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Knotting Matters

Newsletter of the



KNOTTING MATTERS

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF KNOT TYERS

ISSUE No. 38 JANUARY 1992

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SECRETARY:

Frank Harris
14 Games House
Springfield Grove
Charlton
LONDON SE7 7TN
England
Tel: 081 858 6728
or UK+81 858 6728

EDITOR:

Gordon PERRY
171 London Road
HORNDEN
Hampshire
PO8 0HH
Tel: 0705 592808

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EDITORIAL

Firstly - A Happy New Year to you all - and now that you all have your new diaries don't forget to insert a reminder to "Write to the editor of KM". Secondly thank you for the letters of encouragement and comments on the new style; I hope I can maintain and even improve on the content and layout in the future.

Well, since the last edition I've had a month at sea in the Mediterranean, visiting Cyprus, Turkey, Sicily and Gibraltar followed by a visit to Scotland before Christmas, and another to the more remote regions, and back to Gibraltar since. Non of the visits have been particularly knotty, except perhaps for Gibraltar and a

walk across the boarder into Spain, where, I noticed in several restaurants and bars rather good 'knot boards' all of Spanish origin. I was not able to ascertain exactly who had made them but there is obviously an untapped source of new members in Spain which those of you who holiday there might like to look into - if you see any work please try and find out where it came from and let us know. I am catching up on the correspondence slowly but for those of you that have not had a response to your mail yet, you will, shortly after I have put this edition of KM to bed.

Keep the articles and letters flowing.

Ed.

REMINDERS

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR 1992 SUBSCRIPTION YET?

(See Title page for new rates)

10th BIRTHDAY - GIFT OF WORK TO THE GUILD

(See page 25 - KM37)

A.G.M. - OUR 10TH ANNIVERSARY -

The Venu: CHARLTON HOUSE, CHARLTON VILLAGE, CHARLTON, LONDON SE7 8RE

The Date: APRIL 25th 1992

AROUND THE REGIONS

From - The NETHERLANDS

Jan Hoefnagel reports...

The Dutch have been very busy throughout 1991, beginning with a 2 day Harbour Festival at Dordrecht which was very well visited, followed by another show during the meeting of old, but still working, sailing ships. Sadly two shows programmed for Den Helder had to be cancelled because their driver was ill. Back to Dordrecht in September Ineke Kok and Jan put on a show in an old peoples home. Ineke also put on a display of work in hospital where she had undergone an operation. Jan Vos and TH Slyderman have also mounted individual exhibitions.

A glorious day with lots of sunshine and plenty of visitors marked the Inland Waterways show at Rotterdam, which was also the venue for displays at the Maritime Museum. Some 23 members supported the Maritime Museum show, which was held on the 31st August and 1st September in the Great Hall. On day one nine members took part with display boards, mat making for children, macrame' with the emphasis on teaching children. Floris Hin meanwhile was outside re-rigging a 3 masted schooner (his profession) - by all accounts a very successful show.

The Scheveningen members are

running voluntary classes all through the winter for 20 people while in Rotterdam Jan and Louis have a class of 17.

From

THE SOUTH WEST (PENINSULA) GROUP

Denis Murphy tells of the groups participation in NAVY DAYS 1991 at PLYMOUTH. It turned out to be the best show the group had done for many years with local group members Denis and Barbara Murphy supported by George Storer, Ray Tucknott, Robert Merry, Dave Webb and Edna Gibson together with visitors from Wellingborough, Fred Carrington and Albert Burton and from Nottingham Bernard Cutbush.

A splendid display of Fancy Ropework caused tremendous interest among the 60,000 people who visited Navy Days. People were shown various working displays from Sea Cadets tying Matts and Lanyards - One Cadet working for the Duke of Edinburgh's GOLD award in Fancy Ropework - to an enormous Turk's Head by Ray Tucknott, and the ever interesting knitting and cords by Edna Gibson. All in all a very good advertisement for the Guild.

LETTERS

'George PASK writes....

Ashley says that knots of 'a different form, a different way of tying, or a different use, constitute a distinct knot'. In that case, his drawings and text of the Rolling or Magnus Hitch are misleading; and he adds to the confusion throughout his book by repeating these knot names inconsistently in various guises, including the Midshipman's Hitch and Adjustable Hitch.

There is some sense in returning to the older name; and I suggest the double-crossed turns version of the knot (#1753) should be known as the Magnus Hitch, with the name Rolling Hitch kept for the single-crossed variants (#1734 & #1736).

Change 'Rolling Hitch' to 'Magnus Hitch' where it occurs in the text of #167, #1729 & #1735.

Delete 'Magnus Hitch' in #1230, #1791 and #1800 (which could be called an Adjustable Rolling Hitch). In #61 & #255 insert a subordinate clause in brackets '(otherwise, or previously known as a Magnus or Mariner's Hitch)'.
#1994 is the reverse of the Rolling Hitch, not the Midshipman's Hitch. Two round turns & two half hitches (#1884) is no longer a Rolling Hitch.

No textual change is then needed for #62, #503, #1027, #1190, #1465,

#1681, #1734, #1798, #1799, #1854, #1855, #1856 or #1993.

Ashley must have been aware of the problem but did not have our Guild to obtain a consensus of informed opinion. What do you think?

Mellin, Stanton by Bridge, DERBY DE7 1HT, England.

oooOOOooo

Geoffrey BUDWORTH replies...

Dear Gordon,

Thank you for the chance to add a post-script to George Pask's letter sorting out Ashley and the Rolling or Magnus Hitches.

As Percy Blandford pointed out on page 17 of KM4 in 1983, it depends whose books you read; or, in my case who taught you. The 70-year-old sailing master who showed me how to hitch for a lengthwise pull over 40 years ago stressed the importance of the double-crossed diagonals and called it a ROLLING Hitch. So I side with Percy.

For more than a century nearly every writer on knots has labelled that hitch to rope or spar with a lengthwise load as a Rolling Hitch. Most also show the version with the loaded party trapped beneath two overlapping turns. Today, the Royal Yachting Association insists its tens of thousands of novice dinghy

sailors are taught the hitch to attach their painters to the instructor's power boat tow rope at the start and end of a day's sailing.

I guess it's too late, George, for any one to resurrect the name Magnus Hitch (except - perhaps - for that relative of the Roband Hitch with load at right angles to its point of attachment). I see no problem with the Midshipman's and Taut Line (guying) Hitches. Trying to link them with either the Magnus or Rolling Hitch is as tenuous as calling two half hitches a Clove Hitch.

Anyone else care to join the debate?

7 Hazel Shaw, TONBRIDGE, Kent, TN10 3QE, England.

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SHEET BENDS

Direct v Oblique

by **Rob CHISNALL**, B.Sc.(Hons), B.Ed.

The direct Sheet Bend (Ashley's #66) seems to be more secure in hawser-laid lines, especially those made of natural fibres; but I have found the oblique, left-hand, version (#67) to be more secure in kernmantel (sheath & core) and some braided ropes. A distinction should be made between knot strength and knot security. The direct Sheet Bend appears to be slightly stronger.

