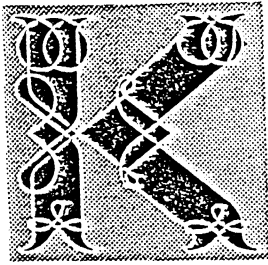
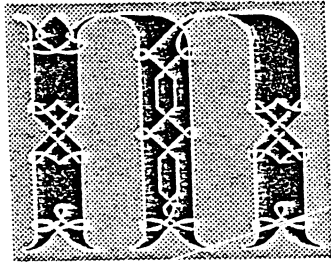


Issue No. 7  
April (Spring) 1984

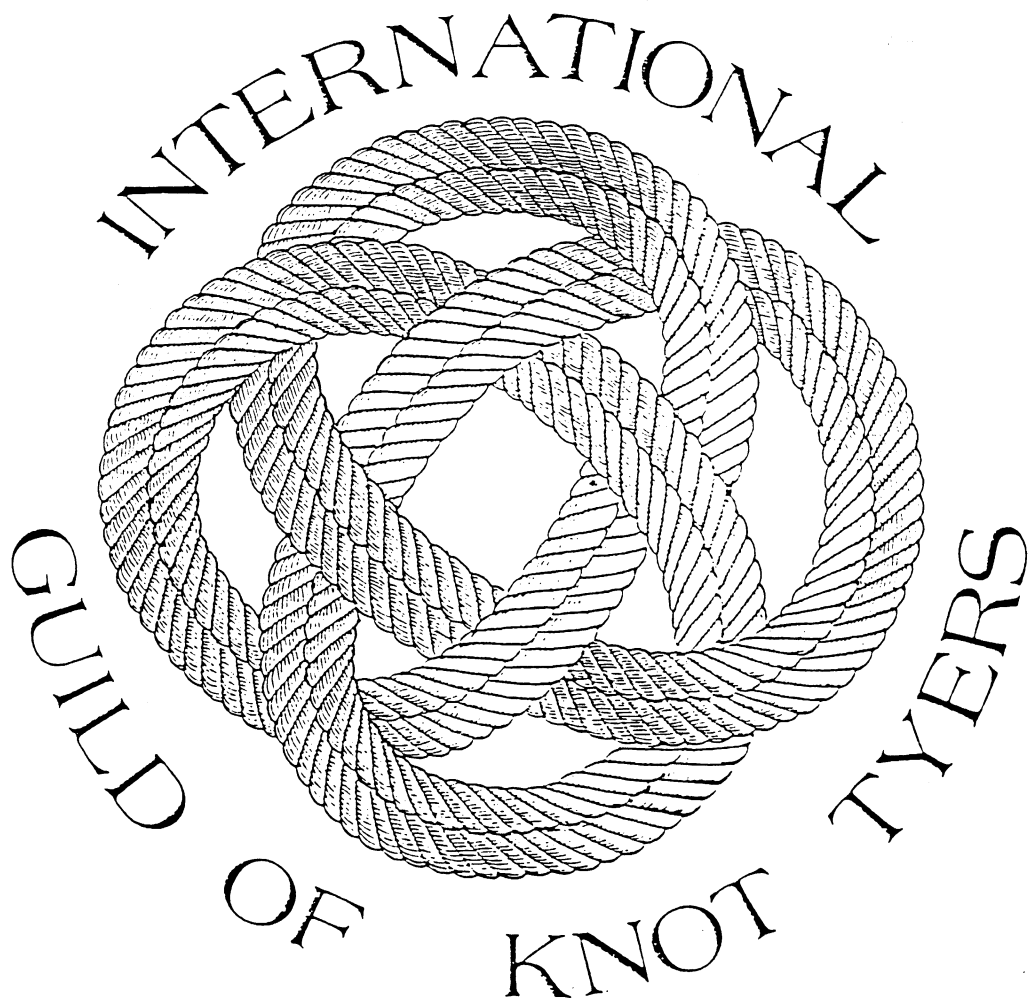


Knottling



Matters

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE



# "KNOTTING MATTERS"

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF KNOT TYERS  
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Issue No. 7  
April (Spring), 1984

- - - oOo - - -

## Editorial

A London man rang me one evening recently. He'd heard of the Guild and decided to learn a few knots and lashings. A scaffolder, he reasoned they'd come in handy at work. I explained our set-up, that we didn't actually run classes and there was no group local to him. All I could do was suggest a good book.' Pause. "So," he said, "you can't really do anything for me." We can't; he's a year or two too early.

My life has been largely spent lecturing, teaching, coaching and tutoring skills both practical and theoretical. So my instinct is always to structure a course of instruction with tests and awards. That's what the man needed.

