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# Knotting Matters

Newsletter of the



INTERNATIONAL  
GUILD OF KNOT TYERS

# KNOTTING MATTERS

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER of  
THE INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF KNOT TYERS  
ISSUE No. 41 OCTOBER 1992

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# EDITORIAL

10 years ago Issue 1 of KNOTTING MATTERS contained some interesting articles to a membership of some 45 people; that means the majority of you have missed those articles. Therefore, with the forbearance of those of you who still possess ten year old copies of KM, I intend to repeat articles from No.1 in No.41, No.2 in No.42 et seq...

I regret that of late I have been so tied up with work and away from home that this edition of KM is very late, it seemed that every time I tried to finish it off I was off to sea again.

One recent voyage across the Atlantic ended in Norfolk V.A. where I was able to take a weekend break before flying home. I was able to travel inland to the Shenandoah Valley and the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. Driving back to the coast I stopped at a "Rest Area" where I was hartened to see a mini-bus full of Scouts, all with a length of line in hand (until they got to the Cola machine!) practicing knots. Next stop was the "Mariners Museum" at Newport News, to see what they had to offer in the way of knot related museum pieces - sadly few...a sailmakers bench and tools with a copy of Ashley open at the tools page was all that I could find, then, Eurica!! books galore in the shop (and in the library I gather but it was closed..Sunday) and the prices compared with what we pay in the UK made purchase irresistable...my knotbook library grew by about 100% that day!

Next stop was The Netherlands,

a visit cut short to sail to the Med supporting the UN effort in the Adriatic.

I do hope things are going to quieten down now, however even if I do have more time to put future editions together, my deepest concern now is the **lack of material** . Please do not leave it to the the few regular contributors, if you have never submitted an article then **now** is the time. I particularly need articles which are original and stem from your interests either directly or indirectly in knotting.

## WELCOME TO THE GUILD

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# LETTERS

**Don WOODS** writes:

Re the "Thumb Knot/Overhand Knot" (KM39), may I try and throw some light on the subject.

I too was baffled by the requirement of the Guide Knotters badge for (a) Thumb Knot and (b) Overhand Knot. After much correspondence with "The Guides Association" it transpired that the Overhand Knot should have read "Double Overhand Knot". What the Guides call a Double Overhand Knot is in fact the Overhand Loop (Ashley #1046).

Further to this may I offer this explanation - The Thumb Knot is indeed an overhand knot but an overhand knot is not necessarily a Thumb Knot. Tie an Overhand Knot loosely in a cord around an object; this is a Half Knot. It requires a further knot to complete. If you tie an overhand knot in a piece of cord and pull it up tight you have a knot in its own right i.e. Thumb Knot. I hope this is of interest to readers and clears up this problem for those involved in teaching Guides and Brownies.

oooOOOooo

**Robert JACKSON** writes...

**OCHE AYE TOM BOWLING**

(Or...A Dalmuirburnfoot By Any Other Name)

Before the Hon. Editor decides to close the correspondence about Tom Bowling I have

edition pull some odd thoughts together - Round Wire Ropes and Flat Wire Ropes - the first "for inclined planes, mines, collieries, ship's standing rigging, etc." and the other "for pits' hoists, etc."

This, I strongly suspect, is a landsman's book of knotting, more suited to the dust, toil, darkness and sheer terrors of the coal mining trade.

There's nothing wrong with that - this book with it's Scottish publishers and suitably salty title taken possibly from Bowling Bay on the Firth of Clyde points to a rather nice association of ideas - some harmless nonsense.

Bowling Bay was the western terminus for the Forth and Clyde canal and must have seen coal brought down from the pits of Airdrie and Monklands, east of Glasgow. There was a steam powered canal inclined plane at Blackhill, on the Monkland branch canal - the first built of its kind. It had a pair of two inch steel ropes coiled on a pair of counter-rotating sixteen foot diameter drums. The drums rotated one turn for twelve strokes of the engine, hauling boats up the incline in tanks of water.

Now, suppose for a moment that the bowline knot were to be Tom Bowling's knot...(which we accept it is NOT)...early plans for the Forth and Clyde canal were to end it nearer Glasgow at Dalmuirburn-foot.

Would the name have stuck?

R.L.J.

# MAGNUS - THE VIKING?

By Pieter van de GRIEND

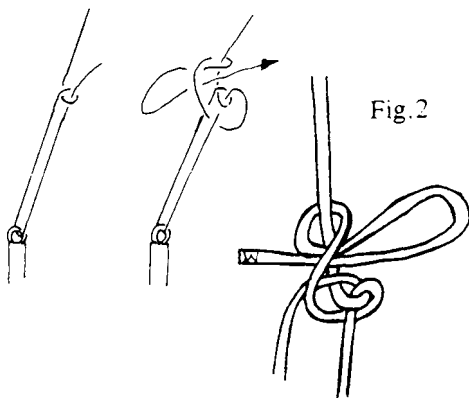
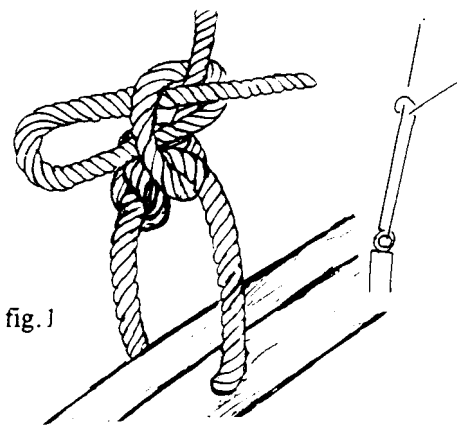
In this small note I would like to add a few comments to remarks made by Des PAWSON in KM40 p9. Des suggested that there might be a link between the Rolling Hitch (Ashley #1735) being called Magnus Hitch and the Vikings. It is about that link I would like to make two comments.

The first relates to rope samples excavated from the Oseberg and other ships. To my knowledge and that at the Viking Museum in Roskilde nobody has ever written anything about knots in the finds. I only know of two scanty sources illustrating some of them; an eyesplice, a Becket Bend and Overhand Knots. However there is no doubt that Viking cordage technology was well developed. In fact they had regular trade routes between Greenland's West coast and the great fair of Koln in Germany around 1200 supplying the European markets with Svardreip. Rope made from Narwal hide, known for its immense natural strength and used extensively in rigging of Viking ships.

The second is about the aforementioned hitch. Des wrote to say that he had observed the hitch being used a lot in Sweden. I can back him up by saying that it has been used and still is being used a great deal in the small open boats on the Faroe Islands. This is of interest because the Faroese are direct descendants of Vikings. Moreover due to appalling climatic conditions, there is very little sailing being done around the islands. Hence the Faroese have not developed their boats for sailing, but for rowing. Doing so they have left the summer rig intact. One of the knots used for tensioning the stays is the Rolling Hitch. It is shown in fig.1, which is reproduced from Maria Eide Pettersen's booklet Snoklar (1982). Fig 2 is a method I have been shown by Sune Joensen from the island of Sandoy in 1987.