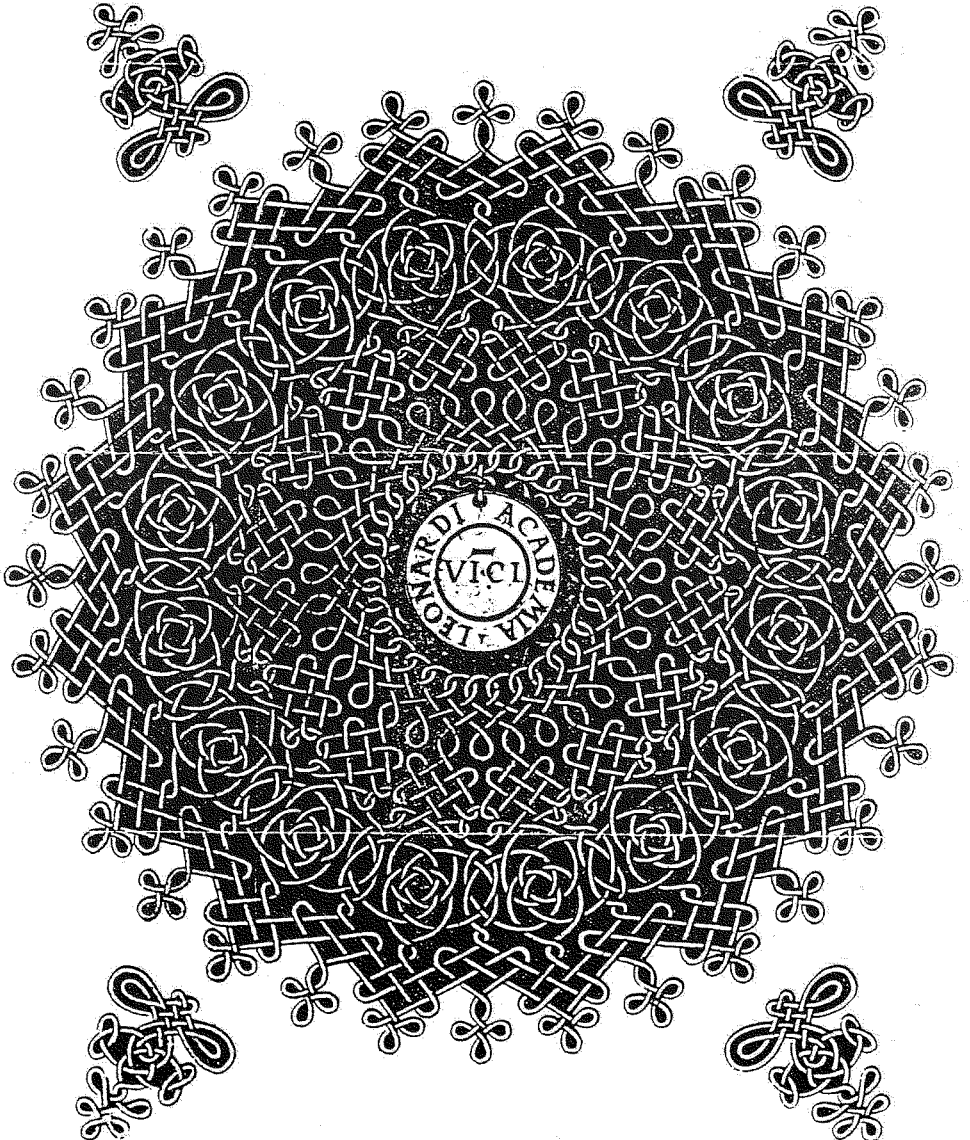
I used four types of test to reach these conclusions:

- (a) gradually increasing loads producing failure, using a gauge or dynamometer;
- (b) sudden loads applied by dropping weights, using a dynamometer, or counting the number of drops until failure occurred;
- (c) manually tugging, causing the knot to tighten or come undone;
- (d) simultaneously loading two different bends tied in the same cord until the weaker one failed.

More empirical data is needed, especially to determine where and how rope fails, with attention paid to the relative behaviour of natural and manmade fibres.

LEONARDO'S KNOT

Keith HOWARD was given this diagram of Leonardo's Knot by one of his Scouts who asked if he had any further information on it. Keith has been unable to find anything in his books: Can anyone help? - Anyone ever tried it?



ANECDOTE

Jan HOEFNAGEL writes..

How to convert rope tying to wine - It can be done!

One of our members working with a dredging company, once told me a funny story. Sent to Portugal with a hopper to raise a beach with sand near the Tago river, he was ashore with his mates one Sunday afternoon where they visited a religious fete. At the fair ground there were many diverse attractions such as fire eaters, motor cycle artists and a young budding Houdini, performing with chain and rope. Bragging that he could always untie himself, he challenged those that would tie him up to also put up some money. Our member was persuaded by his mates to take the bet. The artist seeing a potential victim persuaded the reluctant house father to do his best. Not wanting to loose his money, our member started to work and dug deep into his knowledge of knots and came up with the idea that if he used constrictor knots he had a good chance of winning. He set to work placing loops around the neck, legs, arms and body of the young Houdini: the knots arranged carefully so that as soon as the man started to struggle he would strangle himself!

The struggle for freedom commenced,

crowds gathered as disaster loomed. Twenty minutes went by, still not free and exhausted the artist eventually declared himself beaten and agreed to pay the reward. Our man was gracious and refused the money, but was willing to accept a few bottles of local wine, that he and his shipmates, together with the young Houdini might all enjoy at a party.

So you see, knowledge is power - and rewarding!

DEFINITIONS

Bolt Rope: The rope sewed round the sides of a sail.

Buntlines: Ropes secured to the foot of a sail, and used when taking it in or reefing.

BOOKS

"NETS AND KNOTS"

by

Quinton Winch

ISBN 0 8521 97217 (BATSFORD)

LETTERS

In a letter to **Geoffrey BUDWORTH**, **John TURNER** from New Zealand writes.....

George and I are deeply grateful for the kind things you said about our work. It is nice to be told that others in the world are beginning to take note, and to make use of, ones published ideas and methods. As far as I am concerned, that is the whole point of doing research! One gains great pleasure in making new discoveries; that pleasure is doubled and trebled when others take them up and use them for further advances. Only last week Neil Hood (An Australian 'knotter'; you'll have seen his items in the IGKT Magazine) sent us a fifty-page pamphlet he has produced. He has drawn up grid-diagrams, algorithm tables, and string diagrams for all the Regular Knots depicted in Bruce Grant's Encyclopaedia. All in our notation, with a glossary of terms and definitions to introduce it. So that will help to spread our ideas. We knew Neil was doing it, because he asked our advice on some matters; but it was his own project, and he has put a great deal of effort into it. We applaud what Neil has done, for many people will prefer having his diagrams in a booklet, and working from them, to sorting out our mathematical formulae. I believe he is going to treat other knot-classes similarly...