It isn't difficult. You draft beginner, improver and advanced syllabuses with compulsory and optional ranges of knots, splices, lashings, etc. Students are taught and tested, tying the knots and answering from a standardised list of questions. An effective correspondence course is vital, programmed learning and multi-choice tests, with (ultimately) video-cassettes. A panel of visiting instructors, examiners and correspondence tutors would be compiled, badges or certificates issued. A scale of fees would cover costs.

I also envisage two elite categories. The submission for assessment of a ropework masterpiece could earn the title 'Craftsman' or 'Craftswoman'; while an original book, tests & measurements project, or other theoretical compilation would attract the designation 'Expert'.

These five proposed grades appear to cover everyone. It is not intended that members who qualified at any one of these levels should have greater rights than unqualified, paid-up members.

If the Guild is to move further towards its published aims, it needs - I suggest - a training scheme.

## Definition

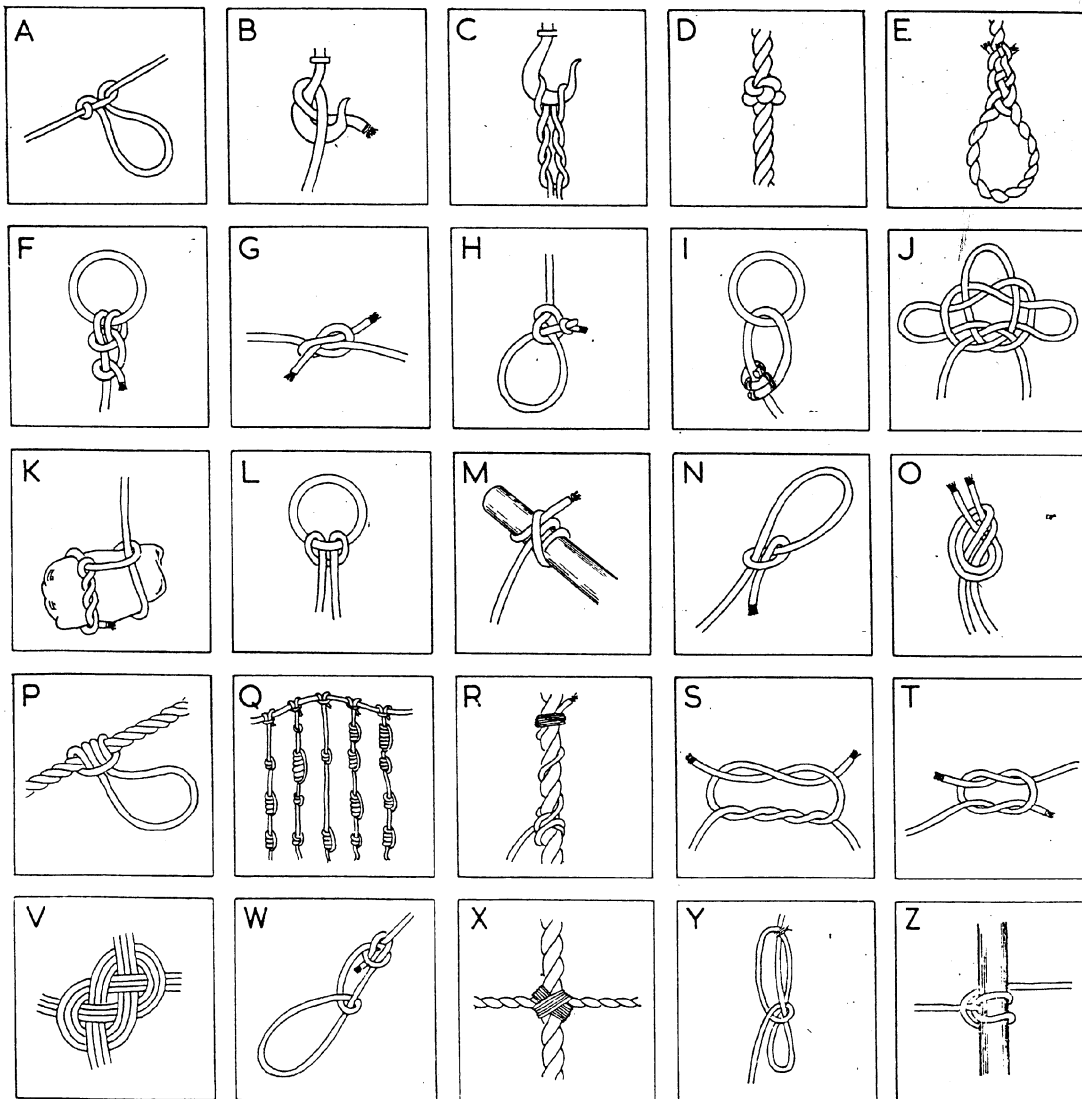
'LIZARD' a piece of rope or wire fitted with a thimble in one end, used for various purposes.

