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Knotting Matters

Newsletter of the



INTERNATIONAL
GUILD OF KNOT TYERS

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Knotting Matters

Newsletter of the
International Guild of
Knot Tyers

Issue No. 66

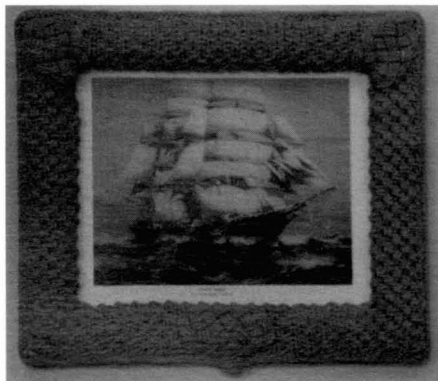
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Cover design by Stuart Grainger



A picture frame from "A World Full of Knots"

IN THIS ISSUE

2K2 Update	7
Knotting Journal	8
Knot Slops	10
Knotmaster Series	14
Word Game	17
John Hensel	18
A World Full of Knots	22
A Boatswain's Lanyard	28
Knotting at the Barbican	29
New Knots or What?	30
Measuring Slippage	35
An Improved Square Lashing	39
Monkey Fist Tool	40
Internet Knot Museum	41

The Last Editors

Bytes and Pieces

Thank you Colin Grundy for taking up the slack so quickly. I must say thank you to a lot of people for their help over the last, nearly, five years.

First, to Stuart Grainger, for his support and encouragement from my very first meeting, thank you. Stuart encouraged me to join the committee and he designed the acknowledgement cards that I sent to contributors. He was the first to see the financial sense of investing in a computer for the editor. It had more than paid for itself by the fifth edition by the way.

Next, to all the authors that made the effort to keep feeding so much well written and interesting articles and letters. I must especially thank Geoffrey Budworth, for his interesting and funny letters, quotes and comments. Also thank, Charlie Smith for his irresistible enthusiasm and infectious joy for all things nodose. Also thank, Jeff and Lesley Wyatt for their indexes and Diaries. Also thank,

Dave Williams for his 'Woody's Knots' series and many letters and articles. Also thank, Nigel Harding for passing on 'stuff' to me for KM and working so hard to keep me 'on time'. Thanks also to all those people who let me talk them into writing so many interesting and well written articles and letters. Also, thank you to all the people who wrote to me to say how much they enjoyed the 'something-for-everyone' format and made so many suggestions on how to improve the next edition

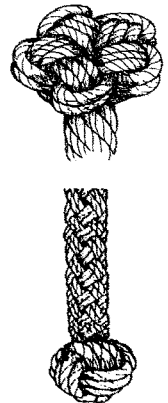
Lonnie and Margaret Boggs



KNOTTING



MATTERS

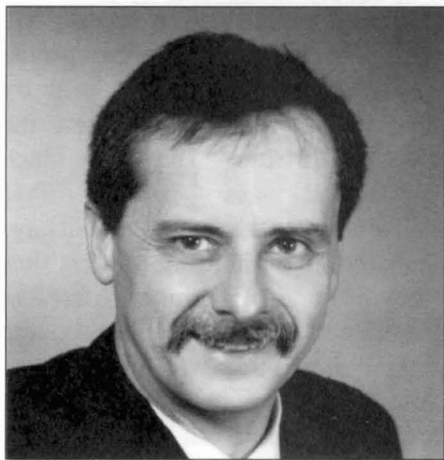


Greetings from the New Editor

Here we are into a new millennium, and Knotting matters has a new editor. Editing a newsletter like Knotting matters is no easy task and we should all be grateful for the efforts that both Lonnie and his wife Margaret have put into bringing our newsletter to its members. I am mindful that this magazine is for some members the only contact they have with the Guild's activities and they eagerly wait for the envelope to land on their mat. I shall do my best get it out on time.

The first thing you will notice as you thumb through it is the new format, I hope you like it. I will try to include something for everybody, but please remember, it is your magazine and without your contributions it would not exist. So keep your articles, letters and photographs coming in. You will find my address on the back page.

For those members who have not met me before, I was introduced to knotting at the age of ten by one of my school teachers. Scouting gave me the opportunity to further my knotting and pioneering interests, and also introduced me to rock climbing. My father encouraged me, by buying C. L. Day's Handbook of Knots and



Splices and my first marlinespike. Later armed with my own copy of Ashley, I ventured into decorative ropework.

When I became a fire fighter, I found another outlet for knotting. There were some eighteen knots that a recruit had to learn and I was in demand for private tuition in return for pints of beer. I have also been involved in developing and instructing rope rescue.

Frank Harris talked me into joining the Guild at the 1986 Gilwell Reunion, where he was manning the IGKT stand. The rest as they say is history.

Well until the next time, read on.

Notes from the Secretary's Blotter

Let me first start by sending you all my very best wishes for the New Millennium, and by thanking all of those who sent me cards at Christmas. They were much appreciated.

I am sure that by now you will have gathered that 'Knotting Matters' has a new editor, Colin Grundy. After five years, and seventeen editions, Lonnie felt that it was time to retire, and give someone else the privilege of presenting the newsletter. On behalf of the membership I would like to thank Lonnie for the tremendous amount of work he has put in on our behalf carrying out the full range of tasks involved in the production of the magazine, from reading your letters, writing replies, editing, laying out and typesetting the pages, to beating about the head me, and others like me, for the articles we had promised but which had failed to materialise. Our thanks must also go to Margaret, his wife, without whose support Lonnie would not have been able to complete this tremendous undertaking.

What does a retired editor do now you may ask? - No doubt lots of decorating, and all those other little jobs that have been building up over

the past five years - he might even tie some knots!!

Speaking of retirement, at the 2000 AGM, three members of the Council will be retiring, and whilst they may put themselves forward for re-election for a further three year period, now is the time for you to be thinking about standing for election to the Council. We are a democratic organisation, but if there are no more candidates than there are posts, there can be no election, hence no choice. This happened last year for the first time since I have been Secretary; hopefully it won't happen again this year. If you wish to stand, or know someone who would like to, please let me know at least two weeks before the AGM. Incidentally, if you are nominating someone else, do make sure that they know about it, and are agreeable.

Whilst on the subject, I myself am due to retire from the post of 'Secretary' at the AGM in 2001. By then I shall have carried out these duties for nine years and if I stood for re-election that would mean a further three years in post. I believe that for the long term good of the Guild, Council members need to be replaced more frequently than this, in order to

stimulate fresh ideas and move the organisation forwards. I therefore give notice that I shall not stand for re election, thus giving you, the membership, over a year to find a willing volunteer.

As I write this, Brian Field our President is languishing in hospital recovering from invasive surgery. By the time you read this he will be home, and well on the mend, however I will take this opportunity on your behalf to wish him a speedy and successful recovery.

If you were still awake as dawn broke on the New Millennium, did you remember to 'Knot In' the New Year. If so, do fill in the Y2K postcard and return it to the address on the card - please don't send it to me - I have enough problems dealing with the routine daily postbag as it is.

To mark the occasion, the Scout Association is holding its Millennium Camp over the Spring Bank Holiday, i.e. the last weekend in May, and they are encouraging all Scouts in the UK to camp that weekend. As a result the organisers of these various camps are just starting to look for volunteers to run suitable scouting activities to 'entertain the troops'. I suspect that many of us have already committed ourselves, however I am still receiving requests, hence I could well be on the lookout for some 'volunteers'. One member was telling me that he had already received 58 invitations to

different camps. I have also had an invitation for someone to demonstrate Knot Tying at a Lacemakers Guild meeting in Scarborough later in the year - any takers?

Finally I must send a general reminder about Subscriptions. Please be prompt with your payments as it does save me a lot of work. I do make mistakes from time to time, for which I apologise in advance, but I am quite happy to have to error of my ways pointed out. As for methods of payment, I do have problems with Postal Orders, and, in particular International Money Orders, which cost more than their face value to pay into the bank. We have an arrangement with our bank to accept US cheques, in Dollars, for a modest handling fee, but that is the exception. For those living outside the UK, or USA, if sending a cheque, you need to ask for one in UK Pounds, 'drawn on a UK branch of your own bank'. Almost all banks have a branch trading somewhere in the UK, usually London; hence this is not a problem, although you may have to order this in advance. Banks in the UK will not accept a cheque in any other currency. (- Oh for the Euro!!)

This started out as just few notes from the Secretary's Blotter - it appears to be turning into a bit of an epic. I will finish now.

Nigel Harding

In Memory of Barry Darkins

1940 - 1999

I am very sorry to tell you that Barry Darkins died on the 16th of October 1999. He had been a member from the early days of 1986. A keen Scout, having once been the leader of the 4th Chesham Scouts, he went on to be the warden of the Buckinghamshire Scouts' campsite, Braidwood, at Ashridge.

For many years he had suffered with a "dickey heart", so much so that he was registered disabled. This did not stop him being an enthusiastic member of the IGKT and working as a professional knot tyer, showing and selling his work at scouting events and craft fairs. He was a strong supporter of the IGKT, promoting the Guild wherever he was.

Although his illness meant that he was unable to travel far and could only attend a few IGKT meetings. He helped organize one of our early "out of London" meetings at Chesham. His desire to help led him to act as the Guild's Supplies Secretary for a couple of years, taking over from Ivy Blandford.

The tying of knots meant a lot to him, he was at a craft fair demonstrating ropework just a few days before he died. He was tying knots up to the last.

Des Pawson, Suffolk, UK

Rope Ends

Do you have a 'trick of the trade' or useful little snippet of information to pass on to other members of the Guild? Or do you know the origin of a saying?

Send them in to 'Rope Ends'. Curious or useful definitions; knot terms; knot lore; tools as well as items of a 'Did you know? And 'Believe it or not' nature, (from odd uses for knots to famous knot tyers). You may believe your snippet of information is well known, but to many members it may be new. So get writing.

SITUATIONS VACANT

A Vacancy exists For a Guild Librarian

The work entails being custodian of the UK library of some 300 books and publications, plus some archive material. Undertaking research from Guild members on an occasional basis, and making the library available at the two main UK Guild meetings.

Inquiries should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, Nigel Harding or Colin Grundy.

2K2 Update

Well done and a big thank you for the truly global and upbeat response to the Millennium Knot. As to the start to 2K2 you have got off to a good start.

With an imaginative array of knots ranging from a Monkeys Fist tied in edible string, to a medallion tied and worn all day, Stars, Guchos, plus the notes how and why the knot was tied. You have all shown the breath and strengths of an International Guild. Tom Reed on a New Year hike along the U.S. coastline of the Atlantic tied a knot and gave a wave with good wishes, to those of us over on this side. (I hope you did not miss it?) With well over a Hundred cards I shall not name names, YET. I shall give one name and that is Reg White of Aberyswyth Wales, still part of the U.K. Reg is registered blind, he tied some knots and found the post box. Make sure you other Knot Tyers say Hi to Reg.

If you have not sent your card yet, do not feel embarrassed, just get it out of the drawer fill it in and post it. Other wise you will miss out on the certificate. I have had cards from well known names and one from a brand new member, well done Ray Robin. A list of names, knots and the geography will be published in

another edition of KM, its not too late just blame the postman.

The bright ones will have noticed the print errors on the post card, with the 3LX4B Turks Head, and the incorrect spelling of my surname, don't worry I only had One Thousand printed.

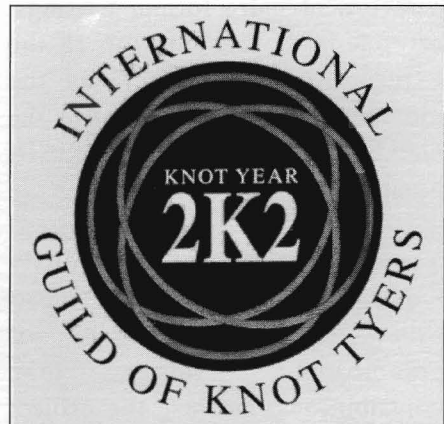
So far so good for 2K2, now start planning your Knot Piece for display: It is your Guild and your chance to be part of a global scale display, don't forget to tell the media about what you are doing. 'Joe Schmidbauer' I may take you to your word and expect one of each, after you have shown them to the public first, of course.

If your display logos or 2K2 notice suffered in the post, I have spare just drop me a line, and if your dog has eat your postcard, then send me one from your hometown.

More reports on 2K2 later, thank you again for the good start.

Yours Aye

Ken Yalden.



Knotting Journal

by Tony Doran

In KM's 59, 60 and 61 a proposal for a Guild Journal was debated. Since then there has been very little opinion expressed for or against such a publication. However, the IGKT Council at its last meeting agreed that, providing there is sufficient support from the members, the Guild would publish a Journal of members' articles on "the art, craft and science of knotting, past and present".