Dear Editor,

I would refer to KM Issue 32 Page 22.

I am all in favour of teaching knots - after all, I have been doing it for nearly fifty years. While therefore I also favour these well designed instruction boards, I must deplore the suggested one shown which depicts the Bowline being tied by the antediluvian, irresponsible, clumsy and time wasting method of the rabbit up through the hole and round the tree. This, I believe, was the way it was taught by inexperienced Assistant Cub Scout Leaders (themselves inadequately taught) in the belief that a young 8-11 year old needed the most simple way of doing anything. How they underestimated our youth of today!

I hope and trust that our members make the Bowline by the correct method which is shown in Knot Chart No.5 - (reproduced opposite) from my latest knot book "Scouting Magazine Book of Knots"

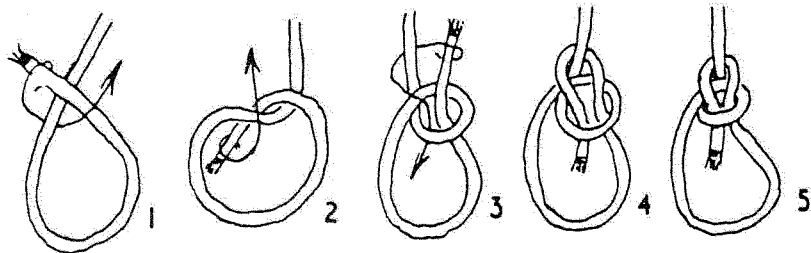
Admittedly, the other methods do produce a Bowline but why use the slower, clumsier and less effective ways when the correct way is so simple, straight forward and more practical in general use.

Yours sincerely,

Eric FRANKLIN

A loop in the rope

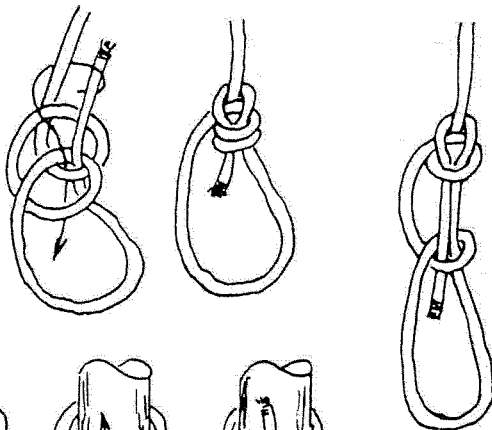
The Bowline is the utility loop and will cater for most instances where a loop is needed. It is identical in form to the Sheet Bend and is tied in a similar manner.



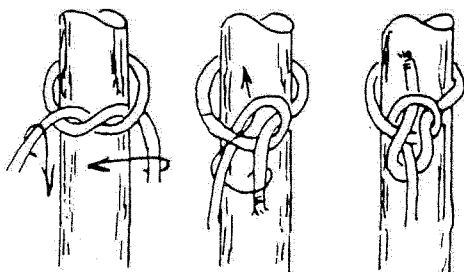
Bowline

A Roundturn Bowline is similar to a Double Sheet Bend and is tied in a similar manner. It is no stronger but is slightly more secure.

At stage 3 above, repeat steps 1 to 3 then complete as shown.



Bowline when object or person is facing you.



Water Bowline

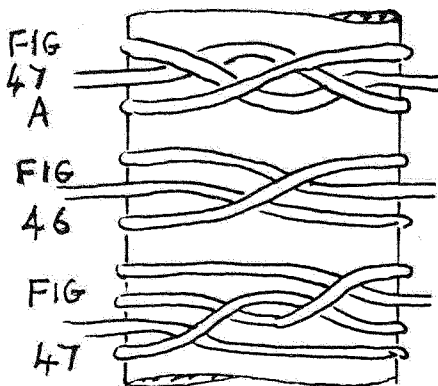
HISTORY OF THE CONSTRUCTOR KNOT

by Lester COPESTAKE

This note arises from a piece of luck which for a brief moment made me feel an equal to the likes of Clifford Ashley and Sten Johansson (who in 1983 owned some 1500 books of interest to tyers of knots).

My luck concerned the CONSTRUCTOR KNOT. It has always been a surprise to me, that so good a knot should have so short a history. Sten summarised the history in a letter published in *Knotting Matters* in 1983 (KM 3 p.13,14). Here is the gist of what he says; "Hjalmar Ohrwall got the idea in 1916, Rapponen and Drew made the first drawings in 1931 (Calling it a WHIP KNOT) and Ashley put it on the market in 1944". Ashley himself (p.225) seems to say that he learned about the constrictor in 1919 though he rather implies it was not known to his local fishermen. This last may explain why the knot does not appear in his 1925 articles about sailors knots. He did not claim originality for the knot, but for new uses of it.

In the drawings, Fig.47A is the Constrictor Knot. Compare it with Fig.46 which is a Clove Hitch, and with the double Clove Hitch Fig.47 which has an extra half hitch.



NOW FOR THE PIECE OF LUCK

I have been given a quaint old book of some 20 pages with three lithographed plates of drawings of knots. "THE BOOK OF KNOTS" and I believe from the inscription dated 1906 on the flyleaf that it is the fifth edition of the book Clifford Ashley lists in his bibliography as "Tom BOWLING". Its quaint features are described on page 11 of Ashley's book and correspond exactly with my little book. One of the oddities is the use of the name 'Builders Knot' instead of 'Clove Hitch'. So I made a search and found that Figs.46 and 47 on the old plate 1 resemble Figs 46/47 above and are indeed clove hitches; corresponding text on page 8 reads as follows;

Fig.46 "Builders Knot- used by workmen in securing building materials, as when it is tied it cannot

come undone, because of the great friction of the parts''

Fig.47 "Double Builders Knot - which (sic) is considerably stronger. The GUNNERS Knot (Of which we do not have a diagram) only differs from the builders knot, by the ends of the cords being simply knotted before being brought from under the loop which crosses them."

ALL OF A SUDDEN, I saw a thing missed, it seems by both Ashley and Sten Johanssen, although both surely knew the little book.

TOM BOWLING'S GUNNER'S KNOT - IS - THE CONSTRICTOR KNOT!

Consequently we now have a latest date of 1906, more likely 1890 for the origin of the Constrictor Knot. The date would be as early as 1866 if the note appears in the first edition. The early date is not certain for The Gunner's Knot could be a late addition to the text only.

Does any member have a copy of Tom Bowling?

My guesses need a check. The name GUNNER's Knot is a mystery. Ashley (p34 #176) offers a thin link with gunnery: Cartridges can be flannel bags into which the gunner weighs his charge. (O.E.D) so he needs the constrictor as a bag knot!

At least the new name gives a new lead for seeking early references. Who can help?

AMENDING ASHLEY

Amending Ashley's Illustrations.

In #2218, between intersections 21 & 27 amend '97' to read '47'. Then, between 41 & re-numbered 47, amend '39' to read '34'.