# A Page of Knots

by

Eric Franklin

About a year ago the Editor asked me to produce a Page of Knots and every month I have tried to give you something interesting and something useful. On the last of these pages this year, here is something different—a full page of knots, in fact one for each letter of the alphabet, less one. See how many you can name. The answers are given on another page but be careful, you may know some of them under different names and it is possible that you may not even have met one or two before.



Reproduced from "The Scout" magazine with the Editor's kind permission

Answers in July's Issue No. 8.

## Wire Rope - Origins

Encyclopaedia agree that wire rope appeared commercially between 1832-1837 and the credit for its invention usually goes to a German, although the English claim to have made it in 1832.

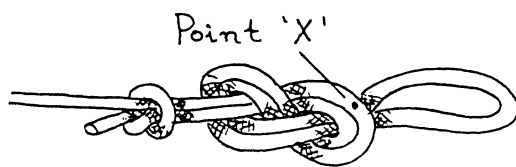
Well, think again. Guild member John CONSTABLE, of Pershore in Worcestershire, draws our attention to an astonishing exhibit in a Naples museum...a piece of wire rope excavated from the buried city of Pompeii. It seems that twisted wire rope was actually in use eighteen centuries ago!

The specimen, as well-made as many ropes today, is 4 1/2 metres long, about 1" circ. (i.e. about 8mm dia.), 3-strands laid right-handed, with 15 wires in each strand. The wires are bronze.

Unfortunately no record was made of the exact position in Pompeii where the rope was unearthed, so we can only guess what the Romans used it for. Perhaps they traversed the River Tiber by aerial runway.

(John's source is "The Wire Rope and its Applications" by W.E. Hipkins, published 1896. Hipkins was Managing Director of J. & E. Wright Ltd. of Birmingham, who patented and made the first successful trans-Atlantic cable).

## Knot Test



The Figure of Eight tied On the Bight is used by climbers who secure the tail end around the standing part of the rope with an overhand knot. In addition, Bill Marsh - in his book 'Modern Rope Techniques in Mountaineering' - advises; ".....always ensure that the main rope lies on the outside of the first bend in the knot (see Point 'X' in the diagram). If this is on the inside, the knot is weakened.

Our own Alan WALBRIDGE of Templepatrick, Co. Antrim, tested Bill Marsh's statement. His report follows:-

"I made up two samples of 1/4" terylene with the figure of eight on the bight, and to my surprise the author is correct. With the main rope on the outside of the bend 510kg (breaking strength); on the inside 430kg: a reduction of over 15%. This is the same rope used in my previous tests so you can see the improvement over a reef knot at 310kg. What is more interesting is the mode of failure. The tests on pure rope, reef knots and figure of eight on the bight (inside - not outside) all failed by first one strand breaking, then another, and finally the third broke. With the 'outside bend' knot all three broke simultaneously. Is this the secret of its strength? I admit the work is not very scientific, only testing one sample of each knot. However, the results do appear interesting, especially if this mode of failure is repeatable".

# Cy Canute

Rope used to be measured by its circumference in inches and those of us who acquired our skills in those days can readily picture a 1 1/2" hawser or a 6" cable.

Nowadays, the stuff is sized according to its diameter in millimetres and that doesn't mean a lot to anyone I've met.

There's an easy trick which removes all uncertainty. Just multiply or divide by 8.

Example 1                      A rope is 1" circumference. To discover its diameter in millimetres, multiply  
 $1 \times 8 = \underline{8\text{mm.}}$

Example 2                      A cord is 12mm diameter.  
 $12 \div 8 = \underline{1 \frac{1}{2} \text{ circ.}}$

Simple, isn't it.

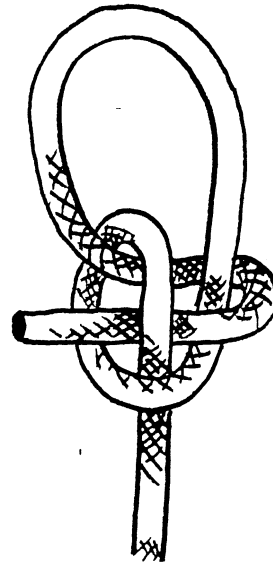
## Cartoon



*"Ha! Ha! Funny how you forget."*

(Reproduced from 'The Scout' magazine by kind permission of the Editor)

## Unknown?



Does anyone have a name or use for this knot?