The Journal will in no way be a competitor to Knotting Matters, which as our in-house quarterly newsletter fulfils a vital function in maintaining communications between our widespread membership. A Journal is a record of more formal writings, intended for presentation to the external world as well as the membership so as to advance the Guild's aspirations to establish itself as an authoritative body.

Contributions of previously unpublished material are invited. At this stage we are looking for commitments rather than contributions, because the project

depends on having sufficient material from all sources.

If you have such a contribution, or have a firm intention to complete one before June 2000, please write to the Secretary with the following details:

Author(s)

Title of article

Abstract (about 150 words)

Approximate size of article (words/pages)

Estimated completion date.

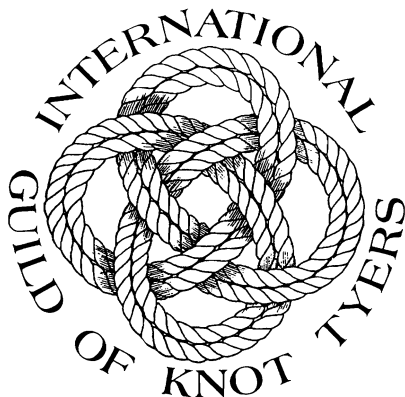
[Please - don't send any manuscripts yet - Nigel won't be able to store them.]

Prospective contributors will receive an acknowledgement of their offer to contribute. If the response indicates that we have sufficient material, the Council will appoint an Editor and peer review panel and establish publication deadlines. Contributors will be sent an author pack defining the Journal house style.

A report on the response to this request will be made in Knotting Matters in due course.

Lots of Knots

A World of Knotting



Fancy Knotwork, Rigging & Splicing

Long Beach, California

Saturday - June 24th

Sunday - June 25th

2000

Lindsay Philpott (562) 595 - 8854
Joe Schmidbauer Koolkatz@prodigy.net
Web Site: <http://home.fea.net/~igktpab>

Knot Slops -

A Millennial Offer of Purpose!

By Dan Lehman

The Mission of the IGKT is: to promote the art, craft, and science of knotting, its study and practice; to undertake research into all aspects of knotting; and to establish an authoritative body for consulting purposes. We have made some progress in promotion, and various individual efforts—such as Geoffrey Budworth’s getting IGKT-cited corrections into Ashley’s ABOK—have brought some IGKT expertise to a prominent place. But as to the general purpose of advancing the state of the art and practice of knot tying, I ask how the IGKT plans to meet this purpose. Similarly, Percy Blandford asked [KM51: 50] “Are we the authority on modern knotting?” Clearly, we aren’t: firstly, we are no “we” in voice (the IGKT has no product other than Knotting Matters, which doesn’t purport to be IGKT advice on knotting—for good reason!); secondly, the IGKT has no tasks oriented towards gaining such technical authority. But it certainly seems that there is a void of sound advice on knotting which the IGKT could fill.

Of all the literature on knotting that I’ve seen, there is little that does not raise questions concerning the basis for its statements about knot tying.

And usually there are some surprising mistakes. As Rob Chisnall observed [KM51: 40], “the literature is rife with contradictions and fragmentary research.” Thus, I would like to see the IGKT mop up the *slop* that permeates our field of interest.

In this article, I examine the treatment of two knots in what is typical of our popular press (and the better half of that!), which I find well short of what the IGKT should be able to give. I’ll suggest a couple of goals for the IGKT to pursue that might meet advance the state of the art/practice of our common interest, knotting.

Recently, I came across a pair of fairly new knot books by IGKT co-founders: Geoffrey Budworth’s large-page “The Complete Book of Knots” (an ambitious title!) and Des Pawson’s quite handsome “The Handbook of Knots” (which, if counting is our guide, seems as complete as Geoffrey’s —”over 100” being each book’s extent). I’ll use these as examples in presenting a tale of confusion, of citing two slops. (NB: surprisingly, both Des [op.cit. p.68, margin photo] & Geoffrey (The Knot Book, 1st ed., p.85#e) have misrepresented—of all knots (!)—the Guild-precipitating, Hunter’s Bend (GB in trying to show its loop form);

they both show instead what is similar, but decidedly inferior, to the Zeppelin/Rosendahl bend.)

A (Confused) Tale of Two Climbers' Knots

—viz., the Flemish (AKA “Fig.8”) bend/loop & the Klemheist Hitch.

Consider the case of two knots used by climbers & cavers: the fig.8 loop (& bend), and the Klemheist hitch. Although both of these knots can be found in Ashley’s ABOK (more or less, re the Klemheist), the development of caving & climbing techniques and modern ropes has brought them a relatively recent popularity.

The fig. 8 form is well known to knot tyers. But the construction of the bend or loop using this form—in a kind of *trace* manner—is almost nowhere exactly, unambiguously illustrated. Most knot books show the knot as a nearly flat tracing of one fig.8 form by a second rope. This is easy on the illustrator, but unhelpful to the knot tyer, as the corresponding physical entity is unstable—rope’s round cross-section ensures that these traced parts will shift, and the illustrated form evaporates in reality. (K. Walker’s “Learn Rock Climbing in a Weekend” actually ADVISES one to “flatten out the knot to check for unnecessary twists”!)

With a properly tied knot seldom illustrated (verbally or graphically), the knot is tied sloppily in practice. Climbing & caving periodicals &

books often show the loop in use, and one can usually see that it’s irregularly, haphazardly tied. Ugh! Now, it’s a nice assurance that even so tied, in modern ropes, there is little risk of knot failure (& resultant injury), but is it quite pathetic that the literature doesn’t provide adequate instruction.

Some books do attempt to illustrate a particular form, but fail. A caving book, “On Rope”, advises that the standing part’s initial bight should lie on the “outside”—as illustrated. But given the misleading, flat illustration, such advice is ambiguous; and On Rope’s illustrations of a drawn-up fig.8 is unclear as to the exact form. TCBKnots gives nominally the same advice—with a distinct form (the bend’s)—; but this is rendered ambiguous with conflicting illustrations: for the loop, “outside” is indicated in the flat illustration—ambiguous—, and the illustrations of the tied knot show two ways (fig.#4 shows the standing bight outside along a perpendicular axis and #7 shows it outside along a parallel axis); for the bend, the knot is clearly illustrated with the standing bight taking the “outside” position along the parallel axis. In sum, the reader has no firm basis to know what is intended (or why!). Now, AHKnots’s instructions [pp.108-9] use the flat form, and without indicating which parts are (to be) loaded (which is the standing part, e.g.). Its photographed drawn-up knots show two forms: that on p.108 is what I call the “perfect” form, but again one cannot tell which is the how

standing part (if indeed only one part is to be); on p.109, the drawn-up form is asymmetric. (In the field, the tied knots assume bizarre forms. And The Knot Book shows yet another symmetric form.)

(In my opinion, which of the two “regular” forms to use might depend on one’s purpose: I think that the bend shown by TCBKnots & loop #7 are stronger (these are also illustrated well by Rob Chisnall in KM51: 47 (fig.14) & KM48: 33(fig.8 [how apt!])), but the “outside along the perpendicular axis” form might draw up more securely and be easier to untie, and sufficiently strong.)

Anecdote: Long ago I was struck by some breaking-strength data shown in a Chouinard catalogue (climbers’ gear): that for the fig.8 loop (or bend?) had a wider range of values than that for the bowline, and maybe another knot. (Alas, I no longer have that catalogue.)

Given the sloppiness in tying the fig.8 knots, I surmise that the test data indicated just such variation in form, from careless tying.

-0-

The Klemheist hitch is a somewhat different case: it is a case of contrary advice clearly given. This hitch is a sliding, or friction hitch: i.e., it’s purpose it to grip a generally cylindrical object (i.e., rope) securely when loaded in a parallel or oblique angle of incidence, but then to readily slide along the object by manual force on the knot body (as opposed to pull on its standing parts). Such knots are

used to ascend a rope: standing on rigging secured by one such hitch to a vertical line, one manually slides a companion hitch that supports similar rigging for the other foot or for one’s body (sit-stand-sit-stand); each hitch must alternately grip and slide to a higher position.

The Klemheist is of a simple construction: first, a sling is made in an appropriately sized (often short) length rope (perhaps with a sloppily tied fig.8 bend), and then that sling—the doubled bit of rope, i.e.—is wrapped around the object (usually a thicker rope) in a spiral. Now, the *slop* re the Klemheist is how to finish the knot, how to lock the spiral formed by the wrapped sling. Assuming a vertical orientation of the object with a downwards load, some books show the upper bight run through the lower to be loaded (thus force reaches the coils around the object like those of a rolling/tautline hitch, e.g.); but other books show the opposite—the lower bight is run through the upper (made long enough to reach down to the lower) and loaded (the coils are thus most forcefully stressed from below/away). And, not too surprisingly, some books contain the confusion by showing both, apparently unaware of the inconsistency. TCBK, e.g., appears to illustrate the former graphically [p.107-fig.#1], but the latter verbally. (THKnots shows only, clearly, the latter form (lower bight loaded).)

Incidentally, there is another, quite similar (or identical, depending on

the conflict above is resolved) knot: the Heddon hitch (alas, also named “Kreuzklem”). I’ve only seen it showing pull on the coils *into* them, as in a rolling hitch. Indeed, in Geoffrey’s earlier “The Knot Book” [pp.103-4], the Heddon hitch is shown, with the advice that it “is insecure” if loaded in the opposite direction (which is tantamount to saying that the Klemheist will not work—though one can quibble about the number of turns of each, as the Heddon is shown with few vs. many)! I’ve also seen it said of the Klemheist that it wouldn’t work if loaded in the opposite direction, tantamount to denying the Heddon hitch’s effectiveness.

Thus, one can say that “both” Klemheist hitches can work, given an adequate number of coils around the object and of an appropriate material—which are general concerns of friction hitches in any case. But the literature is on all sides of the fence (left/right/straddling) on these knots; it can certainly do a better job of guidance here.

(I find the Heddon hitch to be more secure. Now, for ascending purposes, security is needed in not necessarily the greatest amount, so the choice involves other considerations, such as ease of release/sliding.)

-0-

These are but some of many cases of what I jocularly label “slops” of which knotting literature is replete. So much said about knots without basis, or without explicit indication of any

basis; and so much is left unsaid that ought to be explicitly stated. (One often reads “this is to be preferred...” but seldom is that complemented by the supporting “... because...”.) I cannot help but get the sense that many authors base their text on what they’ve read, uncritically, passing along unsound advice.

What I would like to see the IGKT do, in advancing the state of the art/practice of knotting, is to study and issue technical reports on various topics, to redress the slops, to form building blocks of understanding. Why DO (particular) knots break? And why do the breaking strengths differ by so much (say, by 10 percentage points—figures for that of a bowline ranging from 55% to 75% or so, e.g.)? Why do anglers seem almost apologetic about knots that break at less than 85% of tensile strength, when most test data for ropes gives figures much less than that? (And how can Percy claim test results for a sheet bend of 75% or higher when elsewhere we’ve read that this is really a pretty unreliable bend (and all other test results I’ve seen for it are more nearly 55%!)?) What are the various characteristics of sliding hitches, in various circumstances? What works best in which materials?

Such reports could have either of two forms: compilations and comparative assessments of extant literature (to at least SHOW the various published opinions and to point out the contradictions, with perhaps some accompanying advice);

and reports of testing & analysis done by the IGKT.

These tasks demand rigorous critical analysis best provided by a focused, iterative (& amicable) peer review, which shakes each assertion until all the unsecured, ill-fitting false parts fall off, and only solid stuff remains. We must eschew the complacency of only telling old sailors' tales of how we each learned to tie a bowline, and realize that, like it or not, there are MANY alternatives to that tried-and-tested knot, and now also dramatically different materials in which knots are tied. Can folks grasp what it's like to deal with Spectra/Technora—i.e? for a knot structure to sustain triple the force sustainable by nylon and with one seventh as much elastic deformation of its material?! We, the IGKT, should.

Let's mop the slop!

Rope Ends

Early in the 17th century, guns aboard warships were supported by heavy planks fastened to the vessel's side. Seamen harnessed with lines hung from them to make hull repairs. It was dangerous duty in rough weather. That particular sort of plank was called a "devil". The sailor clinging to the woodwork out there gave us the idiom that survives "Between the devil and the deep blue sea".