In #2219, upper left-hand quarter of Ashley's original illustration, at the intersection of 18-19 & 59-47, amend the numbered crossing point '78' (the second place it occurs) to read '79'.

In #2220, the left-hand centre of illustration, amend '29' to read '25'.

I believe this turns fresh light onto Ashley's family.

QUOTATION

"Gaffer gave Victor another jaundiced look. 'String', he said gloomily. 'It all works by string. You'd be amazed how things'd fall to bits around here,' he said, 'if it weren't for me and my ball of string...Amazin' stuff, string,' he said."

MOVING PICTURES - A Discworld Novel - by Terry Pratchett, published by Victor Gollancz Ltd. (1990)

PERSONALITY PIECE

Tim FIELD

Tim was born in 1954. He joined the Scout Movement as a Wolf Cub and progressed through the ranks as Scout, Instructor, Scout Leader and now District Scout Leader. Childhood pastimes included knitting and sewing and he learnt to handle a sewing machine at an early age. In Scouting, Tim now finds these skills useful for repairing tents and his interests soon extended to all S aspects of maintenance of equipment in the Quartermasters Stores.

Tim enjoys the special challenge of teaching knots to Scouts, trying to communicate and stimulate an enthusiasm for skills which have modern practical applications. He is often in demand for teaching knots to left-handed youngsters. Scouting also continues to provide opportunities for handling ropes at camp and in pioneering projects. Tim's other knotting interests include the classification of knots and tying decorative lanyards and pendants, often on a small scale.

Recently, he has been involved with the IGKT display at Bradford Cathedral, linking Knot Year 90 with Bradford's Textile Arts Festival, and he put on a small display and demonstration of knot-craft at the British Wool Centre. This year, he

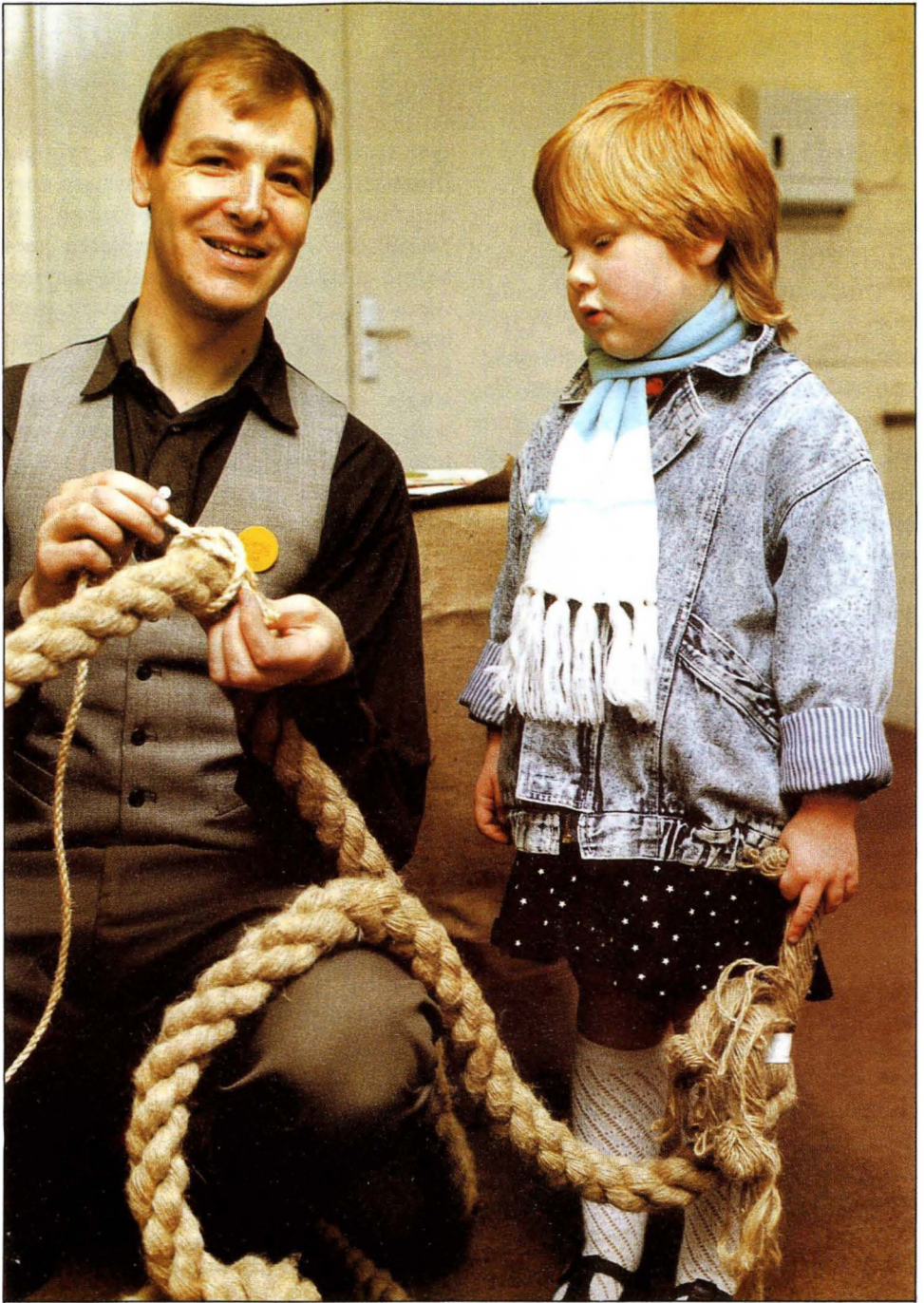
helped to erect a rope bridge project at a camp for the Association of Methodist Scouters and Guiders and has joined in with West Yorkshire Branch activities.

After gaining a B.Sc Honours degree in Information Science at Leeds, Tim worked as a Technical Writer for a computer software company, writing manuals for steelwork design programmes. He was admitted to full membership of the Institute of Information Scientists (MIInfSc), and now works at the British Gas Engineering Research Station writing manuals for pipe fusion machines.

Other commitments and interests include the Methodist Church, choral singing, tea, calligraphy and the history of the English language. Tim is also a member of Mensa. His only claim to fame, he says, is that he has formulated a definition for the length of the proverbial piece of string - a definition which applies to all sets of circumstances!

oooOOOooo

The photograph (Courtesy of the 'BRADFORD STAR') shows Tim passing on his skills to the younger generation during a 'Display of Knot Crafts' at the British Wool Centre, Clayton, in Bradford during October 1990.



SPHERICAL COVERING KNOTS TIED WITH TWO STRANDS

Devised by: Harold SCOTT

A long time ago I successfully covered a sphere using Ashley's #2217. The start and finish met, as in a Turk's Head, and the knot could then be doubled, etc. In fact, #2216 and #2217 are, as illustrated, respectively flattened 5L x 4B and 7L x 4B Turk's Heads.