## AN OPEN BOAT'S RUNNING & STANDING RIGGING.

The drawings in Maria Eide Petersen's Snoklar are a bit unclear or in the case of

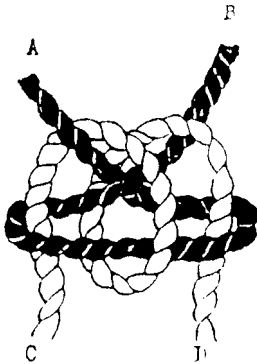


the knot called Spenni printed upside down.

To tension the standing rigging they used the construction to be described below. Here the end of the stay is led through an eyebolt on the gunwhale and pulled taut. A Half Hitch is taken around the standing part a little up the stay. This hitch is spilled, making the working end to lose its Half Hitch, giving the standing end slightly more tension and jamming the working end which is taken through the loop and up, slipped around the stay as shown in Fig 2 on the previous page.

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### WHAT KNOT?



Can you name this knot?

What is it used for?

Do you have any information or stories relating to it?

*Why not share your knowledge with others - Write to me - send me a similar puzzle.....Ed*

## HINTS & TIPS

Chris EATON writes from Switzerland..

When working on a pierced table or sketch, life can be made much easier if the drawing is coloured and the ends of the cords used dyed the same colour. I find felt tip pens best for this. The idea can be enhanced by the use of coloured pins when pinning out the strands. For one such as I, the procedure is invaluable for at least I know where each strand goes right up to the last moment (then it all goes wrong because I can't get the tension right!!).

By Ed - *Chris enclosed some cords with coloured ends, wrapped with tape (like Ken Yalden wrote of in KM40) and those little coloured round head map pins inserted in the ends.*

---

### THE VICTORIAN KITCHEN GARDEN

In the Victorian kitchen garden seedbags for keeping the best of the season's fruit and vegetable seeds over winter were usually made from cotton canvas. Occasionally, however, paper bags with the paper made from old ships ropes were used because they repelled insects.

THE VICTORIAN KITCHEN GARDEN  
BBC Television 1987

Rebroadcast 21st September 1992

# THE QEQERTASUSSUK KNOTS

By Pieter van de GRIEND

Whilst writing something about Inuit knots I came in touch with Dr. Bjarne GRON-NOW from the Institut for Forhistorisk og Klassisk Arkaeologi at Copenhagen University. Since 1983 he has been in charge of the excavation of a site on the island of Qeqertasussuki in West Greenland. It is believed that this was one of the earliest settlements belonging to the Saq-qaq people and it is dated to be 4,500 years old. So far this exciting excavation has brought forth a wealth of entirely new knowledge about prehistoric Inuit culture. My connection to this project was via the identification of some excavated knotted structures. I spent a few days in Copenhagen peering through microscopes, making sketches and taking photographs. The minuscule "knots" I examined were tied in the remains of 4.5 millenia permafrosted whale baleen, hide strips and some scraps of clothing with samples of sewing. It was a far from easy task to reconstruct their spatial configurations, in some of the cases identification even failed altogether, but for most of the finds we could eventually tell something about the employed knots. During the many discussions it was soon to be confirmed that knots can tell one incredibly much about a bygone cultural stage.. What we learnt will be published in the scientific journal *Meddeleler om Gronland* in the course of 1993, but it is about the knot repertoire of those fascinating Inuit

people I already want to write something in this little article for KM. Due to restriction of time I will only outline the knots and add a few notes on one of the materials we found.

The whale baleen had hardened so much that it had fixated the knots which were realised in it. Hence with considerable certainty we know they were Clove Hitch, Granny Knot, Reef Knot, Lark's Head, Half Hitch, Overhand Knot, Becket Bend and a near-intact Noose based on a symmetrical Overhand Knot. Since their original functionality could not always be determined unambiguously, it may only be speculated in how far the first two pairs were the original (non-capsized) knots. In any case it may be assumed that the Inuits regularly used all four structures. Concerning the remaining knots there was no doubt about their original configurations.

In a strip of hide a very recognizable Sheet Bend structure was to be found. To my knowledge this is one of the oldest Sheet Bends found anywere in the world so far. It certainly is the oldest in the Eastern Arctic. Sadly it could not offer any indications about its original functionality. It would have been very interesting to know whether it had been part of a Boas Bowline<sup>1</sup>. By the way its retraceable history now begins by the finds of this loop knot by Hans Christian Gullov, of *Etnografiski Samling* from the Danish National Museum in Copenhagen, who found some of them during the excavation

## CORRECTIONS

By Ed....

*There were some errors in KM40 - The typos you will have noticed but please also amend Bryan Hatto's article TECHNOLOGY OF FIBRES as follows:*

a. POLYACRYLIC FIBRES - should read - Polyacrilonitrile - Orlon, not Nylon and Perlon.

b. Table on p.22 PERCENTAGE CHANCE IN BREAKING ELONGATION, should read - ABACA (Manila) 60.6% gain after 6 months, not 66% gain.

*Sorry - I'm learning fast and promise to try harder in future.*

of a site dated to be from the 1700's near Nuuk (Godthaab) in West Greenland

The knots in the thread of the excavated clothing samples were much harder to identify. The clearest were simple Overhand Knots, which had been used as stopper knots. There was also a structure which obviously had functioned as a bend, but had become so congealed that it was only possible to see that it consisted of two interlocking Overhand Knots. It presumably was a Fisherman Knot (Ashley p 259 #1414). However, the construction of the material in which these knots were tied was, at least to me, some thrilling new experience. The thread which had been used was LH 2-stranded, each strand neatly laid up of RH twisted crushed seal-sinew fibres! This fact implies that the Inuits had the actual knowledge of ropemaking, but refrained from developing it. At a later stage, such as shown by the stitching in the clothing of the Qilakitsoq mummies from the 1400's, it appeared like they had even lost that knowledge.

In a way all of these knot finds are equally tantalising as Oreibasius' notes from almost 2000 years ago. They pose many new intriguing questions. However, this time we are in a slightly better position, as they represent concrete knowledge. Information which in a far past has been conveyed eastwards from a region around Strait Bering, right across the Arctic to a place we nowadays call Qeqertasussuk.

1. See Geoffrey BUDWORTH: The Boas Bowline. KM 27 pp9-11. 1989; John SMITH: Invention Accident or Observation?. KM28PP20-21. 1989; Pieter van de GRIEND: Survival of the Simplest. KM39pp23-27. 1991.

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# MACRAME

## HALF HITCH (CORDING)

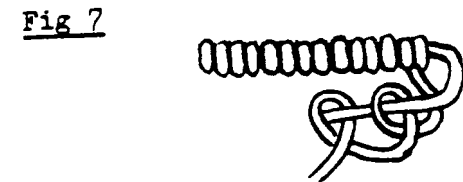
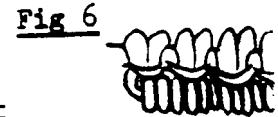
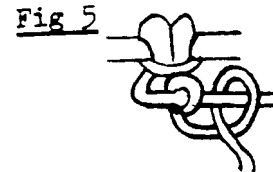
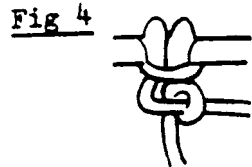
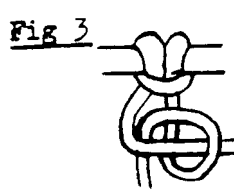
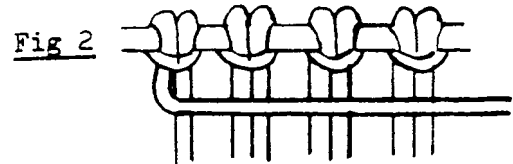
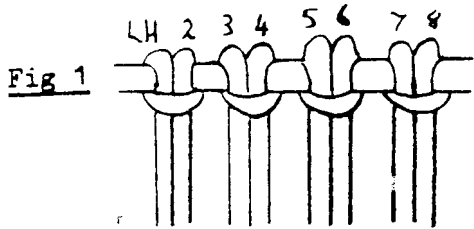
By John & Veronica HOLLISS

### HORIZONTAL CORDING.

The desired number of cords is mounted on a board (Fig.1), each cord being four times the finished length, except the left hand one which needs to be very long. The left hand cord is known as the knot-bearer; it is laid across all the others (Fig.2), and with each of the other cords two half hitches are made round it, as shown in Fig.3 (first half hitch), Fig.4 (first half hitch pulled tight) and Fig.5 (second half hitch).