Bob Schwartz

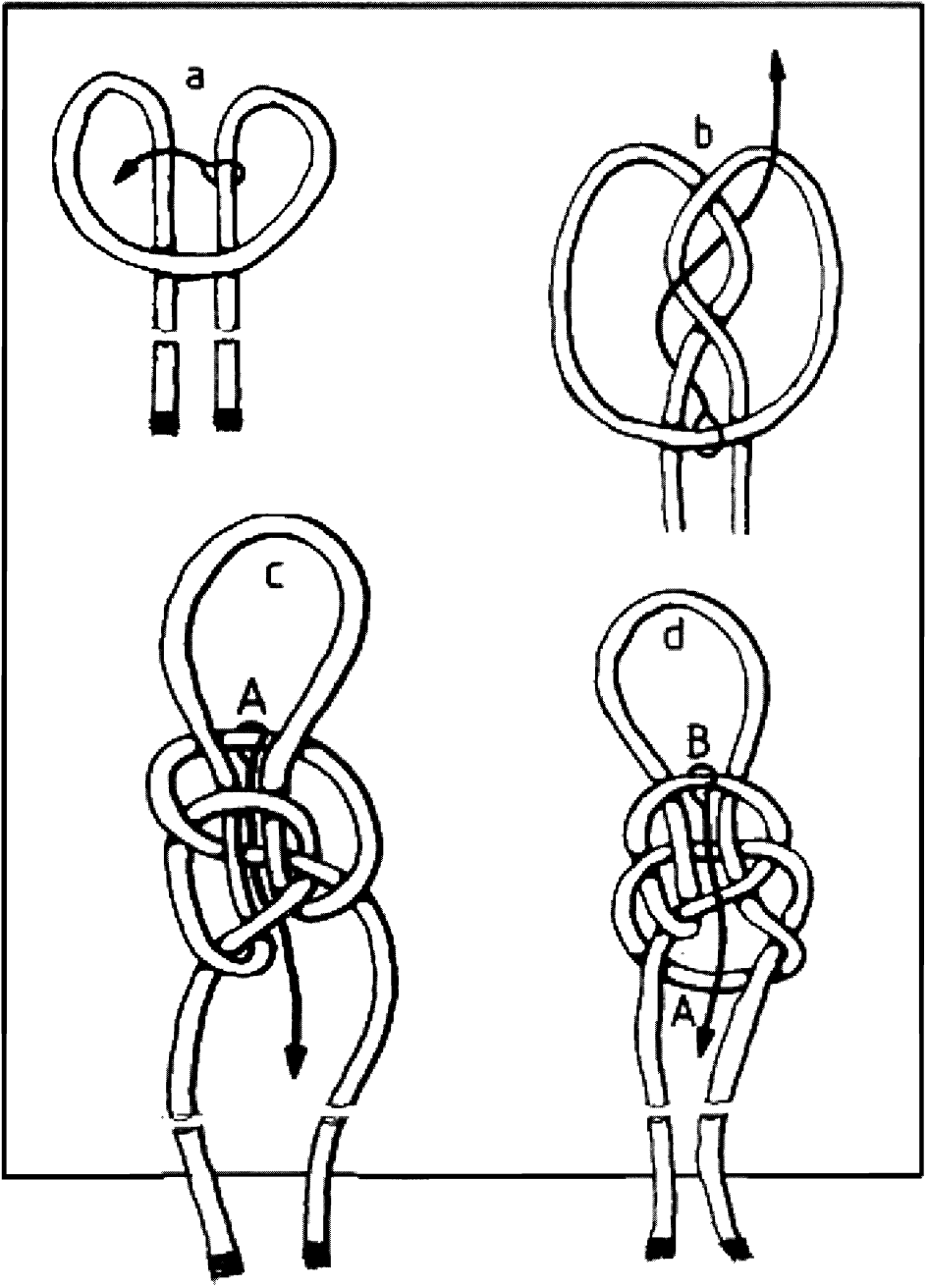
Knotmaster Series

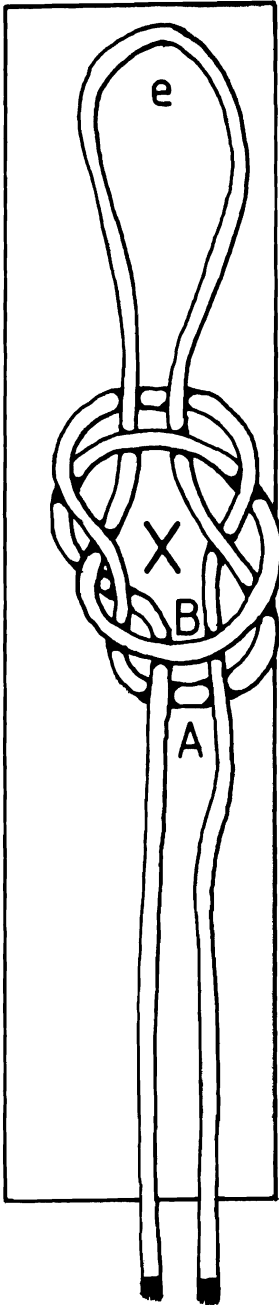
No. 4

"Knotting ventured, knotting gained."

JUG, JAR or BOTTLE SLING

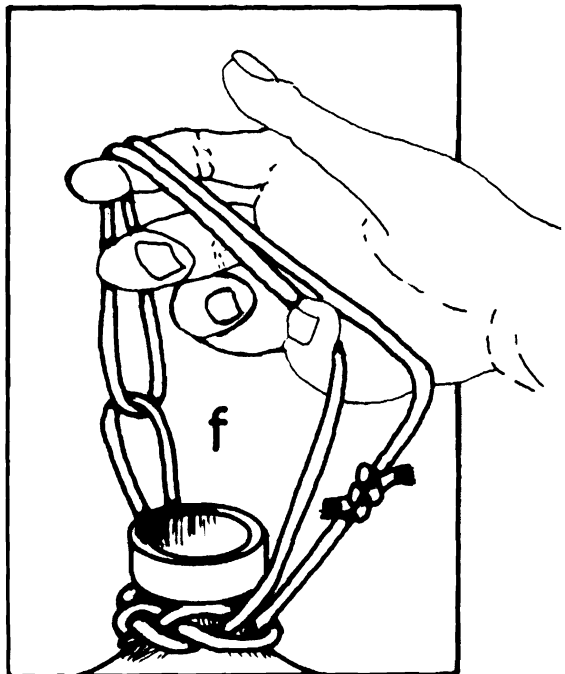
This cunning knot tends nowadays to be just a trick tied to impress . . . but it really will carry a heavy jug, jar or bottle. Cowboys might assemble makeshift horse bridles with it; given enough line it could be a jury mast knot; and at least one 1st. Century A.D. Ancient Greek physician recommended it as a surgical sling.





Push the centre X (Fig. E) over the neck of your amphora, flagon or thermos flask, and tighten up the interwoven bracelet. The eight sliding knot parts exert a ratchet-like grip on even the smoothest surface.

Then tie the two working ends together, first taking one strand through the existing loop (Fig. F), to make two self-adjusting handles. This neat arrangement - obvious once you know how - was suggested by Dr. Harry Asher in



Word Game

How many of you attempted the Word Game in KM 65? I suspect many of you did and succeeded, some of you may even have managed to do it in less moves than with the seven intervening words as suggested. Here are just a few of the contributions sent in to Knotting Matters.

I just received the latest KM and, as usual, I thoroughly enjoyed reading it. With regard to the Word game on page 14 (I haven't found the hidden solution yet - I must be blind!), I have several solutions (I couldn't resist sending them along.

In six moves with five intervening words:

YARN, BARN, BORN, BORE, MORE, MOPE, ROPE

In five moves with four intervening words:

YARN, YARE, YORE, MORE, MOPE, ROPE

In four moves with three intervening words (The minimum, one move per letter):

YARN, YARE, RARE, RAPE, ROPE

Robert Chisnall, Toronto

How about:

YARN, BARN, BARE, PARE, PORE, POPE, ROPE

Which are two steps less than you asked for.

Do you want to see if anyone can get from "KNOT" to "TIED" quicker than I can? It's a pig.

KNOT, KNOW, SNOW, STOW, STOP, STEP, STEM, SEEM, DEEM, DEED, DIED, TIED.

Or "TIED" TO "FREE".

TIED, DIED, DEED, FEED, FLED, SLED, SLEW, FLEW, FLEE, FREE.

Anne Dyer, Shropshire

An unattributed letter (?), Word Game [KM65: 14] challenges us to make "rope" from "yarn" with just seven intervening words, by changing a single letter to derive each. (Methinks this was a Cy Canute letter, judging by the '—o0o—' signature.) Well, I'll leave the seven series to others, for Occam's Razor cut mine to a mere trio:

YARN->yarE->Rare->raPe [or rOre]->ROPE.

("Archaic & Dial. Scot." maybe, but "yare" has nautical uses and surely qualifies! —OED & Webster's 3rd (& predecessors))

Cheers, Dan Lehman

For those of you who searched for the solution in Knotting Matters 65 and didn't find it, look again at the last paragraph on page 3.

John Hensel: A Truly Notable Knot Tyer

**Joseph Schmidbauer goes in search of the co-author of the
Encyclopedia of Knots and Fancy Ropework**

The most used book in my knotting library, after the *Ashley Book of Knots*, has to be *The Encyclopedia of Knots and Fancy Rope Work* by Raoul Graumont and John Hensel. Although it is not as “user friendly” as the ABOK, it is still quite a wealth of information on knots and knotting design.

Some time ago I began to be curious about one of the authors, Mr. John Hensel. I was hoping it might be possible to invite him to lecture at one of our future AGMs. After some fruitless searching, I finally got in touch with a nice lady at Cornell Maritime Press by the name of Charlotte Kurst. She is the Managing Editor there and remembered Mr. Hensel well. She had the sad duty to pass on the news that he had passed away some years ago. To help us honor the memory of this worthy gentleman, she sent along copies of the biographical information that Mr. Hensel provided when Cornell Maritime Press reissued his *The Book*

of Ornamental Knots in 1989. I reprint it here with their kind permission.

Having tied more than a million feet of rope and cordage into knots and ornamental designs since I first began practicing the art, it gives me a great deal of satisfaction to find a resurgence of interest in the once almost forgotten art of seamanship and fancy ropework. I find the ladies are just as proficient as the men in this work. It is a pleasurable craft and everyone can learn a few simple basic knots. To the yachtsman, they are indispensable, and if you add some fancy rope work to your vessel it will be a thing of beauty and pleasure.

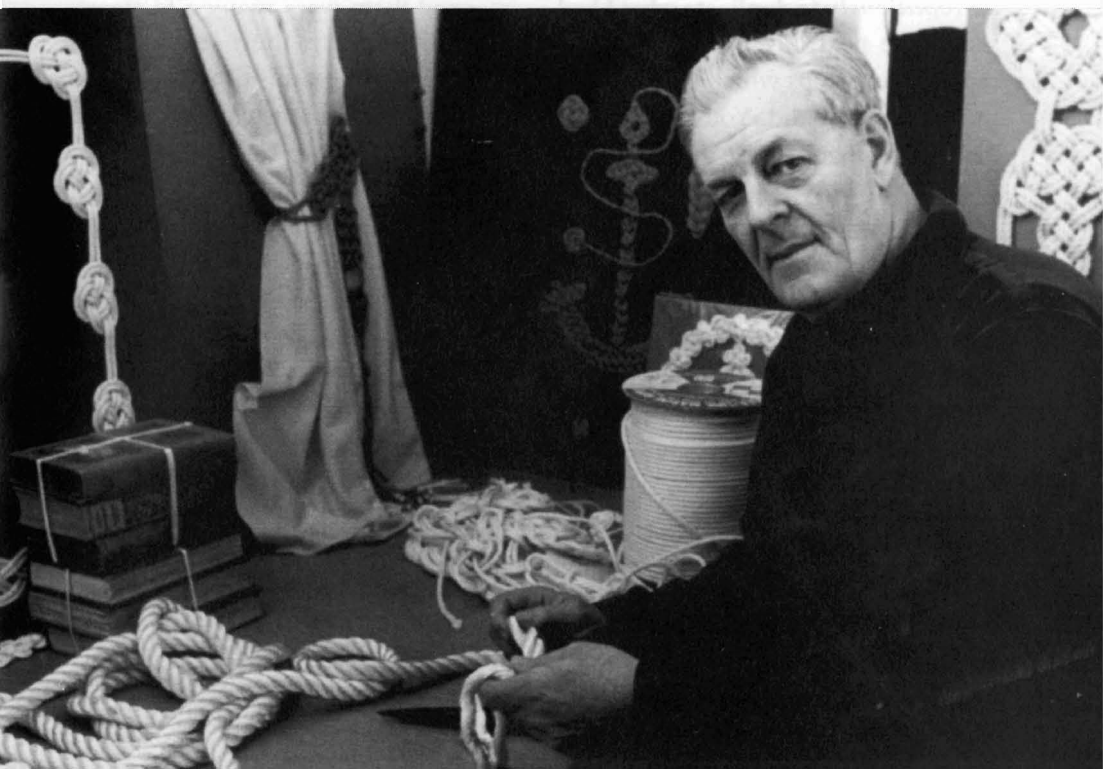
Fancy rope work did not disappear entirely with the clipper ships and certainly has not been relegated to the museum world. It is still much in demand today and a yacht decorated with coxcombing, turk’s heads, manrope knots etc. is the envy of the fleet.