The start and finish of some other knots in his series do NOT meet, however, spoiling their over-under sequences. The knots in question are #2218, #2219, #2220, #2223 and #2232.

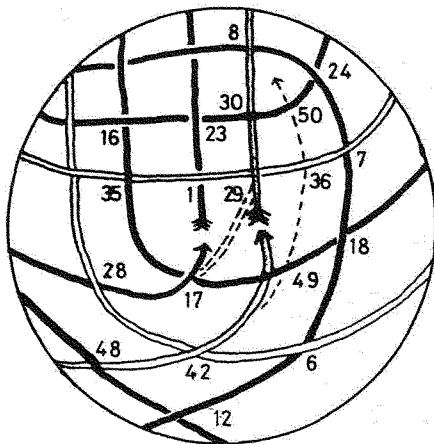
The apparent flaw in #2218 occurs between intersections 17-8 of Ashley's original illustration. When the knot is first pinned out complete over the diagram, the regular basket weave is marred by a strand that dips under the TWO consecutive crossing points 29 and 30. Novices tying the knot might easily believe they had done it wrong.

It has been said to me that this is merely a characteristic of the knot. If care is taken arranging the standing and working ends before commencing to double the lead in both directions, then (as slack is removed from the knot) the offending part recedes beneath the surface, to be overlaid by the perfectly regular square of knot parts intersecting at 36-50-23-1.

Well you have to be a practised knot

tyer to do that from Ashley's original illustrations and text, and nowhere does he point out that the ball or other core MUST go beneath the completed knot before shaping and tightening begins. Also, you have to double away with both ends to make the offending part recede. Thus it is not possible to have a single cord covering (unless, maybe, with coarse thick stuff). Whereas, with just a slight modification, what I see as a fault in this spherical covering knot can be overcome.

◁ 2218 ▷



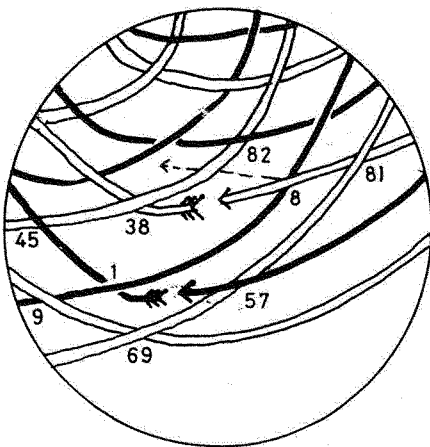
I have re-drawn #2218, breaking the line between 17-29. The broken ends are treated as follows: 17 is re-joined to 1 (which is re-numbered 29); 49 is connected to the original 29 (now re-numbered 36). Crossing points 1 &

50 cease to exist. A perfect covering knot results. It is in 2 cycles, tied with 2 separate strands.

One cycle, shown here as a solid black line, is a 5L x 4B Turk's Head. The other is a 3L x 4B version. Combined, they make a 8L x 4B Turk's Head, which - of course-contravenes Ashley's law of the common divisor, hence the need for 2 strands, but now two different colours may be used. I find it surprising that the leads combined (i.e. 5+3=8), but the bights (4+4) remain as 4 rim bights in the completed new knot. (See #2223, however, for a fascinating variation.)

There is a nice crossing sequence as you pin out the knot. The 5L x 4B cycle goes OOOO, UUUU, OOOO, UUUU, OOOO, UUUU, OOOO, UUU. The 3L x 4B goes UU, OO, UU, OO, UU, OO, UU, OO. (when 'O' = over, & 'U' = under)

◁ 2219 ▷



In #2219, a similar flaw occurs between 37 & 38, camouflaged by square 1-45-82-8. In #2220, it is at 10 & 11, overlaid by 1-21-26-15. In #2223, 19 & 20, covered by 1-33-38-25. In #2232, 17 & 18, resolved by 1-23-34-12.

In the re-drawn #2219, the line is broken between 37 & 38. Re-joining 37 to 45 and 8 to 38. Crossings 1 & 82 are eliminated.

Once this idea is grasped, you can work out how to apply it to the other flawed knots. Break the line in #2220 between 10 & 11. Re-connect 10 to 15 and 21 to 11. Crossings 1 & 26 disappear.

In #2223, the break occurs between 19 & 20. Join 19 to 33 and 25 to 20. Crossings 1 & 38 cease to exist. In this new knot, two 3L x 4B Turk's Heads combine to form a 6-lead variant with 8 bights (outer rim) and 4 bights (inner rim). Seemingly an "impossible" Turk's Head, it still takes just two strands.

In #2232, break between 17 & 18. Join 17 to 23 and 12 to 18. No's 1 & 34 disappear.

I believe this turns fresh light onto Ashley's family of spherical covering knots, revealing further scope for fancy-ropeworkers.

G.B.

By Ed.....

There are some amendments to the original diagrams in this series "Amending Ashley" on page



"KNOTBOARD & FRAME" A Masterpiece by Bernard CUTBUSH

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Supplies Secretary, Yew Tree House, Goosey,
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GIRL GUIDES - KNOTTER BADGE

Bill MARSHAL writes.....

I thought the members might like to see the requirements for the Girl Guide Knotter badge, which has four stages, and perhaps someone can enlighten me as to what a 'pedigree cow hitch' might possibly be (Level 1 part 1h).

By Ed...

My guess is that the clue lies in 2e.

NOVICE MEMBERS - How about using the four stages as a self imposed proficiency target? - not just to be able to complete the tasks but also carry out some research. (Particular into alternative names and useage).

The BUFFS among you might also like to see if you could qualify in all four stages without reference to any books!

LEVEL 1.

1. Show that you can tie the following knots, bends and hitches:

- a. Thumb Knot, b. Overhand Knot, c. Granny Knot, d. Reef Knot, e. Surgeons reef, f. Reef bow, g. Larks head, h. Pedigree cow hitch i. Round turn and two half hitches.

2. Choose from the knots bends and hitches in clause 1, and show that you can do the following:

- a. Make hand loops at each end of a

skipping rope. b. Tie a bow in shoe laces. c. Put a stopper knot at the end of a sewing thread. d. Fasten off a bandage or sling. e. put up a washing line with a different hitch at either end.

3. Make a single plait in a length of thin rope or cord.

LEVEL 2.

You should choose a suitable weight of string, cord or rope for each knot etc.

1. Show that you can tie the following:

- a. Figure of eight knot, b. Packers Knot, c. Fishermans Knot, d. Sheetbend, e. Clove hitch, f. Sheepshank, g. Pole hitch, h. Slipped hitch, i. Halter hitch, j. Donkey hitch. Explain the difference between a knot, a bend and a hitch.

2. Use the knots in clause 1 and those in Level 1 to do the following:

- a. Tie up a parcel, b. Hoist a flag, c. Shorten a guy rope or washing line that is attached to something at both ends, d. Fasten securely a bundle of poles, e. Tie up the brailing on a tent.

