funds were welcome. With some effort Kees Tuk obtained sponsorship of FL750 from a firm of ships chandlers and safety clothing merchants: Cor VELDHOEN. Louis obtained a grant of FL250 from the pensioner's fund of the harbour police.*

*Now the battle really began. In three weeks we collected work by the other members and material from some of the rope factories. In all about 2,000 Km were covered by Louis and me. Leaflets and letters were printed in the Buurthuis. Also 150 letters were sent to all sorts of people. Newspapers and TV were notified that there was to be a six week exhibition, as were schools and scout groups. Window posters were drawn and printed by Kees TUK. Circulars sent by Jan was brought along 10 members who volunteered their material and time.*

*In the week before opening we worked feverishly. No nails were allowed, so everything was hung by copper chains and hooks. We used nets and we had use of five glass show cases and shelves. Every member organised his own contribution, so that our 120 square metre show was ready with two days to spare before the opening on the evening of 9th March.*

*The opening was done by our main sponsor, Nr Veldhoen, and afterwards JC Hoefnagel gave a speech on the work and goals of the guild. Also we Judged the children's knot boards, all six of them, and Mr Veldhoen gave a prize of a bell and bellrope to the best knotter - Marco - a boy of 13 who was baffled to get it. Many new contacts were made after the official matters were completed, and a pleasant family atmosphere developed.*

*Continues on page 16 . .*

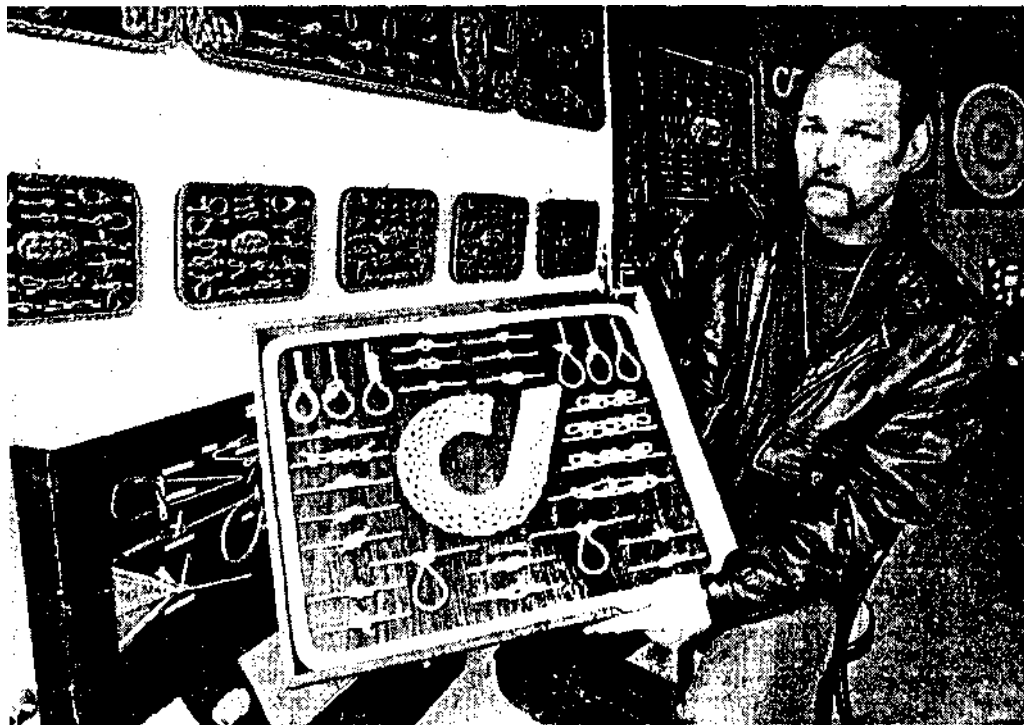
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## Touwbewerker tonen knoopkunst in museum Katendrecht

Door Laurens van der Klis  
ROTTERDAM — Dat een knoop het bestuderen waard is, bewijst de expositie van het Internationale Gilde van Touwbewerker in museum Katendrecht. Internationaal, omdat de 450 leden van de vereniging over de gehele wereld verspreid zijn. Van Zuid-Amerika tot Arabië tot Nederland, dat ongeveer tweeëntwintig leden telt. In de expositieruimte liggen en hangen allerlei soorten sierknopen van diverse makers, veelal lid van dit Engelse Gilde. Er hangt ook werk van kinderen in de expositieruimte, die 'knooples' krijgen in buurthuis 'De Boei'.