When each cord has been hitched twice round the knot-bearer, a line of knots as in Fig.6 results. For tight, even knots, the knot-bearer must be pulled right up to the row of hitches above, while each half hitch is being pulled tight.

At the end of the row, the knot-bearer is reversed, and each cord is again hitched twice round it (Fig.7). Each hitch is made the OTHER WAY ROUND, compared with the left-to-right row. The way to remember this is that invariably the end of the cord first goes downwards on the side from which you are working, not on the side towards which you are working.



## VERTICAL CORDING

The cords are mounted as above, but in this case the left hand cord has to be extraordinarily long (usually an extra length will have to be joined to it), while the other cords need only be a bit more than the length of the finished article.

In vertical cording, the long cord is hitched twice round each of the other cords (Fig.8), to make a pattern as in Fig.9. The long cord is always taken UNDER the next

cord, before the hitches are made.

Reversing at the end is done in a similar way to horizontal cording (Fig.10).

## VARIATIONS

A variety of different effects can be produced, e.g. by using horizontal cording on a diagonal knot-bearing cord, to make diagonal lines, diamonds and other patterns, but for these the reader is advised to acquire a book.

## CAN ANYONE HELP

**Geoffrey BUDWORTH** writes....

I plan to edit and annotate the late Desmond MANDEVILLE's work on Trambles as well as his Alphabend, for publication and preservation where future students can find them.

He and I corresponded since 1978 and I have most of those letters and papers. I am now keen to locate anything else he might have written to other Guild friends on these subjects.

If any KM reader has relevant material, may I see and copy it please? All sources will be suitably acknowledged in my final work.

7 Hazel Shaw  
TONBRIDGE  
Kent  
TN10 3QE  
England

Fig 8

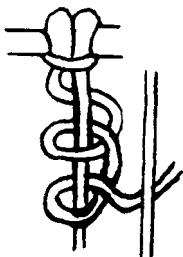


Fig 9

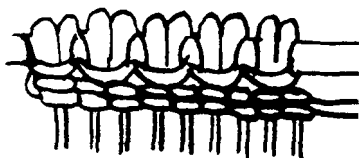
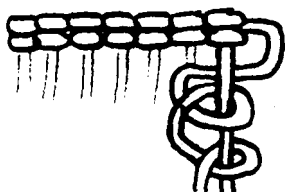
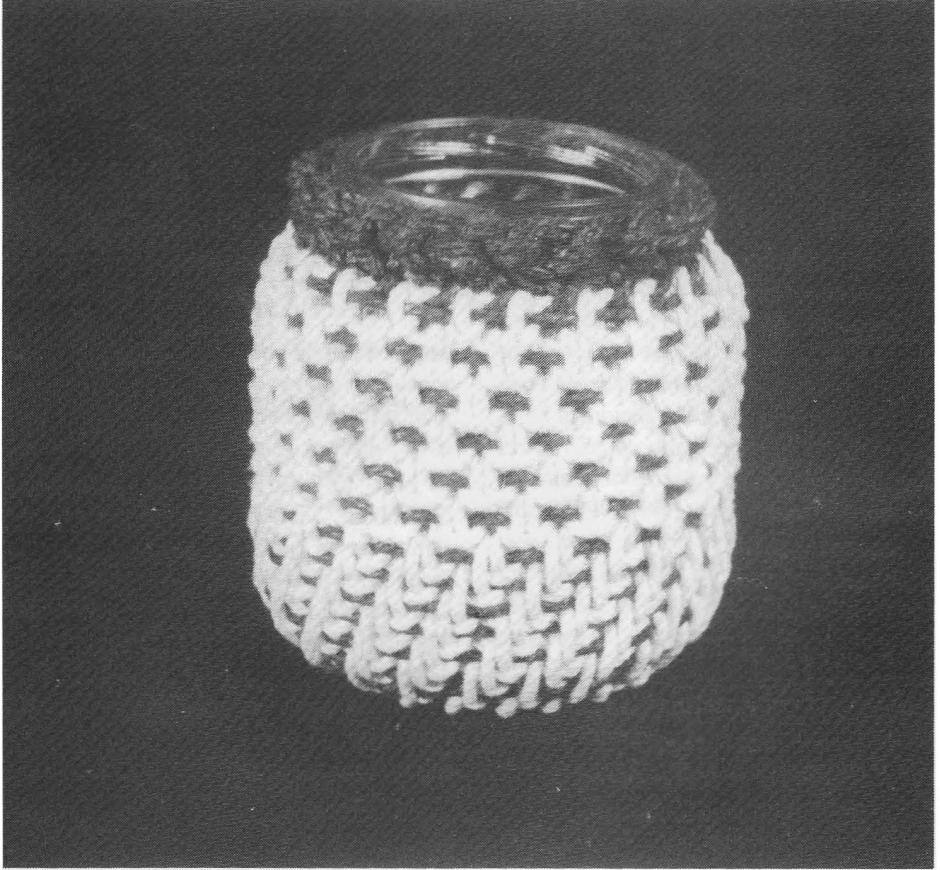


Fig 10





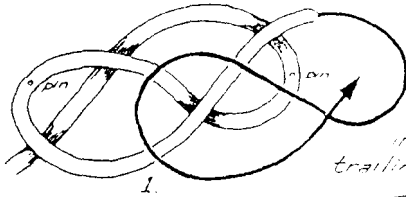
**COVERED JAR by Stuart GRAINGER**

This is a “quickie”. A baby food jar (donated by my grandson) covered with half hitching variations in black and white cotton cord. These are much used as vases for small wild flowers.



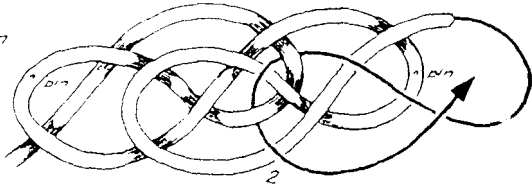
**COVERED BOTTLE by Stuart GRAINGER**

A one-third bottle (originally rum) covered with half hitching for protection in use on my boat. Note the becket for a lanyard or hanging stowage. I know a one-third bottle is not much, but she was only a 22 ft yawl used as a day boat.