G.B.

# Single cord Star Knot Turk's Head

Illustrations from drawings by S. Clavery  
and secured for the Guild by his kindness at the suggestion of Guild  
member Tom Solley of South Shields.

How can the beautiful Star Knot be reproduced using only a single strand? Here's how. This 'Single-cord Star Knot Turk's-Head' was developed by Capt. Paul P. O. Harrison, Master Mariner, and published in The Harrison Book of Knots (1964). This original and versatile creation can by any length you choose; it will spiral around a bellrope, or the ends can be united to form a bracelet. Paul Harrison's book is worth the price for this alone.

Minds become confused, however, at the sight of all those interlocked bights; and linking both ends in a continuous and unspoilt pattern can give a little trouble. Guild member Tom Solley of South Shields is not the first to find that out...but Tom has a friend, Mr. S. Clavery, who constructs jigs to make this sennit and he gave him one, together with a drawing in two shades which makes the join quite easy to follow.

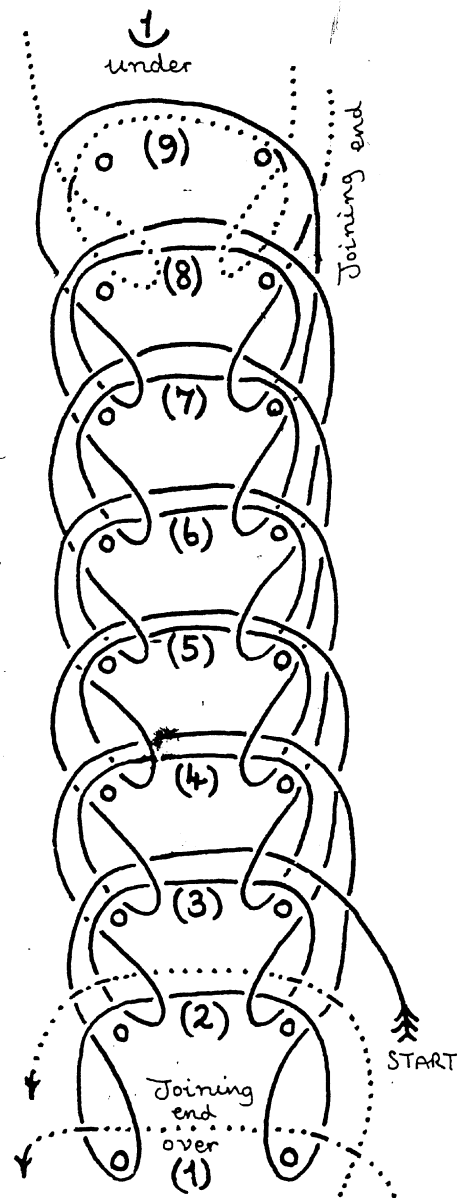
Mr. Clavery - who is NOT an I.G.K.T. member - then kindly passed his knowledge on to me so that other Guild members could benefit from it.

The jig (fig. 1)(overleaf) is a wooden block, dimensions shown, in which two parallel rows of holes are drilled for panel pins. The rows are 3/4" apart, and the holes along each row are also spaced at 3/4" intervals. So as to be able to tie a smaller sennit, another pair of parallel rows of panel pin holes is drilled (this time just 1/2" apart). Holes are still 3/4" apart. For clarity in fig. 1, they have been kept apart and not shown overlapped.

Fig. 2 (also overleaf) shows the method of joining ends. Fig. 3 (alongside) depicts a "knot" of a specific number of bights, in this instance - nine.

Beginners at this sort of knotting, do not be put off by the complicated appearance. Just follow it around a few times with your fingers or a pencil-point. Then, as the repetitions become apparent, try it with a piece of cord.