De expositieruimte is klein, maar vol. Knopen staan in de vitrines of hangen aan de wand. Bovendien zijn de makers van deze knopen aanwezig om demonstraties te geven en zij zijn enthousiaste 'vertellers'. Het doel van het gilde is immers om het ambacht, de kunst en de kennis van het knopen in theorie en praktijk te bevorderen en hoog te houden.

Vaak zijn de sierknopen uitgebreide variëties op bekende knopen zoals de turkse knoop, de platte knoop (waarmee de schoenveters worden vastgemaakt), de ocaanknoop, de allemansend enzovoort. Het leggen van die knopen vraagt geduld, een goed inzicht en handigheid met de vingers en bij de grotere werken ook veel tijd. De verkregen knopen kunnen als sierwerk worden opgehangen, maar ook op andere manieren



Gildelid C. A. Tuk: „De meesten hebben geen idee van de hoeveelheid werk die je erin moet stoppen.“

FOTO COR VOS

worden gebruikt.

Zo maakt de heer Hoefnagel, samen met zijn broer de promotor van het Gilde in Nederland, deurkloppers van touw. Dit idee komt af van de handvaten van touw die vroeger werden bevestigd aan zeekisten. Van een zeeman hangen twee wandkleden die de muren van de tentoonstellingsruimte sieren. Zo'n kleding is opgebouwd uit een gigantisch aantal kleine knopen. De heer Hoefnagel: „Dat is

een boom van een kerel met zulke vingers. Hij knoopte deze kleden tijdens de saaie uren dat hij op wacht stond.“ Een enkel wandkleed werd gemaakt op een rein van acht maanden en kostte 4800 meter touw.

De sierknopen kunnen worden gekocht, maar de prijzen schrikken veel mensen af. C. A. Tuk, ook een lid van het gilde: „De meesten hebben geen idee van de hoeveelheid werk die je erin moet stop-

pen“. Hij wijst naar een grote witte mat van touw met een straal van ongeveer een halve meter. „Deze mat bestaat uit drie touwen die samen zo'n vijfhonderd meter lang zijn. Het kostte me vierhonderd uur om hem te maken. Allemaal handwerk. Dat valt natuurlijk niet meer in geld uit te drukken. Dat is niet te betalen“. Wat dat betreft worden de werken toch nog voor een schijntje verkocht. Een klein knoopwerkje hoeft hele-

maal niet veel te kosten. Maar voor de grote mat moet toch een paar duizend gulden worden neergelegd. Tuk verwacht dan ook niet dat zo'n mat verkocht wordt, maar daar gaat het ook niet om.

Knopen werden al door onze voorouders, de holbewoners gelegd, al voordat zij andere basisuitvindingen, zoals het wiel en het vuur, ontdekten en gebruikten. Ook later speelde de knoopkunst een belangrijke rol. De Inca's in Peru maakten bijvoorbeeld grote bruggen van grastouw over de diepe ravijnen in het Andesgebergte. Nog later was het leggen van knopen natuurlijk onmisbaar in de scheepvaart. Die tijd was dan ook de bloeiperiode van het knopen. Toen vervangingsmaterialen als kunststoffen en metaal hun intrede deden, raakte de knoopkunst op de achtergrond.

Vanuit de medische wereld bestaat nu belangstelling voor het knopen. Momenteel onderzoekt men het gebruik van verschillende afhechtingsknopen die na operaties worden gebruikt. Behalve het feit dat deze knopen op microniveau met pincet moeten worden gelegd, is dit knopen ook zo moeilijk omdat de eindjes vast moeten worden gehouden om de spanning van het touw niet to laten verslapen. Enkele chirurgen zijn ook lid van het gilde.

Het museum, Rechthuislaan 1 A te Rotterdam, is open tot en met 9 april, elke zaterdag en zondag van twaalf tot vier uur.