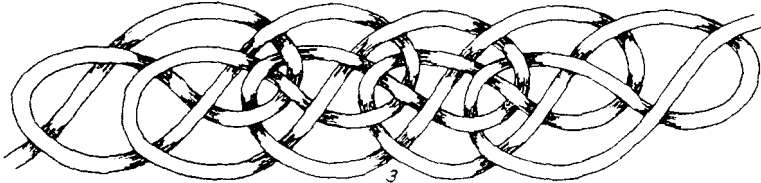


It may be helpful to pin stages 1 & 2 to a board initially, through the trailing and leading loops, and

move the leading pin forward as work progresses.

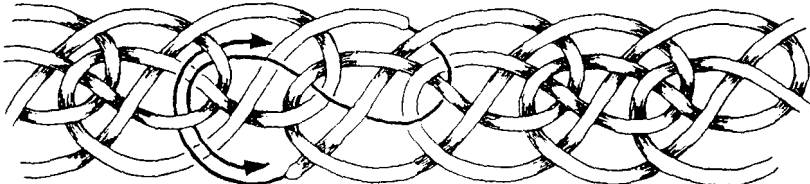


Repeat the sequence until the chain is long enough for the ends to overlap around the circumference, then link them.

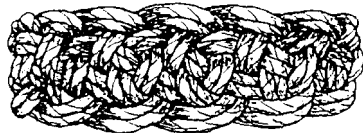


The Chain

The Link is easier if the Chain is pinned around a cardboard tube.



4. The Link. Finally double the lead.



8 21

Decorative Chain Grommet VIII.

# OCEAN MAT

Ken HIGGS writes

In the back of my Ashley I recently found an article from a magazine of many years ago (My copy of Knots was purchased in 1949, the year after it first appeared in U.K.). The "Rope Mat" shown is undoubtedly the Ocean mat of many articles but the method of tying is different and, to my mind, easier when on the floor with 5 fathom of 2" (5/8" dia) rope to control

making a 30" x 18" mat.

Fig 1 sets the initial pattern and all passes are OVER.

Fig 2 locks everything in place and Fig 3 completes the pattern ready for doubling and trebling.

If the first pattern is laid out to be approximately 27" x 15" you will save a lot of unnecessary tightening in the end.



FIG. 1.

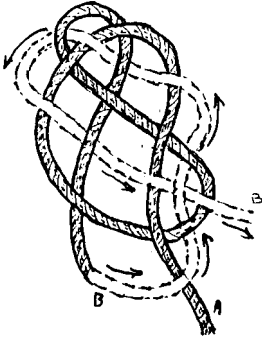


FIG. 2.

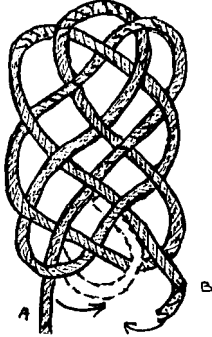


FIG. 3.



THE FINISHED MAT

# LEFT HAND - RIGHT HAND?

Des PAWSON reports on....

**An Experiment carried out at the half-yearly meeting at Cambridge on 10th Oct 92.**

At the half-yearly meeting I asked all there to quickly and without taking any trouble or checking, to tie first an overhand knot, then to join the ends together with a reef knot. This sample was put in an envelope marked on the outside with the tyer's age, if they were left or right handed and what, if any, youth movements they may have had some connection with.

I have been very interested reading about the handiness of knots in "Knots and Crime" by Geoffrey BUDWORTH. There was the question as to if there is any trend in the handiness, age or background of the tyer. A couple of years

ago the East Anglian branch had a session on tying neck ties. We noted that those who tied their ties with a left hand long end had been taught by left-handed parents, even if they themselves were right-handed. I was therefore interested to see if people tend to tie overhand and reef knots with the same handiness.

The results of my experiment are that from 70 samples collected 63 people said that they were right-handed (RH), 4 left-handed (LH) 1 mainly left-handed, 1 ambidextrous and one a forced RH. We had 40 people who had some involvement at some time with Scouting or Guiding (S), 3 Sea Cadets, 1 Boys Brigade and 1 Sea Ranger.

I did notice that in a group ranging from 17 years to 80 years old there were far more RH RH results in the over 50's and that 63% of people were consistent in their tying ie RH RH or LH LH. I am sure if we took a greater sample we could learn more.

Overhand Knot	Reef Knot	Right Hand People	Left Hand People
RH	RH	13 (INCL 7S)	1 S
LH	LH	25 (INCL 14S)	4 (INCL 3S)
RH	LH	14 (INCL 6S)	NIL
LH	RH	11 (INCL 8S)	2 S

# THE TARBUCK KNOT

by Cy CANUTE

The late Ken Tarbuck devised this adjustable loop knot about 1952 for the new-fangled nylon climbing ropes. It was an end-man's tie-on that stayed firm unless you fell. Then it would s.l.i.d.e and GRIP, acting as a shock absorber. That was the idea.

British Ropes recommended it. They said it was stronger than any other knot and almost as good as an eye splice.

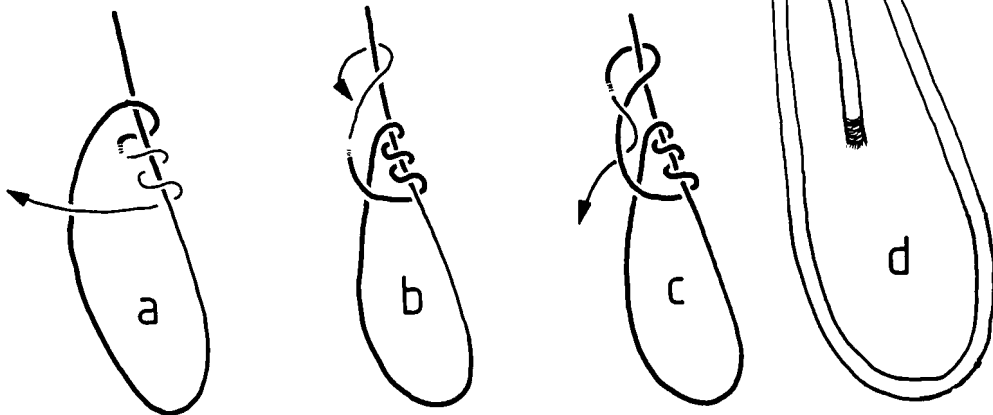
Hardly had the Tarbuck Knot been adopted than it was abandoned. Climbers feared it would tear the outer layer of kernmantel (sheath-&-core) ropes. Few knot writers today feature it, other than Percy Blandford and Geoffrey Budworth for general use.

What a pity it is so little practised. It is a clever and versatile knot; and Ken Tarbuck deserves to be known as one of knotting's innovators.

I use it like a guyline knot on the shrouds of my sailing dinghy. While helming, I can reach out a hand to tighten or slacken the windward one in seconds, yet it copes with

all the intermittent strains of tacking or gybing on any point of sail.

Try it somehow yourself. Knotting ventured, knotting gained. Be sure to wrap and tuck exactly right (fig's a, b & c). See how the loaded knot (fig. d) relies for its grip on creating a dog's leg deformation in the standing part of the filler cord. Marlow Ropes have resurrected it in their latest Knots & Splices poster, wrongly (I think) showing it as a hitch for a lengthwise pull. That would NOT work on a rigid spar, although it might do so on rope. It is strictly a loop knot.