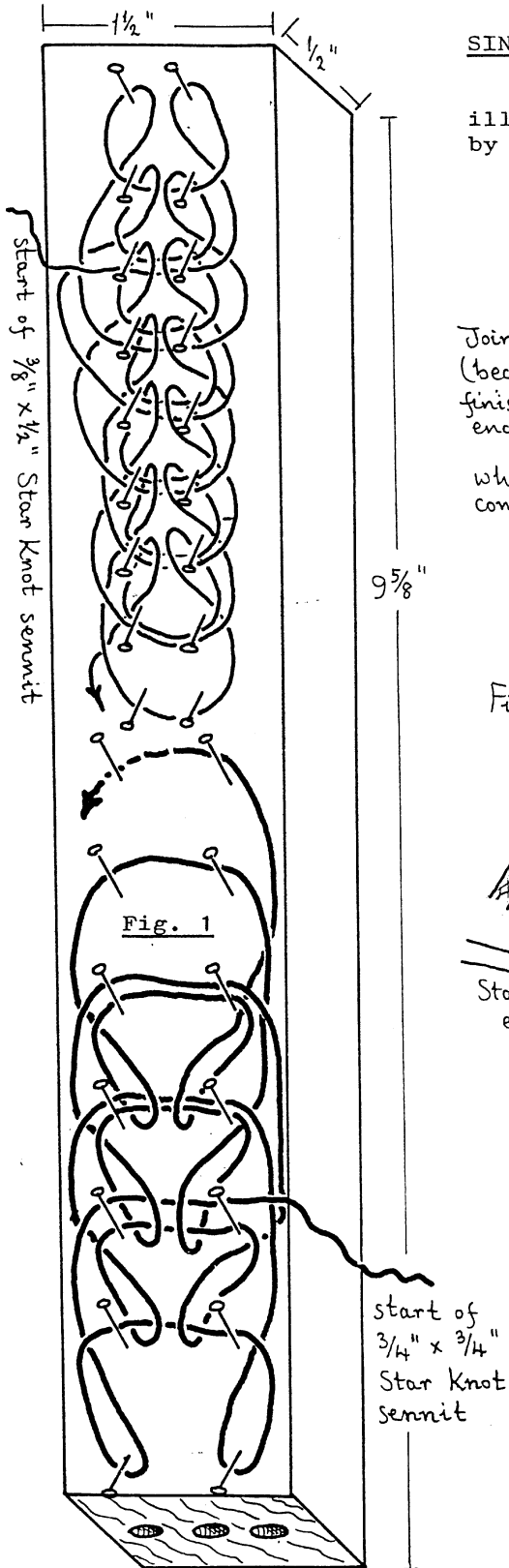
MANY THANKS, MR. CLAVERY



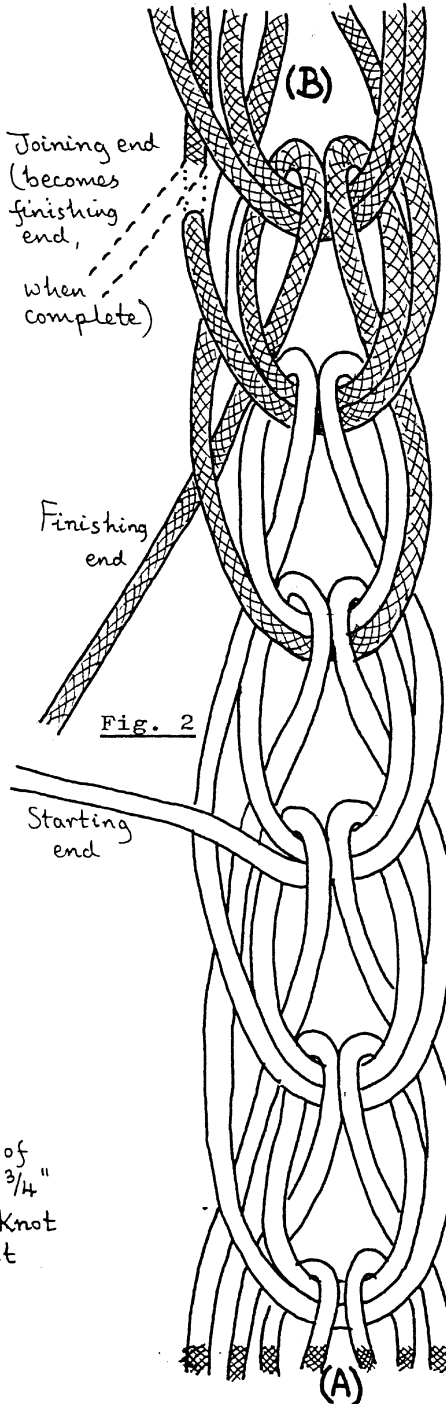
SINGLE-CORD STAR KNOT

TURK'S-HEAD

illustrations from drawings  
by S. Clavery



drill holes  $\frac{1}{4}$ " dia. x  $\frac{1}{4}$ " deep  
for 1" panel pins when not  
in use.



# East Coast Odyssey

by Jack CORLEY  
in darkest Essex

Y'see, it all started with this feller from Scandinavia. What may be the greatest discovery since Spike Milligan found that the world really was flat, and my elderly fishing mate 'Knocker' established for all time that by setting his flying jib upside-down at his ancient bawley's bo'spr't end it was not so efficient. Stood there, he did - this Scandinavian gent - in a suit that had cost more than our family smack, gold-rimmed glasses, layer-cut hair, the lot. On a business trip to England, and a feller with strong salt-water connections, he had sought out our little riverside town to sample the beer and to look at local boat types.