*From page 14*

*Over the next five weekends the show was manned by the TUK family, Ben Asberg, Göttmers Vlietstra, Ria Luiten, Tan Vos, Amund Karner, T V Smit, and we two Hoefnagels. New members turned up with examples of their own work. In all 8 new members joined us and our visitors book was signed by about 600 people, a new record for exhibitions at that museum. Also we sold some work. Photographs and videos were taken which were to be shown at the Guild's AGM at Portsmouth. The clearing up is yet to come.*

*Our plans for the rest of the year include exhibiting at a Sea Scouts course and the boat owners gathering in the summer, both in Rotterdam; the Furiade Fair at Maasluis in October; and finally an 8 week course for adults this winter at the "BOEI".*

Jan HOEFNAGEL

Dordrecht

April 1989.

Holland

### **TRANSLATION**

Mr and Mrs Bernard COLLIER have kindly provided non Dutch speaking members of the guild with the following English precis of the newspaper article printed on page 16.

### ***Well done all!***

"Het Vrije Volk" is a daily national newspaper.

This article also introduces the exhibition but says that Holland only has 22 members! Many knots on show - also from children receiving "knotting lessons". Gives details of some knots - practical or decorative. Mr. Hoefnagel and brother make rope doorknockers. Two large wall-hangings/tapestries made by a seaman during his watch. One tapestry was made during a voyage of 8 months and took 4.800 metres of rope.

Work is for sale but customers are surprised by high prices: C.A. Tuk says that people have no idea how much work is involved.

Historic uses of knots: Incas in Peru knotted bridges to cross the ravines in the Andes. After that much use of knots in shipping - then rope was replaced by metal and synthetics. Now the medical world shows renewed interest in knots especially in the field of micro-surgery. Several surgeons are members of the Guild.

## *Size of Despair?*

AFTER the introduction of the Imperial Standard Wire Gauge, which became effective on 1st March 1884, the problem of gauges gradually became simpler as the older gauges fell out of use and the ISWG (or SWG) took their place.

...Before the SWG came into use the position taking the country as a whole was chaotic. In the Black Country it was bad enough. The usual standard was the Birmingham Gauge (BG). This might appear simple enough, until it is realised that there was no general agreement as to what BG really was. Thomas Hughes writing in 1879 *The English Wire Gauge* shows that there were no less than 28 gauges, each purporting to be the BG!

The Black Country Iron Industry - V K V Gale, Pub. Iron and Steel Institute, London 1966.

## *CuttingRemarks*

Dear Geoffrey,

I have followed the debate, via *Knottting Matters*, on the future of the word TYERS in our title. Though I have my own thoughts on the subject, it has been common knowledge here in N.Z. for quite a while that the word is "for the chop". In fact there is a sign on the side of a road on the outskirts of the capital telling everyone down just which road the word is headed...see the enclosed photograph [simulated below - RJ).

ABBATOIRS  
TYERS ROAD  
NEXT EXIT LEFT

I was sorry I couldn't make the half yearly meeting in Gloucester, that was my "home port" when I was in Harker's Tankers. Equally I was sad to miss the AGM at Whale Island, I was a Pompey rating in the Navy before I went on river . . Small world ain't it?

I am so sorry you have to give up the editorship, but after seven years I do understand.

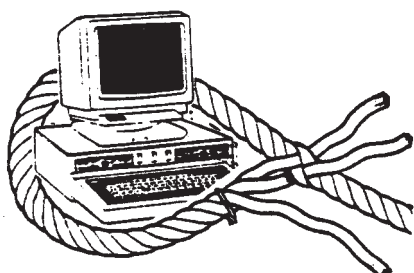
All the very best,

Roger Carter

27 April 1989

18 Moana Rd  
Plimmerton  
New Zealand

## LETTER From a New Member



91 Sandy Lane South  
Wallington  
Surrey  
SM6 9RF

April 1989

Dear Editor,

I write as a new member to thank the Committee for the excellent Annual General Meeting recently held in Portsmouth. The balance between business and social activities was just right. The chairman sailed a steady course through stormy waters especially in relation to the constitution.

Several points were of particular interest to me. I was reassured to hear that the Charity Commission does not object to members making their goods and services available to other members. Like other members, my interest in the Guild stems from a hobby I hope to turn to modest financial advantage.