The art has also moved ashore. Public places and homes are decorated with plant hangings, ornamental hangings of oriental design, deadeye blocks and tackle nets and hawsers and similar articles made of rope. There would be more of this type of work in evidence afloat and ashore if people realized how simple this work is to do. I frequently am told after one of my workshops,

“I never tried to do fancy work because it looked so complicated and am pleasantly surprised to learn how simple it is.”

I first became interested in knot tying and fancy rope work when I was

a young man in the merchant marine aboard a Canadian tramp ship. A decorative bell rope on the bridge caught my eye during my first trick at the wheel. I became interested in the knot work and curious as to how it was made that the ship wandered far from its course. A sharp nudge from the mate quickly brought me back to reality and the ship back on course. I was determined to learn more about how this work was done as I found it fascinating. There were a few old salts aboard whom I had been watching do drawn thread and tassel work. I selected them as the most likely ones to help me. After much persuasion on



my part, they told me with a twinkle in their eyes, that it was made of a three strand running coxcomb, a four strand doubled reverse crown sennit and finished with a four strand doubled footrope knot. They continued on with something about throat seizings and turk's heads, concluding with "that's all there is to it and any boy should be able to learn this with a few years practice."

The effect of this was like honey to a bee. I pestered those poor fellows for days until they finally agreed to demonstrate (not show me) how it was done. After about one our of watching, I had the technique pretty firmly fixed in my mind and proceeded surreptitiously to duplicate what I had seen. The next day I asked them to repeat a few steps which had escaped me, which they did. You never saw a happier lad than I, when that afternoon I held up my bellrope to two astonished seaman.

To me ornamental knotting and fancy rope work was absolutely fascinating and, contrary to my original belief, found the work not too difficult to master. From that time forward anyone who I discovered had any knowledge of knotting, splicing or fancy rope work became fair game and found no peace until they revealed their secrets, such as a secret recipe. There are several families of rope

work; among them: splices, coxcombing, pointing, turk's heads, sennit braids, square knotting etc., and hundreds of variations within each family. I had to learn the basic "keys" and intricacies associated with each family in order to duplicate designs which I had seen, and which some of the men in possession of such knowledge were willing to reveal. At times we would trade knot for knot, or sometimes I would find it necessary to trade as many as five knots to learn how to make a newly discovered prize.

Needless to say, I was most fortunate in going to sea at a time when sailing ships were rapidly disappearing and the sailors who manned them were moving to steam vessels leaving their art behind. However, even at this time there were only a few men left who had a good grasp of marlinespike seamanship.

With the passing of sailing ships, fancy rope work was left to those who where proficient at and appreciated the art. The new breed of steamboat sailors were generally looked down upon by their Cape Horn counterparts as being ignorant of all except the most rudimentary basic knots and as for turning in a splice well —.

Eventually my travels brought me in contact with a French sailor, Raoul Graumont, who I soon discovered was also proficient in knot tying. We began

to pool our knowledge and write a book. It was titled *The Encyclopedia of Knots and Fancy Rope Work*; without realizing it at the time, we had undertaken a monumental task which took two and a half years before it was completed. It was almost 600 pages long and had over 300 illustrations covering every branch of the art. It was indeed gratifying to read reviews on publication such as: "Nothing less than a Britanica of the subject, the most thrilling, fascinating and hypnotizing product of typewriter, pen or pencil," in addition to winning the highly coveted American Institute of Graphic Arts award as one of the fifty books of the year. After the *Encyclopedia*, came *Splicing Wire and Fiber Rope; Square Knot, Tattling Fringe and Needle Work* and later *The Book of Ornamental Knots*.

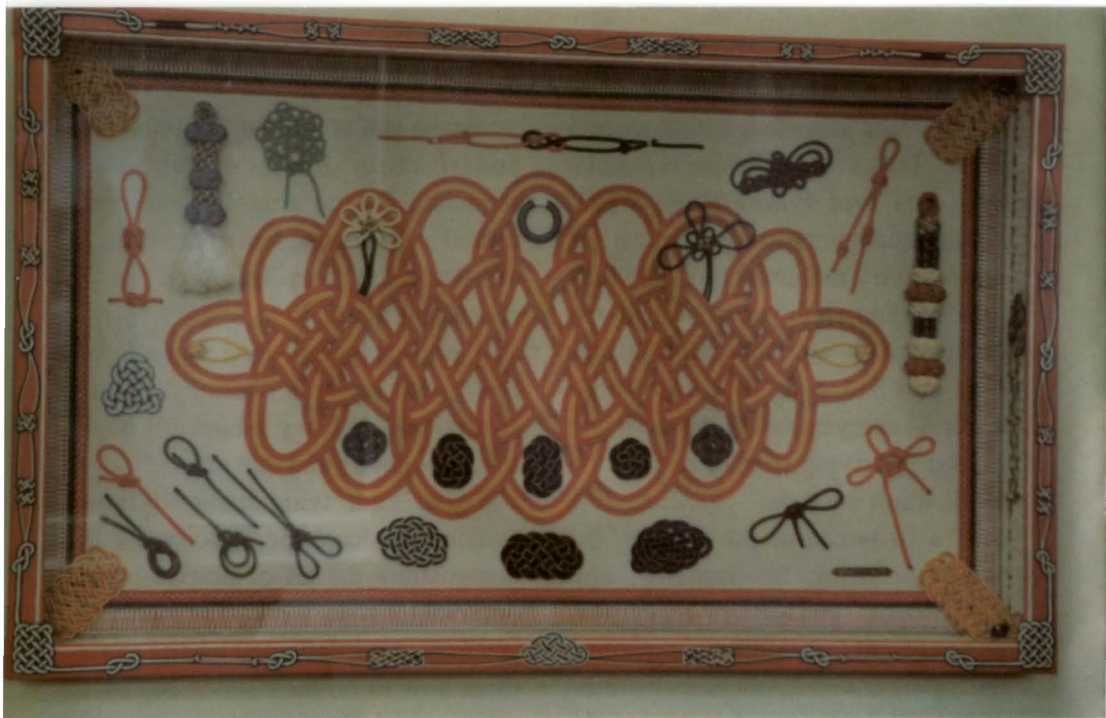
During World War II, having had prior sea experience as an Able Seaman, I was able to enter the Officer Training School in Fort Trumbull, Connecticut. Upon graduation, much to my surprise, I received an award for the highest standing in seamanship for the graduating classes. I then shipped out as a mate aboard Liberty ships in convoys on the North Atlantic and later in the North and South Pacific, where we ran alone without benefit of a convoy.

At the end of the war, I entered the construction business where I remained for the next 40 years and retired as Vice president of the firm. I am still actively engaged as a consultant in this field.

I presently live in a waterfront home with my wife, Dorothy, on the eastern end of Long Island. I have three daughters and one grandchild. I still give knot tying demonstrations at fairs and have the opportunity to demonstrate the art of practical and ornamental rope work. The mothers and fathers are delighted when I show them how to tie their shoelaces by a new method. Yachtsmen are amazed when they see how simple it is to do coxcombing or turn in a splice, in addition to see the practical use of a stopper knot.

I have my own boat (in front of my house) still do some sailing, and love to go to the ocean nearby and surf cast for fish."

This article is reprinted with the kind permission of Joseph Schmidbauer and Cornell Maritime Press. John Hensel's books: Encyclopedia of Knots and Fancy Ropework and Book of Ornamental Knots are available from Cornell Maritime Press, Box 456, Centreville, Maryland 21617 USA.



Above: Knotboard by Commandant Hasselle, Belgium.
Below: Key fobs by Daniel L. Calahan, Alaska, USA.



A World Full of Knots

An Exhibition of Knots
by Geert "Willy" Willaert

I would like to welcome everyone who is present today for the opening of the exhibition "A World Full of Knots". This was the opening line from a speech given by Belgian Guild member "Willy" Willaert at the start of an exhibition of knots last Easter.

The exhibition was held at the museum "De Zilverreiger" (The Silver Heron) whose theme is about the life and work at the borders of the river "De Schelde". The idea for the exhibition began in the summer of 1998 and took almost a year of planning. With the help of the museum's staff and sponsors, the idea was finally realized. Pieter van de Griend (Netherlands) and Dan Calahan (Alaska) also provided Internet backup.

On display was over four hundred items loaned by seventy-three contributors from around the world. During its six month run, the exhibition attracted over 10,000 visitors.

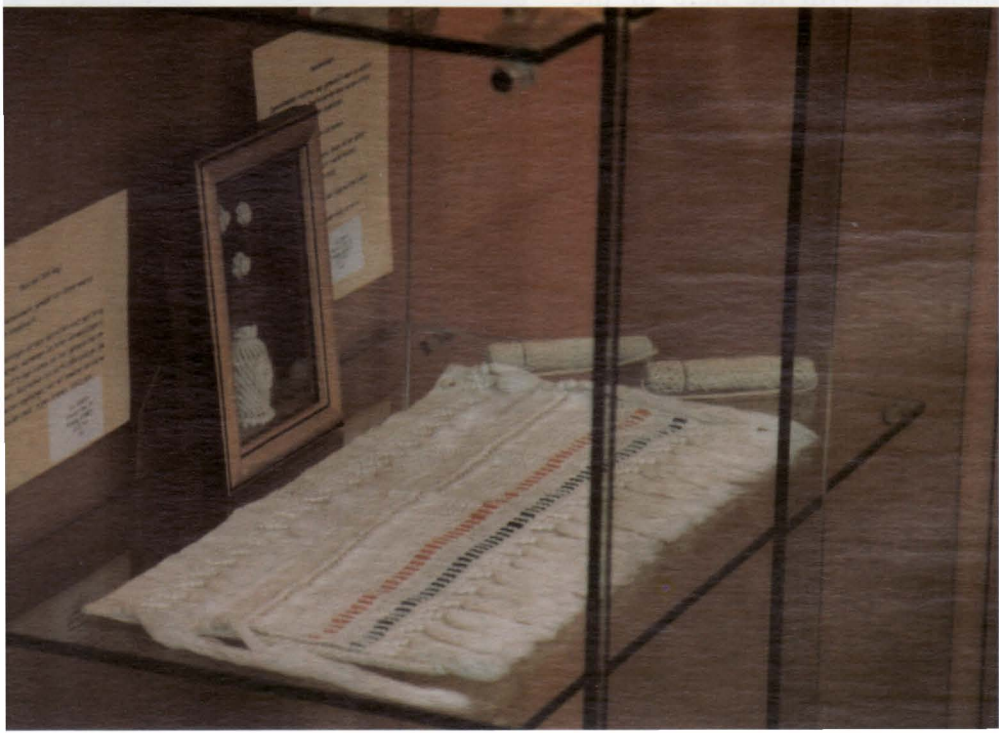
Willy wishes to express his thanks to all the Guild members from around the world who contributed items for display. Well done.

Right: Table lamp by Dave Barrow, Florida, USA.





Above: Breastplates by Brian Field, Essex, UK.
Below: Fringework by Tony Doran, Surrey, UK
and needlehitching by Denis Murphy, Devon, UK.