He says (not having any idea that I have been an incurable string-fiddler all my life) that something he'd give his right arm for is a nice big board, framed behind glass, showing all sorts of sailor's knots, both simple and complicated, and bits of fancy plaits, knob knots and buttons, etc. which he could hang in the hall at his home. Well, I! reckoned that he'd part with a nice lot of money before giving his right arm, but I always had the idea that the Danes and the Finns and the Swedes were the last word in seafaring arts so I asked him why he didn't get himself a Knotboard nearer home.

"Veil, everyones knows dat ne English is best in ne world vor makings vis knots and decorationments", he said.

I suddenly noticed that a Union Flag was fluttering from my cap and Elgar was welling up inside me, but I forced myself to sound non-committal as I said;

"I could do it for you, mate. Give me six months",

Which judging from his behaviour made us blood-brothers for life. One thing I resolved to myself at the time: somewhere on that board, be it ever so small, I would put "MADE IN ENGLAND" and thereby earn myself the admiration of our dear Queen, and Prince Albert too I shouldn't wonder.

The board, 3 x 2 feet, was nearing completion when I got the idea that a little bit of colour wouldn't go amiss. The base itself was seven coats of 'keep-out-of-here-with-that-woolly-pullover, boil-your-kettle-in-the-other-room, don't-you-dare-smoke, just-go-away' varnished ply and the roundish white shapes of the ropework reminded me of flowers on a coffin.

So, "Colour, mate, that's the answer", I kept saying to myself about the house until the budgie added it to his repertoire. I woke up in the night thinking of lovely eight-strand sennits in blue and white and coachwhipping in red and white. All my local yacht-chandlers seemed ready to get me certified as insane (mind you, I live in a backward area) for suggesting that they might have any blue or red whipping or hambro' line, so I haunted such places as upholsterer's workshops (too fluffy) and lingerie manufacturers (too delicate, and got some funny looks too!).



## East Coast Odyssey cont...

Eventually I hit on the idea of trying a tent and marquee maker's place. So in an attempt to make myself look like a camper (everyone knows that all sailing folk are wealthy and a good guide to shopkeepers is to multiply the real price by nine as soon as you spot one) I turned up my coat collar to hide a diesel-and-paint-impregnated guernsey and thrust my battered little denim cap in my pocket. I glanced at the reflection in a shop window. I saw a sad old geriatric, apparently feeling the cold on a nice mild sunny morning. Clearing my throat, I went into the showroom (remember you don't say fathoms, you say feet). It was lovely. Rope of all kinds, small stuff, canvas, eyelets and toggles - even the aroma of Stockholm Tar!

"I was just looking for some stuff to mend my tent", I said to the teenager with the incredibly white and even teeth, thereby revealing my own headrail, even...but reflecting a lifetime diet of rum and tobacco. To my relief he didn't say;

"Clear off you old liar, you haven't got a tent", but; "Have a look round, Sir, all the prices are marked on the goods" - and so they were!

In the next ten minutes I saw enough prices for me to swear to myself that I knew where my next halyards and sheets are going to be purchased. It will pay me over and over again to make the ten mile trip. I did not find my coloured small stuff, which by now had assumed the status of the Holy Grail in my search, but I got just the sizes I wanted in cotton and have now become quite proficient in dyeing, or is it 'dying'? No, it must be 'dyeing'. Wear rubber gloves. I do now after finding that four royal blue fingers and a red thumb don't look quite right with a D.J. at the Laying-up Supper. The colour has made a world of difference to my beloved knotboard, and now gives the impression that a few roses and violets have been dropped on the coffin lid. Is this an omen, I wonder? I must get that board off to Scandinavia and the cash back here before there's another plane accident.

So the secret is revealed to an astounded public. When you go looking for rope don't go looking like a sailor. Leave your parrot at home, don't chew tobacco and don't call anyone "Old Matey". Borrow an old banger van and leave the Volvo in the garage. Try to look like a healthy camper, not a wealthy yachtsman, go to a tent-maker and surely you will save yourself many pints.

- - - oOo - - -

## **Puzzle**

What famous rope was eaten by a jackass?

(A. In a classical painting, the jackass eats the straw rope while Ochnus braids it)(from a general quiz sheet by Fred D. Browne)

# How to Draw Knots - 4

by Geoffrey Budworth

Really complicated Turk's Heads can be tied directly if you commit the starting sequences to memory; or smaller, easier ones may be first tied, then enlarged by various methods.