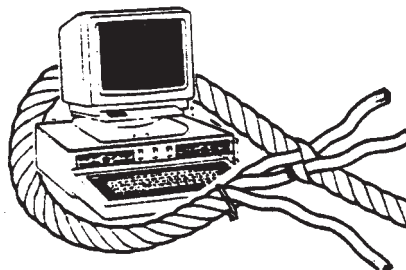
As a former Dockyard Sailmaker, one of my hobbies is working with heavy canvas; repairing scout marquees and making tailored made canvas covers. I also enjoy rope and wire splicing as well as knot tying.

Having gone to Portsmouth in pursuit of these interests I was surprised to find another of my hobbies -computers - was also relevant to the Guild. A number of members at the A.G.M. speculated on the use of Computers for 'desk top publishing' to create the "KNOTTING MATTERS" Newsletter.

On reflection I wonder whether the Editor might find something useful (and economic !) amongst the many and varied systems used in schools. Most Schools now have very good but not extravagant computer hardware. A very effective software package such as 'Typesetter' would be very helpful in the layout of text and simple graphics but the rather tortuous diagrams of knot tying may still be easier to draw by hand.

I think the Newsletter would be more economically printed by finding an organisation willing to accept a nominal payment rather than buying a copier. I use my local Trade Union office for my efforts. I doubt owning a copier would ever be economic unless we hired it out.

Finally if any members in the U.K. think you might need my services in the repair of a marquee or some other canvas work please don't hesitate to give me a ring - MIKE WILLIAMS, 01 669 0038



*Mike*

## Frank ties up the loose ends



**WHEN** It comes to tying knots Frank Harris can show you a thing or two.

He is pictured at the National Waterways Museum at Gloucester docks giving a lesson in the art to intrigued members of the Hale family on a visit to the city from Oxford.

A little-known group of 27 keen knotters formed an International Guild of Knot Tyers. The guild was launched seven years ago and has become so popular it now boasts hundreds of members.

Mr Harris, the honorary secretary of the guild, keeps in

touch with members through a quarterly newsletter aptly entitled 'Knotting Matters'. He and other expert knot tyers have been busy down at the Waterways Museum ready to pass on a few tips to visitors wanting to learn more about the art.

Reprinted from 'THE CITIZEN', June 1, 1989

### QUOTE

According to Edward H Dodd Jnr the word *catamaran* originated in Malaya and meant literally "tied logs".  
*Polynesian Seafaring* - Pub Dodd Mead & Co 1972

## *Invention, Accident or Observation?*

John Smith

The article in *Knotted Matters* (issue 27) about the Boas Bowline reminded me of a basic question of the. "invention" of knots.

There is no doubt that some. knots are the result of application, knowledge and skill to achieve. a specific result according to material or usage. They can be said to have been invented or at least developed.

There is equally no doubt that some knots occur by accident. The Figure of Eight Knot has been called a Wind Knot, supposedly tied by the wind in a fishing line. In sloppy coils of cord I have come across quite a few Wind Knots!

Many of us in the. Guild, I suspect, are inveterate fiddlers; given a length of cord and an idle moment, we. will try this tuck, that tuck. We will see what happens if this end goes through that loop, and if we pull here . . .

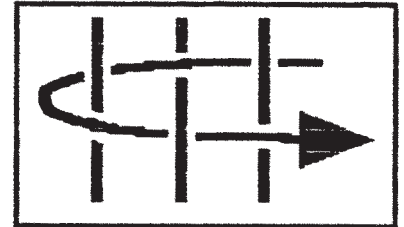
The. result is likely to be a pressing need to try the art of untying. (And there are as many opportunities to observe when untying a knot as there are when tying.)

I believe. that very occasionally, we might be. blessed with the ability to dearly see. what is in our hands at one special moment. To be able to understand that here is a knot, with an application or use; something worth trying out, using or comparing.

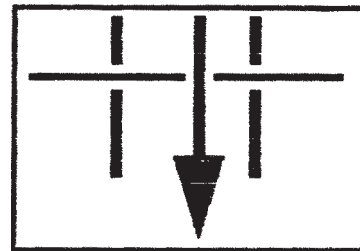
Such a knot is the result of observation. It is not invented, with that implication of intent, nor produced entirely by accident, since there is some expectation. It is observed, recognised for what it is.

There seem to be some common invitations to explore:

Parallel strands invite a simple. weaving - over one under one. It is easy to see how this might develop.