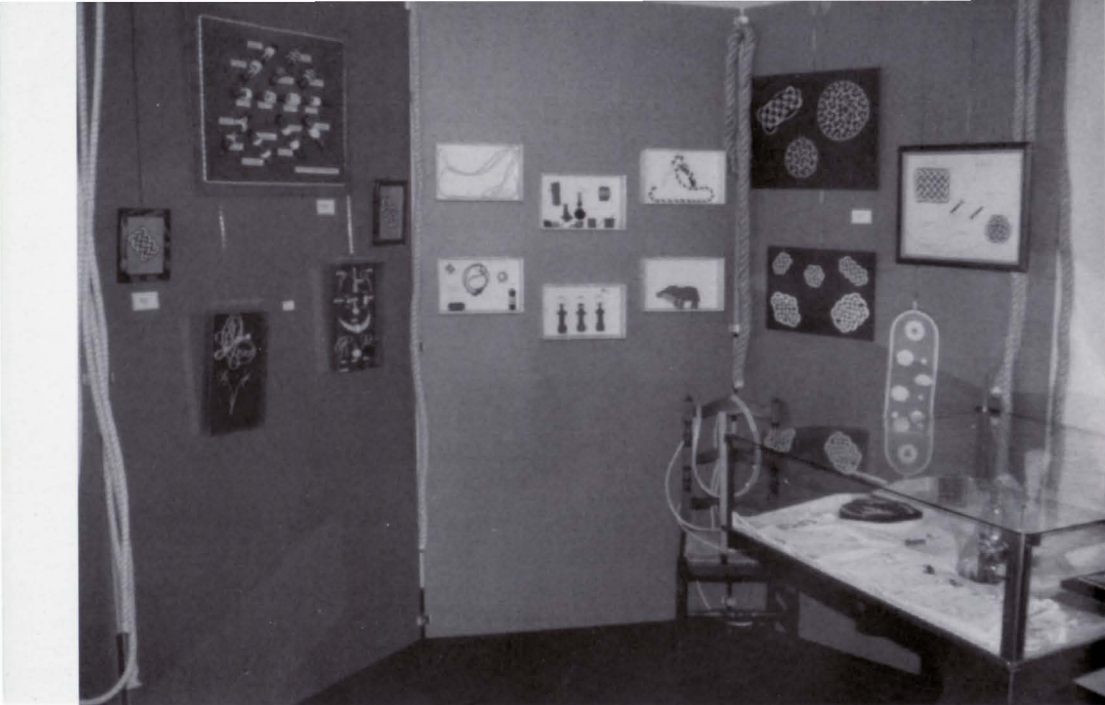




Above: Turkshead knots by Dean C. Westervelt, Pennsylvania, USA.

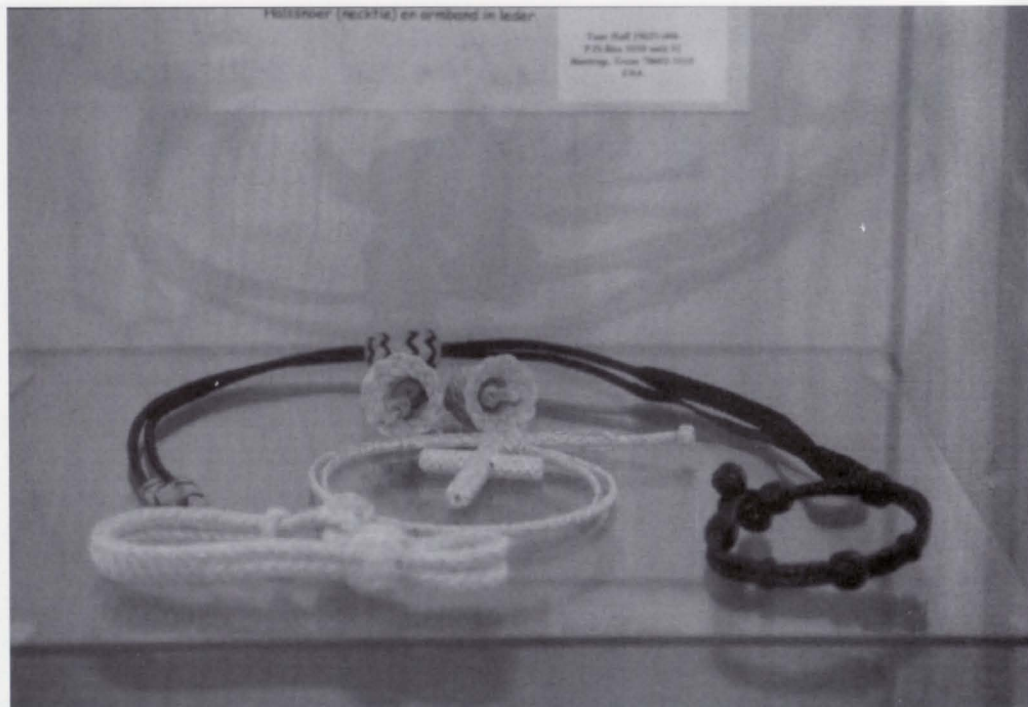
Below: Bellropes by various contributors.

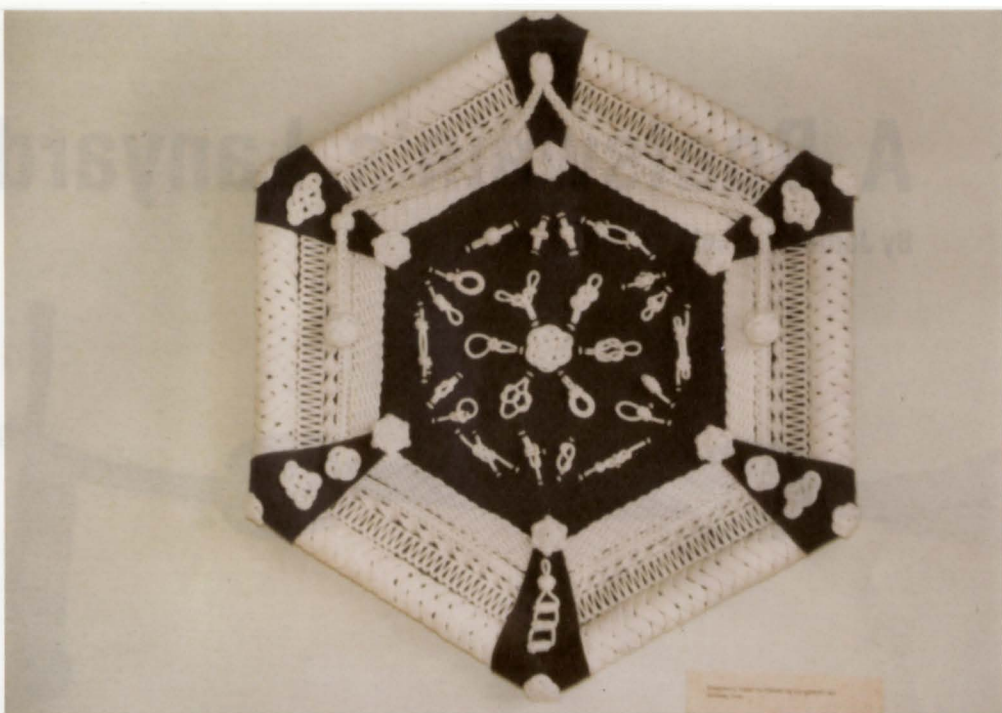




Above: A corner of the exhibition.

Below: Braiding by Tom Hall, Texas, USA.





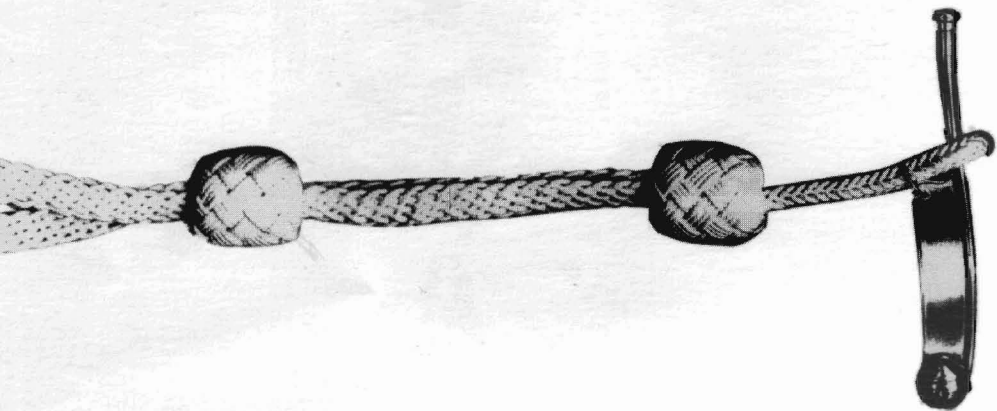
Above: An intricate knotboard by Douwe Jan de Jong, Netherlands.

Below: Picture frame by Clifford J. Case, California, USA.



A Boatswain's Lanyard

By James L. Doyle



A few months ago, I met a young “Boatswain’s Mate” serving aboard the U.S.S. Constitution, in Charlestown Navy Yard, Charlestown, Massachusetts. He asked me if I would give him some instructions on how to make a new lanyard. I agreed.

As time went by, I would ask him how he was coming along with the new lanyard. The answer was always; “I have been too busy”. So when I received my cord from “Oakhurst”, I made a new lanyard for him.

I presented this lanyard to him at the Navy Yard. He was really surprised.

Method

Take eight 8-ft pieces of No. 1 white cotton glaze cord.

Make up 45" of eight strand “French” sennit.

Make up 8" of eight strand square sennit from the “French” sennit.

Join the ends of the French flat sennit, and then loop the 8" of the square sennit into the flat “French” sennit.

Whip all together and make a “mouse” around this joint.

Cover this joint with an eight lead by seven bight Turk’s Head knot with four strands, which is required to cover the “mouse”.

Repeat the Turk’s Head to cover a second mouse over the “French” sennit.

Knotting at the Barbican Glassworks

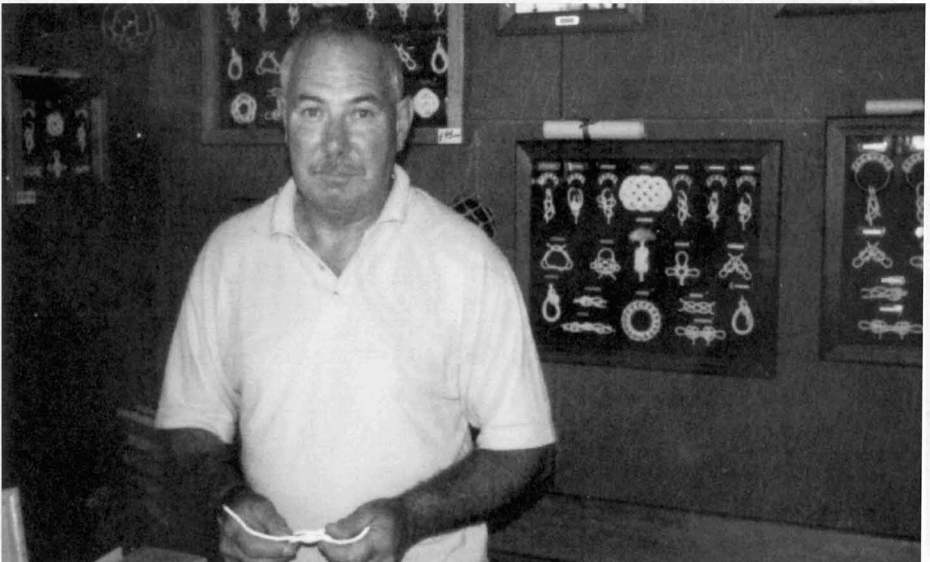
A Cornish net fisherman, from Newquay, Bill Brain, who started making knots to relieve the arthritis in his hands, was among other amateur artists and craftspeople exhibiting at one of Plymouth's top tourist attractions and retail giftware stores during the summer holidays in August and September.

Bill demonstrated the intricate art of knot making to visitors to Dartington Crystal's Barbican Glassworks. A member of IGKT, Bill, aged 54, started tying decorative knots as a hobby five years ago to relieve the arthritis and says: "There are only

about four knot-board makers in Cornwall."

"There are over 3,000 different knots and some of them can be very intricate and can take hours to do. But it's a dying art because not very many young people seem interested in it these days."

Alison Barter, Retail Manager of the Barbican Glassworks, said: "This festival of arts and crafts is our way of putting back something into the local community and to encourage the wealth of talented artists and craftspeople who live and work in the West Country." Dartington Crystal Ltd. operates the Barbican Glassworks. The shop and studio has attracted more than 500,000 visitors since its opening in May 1997. Contact Alison on 01752-224777 for information about this festival.



NEW KNOTS OR WHAT???

By Sten Johansson

In 1997 a knot book by G. M. Sassu was published in Italy. The title is “Il Mondo dei Nodi” (The World of Knots). In this book Mr. Sassu claims, that some of the knots are new knots.

I have had the text translated into English and copied together with the pictures. Can IGKT members tell me if they are really NEW knots?

And to my query in KM 62 (1999) “Monkey’s Fist or Monkey Fist”, I still have not got any help to lighten my brain. Isn’t there anyone with any ideas?

Besides, the new knots, mentioned and illustrated in the

previous chapter, I have in this last chapter, put together some, that have been made during my time as a teacher in Technics and Practical Seamanship. Many of these knots have been worked out by my pupils and my supervision, where I have tried to stimulate them to use new methods, when they are working with ropes. I have also helped them to illustrate the book. The most hardworking and most enthusiastic of my pupils was Paulo Frigau, who has invented many knots of which some and as to my opinion all of most interest and originality, are shown below (Figs. 135, 136 and 137).