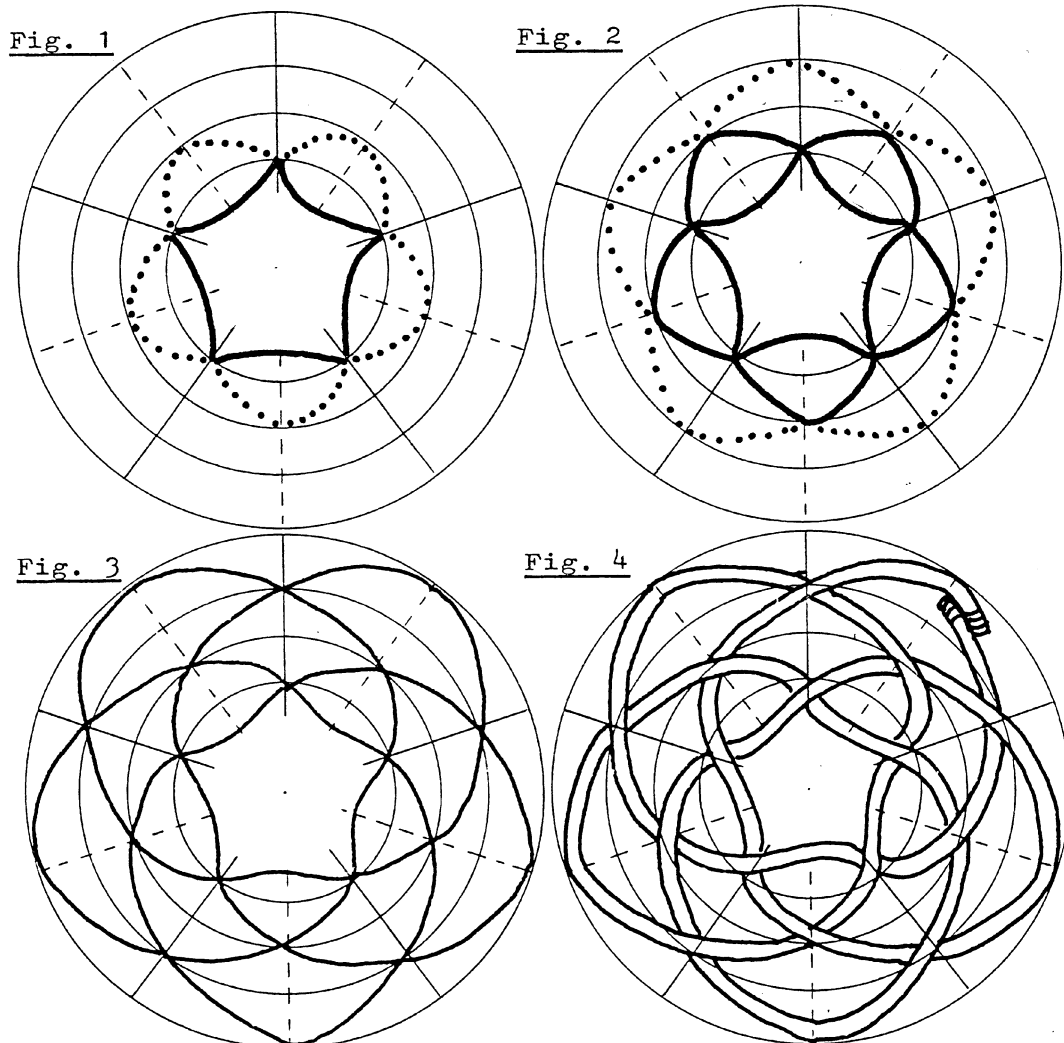
Knowing how to draw Turk's Heads enables you to pick any size and shape, creating a pattern over which to pin your cord during the tying process. Anyone can do it - freehand if you like, but a pair of compasses, a protractor, and a ruler will ensure nice symmetry.

Two features describe Turk's Heads, (i) "bights", which are the scalloped rim parts forming the edges, and (ii) "leads" (say "leeds"), the number of interwoven cords making the sides or body of the knots.

Example:- 5 bight x 4 lead Turk's Head...

1. Draw 4 concentric circles representing 4 leads;

2. Rule straight lines sub-dividing the circles into 5 segments, for 5 bights;



3. Divide each segment in half with extra (dotted) straight guidelines;
4. Fig. 1 - join the inner circle's 5 sub-divisions by drawing (see thick line) curved sections of line;
5. The dotted lines (Fig. 1) indicate the next stage, linking the 5 star points of the lines already drawn to the next circle out where it is crossed by the broken guidelines;
6. Fig. 2 - shows stage 5 completed and (further dotted lines) the process repeated out to the third circle; repeat once more;
7. Fig. 3 - shows stage 6 completed;
8. Add the cord's second line and create the over-under sequence (refer back to Issue 14, page 9).