# TEN YEARS ON

*By Ed ..The following articles from Issue No.1 of KM are the first in what I hope to be a continuing series of looking back at KM 10 years ago. And what more appropriate to start with than Geoffrey Budworth's concluding editorial.*

'KNOTTING MATTERS' concludes the Hon. Secretary

That's the title chosen for this newsletter. It's a name general enough to cover anything likely to be printed. Or you may read into the words a message, for knotting DOES matter...even today.

Many people cope for a long time without knowing any really useful knots, but only because they can replace them with handy manufactured fastenings like safety pins, dog lead clasps, snaplinks, screws, glue and those elastic cords with metal hooks on the ends. Now they're fine when they're available - I use them all the time - but without them you're lost, unless you can tie a knot or two. Knots are a useful 1st aid in many circumstances and indispensable in others. That's why so many practical folk scorn spending money unnecessarily on gadgets and take pride in knowing the right knot for the job.

The Sunday Times reported on 30 May 82 in connection with the Falklands conflict that "...important lessons have been learned...about the long forgotten art of improvisation....a hand-held machine gun roped to a handrail proved immensely effective

against a Skyhawk bomber costing millions of pounds."

A couple of years earlier a 1980 issue of the Sunday Telegraph was announcing that the Navy was forming a new branch, to teach...seamanship! The aim was to have one or two experts on each ship who knew about such things as knots, splices, and handling ropes and cables. One frigate captain reckoned he had few seamen able to tie a knot or lower a boat. In fairness, even his junior ratings were concentrating their technical skills on more immediate needs like operating missile systems, radar and anti-submarine weapons.

The implications are clear. IGKT members must become the high priests of knotting, keeping the old knowledge alive until the need for it again becomes apparent to others. We must be the evangelists who preach the ropework gospel, enthusiastically spreading the knotting word. We must continue to love the old religion, but be quick to point out its relevance in the modern world.

In the near future, more members will bring more funds, more skills and greater knowledge to the Guild. Where it will lead us we can only guess; but the next steps may be a training course of some description, and a public exhibition of member's work.

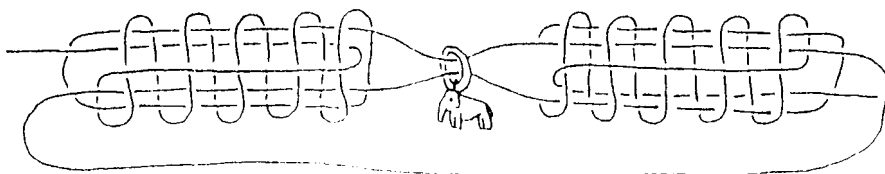
Since April's inaugural meeting, momentum has been maintained. Do let's keep it going.

## AFRICAN BRACELET

During 1961, a number of Metropolitan Police Officers were seconded to Nyasaland. One of them, a Sergeant from Thames Division (London's River Police), returned wearing the bracelet shown below. It was tied directly onto his wrist

by a native servant and couldn't be removed as sliding the knots apart tightened it more. The elephant charm was carved from a fragment of tusk ivory, and the bracelet tied in a coarse, plastic-like, hair from the animal's tail.

G.B.



## ROPEWORK SIGNATURES

By.. Cy CANUTE

Can you recognise your own ropework if it is presented to you years later? Can other people? Artists sign their paintings. So how could we put our personal signatures into every piece of knotwork? A friend once put his name and address and the date on a typewritten slip of paper inside a bellrope he tied. It was a whimsical gesture, because his particulars would only be discovered if the bellrope was untied. Should we stitch our initials on afterwards? Or insert during the tying process some code of hitches peculiar just to our own knotting? Our work shouldn't be anonymous. Much of it will outlast us, to acquire antique value in future years. If only it was identifiable. I can imagine an art critic scrutinising a piece of old knotwork. "Umm. Let me see. Ah,

Ah, yes! The work of Jack Fidspike, I do believe. Look, you can see the curious irregularities in the over-under sequence of the Turk's Heads. That was his trademark (although there were his detractors, now happily discredited, who claimed he'd never learned to tie them correctly). This would have been made during his exploratory white cotton period when he was living in a flat in Walworth. Of course he really came to prominence later, and began creating definitive contemporary statements in orange polypropylene."

Seriously, if anyone decides to mark their work in any way, your Hon Secretary will be pleased to maintain a register of such marks. The information will then be available to identify the originator of a particular piece of knotwork; and subsequent requests to register similar marking can also be avoided.

# LETTERS

**Sten JOHANSSON** writes from Stockholm, Sweden.

In KM 40 Des Pawson wonders if Magnus was a Viking. The name Magnus has been used for various knots and hitches during the years e.g. Steel in "Art of Rigging" published in 1818 calls a three-coil or tucked Prusik Knot "Magnus Hitch". Magnus is not a name but the Latin word Magnus, which means "large" or "great in size" (the same as the English word "major").

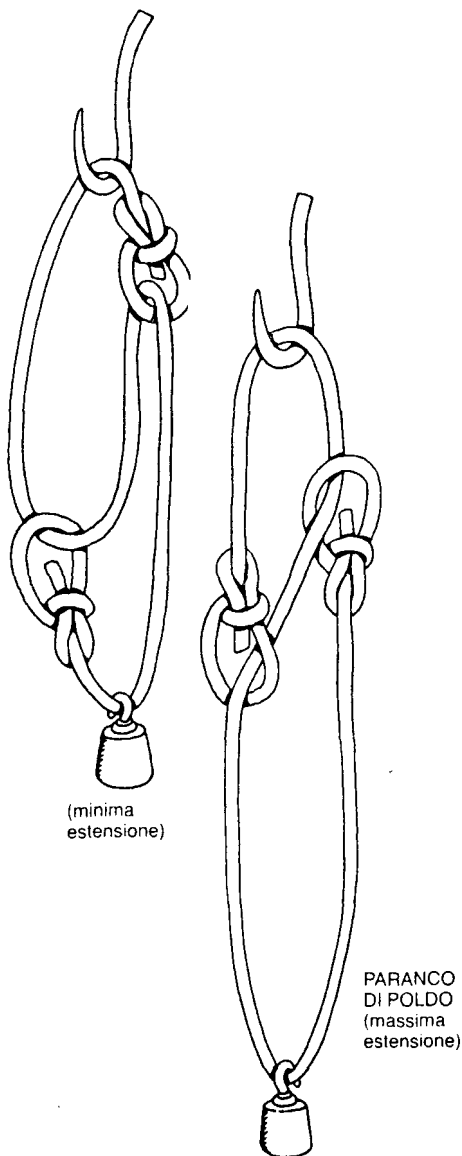
The pseudonym "Fidspike" (Is he ashamed of his real name?)(by Ed.*most certainly not*) is curious about the Poldo Tackle. In the book I NODI CHE SERVONO, published in 1979, Bigon & Regazzoni write about the Poldo Tackle (Free translation from Swedish)...

## POLDO TACKLE.

It is an ingenious knot, which can be used at sea, in climbing and camping.