3. Coil a length of rope.

4. Using square lashing, West Country whipping, and other appropriate knots and hitches do the following:

a. Make and erect a flag pole, using at least two lengths of pole. b. Make either a plaited or Turks Head woggle, or a net bag, or a cord belt.

LEVEL 3.

You should choose a suitable weight of string, cord or rope for each knot etc.

1. Showing that you can tie the following:

a. Square Knot (English), b. Hand Knot, c. Chair Knot, d. True Lovers Knot, e. Shamrock Knot, f. Bowline with stopper Knot, g. Sliding Figure of Eight, h. Double Fishermans Bend, i. Carrick Bend, j. Figure of Eight Hitch, k. Marline Spike Hitch, l. three ways of tying a Clove Hitch.

2. Choose from the knots in clause 1 and those in the earlier levels to do the following:

a. Make a rope ladder. b. Fasten a scarf or bow with a fancy knot. c. Tie a rope securely around another person. d. Make a handline down a slope.

3. Perform three rope tricks.

4. Using square, sheer, snake, and tripod lashings, make the following:

a. A camp washstand. b. A bridge. c. A raft.

5. Organise a game or activity for a small group of people that involves a lot of safe knot tying.

LEVEL 4.

1. Demonstrate the knots, bends, hitches and sinnets that you use in a sport or activity in which you are involved, eg, rock climbing, handicraft, boating, hairdressing, angling, or service preparation. You should use the correct materials, and be able to explain:

a. Why and when a particular knot is used. b. The strengths and weaknesses of each knot. c. The dangers of incorrect construction and use.

2. Either organise the building of three contrasting pioneering projects (with a group of people to help you) or teach a group of inexperienced knotters the knots, bends and hitches for level 1 or 2.

QUOTATION

ROPE BRIDGES: "Rope bridges were formerly much used in war, but until lately had fallen into disuse. A bridge of ropes across the Clain, at the siege of Poitiers, in the reign of Charles IX of France... Bridges of cordage were also used by Henry Prince of Orange, in 1631, and in Italy, in the campaign of 1742, and on many other occasions."

DOUGLAS' MILITARY BRIDGES, 2nd Edition (Published 1832)

G.B.

LETTERS

Craig SIGURDSON writes...

As a Canadian IGKT member, I am not overly exposed to knot-tying specialists on a regular basis. I am intrigued by the bowline series of knots, and am interested in further developing my skills and knowledge with this particular series.

I was impressed with the article in KM37 on the variations of the Alpine Butterfly knot. Compliments are to be extended to the author of this informative feature.

I am interested in meeting with other students of knots in North America to organize some event. To date, I have met many knot-tying enthusiasts, mostly volunteers with Scouts and the like, but never any members of the IGKT. I would like to ensure that North American members get just as much out of their membership as British members do.

I would be interested in hearing from other members who have the same interest in the Bowline series as I do.

11 Key Hill Road
London,
Ontario,
Canada N6G 2G2

John CONSTABLE ..writes

Most newly developed materials are wonderful and the set of plastic basins, with lids to match, was no exception. Puddings did not stick but there was no purchase to lift the basins out of the steamer. The solution however was simple and effective. A 74 bight, 3 lead Turk's Head was quickly made with two of the bights extended out to half the diameter of the lid. The working end was safely tucked in and the standing end taken through the two bights and secured to make a safe, equidistant, three-point suspension. A little whipping around the three suspension points at the Turk's Head made a neat and permanent job.

Ashley does not include a cook in his chapter on "occupational knots" but I suspect he would have approved

14 Church Street,
PERSHORE
Worcestershired
WR10 1DT

Europa Chang DAWSON

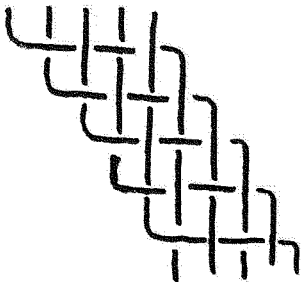
writes.....

Upon experimenting with the ingenious method of hair plaiting suggested in KM35, page 16, fig 3, I discovered that:-

1. The binding strands ended about a quarter way down the leader, so that four sets of binders were required;
2. The optimum speed of progression was 8cm in 30 min, anything faster causing a massive buildup of static electricity induced by friction; and
3. Combing out the plait was at a rate of 8cm in 50 min - and fairly painful even so.

It seems probable, therefore, that some other method would have been applied in daily use, if only to minimise the number of strands pulled out.

I wonder if a braid of five strands (as in the sketch below) could have been the special plait referred to.



When pulled tight enough to confine hair, this gives the effect of a plait down each side, though with slanted rather than horizontal joins. The plait also runs the full length of the hair, and may be undone by shaking the head briskly.

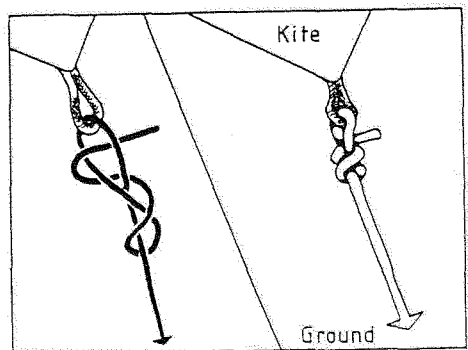
Longreach, The Common,
East Hanningfield, CHELMSFORD
CM3 8AQ

oooOOOooo

Geoffrey BUDWORTH writes...

I bought a small parafoil kite recently, to fly from my sea kayak and so be towed downwind (saving some paddling).

Whoever made it in Hong Kong had secured the bridle line to braided loops on the kite with this hitch.



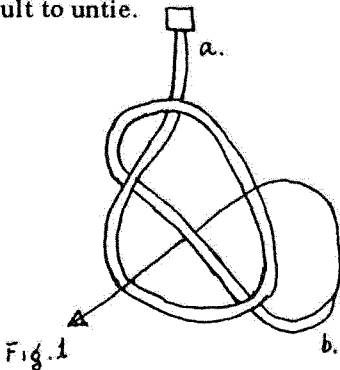
SOME EXPLORATIONS WITH THE ESKIMO BOWLINE

By Harry ASHER

For the conventional Bowline, there is a "correct" and a "left-handed" version: (Ashley #1010 and #1034). The Eskimo Bowline too has a correct and a left-handed - or sinister - version, but which is which?

Simple but brutal tests in a variety of materials, including that hard 2mm cord used for bathroom light pulls, indicate the following:

To be sure of producing the (much) more secure version, tie the Eskimo Bowline as in Fig.1 (It is interesting to note that the direction in which the working end is passed is opposite to the way you would expect if you normally use this "crossed loop" technique to tie the conventional Bowline.) Pull at a. and b. and the Eskimo Bowline forms, ready for pulling up tight. The loop is very compact and neat. However it can be difficult to untie.



There are of course other methods of tying but this way ensures the more secure form. Weaving the end the other way, as in Fig.2 produces a deceptively similar form but it is the left-handed version. This is quite unstable if the pull on the legs is uneven, with the greater strain coming on the leg nearer the working end.