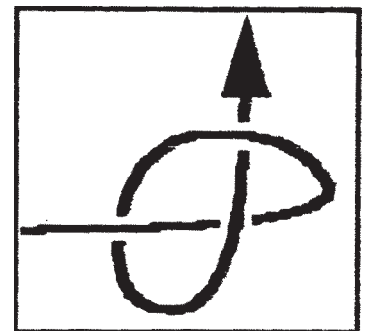
A "bar" across two other strands needs to be locked off as it were, to keep it in place. A



very similar appearance. to weaving, but stimulated by a different condition.

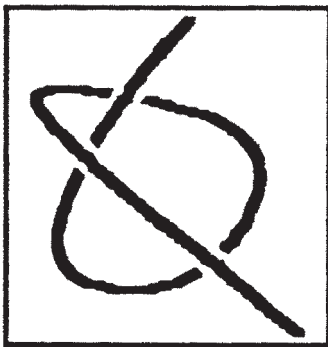
A loop invites the tucking of an end. Probably the most basic of such actions is that which forms

an overhand knot. So simple is this that the Overhand knot might have the sub title of Breeze Knot.



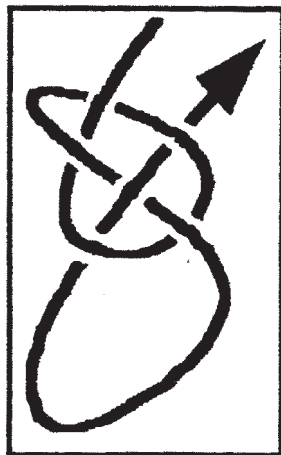
Of course., several of these “invitations to explore” can occur together. Could it be that the Boas Bowline (purely for example) originated this way and was observed as being of practical use and value? Find an idle moment and a length of cord. Allow the cord to move in the hands. Direct it only when invited to by the presence of one of these situations.

Could not the following steps result with very little effort?

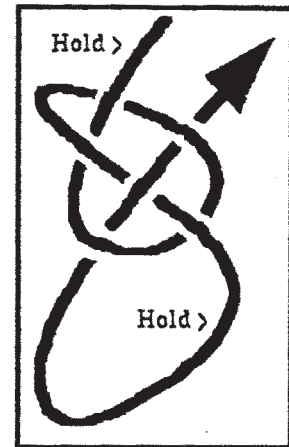


A loop forms and one part lays across it. There is either an opportunity to weave or a bar to be locked off, depending on how you see it.

Pass the other end through. (Note the direction chosen by chance on this occasion.) It happens to form another loop, but that might not be noticed at the moment.



Now take hold of the two places shown and gently pull.



Stop, observe and recognise that you have what might be a useful fixed loop knot. Try it out when next you need to lash a sled. If it is successful, tell your friends and show them how to do it with intent, not surprise. You are the inventor(?) of the Boas Bowline.

Had your cord dropped with the other part across the original loop, you would have been even more famous and had the Bowline named after you. If you had passed your fid through instead of the end, what a useful Marlingspike Hitch you would have invented.

Is this all heresy? Does it deny Knot Tyers due acknowledgement of their craft? I don't think so, for it certainly requires knowledge and skill to recognise the potential in what is observed. It might even require a degree of bravery to be the first (to your knowledge) to use your discovery and even greater bravery to promulgate it.

*QUOTE*

If we steal thoughts from the moderns, it will be cried down as plagiarism; if from the ancients it will be cried the up as erudition.

Charles Caleb Colton - 1825

## OBITUARY

Guild member JOHN POTTER died on 5th April 1989. We extend our sympathies to his wife and family.

John joined the guild in March 1985. His knotting was used in a 20th Century industry - the security of his bowlines, clove hitches and round turns and two half hitches were crucial both behind and above the scenes at the BBC's Pebble Mill television studios. His knotting knowledge ensured the safety of the actors and technicians working below. Popular productions such as 'The Onedin Line' and 'Howard's Way' were the more accurate for his interest.

John had been known to tie a turk's head on a cartwheel spoke shortly before it went before the cameras, tiny enough - of course - to be missed by the eagle eyed editors. But there it was, rolling across the small screen if you knew where to look!

The Midlands Branch owes John a special debt of gratitude, it was through his efforts that the branch has held its two formal meetings to date, at the BBC Pebble Mill Social Club, Birmingham.