### ORIGIN

This knot has, for a long time, been considered to be a very good example of the inventiveness of the human being. Strangely enough it is not mentioned in any book about seaman's knots. The Encyclopedia Dideodor shows a similar knot, but with more limited usage and not with the brilliant structure as of the Poldo Tackle. The knot shown here is named after Poldo Izzo, who was a sailing instructor in Caprera and who often used it



## PROS AND CONS.

The particular thing about this knot is that it is self-locking; thanks to the enclosed circle, it remains in a locked position once it has been tightened and put under strain and thereby does not need any other form of locking. The levering power, built into this knot, should not be underestimated. The only disadvantage is the limited way of running; this is not more than one third of the total length of the tackle.

## APPLICATIONS.

The Poldo Tackle can be used in a lot of fields, when a rope has to be tightened. It can be a simple clothes-line or for life-saving in climbing, in yachting it can be used to lock the sheets or the halyards or set up the shrouds. In camping it can replace the small thin aluminium sheets used to tighten the lines of the tent.....

Bigon/Regazzoni refer to the Encyclopedia Didedor but there is no encyclopedia by Didedor as far as I know. They must mean Encyclopedia Diederot/Alembvert published 1751-72. The tackle they refer to is shown in fig 9 on the enclosed plate. It is called "Noeud a Cremallier" in French. The word "Cremallier" as an old french word for a lever device to set up the



shrouds on the sailing ships. In the 18th century this tackle may have been used instead of dead-eyes and lanyards to set up the shrouds. The text to fig 9 reads in free translation from French via Swedish.....

## A KNOT TO LEVER THE SHROUDS.

This knot is a great mean to lower or raise things in a hanging position. It is also used in building and construction....(then follows a description of how to tie the knot). I doubt Bigon/Regazzoni have seen this original tackle by Diederot as they are writing "A similar knot but with a more limited usage and not with the brilliant structure as of the Poldo Tackle" The tackles only differ by the knots used to tie the loops. Bogin/Regazzoni use bowline knots but Diederot/Alembert use slip knots with the ends locked by half hitches.

Best wishes to all knot lovers for may happy knottings.

# LETTERS

**Ken Higgs** writes....

May I take issue with the attitude of Eric Franklin in KM38 concerning the tying of a bowline? I can tie, say, a 5x3 turkshead by 4 different procedures. Who is to say which one is 'right'? If there is a 5th method would the tyer insist that is THE way?

My point is that I have seen too many people put off from learning more of a subject because of dogmatic and rude teaching and the terms 'antediluvian, irresponsible, clumsy and time wasting' in regard to ALL other methods of tying a bowline just make my point. I am currently teaching and examining Guides for their Knotting Badges and, TO SOME, the 'rabbit and the hole' is the only way they can 'see' how the bowline is to be formed. Please, dear Members, put yourselves in the students shoes and ask, "would I respond positively to this teachers' attitude?" Knot tying is NOT easy to SOME people but, with a willingness to offer a variety of options it can become 'possible'.

**Ken Higgs** writes.....

Since retiring last year I have found a lot of pleasure in talking about and demonstrating my hobby of Decorative Rope-work - as well as making some pocket money with fees and sales of self-made goods!

Attracting attention at sales-of-work proved easy with the display board shown opposite. It made people stop and ask, "is it that easy?" and, once you have them talking a sale becomes easier!!!

The board is black painted softboard with the layout, in white 5mm cord, sewn into place through the base.

I pass the idea on for anyone else to use who may be interested in attracting others to our craft AND the Guild.

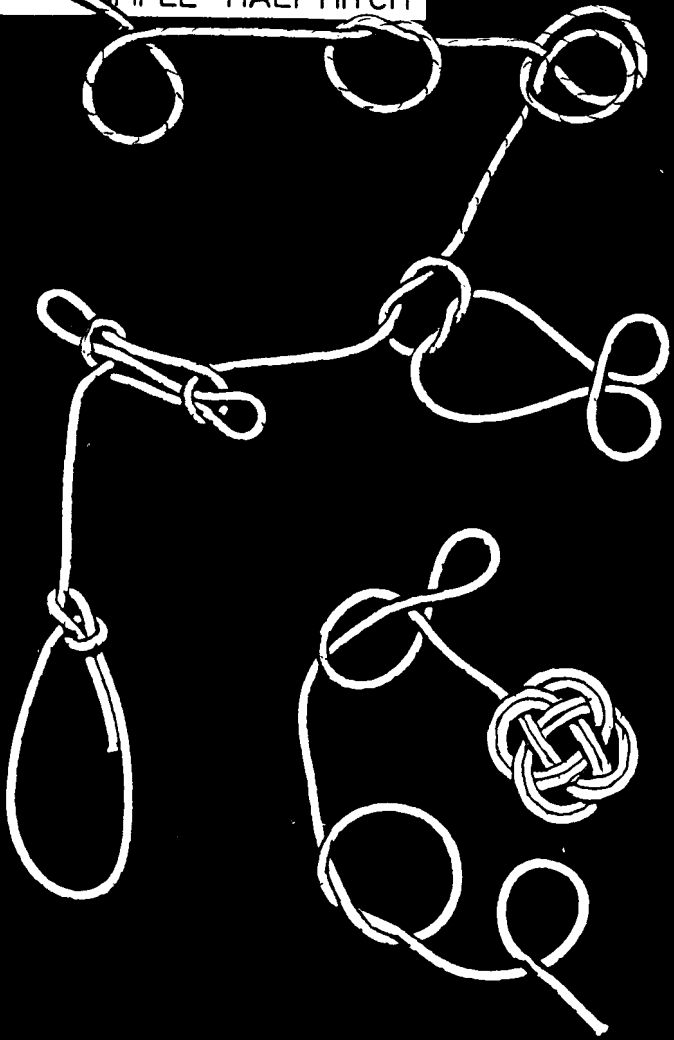
## HINTS & TIPS

### WEND - WISE

When working LONG lengths of line, cord or rope, if the working end (wend) has to be passed under or through existing or standing parts, and space permits, pass a bight from a little way down the line first, then work the bight to pull the wend through last - those horrible twisted bights will be a thing of the past.

G J P

IT ALL STARTS WITH THIS  
'SIMPLE HALF HITCH'



? HAVE A GO ?

SIZE 3' x 2'

# TESTING KNOTS

From

## “A Fresh Approach to Knotting and Ropework”

by Charles WARNER.

## WHAT IS A GOOD KNOT?

Having found a knot that looks good, with the highest load on the gentlest curves and with no possibility of capsizing, how do you test it to find out if it is as good as it looks?

Tie the knot in a rope of each of natural fibres, a soft synthetic, a hard synthetic, maybe monofilament nylon fishing line, and elastic shock cord. Then jerk the knot in various directions and see if it slips. The shock cord test is particularly interesting, as it seems to detect knots that have only a small tendency to slip in ordinary rope, though interpretation is not always easy. Many knots often considered reasonably secure spill undone after only a few jerks, for example, the Bowline or Sheetbend.

Then put as much load on the knot as you can, with maybe some small jerks, and see if the knot jams, or becomes particularly difficult to untie.

Static kernmantle rope is one of the best to use for serious testing: any knot that is good in kernmantle will be good in just about any other rope, though it may jam. And any knot that jams tight in kernmantle rope will jam in just about any other rope.