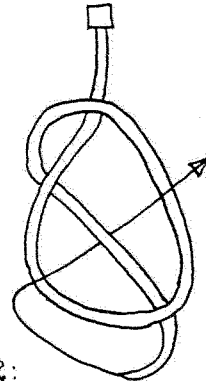


Fig. 2:
"Left-handed"

It has been well demonstrated how loops can be adapted to make bends; the Eskimo Bowline is not an exception. One method is illustrated in Fig.3. The attractive finished form is shown in Fig.4.

Another, quite fast, method is shown in Fig.5. It is worth noting how similar this shape is to the Sheet Bend but rather how different it is. Do not pass the working end round the other way: you will get the left-handed,

very much less secure, version of whatever this is (Eskimo bend?).

HINTS & TIPS

Kai LUND's Tip

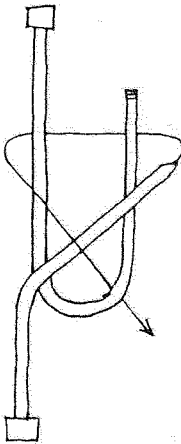
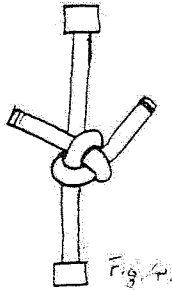
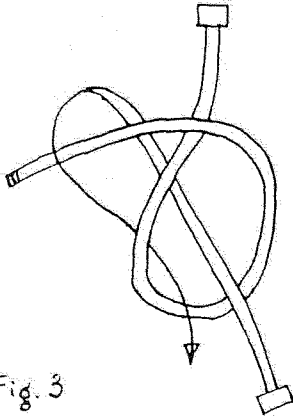
passed on

by Des & Liz PAWSON.

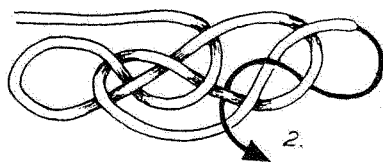
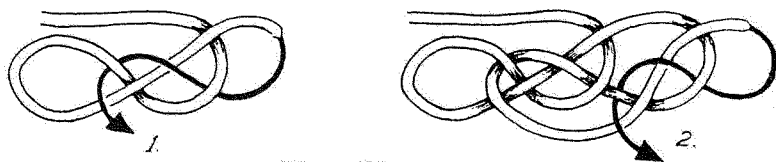
On a recent trip to Denmark Liz and I had the good fortune to visit Kai Lund - the author of amongst other books *Tovvaerks Kunst* (Ropework Art) and *Matter og Rossetter* (Mats & Rosettes) now both sadly out of print. Talking with him about tying mats he said that he preferred to pin his work out over a full scale photocopy of the design. For this he used insulating or pulp board and recommended glueing the board to a piece of hardboard to avoid sticking the pin right through and into your leg. He also said that a coating of shellac will extend the life of the board and stop the disintegration that covers you with bits of fibre.

Liz has just finished an order of 200 small mats using a board made up as Kai Lund suggested, it has proved to be a major improvement on the unbacked and untreated board.

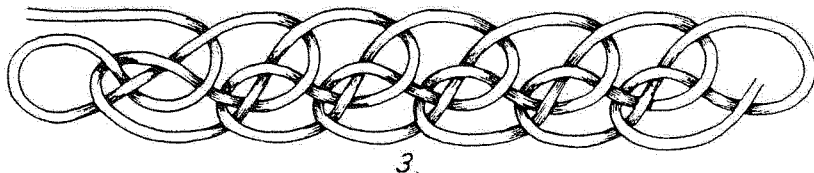
We pass this tip on to all that like to make mats, the hardboard and insulating pulp board are obtainable from DIY stores (ask if they have a broken panel) shellac is a little harder to find but may be with the paints and polishes.



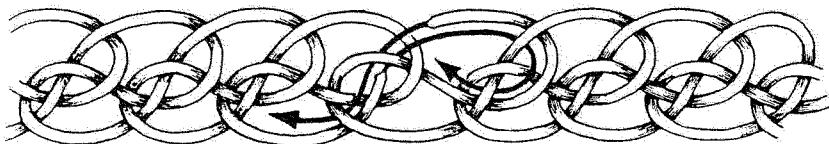
This bend is probably just of academic interest but the marked difference in performance between the right-handed and left-handed versions should stimulate further thought on other knots where the difference is not immediately obvious.



The Chain.

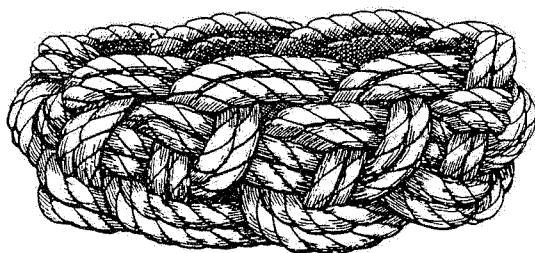


Repeat the sequence until the chain is long enough to overlap around the circumference, then link the ends,



The Link.

and double or triple the lead in either direction.



The Grommet after Doubling. © & 7-91

Decorative Chain Grommet III.

Another of Stuart GRAINGER'S Decorative Chain Grommets

KEESJES or MONKEY'S FIST

EEN COLLECTIE KEESJES

door B. den Haan

De verzwaaring aan het werpeinde van een hieuwlijn, ook wel opgooilijn of kanaallijn - soms verbasterd tot knallijn-genoemd, veder te kunnen werpen Het keesje is over het algemeen vervaardigd van goknoot touwwerk Tegenwoordig ook wel met zand gevulde leren zakje (Japanse boten) of soms een rode plastic bal.

Omdat ik in mijn werk nogal eens met dit soort voorwerpen te maken heb, heb ik er ondertussen al div verzameld. Nu vond ik laatst een artikel in een blad over het "keesje" Men vroeg zich af waar de naam vandaan komt, omdat er nogal vreemde vormen zijn zoals b.v. de meest opvallende "kees" van een Chinees schip, alleen een stuk ijzer in de vorm van een bal, met een gewicht van 650 gram, dus een bijzonder "keesje" onder de kezen.



De kees der kezen: 650 gram Chinees ijzer.

Misschien kan iemand mij vertellen waar de naam vandaan komt, of weet men iets van andere vormen af, dan de al bekende balvorm.

TRANSLATION

A COLLECTION OF MONKEY FISTS (KEESJES)

Bas den HAAN writes...

In Holland the heavy part of a heaving-line is called a "keesje". It serves the purpose of weighting the end of the line (other names: throw-line, canal-line often pronounced knal-line) so that it may be thrown farther or higher.

The Monkey's Fist (keesje) is normally constructed at the end of the line, but today, a sand-filled leather bag or sometimes a plastic ball is used.

In my work (As a tug skipper) I am confronted with these objects almost daily, and have collected several different specimens. Practice onboard is to cut off any that are filled with a heavy nut, for these are very dangerous (windows, heads).