The knowledge and folklore of the guild is the richer for your involvement, John, these past brief four years.

## QUOTATION

In later, retiral years, stories were often exchanged under the *Heilandman's Umbrella* in Argyle St., Glasgow. One sailor had handled with a certain measure of pride and efficiency the operation of the bowrope on the Iona.

The throwing of the heaving line could be a feat in itself as its coils unfolded, and the distance covered could be considerable. An accomplished operator could usually establish contact with the pier, without many misses. Donald remarked with a great deal of pride that "he was for two years bowrope and a half on the Iona".

*Puffer Ahoy!* George W Burrows, Pub Brown, Son & Ferguson 1981

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## MATHEMATICIANS IN KNOTS

Dear Mr Budworth,

By now you will have received our applications for membership of the IGKT, I hope you find us acceptable, Next week George Schaake and I go to a New Zealand Mathematics Colloquium, and will present talks as follows:

*New Theory of Braiding - JC Turner*

*The Classification and Evolution of knots and Braid - AG Schaake*

The Colloquium is at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand, and will be attended by about 20 mathematicians from NZ and Australia,

We have recently extended our theories to cover braiding processes on surfaces other than on a cylinder, For example, we now have algorithms for tying single string braids as Moebius Bands, They are quite beautiful! and the mathematics has broadened considerably - linking with fundamental number theory in very interesting ways, The mathematics is in the areas of modular arithmetic, continued fractions, and through our evolution braid trees, we are developing a new branch of mathematics using what we call 'Number Trees',

I enclose for the IGKT archive copies of our first two research reports, any part of which you are welcome to publish in your newsletter...otherwise our material remains copyright to us.

I wonder if you can help us? We have tried hard to turn up earlier MATHEMATICAL work on braiding, other than the topological knot theories of Emile Artin et al of which I am well aware, The books by Clifford Ashley and Bruce Grant hint at mathematics, but do not ever use any, or give proper references, For example, in Ashley's book of knots section 1321, page 235, several authors on turksheads are mentioned, In particular, I would like to see the hook on square turksheads George H Taber (Privately Published - Pittsburgh 1919), Ashley makes a meal out of these braids - as do all the other authors mentioned (except perhaps Taber which we have not yet seen),

Making square turksheads (ie giving the algorithms to make them) is a trivial exercise with our methods, we treat them all as a subfamily, albeit infinite, of our class of regular knots - which is coextensive with the rational numbers,

On pp233, 234 Ashley talks with pride of discovering, at the same time as Taber, the 'law of the common divisor' ie parts/bights numbers must be coprime for single string turksheads, Ashley gives no proof of this - only an empirical table in 1314 have proved this result with a three line proof in our research report RR1/1 (page 19), I shall be interested to see if Taber had a proof, and what his methods were, Do you by any chance know how I can track down Taber's book? I have my librarian sending E-mail messages to large American libraries! Any information would be welcome,

Best wishes,

John Turner

10 May 1989

University of Waikato  
Private Bag  
Hamilton  
New Zealand

The research reports to which John Turner refers are intensely rigorous mathematical documents, near-meaningless to non mathematicians. Research Report No 165 'A New Theory of Braiding RR1/1)' and Research Report No 168 'A New Theory of Braiding (RR1/2) - Algorithms for Regular Knots', are both by AG Schaake (Waikato Polytechnic) and JC Turner (University of Waikato), published by University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand.