A good knot:

- ◆ should be appropriate to the materials used and the task in hand.
- ◆ should be easy to tie; if it ever might need to be applied in very awkward circumstances, it helps if it is not too hard to tie one-handed.
- ◆ should be easy to work tight, without slack or kinks.
- ◆ should be easy to check at a glance that it has been tied correctly; this is most important when you are working with a group of people, any one of whom might need to tie the knot, and much depends on the reliability of the knot.
- ◆ should be adequately strong, not weakening the rope unduly, and adequately secure, not unduly likely to slip.
- ◆ should be appropriate both to the purpose it is intended to serve and to the rope with which it is made.
- ◆ should not be liable to come undone by chance, as when subjected to an intermittent load or a give and take motion.
- ◆ should be easy to cast off or untie when desired

Many of these properties can be screened by methods indicated in the previous

section, but before making recommendations for use of a "new" knot, there should be a lot of experience of use of the knot in the application for which it is intended. The strength of a knot really needs to be tested by the proper machinery in laboratory conditions simulating the conditions of application as closely as possible. Thus ropes used for climbing and similar applications are tested by repeatedly dropping a 80kg weight from a height of 5 meters. If the rope attached to it can withstand a number of such drops it will successfully hold a falling climber in most circumstances

## DRAGONFLY

Stuart Grainger writes....

I enclose a photocopy of a dragonfly, which I tied in accordance with the design sent to me by a member, **William SIMPSON** of Atherton near Manchester. I have mounted it on a piece of green card cut to represent a lily pad and am sending it to Des for inclusion in the centenary exhibition collection.

William says that he is unable to take part personally a Guild events, because he is "virtually stone deaf", nevertheless he takes a great interest in the Guild and eagerly looks forward to each new "Knotting Matters". He became a member when KM No2 was issued.

The design is ingenious and original, made as a result of seeing a dragonfly while out on a walk, for "the first time in

quite a few years".

It is tied with a doubled cord throughout, the head being a Chinese Button Knot - Ashley #599, the thorax and wings consist of a True Lovers Knot - Ashley #2301, and the body is four strand round senit, with a small seizing at the end, leaving the two ends slightly spread at the tail.

I sized my specimen with Ronseal Wood Hardener before mounting it with a drop of Uhu.

The one William SIMPSON sent to me was made to hang up on a thread, and a group of different coloured ones could be hung together to make a very beautiful and effective mobile.





# BOOK REVIEW

## KNOTS AND ROPEWORK

by **NOLA TROWER**

Published 1992 by Helmsman Books, an imprint of Crowood Press Ltd., Ramsbury, Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 2HR, England.

ISBN 1-85223-705-8 Price (UK) 8.99

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Nola TROWER is an IGKT member, a keen racing sailor, and a freelance writer and photographer.

If you don't know your Kevlar from Dyneema, HMPE from Spectra or Admiral 2000, her book will update you.

If you're into boats she'll teach you a knot and whip and seize and splice and care for your ropes and rigging. Then safely moored to her advice – you can start decorative knotting (even macramé).

Her writer's voice is helpful, lucid and often very funny. For example small pliers are; "...usually steel, in shades of oil and rust." A sheepshank is; "... A sort of Band-aid for chafed rope." And baggy-wrinkle looks; "... like imitation hedgehogs climbing up the rigging." Even the Bunny Rabbit Bowline was worthwhile for her way to untie it; "... push the rabbit's behind up the tree."

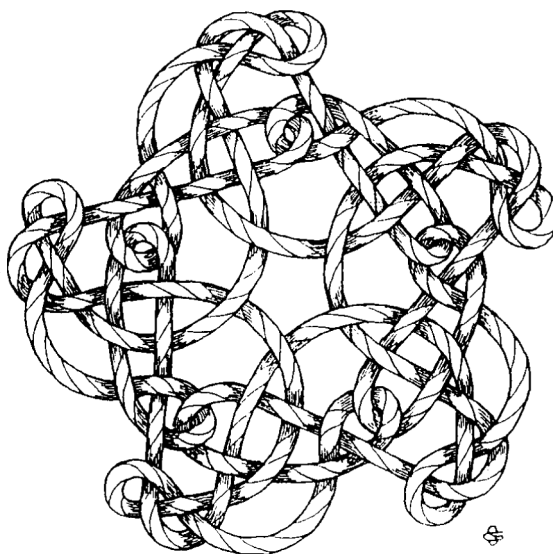
This is no cut-and-paste re-hash of others' ideas. Nola Trower knows her working knots; the Buntline Hitch through an eye or ring; a slipped Clove Hitch to hang

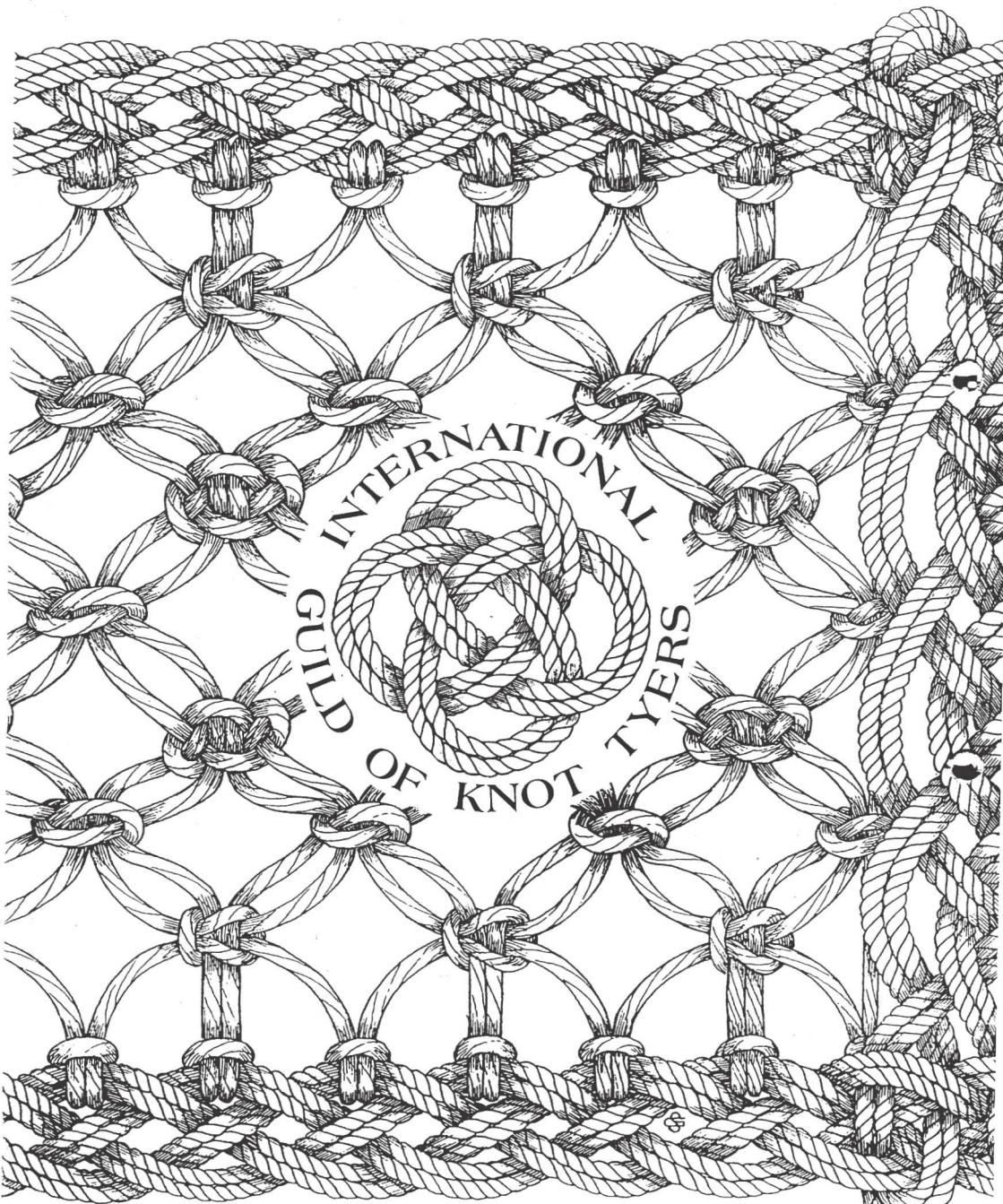
a fender; and the Jury Knot "... around the BOTTOM of a jury mast as a way of keeping it central."