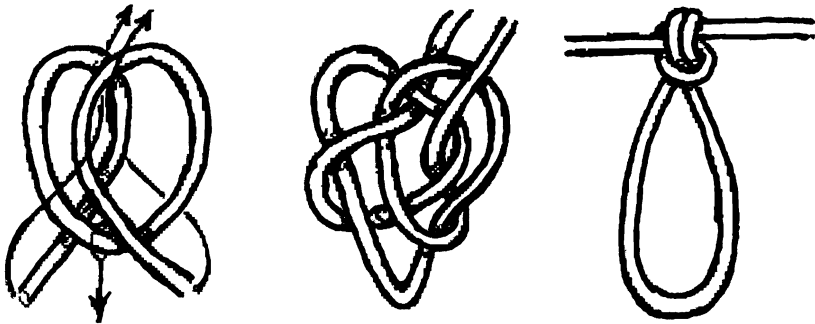


Fig. 135. Asola di Frigau.

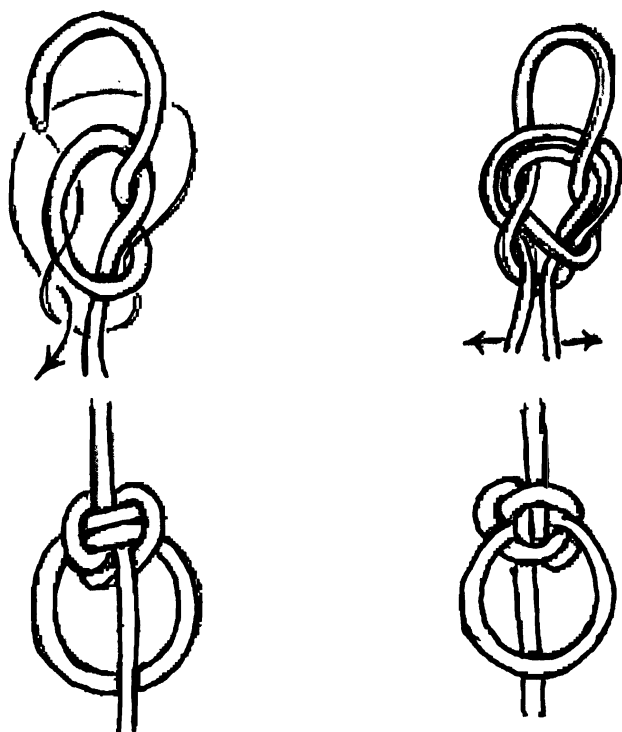


Fig. 136. Asola di Paolo

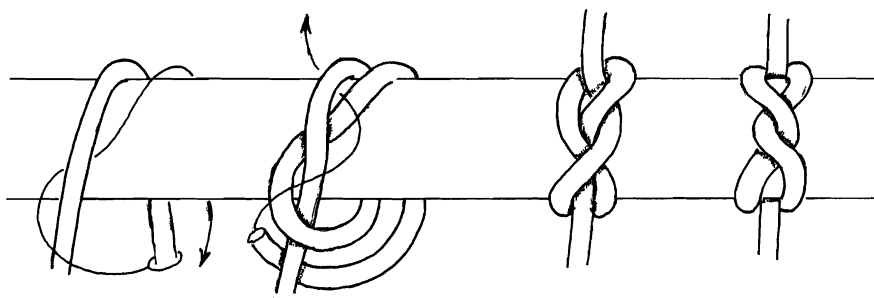


Fig. 137. Volta con doppio serraglio

All knots, that are introduced here as “NEW”, must be considered as “accepted”, even if some of them have been further developed by me in person so I have obtained a decent result, which is shown by the illustrations below (figs. 138 and 139).

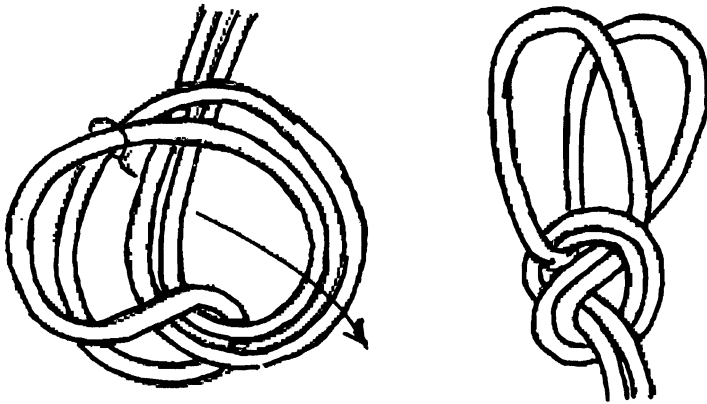


Fig. 138. Gassa Roberta

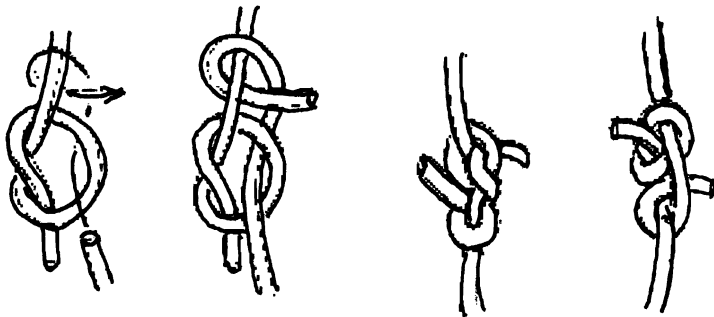


Fig. 139. Intugliatura Anna Maria

Before going ahead with other joining knots, I want to present you an interesting knot created by Walter Tross, a reader of the Italian magazine “Bolina”. The knot, first published in 1990 number 59 of the magazine, was so interesting that after some experimentation, I decided to recreate it here. (fig 64a)

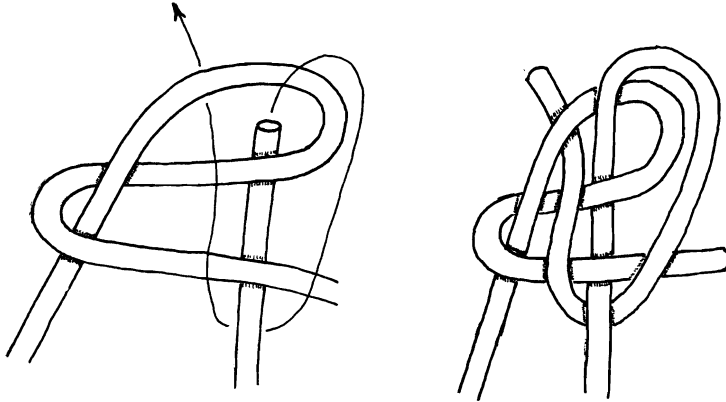


Fig. 64. Nodo di Walter Tross

In conclusion I want to suggest four knots of my invention, with the hope of receiving your opinion and suggestions.

All four knots meet with the main requirements for being good knots: they can be untied easily, also after high-tension work; they are easy to make and to learn; they are safe and solid; they have a precise practical use.

In order to give them a name, and because they were born during my seamanship lessons I decided to name them Professor Bend (fig. 65), Buccari Bend (fig. 66), Sassu Bend (fig. 67) and the last owes its name The Professor Error to a bad execution of the Carrick Bend that give light to this knot.

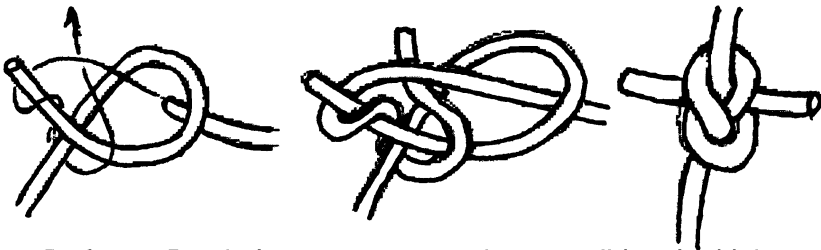


Fig. 65 Professor Bend, does not turn over, is very solid under high tension and easily untied after heavy duty. To be tested.

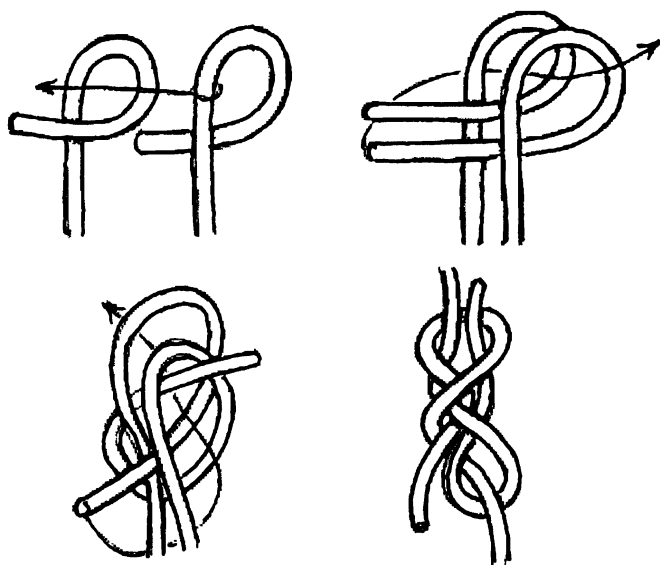


Fig. 66 Buccari Bend, shuts tightly, is good for high grip ropes.
To be tested.

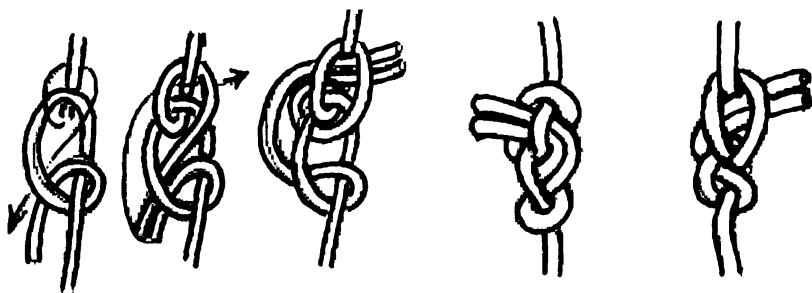


Fig. 67. Intugliatura Sassu

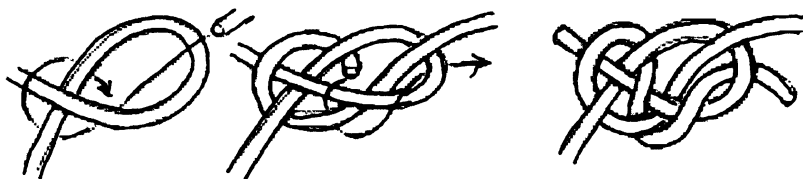


Fig. 68. L'errore del professore

Measuring Slippage

by Frank Charles Brown

For many years I have been intrigued by Ashley's all too brief description of his experiments in measuring knot slippage. He used the term knot security and defined this with the statement "the security of a knot is determined by the stress it will endure before it slips". He then went on to describe his apparatus for testing slippage. I do not think he actually measured the endured stress, but he certainly determined the relative security of a range of knots (Bends). He also investigated the difference in security of the same bend tied with cord of left and right hand lay and showed that this factor had a definite influence.

The drawing of his test rig is reasonably clear but the actual working method is not, at least to me. It would appear that the handle is turned back and forth so as to draw the sandbag up to the stopper ring and so deliver a uniform thump (timed by the conveniently dripping tap). As the bend slipped, the length of the swing would increase and the speed of the swinging would have to be increased to keep the beat! The important fact is that he was able to run comparative

test in a uniform manner.

Ashley's work was initiated by a request to determine the best bend for tying slippery yarn (mohair). My interest in the subject arose initially from a concern over the security of knots used in tying down tarpaulins on storm damaged roofs. This action was often carried out while the wind was still blowing and the force generated by a flogging tarp in a stiff breeze is quite considerable. The lengthy and forceful jerking put any knot used to a supreme security test. Adding to the problem was the use of slippery plastic ropes, which were too short 90% of the time, and required bending on extra lengths. I must report that knot failure was a rare event, due to good ropework by the teams, but the concern remained.

Ashley carried out his test on the so-called Right Hand and Left Hand Sheet Bends. The curious thing is that both these knots incorporate a Right Hand Half Hitch. I was interested to see if there were any variations in the security of the same knots, but using Left Hand Half Hitches.