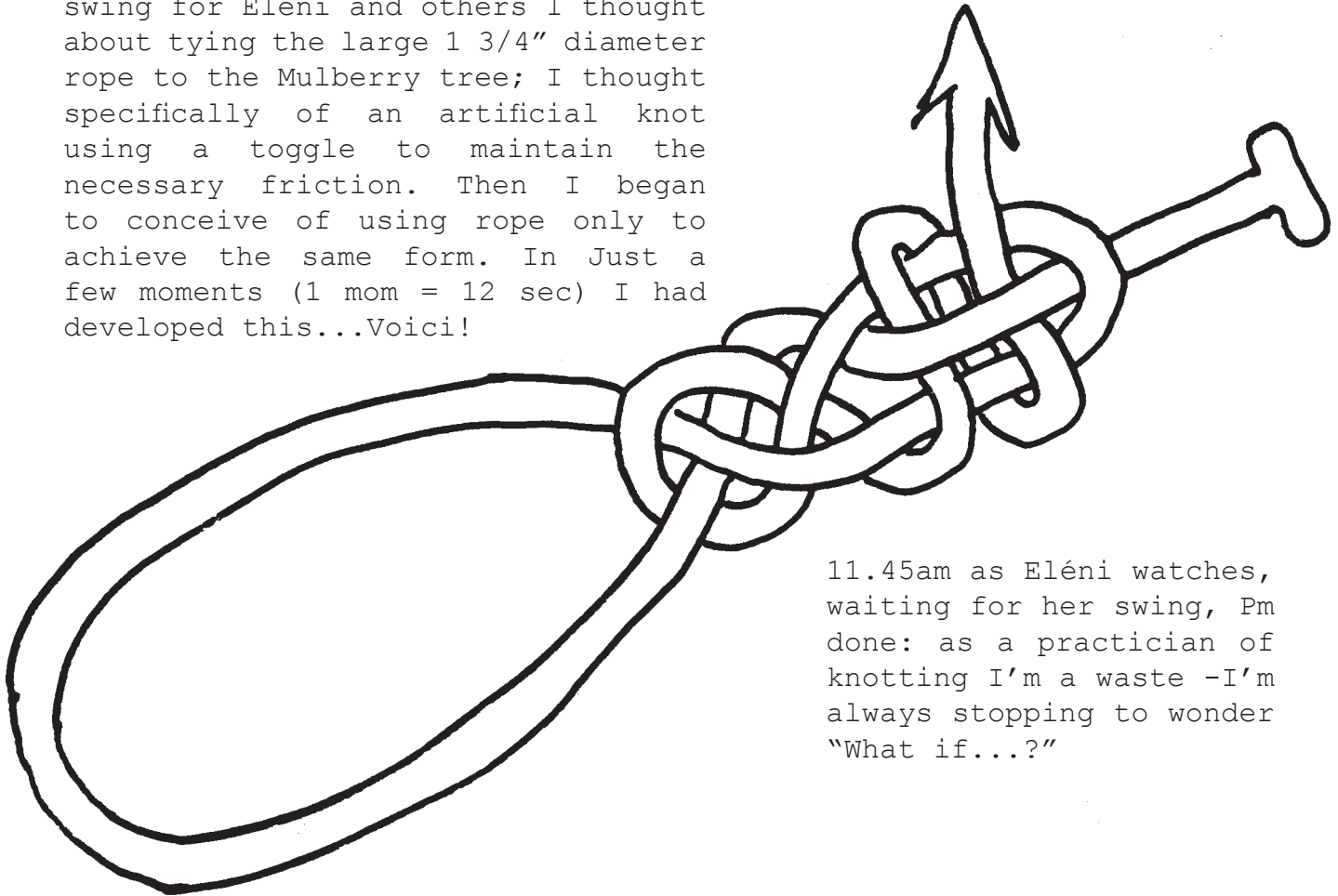
A more accessible version of their work was reviewed in Knotting Matters #27, pages 4 and 5.



DAN LEHMAN

Here is another snippet from the notebook of R. Danford (Dan) Lehman of MacLean, Virginia, USA.

11.07am Oct 22 '78 (Sunday Morning)  
as I considered the building of a swing for Eléni and others I thought about tying the large 1 3/4" diameter rope to the Mulberry tree; I thought specifically of an artificial knot using a toggle to maintain the necessary friction. Then I began to conceive of using rope only to achieve the same form. In Just a few moments (1 mom = 12 sec) I had developed this...Voici!



11.45am as Eléni watches, waiting for her swing, Pm done: as a practitioner of knotting I'm a waste -I'm always stopping to wonder "What if...?"

*EDITORITAIL*

So...that's my first effort. I have edited out the well wishes from your recent letters. I will be pleased to receive constructive criticism, especially if you make it publishable.

A COUPLE OF CAVEATS....The articles published in the newsletter do not necessarily represent or reflect the views of the guild as a whole, nor even the Guild Council I chose not to stand for election to become a council member so am not privy to their discussions.

. . . . . Secondly, the knots I choose to print are your submissions, its up to you to use or develop them as you see fit - or to condemn them.

i.e.Don't sue us . . . . .