Her splicing chapter, 3-strand and braided ropes, show clearly all you need to know and, if you've never tied a double Matthe3w Walker Knot, study her pictures and I don't think you can fail.

This glossy soft-cover 235 cm x 165 cm, 128 page book illustrated throughout by Mrs. Trower, even has a chapter to say how synthetic ropes can look right on classic boats, but that comes after the Ocean Plait mat made around eight baked bean cans.

G.B.





# THE INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF KNOT TYERS

## A CODE OF PRACTICE FOR MEMBERS TRADING

One of the Guild's main purposes is to stimulate interest and educate in knot tying, and among the best ways of doing that are demonstrating the craft and exhibiting its products. In doing so it is inevitable that we shall be asked to sell exhibits and to accept commissions for particular items. We do not want to disappoint those in whom we have successfully stimulated interest, nor are most of us so wealthy that we can afford to decline a financial contribution towards our costs. Those who have tried will know that it is extremely difficult and wearying to make a profit from any craft and the vast majority of our members can expect no more from selling their work than some help in defraying the cost of materials and allied expenses. We have to remember, however, that the Guild's Constitutional Rules, approved by the Charity Commissioners, state at 3(c): **“The Guild shall be a non-profit making voluntary association and no member shall derive any profit or gain from Guild funds.”**

The following guidelines are intended to help members who are in any doubt about procedure in accepting payment for their work and, because we can not be conversant with the law everywhere, they are aimed mainly at U.K. based members, although it is hoped that they may be helpful beyond the U.K. also.

1. If you are trading on your own behalf, it is always wise to keep an account however simple, if only to satisfy an inquisitive Tax Inspector. If you keep a small cash box for the purpose, noting how much change you put in to start with, you can add up the total at the end of an event, deducting your starting “float” and know how much money you have taken; that is your gross profit. You should know how much you have spent on materials, on hiring a stand perhaps, maybe some printing or advertising, and on travelling to and from the venue. Legally all of those expenses can be deducted from your gross profit in order to determine your net profit, if any.

2. If you trade regularly on your own behalf, it is a good idea to use a small duplicate invoice book, obtainable from any high street stationer, so that customers can be given an invoice when required. This should carry your name and address, not necessarily printed, small self-adhesive labels or a rubber stamp will do, and you can note the customer's name and address on it, so that the carbon copy remaining in the book becomes a valuable list of contacts for future reference. In addition to your name and address, you might add "member of the International Guild of Knot Tyers" and do us all a bit of good.

3. If you are manning a stand which carries the name of the Guild, care must be taken to ensure that the proceeds of any sales are properly accounted for, so that a statement of sales and deductions for expenses can be provided to the Hon. Treasurer afterwards. This applies equally to I.G.K.T. branches and groups, who can retain their profit, but must keep proper accounts that can be produced on demand.

4. If you are representing the Guild and the proceeds of your sales are intended to contribute to Guild funds, you probably will not expect to recover more than the bare minimum of expenses, if any. You are legally entitled to claim expenses, if you wish to do so, but you can not claim more than your efforts have raised. If you have taken a stall at a local fete and it pours with rain all afternoon, so that you sell nothing, you must not expect the Guild to cover your expenses, because it could not legally do so.

5. If you are representing the Guild at an event, it is important that the rules under which the organisers invited the Guild's participation are fully complied with. If the organisers have stated that you may exhibit and demonstrate, but not sell, this undertaking must be honoured.

6. Most controversy arises when members trade privately from a Stand which carries the Guild's name, because this indicates that sales are being made in aid of funds, when in fact they are being made to subsidise the individual member. The best policy in such circumstances is for all sales proceeds to be passed to a single Stand cashier who will hold them responsibly. Individuals manning the Stand can then reclaim their expenses from the total afterwards, if a sufficient gross profit has been generated. At an event organised by the Guild, where members are invited to trade on their own behalf, all who are doing so should make the fact clear to their customers, either by issuing their own invoices and/or by exhibiting a showcard stating their name and address and their status as a Guild member. On such occasions, individual trading members may be asked to contribute a proportion of the Guild's costs.

7. At the Guild's own events, such as General Meetings, where members exhibit, demonstrate, exchange and sell their own wares, this is considered to be a normal Guild social activity, which adds greatly to the enjoyment of those who attend, thus encouraging attendance and the interchange of ideas. It is customary for those who trade and exhibit on these occasions to make an appropriate contribution by way of a raffle prize or a straightforward donation to funds.

8. Those members who write and/or illustrate Guild publications, other than "Knotting Matters", are entitled to the normal author's royalty of 10% of the wholesale price of their product. This provides encouragement and incentive to anyone who can usefully contribute in this way, for "the labourer is worthy of his hire" and the Guild's funds benefit by hundreds of pounds every year from sales of its publications. Some of our authors waive their royalties in aid

of funds, but the principle of their entitlement is preserved. In certain special cases, members have preferred to pay the cost of printing themselves and to sell an agreed quantity to the Guild on preferential terms. The Guild is registered as a commercial publisher in the International Standard Book Numbering scheme and therefore can arrange for its publications to carry an I.S.B.N. number, which does help to sell them. Anyone interested or in doubt about this or other trading matters should enquire through the Hon. Secretary or the Hon. Treasurer.

9. Members who are organising exhibitions and/or demonstrations are particularly asked to remember that many of the Guild's own publications can be supplied to local groups at 33.3% discount and to individual members also, if the order is worth £30 or more. The distribution of the Guild's publications by selling them at local events has a threefold benefit in that it educates and stimulates interest in the buyers and other readers, boosts local funds and contributes to central funds also. Price lists are published regularly in "Knotting Matters" and are available from the Supplies Secretary or Hon. Secretary.

10. Members organising any kind of event in the U.K. which is in aid of the Guild, whether by raising funds or increasing membership, must bear in mind that it is now a legal requirement for all documentation relating to such matters to carry a statement to the effect that the International Guild of Knot Tyers is a U.K. Registered Charity, Number 802153. All programmes, tickets and posters must carry this information if they are for circulation among the general public.

**THIS CODE OF PRACTICE HAS BEEN APPROVED AND ISSUED BY THE GUILD'S COUNCIL.**