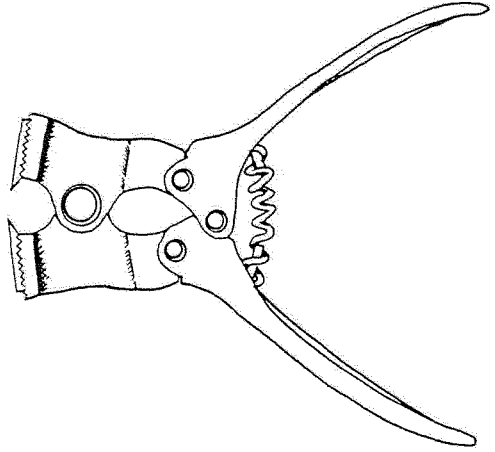
I noticed in one magazine article the question of where the name (keesje) came from because there are several strange objects among them, notably the Iron pieces weighing 650gr from a Chinese merchant ship - A real kees under the "keesjes". Does anyone know of other forms? And can anyone tell me where this name originates.

TOOL TIPS

from Geoffrey BUDWORTH

TOOL TIP (1)

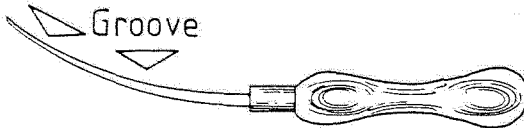
End-Cutting pliers, with cantilever action, are powerful and precise enough to snip thick wire and the finest fibre or filament of rope. Squeezed fast and hard, they generate just enough heat (it's the compression) to cut and seal small cord into chisel-shaped ends for easier tucking.

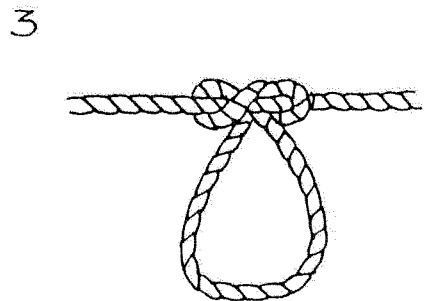
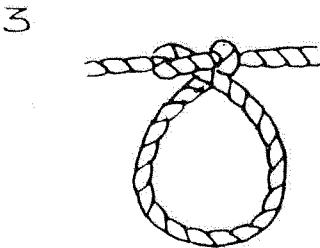
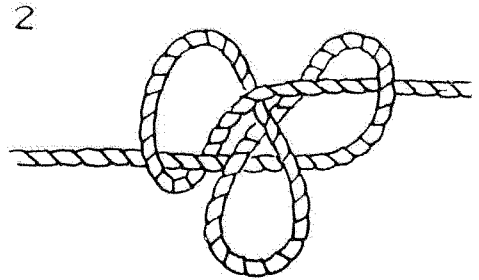
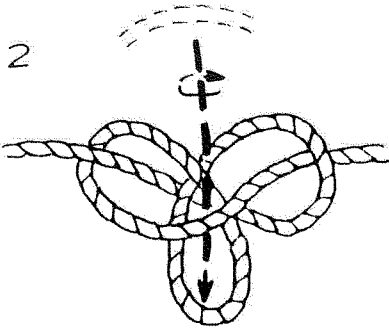
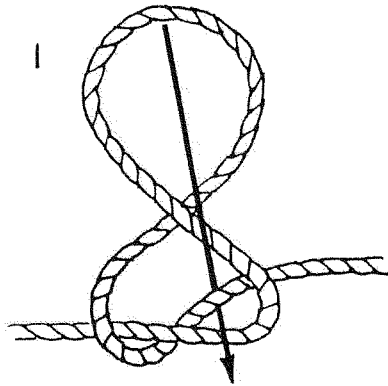
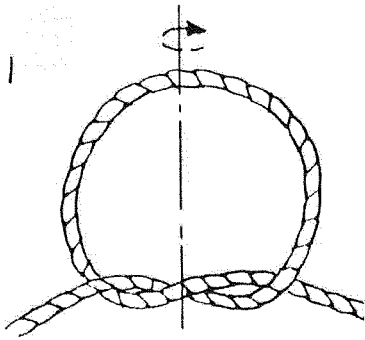


TOOL TIP (2)

An awl with a strong curved and grooved bill is used for cane chair making and basketry. It will also act as a miniature Swedish fid for the fiddly business of splicing braided ropes the proper way.

A similar, but straight and much frailer, tool comes with candle-making kits.





FOR THE NOVICE

Here are two more 'Knots without words' from Bryan HATTO. Learn them, name them, list uses for themI will print the best response. Ed

BOOK REVIEW

'KNOTS'

by Brion TOSS

(A Chapman's Nautical Guide)

published 1990 by Hearst Marine Books, New York

\$14.95 U.S. or #7.95 U.K.

ISBN 0-688-09415-5

A quality product, designed by Mary MORIARTY and illustrated by Gae PILON, in which layout, typefaces and drawings combine to please. The Sturdy flexible blue cover with gold lettering holds 192 pages of acid-free paper and 320 drawings.

Brion TOSS has done a superb job. His choice of 'core' (used 90% of the time) and 'non-core' (when nothing else will do) knots includes most of the classics, but goes on to such specialist items as Swedish furling, Camel hitches, a New Age deck stopper, the Knute hitch, a Good Luck Knot, Strait & Shovel splices, and St. Mary's hitching.

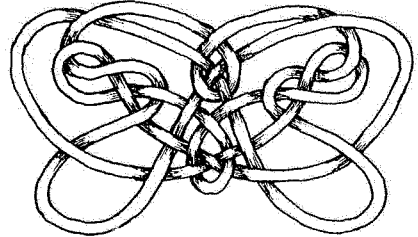
He is an amusing wordsmith. In his text lie nuggets such as: "...a Judo-like move" (to trip a hawser bowline into shape); "...byzantine Fancy Work"; and "...more of a darn than a splice".

This masterly show-&-tell performance by an accomplished IGKT member also explains belays,

coiling, purchases, whip-pings & seizings, and gives us a glossary, charts and an index.

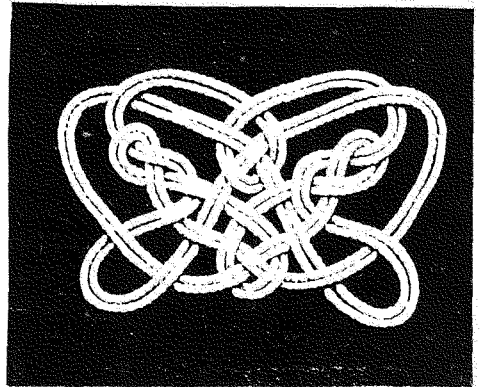
Anyone wishing to learn a tie or two (or twenty two) will find value for money, and an easy read, in this excellent manual.

G.B.



⊗ 6.91

A Butterfly - Single Strand Knot.



From Stuart GRAINGER'S Collection