Method

After a few trials I constructed the test

The initial tests were conducted using a light cotton string slightly less than 1 mm dia. These showed that the system worked and was able to give near reproducible results. The force delivered by the Drop Arm had to be moderated by using a lower peg as this string tended to break easily.

Half Hitch. Considering that the accuracy of the measurements would be of the order of +/- 1 mm, the results are almost too good to be true.

The next phase of the testing was the comparison of slippage between line of opposite twist joined using the four possible types of the Sheet Bend, as shown in Fig2. The labelling of the

Table 1

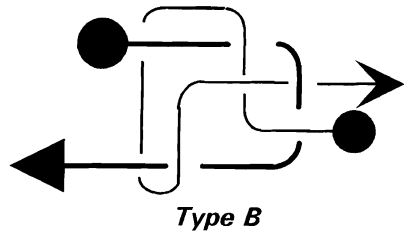
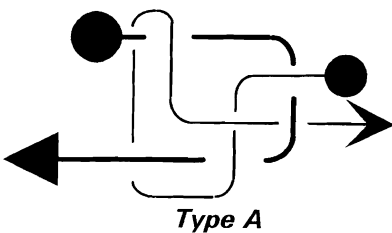
Number of Drops	10	20	30	40
Slippage mm	5	15	20	25
	11	18	23	27
	9	17	24	27
Mean Slippage mm	8+/-3	17+/-2	32+/-2	26+/-1

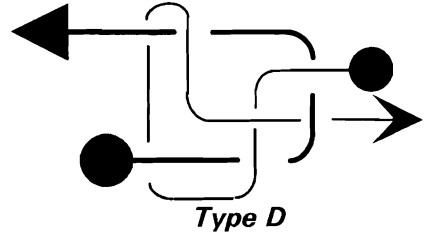
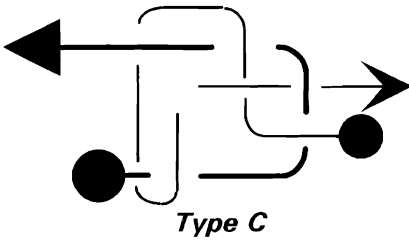
Once the method had been established, a test run in triplicate was made using a 1 mm nylon line. Three Right Handed Sheet Bends (Ashley 1432) were tied and tested. The results are shown in Table 1. These results demonstrated the general repeatability of the test.

The results obtained and are the measured lengths of slippage of the tail of the line not incorporating the

types was deliberately simplified to make reference to the type for each test easier. Also there is some variance between authors with some showing Type C and others Type A as THE SHEET BEND!

Note: in the Fig 2, the arrow represents the standing part, and the dot represents the working end (or the tail I have been referring to).





The lines used in the test, being from different manufacturers, were marginally different in diameter. There were probably minor differences in composition, yarn size and other features that would contribute to the difference in the comparative results.

seen that the most secure knot in this series of tests was Type A tied in the Left-Hand twist, followed by Type C in Right Hand twist. The least secure knots were Type D in Left Hand and Type B in Right Hand.

Table 2

Number of Drops	1	2	10	20	30	40	50
Slippage mm							
Series 1							
Right Hand twist cord							
Test 1 (Sheet Bend Type A)	1	4	12	21	30	37	43
Test 2 (Sheet Bend Type B)	10	16	36	40			
Test 3 (Sheet Bend Type C)	5	5	12	22	27	35	38
Test 4 (Sheet bend Type D)	10	15	22	32	36	40	44
Series 2							
Left Hand twist cord							
Test 5 (Sheet Bend Type A)	1	2	6	9	11	16	18
Test 6 (Sheet Bend Type B)	5	7	17	25	37		
Test 7 (Sheet Bend Type C)	1	1	8	17	26	36	40
Test 8 (Sheet Bend Type D)	16	19	36				

Results

Table 2 sets out the results obtained on measuring the slippage of the working end as described. It can be

Conclusions

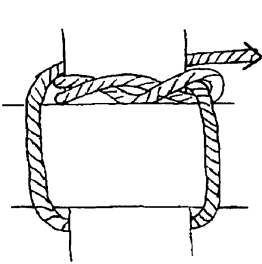
The results obtained, unsurprisingly, confirmed Ashley's findings, i.e. the ends in a Sheet bend

should be on the same side of the knot. There does appear to be some influence on the stability of the test Types relating to the handedness of the twist. The procedure was not considered to be any more than a

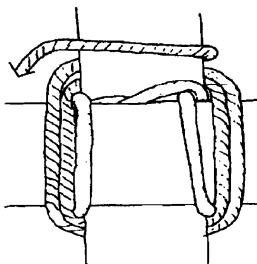
slightly crude method of testing slippage, but the results obtained were reasonably reproducible.

My wife drew the other conclusion from the testing. She is now convinced I am totally mad.

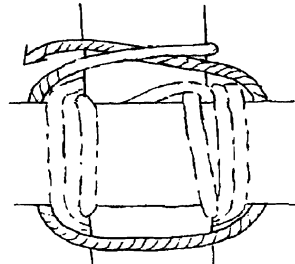
AN IMPROVED SQUARE LASHING



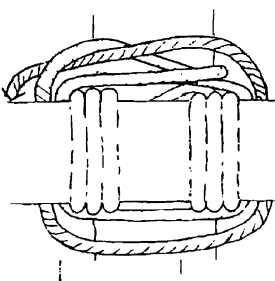
START WITH A TIMBER HITCH. THIS IS MORE SECURE THAN THE TRADITIONAL CLOVE HITCH



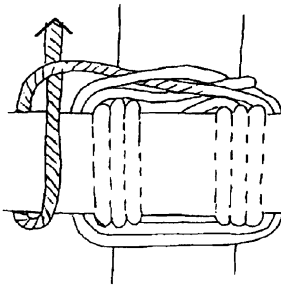
PUT ON 3 WRAPPING TURNS. THEN CHANGE DIRECTION AS SHOWN FOR FRAPPING



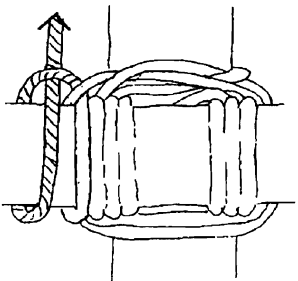
INSTEAD OF THE TRADITIONAL FRAPPING TURNS, PASS THE END UNDER THE START MAKING IT INTO A HALF HITCH. - PULL TIGHT.



ADD A SECOND HALF HITCH AND PULL AS TIGHT AS POSSIBLE. **Note:** UNLIKE THE TRADITIONAL LASHING THE TENSION WILL STAY THERE WHILE TYING OFF



PUT A HALF HITCH AROUND THE POLE AND WORK IT TIGHT INTO THE CORNER



ADD A SECOND HALF HITCH AND TIGHTEN

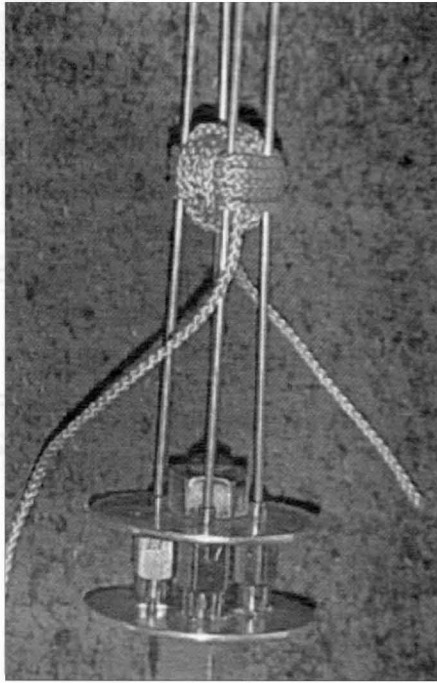
Note: ALTHOUGH TWO HALF HITCHES RESULT IN THE SAME KNOT AS THE CLOVE HITCH THIS WAY OF TYING IT PUTS IT TIGHT INTO THE CORNER SO IT CANNOT ROTATE AND LOSE TENSION

John Kennaugh (c) 1998

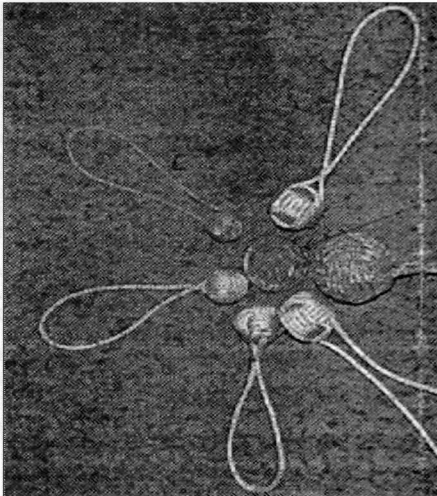
Monkey Fist Tool

By Antony Souza

At a recent New Bedford meeting Ken Yalden encouraged me show the tool I use to make small Monkey Fists, which I give away for zipper pulls and the larger ones for key chains, to the members through KM. I find that I save line when I use the tool verses the fingers on fists, with 1" balls. The larger tool was made to accommodate center balls from 1" to 1/2" and all sizes in between.



The smaller monkey fist tool is made from spinal tap injection needles 1.4mm diameter. The fist is 1.4mm line with a 3/8" ball in centre.



Internet Knot Museum

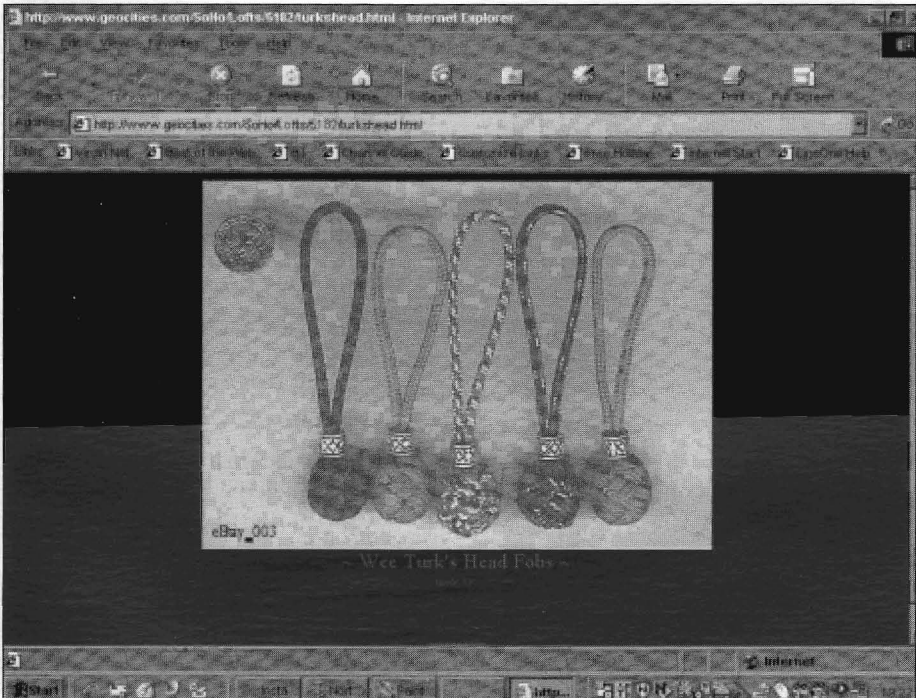
Daniel L. Callahan from Anchorage, Alaska has recently moved into a museum of fancy knots. Daniel says,

We have fancy knots from around the world, and we hope to make this little museum into a place for all knot tyers! He has a homepage on the Internet at <http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Lofts/5182/>. Those members with web access will enjoy viewing his Internet museum.

Rope Ends

“Walking backstage at the Liverpool Empire was like walking on the deck of a huge land-bound sailing ship. We climbed up onto the fly-floor, high above the stage, where the fly men bring in the scenery. After three weeks at sea, I felt at home. The same sort of ropes, the same knots, cleats for belaying and the same names.”

(Island Race, by John McCarthy and Sandi Toksvig, pub. 1995 by BBC Books)



Branch Lines

Knotting in the New Millennium from New Zealand!

Kia Ora (Greetings) from Aotearoa (New Zealand)!!

Firstly, congratulations to Ken Yalden and his team for the preparation of the IGKT Millennium Survival Pack! I am delighted that some of the suggestions that I made in KM: 57 were of use to the organization!

My own Millennium contribution was made on the floating crane, the "Hikitia" at anchor off Oriental Bay in Wellington Harbour. We were used as part of the production of an enactment of the formation of Wellington Harbour. I formed a nine part- four lead Turks Head atop the crane, (a 100 feet up, hanging on a Petzel C-71 dorsal harness, I might add) yesterday (31st of December) at about 8:00pm. We thought that the weather might have been too bad at midnight or at 4:00am when our ceremonies started. The other factor was I didn't want to be up there when the Pyro-Techics erupted from the Jib Head! I hope that I will be forgiven my temerity.

At midnight a video record was

made of me short-splicing a manila rope to signify all members being together. I also did an eye splice to signify our being ever alert to ways to promote our organization through the "eyes of the world!"

I would like to lay claim to being the first person in the world to splice a rope, in particular a natural fibre rope. Any challengers?

As I was on watch all night, I also formed another nine-part; four lead Turks Head on the bridge railing of the "Hikitia". I might add that I might well be sacked as an Officer of the Watch. On the two occasions that I needed a short break, we were boarded by up to 30 visitors!

A real highlight of the next few days is our first Guild Meeting of the new millennium with Professor Vaughan Jones (Our New Zealand Chapter's Patron and one of the International Guild's Vice-Presidents). Maybe this is the first Guild Meeting of the new era?

I haven't had time yet to communicate with our Chapter members (I have just come off a 36 hour muster without a sleep), but will report more fully to you as soon as possible. It goes without saying that the New Zealand Chapter will participate fully this year in our birthday celebrations. Unfortunately I will be unable to venture to the May meeting.

A wonderful visit to New Zealand at the end of the year from Netherlands member Willeke van der Ham was a

highlight. What a wonderful ambassador for the Guild! Willeke has met more New Zealand members than I have! Whilst here she stayed with a number of us; attended a Guild meeting on the “Hikitia”; helped Jack Sheahan and I at a Fire Brigade Training session and left wonderful examples of her work with each of us. She is a consummate traveller and in my opinion should be appointed “ambassador-at-large” for the International part of the organization. Arohanui ki a koutou katoa!
(Love and Care to you all)

Tony Fisher
President - New Zealand Chapter

West Midlands Branch

On 21st November 1999 the West Midlands Branch held their first meeting for quite a while. We had our meeting at Kinver Scout Campsite, unfortunately there were only six of us but we all enjoyed ourselves. Upon arrival Bill Lyden greeted us all with a nice hot mug of coffee, we all then had a chat before Colin Jones gave us a talk and demonstration on Grommets. We all finished up making one of these. Our thanks go to Colin for sharing this with us and also Bill for arranging the venue.

Bruce Turley

East Anglian Branch

At 1pm on Saturday 25th September 1999; 22 enthusiastic

members of the East Anglian Branch of the Guild gathered for a convivial and informative late summer afternoon of Knotting Craft/Skills. John Addis the retiring outgoing secretary handed over the reigns, records, subscription funds and the most important thing; the wherewithal to me. John and his wife Audrey were thanked and applauded for their sterling work and enthusiasm in keeping the Branch running and in particular Audrey for keeping us supplied with tea/coffee and biscuits. We wish them a happy fulfilling and peaceful retirement and hope to see them again at future meetings with John adding his distinctive flair.

We enjoyed an interesting and informative dual talk/teach-in workshop by Des Pawson on the wide and intriguing use of combination ‘Half Hitching’ techniques and ‘Needle Hitching’ to cover bottles and various other structures and in the making of ‘Mats’ ably assisted by his wife Liz.

I gave out a ‘Handout’ about how womankind had got the world all sewn up with spinning and rope making whilst man the hunter-gatherer went out with their handiwork to hunt. After which I endeavored to teach two different ways to tie the American ‘Theodore’ Knot and the South American and Australian method of tying a ‘Rose Knot’ by two different methods, which is in fact a Single strand ‘Mathew Walker’ but much easier to tie than the traditional

methods of using multi-plys. All of which lead me on to demonstrating how to combine those knots using 6/7 metres of rope to make a 'Head Collar/Halter'.

Our next meeting will be on Sat. 25th March 2000 at 1pm at the usual venue. Bring samples of your craft to show and explain; I will demonstrate an aspect of 'Macramé' Hanging Basket techniques. See you there!

John Halifax

West Yorkshire Branch

1999 was a good year for the West Yorkshire Branch of the IGKT, with various different events and plenty of opportunity to exchange ideas and chat.

At both International meetings our Branch was well represented, and we had a great time meeting other knotters, including several from other countries. A piece of rope can overcome language barriers very well!

At Branch level we had seven meetings throughout the year and whilst the numbers attending have not increased, we are working on it.

In addition to the Branch meetings, we met the general public at numerous events. We had three exhibitions in Museums last year. The first was at the Colne Valley Folk Museum at Golcar where we had a static display for 5 weeks occupying quite a large room, with some manning at the weekends. The Captain Cook Museum in Whitby invited us back

again and we displayed for a weekend in the hot sunshine in their courtyard on the banks of the river Esk. The event was particularly good as some local members who brought their work to display with ours joined us. Our third Museum was Armley Industrial Museum where we had a single display case to support the RNLI exhibition. This ran for a month, and we staffed the last weekend.

Our Waterways festivals began with a Canal Working Boat weekend (a first for us) in Shipley. The event was not well publicized so there were not many visitors: However we met another branch of the boating fraternity and were made very welcome. We then had the Wakefield Canal Festival, a regular event for us, where we are well received and have a good following of interested boaters. The one-day Dewsbury Canal Festival followed, hot, dusty and good fun. Our final outdoor event of the year was at the Leeds Waterways festival, which began only three years ago and has rapidly grown in size and popularity. A visiting French market was on the site this year, which made lunches more exciting! The Festival is held at Clarence docks, next to the Royal Armouries, and makes a good venue for our display.

We already have three bookings for this year, the first being a weekend display at Armley Mills Industrial Museum on February 19th and 20th. The IGKT President, Brian Field is planning to join us that weekend. Our

second booking is for a representation of the Branch at the Lace Guild meeting in Scarborough, in April. Our third booking is for Wakefield Canal Festival on June 3rd/4th

We know that we will have many more requests and unfortunately, we have had to turn down several over the past 2/3 years as we have not had sufficient members available to staff the events. Please call if you have any time spare to join us at events, and you are all VERY welcome to our Branch meetings.

David Pearson

Pacific Americas Branch

We have our “Traveling Knot Box” which is a 3 ft by 2 ft by 7 inch wooden box that opens up to show two knotboards. Since the beginning of the Branch, members have also donated a good quantity of knotted items for display at different shows and events. This is what we take with us when we go before the public.

Dana Point Harbor holds two major yearly events. These are the Festival of Whales in March and the Tall Ships Festival in August. We always get a good number of members to participate with these and we can always anticipate a good crowd. They are exhausting but exhilarating at the same time!

There was also the Tall Ships Cannon Festival at Rainbow Harbor

in Long Beach. The parking was a bit difficult so we didn't see as many people that time but we met some enthusiastic knotters none the less.

Lindsey Philpott gave a talk at the Banning House Museum and to a number of Boy Scout Troops in the Los Angeles area.

Someone saw us at the Tall Ships Festival and so Joe Schmidbauer was invited to the Victorian Handicraft Faire in Lake Forest. This took place at Heritage Hill Park a few weeks before Christmas. Most of the crafters in the area were there showing off their goods. One lady told me that she had just learned of the existence of the Guild and had been hoping to find some information about it. It was her lucky day that I was there with all the information she could want! Joe also gave a lecture to Boy Scout Troop 399 in Corona, which turned out to be a very fun time indeed.

The Pacific Americas Branch holds monthly meetings at the Los Angeles Maritime Museum with whom it is affiliated. It is also planning a knotting extravaganza this June 24th and 25th in Long Beach, California called “Lots of Knots: A World of Knotting” More details will be sent along as we work them out.

Joe Schmidbauer
IGKT-PAB



Postbag

The views expressed in reader's letters do not necessarily reflect those of the Council. The Editor reserves the right to shorten any letter as necessary.

The Surrey Six

The presentation of the 'Surrey six' in the last issue of KM was interesting, but raises a few questions.

What is the authority behind the statement 'these are the knots we think should be used with modern ropes'? Is this proposal endorsed by the Guild or is it peculiar to the Surrey Branch?

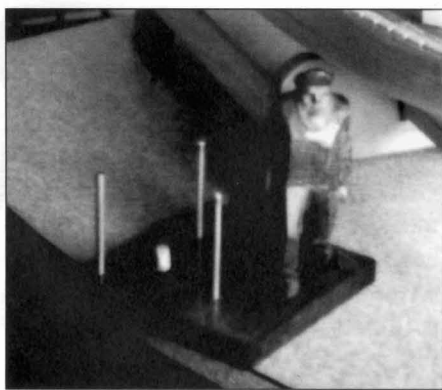
What set of knots do these knots replace?

Have there been tests that validate the claim that this set is more suitable for use with modern ropes.

Does the term 'modern ropes' mean man-made fibre ropes, and does it encompass all types of rope in current use?

I believe that the Surrey Six represents work that the Guild should be engaged in, revalidating traditional working knots in the light of new materials and rope design, but the rationale of proposals for change should be fully documented. Perhaps the authors could address this.

Tony Doran



ROPE-MAKING ANCHOR?

I have enclosed a photograph of an old carved seaman in oilskins, holding a metal three-core hawser, secured on a rosewood base. With three metal rods spaced 2 1/2" apart fixed as a triangle. My wife bought this at a car-boot fair, thought it would be a nice letter rack! After a few weeks and a few hours admiring the quality of the workmanship, it reminded me of the anchor points used in rope making, which I saw in a book on Chatham Dockyard history. The Rope Shed had a similar anchorage. I wonder if any members could identify this idea of mine?

Brian Trew, Hastings

Snail Mail

As a freelance writer I ought to welcome more picturesque prose; but I do object to the dismissive use of 'snail mail' when it appears to

condemn those of us who have chosen -for whatever reasons - to do without e-mail addresses and fax numbers, connection to the Internet, or even a mobile phone.

Contributors to Knotting Matters who request information and then supply only an e-mail address (when their details are not in the current IGKT membership handbook) will receive no response from me. Frankly, I find their approach irksome and discourteous.

Sorry to grumble. It's my age. Perhaps I don't get out enough.

*Geoffrey Budworth,
Tonbridge, England*

Watch Telescopes

I was interested to see a photograph in the Times of 3rd September 1999, showing Captain Mark Stanhope, of HMS Illustrious, carrying his watch telescope complete with decorative Turks Heads. Can any of our ex Royal Navy members comment on the continuing validity of watch telescopes in this age, or are they 99% ceremonial now?

John Constable, Pershore

Hammocks

I wish to make a hammock for my own use, but cannot find any information on this subject. Can any reader help me?

Also where can I purchase those small ships wheels, pulley blocks and lifebelts etc. that I have seen on some knotboard displays? I would be grateful for any information.

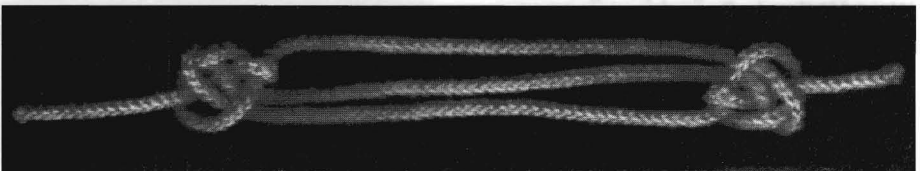
Keep up the good work with Knotting Matters. I look forward to every issue.

*Robert Wiseman
Fraserburgh, Scotland*

Catshank

Has anyone seen this? I found it on a book published in 1948. John Erving, the intrepid yachtsman called it a "Catshank". I've found it doesn't slip, won't jam under pressure, and makes a good addition to knotboards. As far as I can see it's not in Ashley or any of the knot books or sailing manuals?

*Peter Winward,
Suffolk, UK*



Knotting Diary

Compiled by Jeff Wyatt

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IGKT Annual General Meeting

T. S. Weston, Weston-Super-Mare,
Somerset. 13th May 2000
Contact: Nigel Harding

A World of Knotting

IGKT-PAB
Long Beach, California
24th -25th June 2000
Contact: Lindsay Philpott
Tel: (562) 595-8854, or
Joseph Schmidbauer
E-mail: Koolkatz@prodigy.net

IGKT Half-yearly Meeting

14th October 2000, Netherlands
Contact Willeke van der Ham
Tel: 0251 21 3285

West Midlands Branch

12th March 2000 at Kinver Scout
Camp, Kinver, Nr. Stourbridge.
Contact Bruce Turley
Tel: 0121 453 4124

West Yorkshire Branch

21st March, 16th May 2000
Beulah Hotel, Tong Road, Farnely,
Leeds.
Contact David Pearson,
Tel: 0113 257 2689

Lace Guild Meeting

April 2000, Scarborough
Wakefield Canal Festival
3rd and 4th June 2000
Contact David Pearson

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