NOTE - Turk's Heads cannot be tied with a single cord if the number of bights and the number of leads can be divided by the same number, any number (but ignore 1; that doesn't count), e.g:-

4B x	12L	(both divide by 2, and also by 4),
3B x	3L	" " "3),
6B x	18L	" "2, 3, and also 6),
6Bx	8L	" "2).

This is the so-called "Law of the Common Divisor". All other combinations not conflicting with this rule can be drawn and tied with a single cord.

## Poem

by DESMOND MANDEVILLE

KNOTMAN, NAME YOUR KNOT!

A nameless knot's a foolish thing -  
 Merely a muddle in a piece of string!  
 In Geoffrey's Rag, it makes me rage  
 To see a squiggle on the page  
 Without a name. I care no cuss  
 For your fine Knots Anonymous -  
 - Since any bend that's worth a try  
 Should have a name, like you or I.  
 A waste of time, a KNOTMAN's shame  
 is every knot without a name.

(Yet worse than those that haven't any,  
 Some knots there be, that have too many)

Letters

## Letters

Dear Geoffrey,

I would like to offer a couple of suggestions for the "Logical Knot Board" by Eric Franklin (Issue No. 5). First "Lark's Head" is a bad name for the ringhitch (see Ashley, p.11) and the reef knot should not be illustrated being used as a bend (see Ashley, paras 75 'and 1402). Lesser criticisms are that the bowline on a bight should surely be shown on a bight, to show that the end is not needed to tie it, and that all ends should be longer than illustrated - some of the knots shown would spill if drawn up.

Another knot in the same issue L.F. Osborne's "No Name" - reminded me of the Falconer's Knot illustrated by T.H. White in "The Joshawk", though of course it is not the same.

Finally here is a bight loop devised recently - perhaps a member can identify it. AB is extended over CD which is then extended through the loop so formed. Similarly a double form can be had by bringing EF up through ABHG and then 'extending' GH.

With best wishes to the Guild for 1984,  
John DARBY  
Canton,  
Australia

4.1.84



Hello Geoffrey,

I thoroughly enjoyed the General Meeting 8/10/83. The knotboard on green baize that I displayed was the following week on its way to Wanganui - New Zealand. The couple had a packing case in London for their bits and pieces they had collected during the three months stay but thought that if the knotboard went into the packing case some official might take a liking to it, so they carried it as hand luggage,

During October I went to London to spend a day at the Historic Ships, St. Katharine's Dock. I was delighted to see a model of the Brixham Sailing Trawler "Provident" which I had singlehanded re-rigged during 1948. But I must confess to being very disappointed with the ropework on display. I am going to make a knotboard for Yankeeland which is required in June and thought I might get some new ideas,

December, 1983

Cheers, Tom Long,

King's Lynn, Norfolk

Dear Geoff,

One thing that fascinates me is the Perique or Plug of Navy Tobacco. I can find no mention about it in any knot book and before it's too late can we get one of our members who has rolled his own tobacco leaves to put' into words and diagrams how to do it; one better, what about a display or demonstration at the, next AGM?

20-9-83

Yours aye,  
Ken Yalden

Petersfield,  
Hants.

Dear Mr. Budworth,

Re. your editorial (KM No. 6) I have asked a couple of Classicist friends about suitably pretentious names for knotting. The consensus of opinion seems to prefer a Greek stem (-ology is of Greek origin).

However, Harry Asher's suggested "Kompology" already means "boasting or vaunting speech (very appropriate, no doubt, to describe this whole discussion but not knotting!).

Alternative suggestions put forward... "sunhammology" or "sunammology" (Gr: sunamma - knot); "plecology", ~ "plectology", "plekology" or "plektology" (Gr: plec/kein - tie); "schoinology" (Gr: schoinos - cord)...a few of the' unpleasantest words that ever blotted paper!

Yours,  
Mark Nash-Williams

Trinity Hall,  
Cambridge.

Dear Mr. President,

Square Sinnets are all very well and I am glad some one cares for them but my interest in Knots is purely practical (hence my subscription renewal herewith) and I still await news of the one that I have never been able either to tie or hear of. -

What is the knot that can join two CHAINS together and can be untied after tightening under full tension?

Yours hopefully,

3 Feb 84

C. C. Stevens

Brentwood,  
Essex.

Dear Geoffrey,

I am Station Mechanic on the Clovelly lifeboat, and despite the old 'oil and water' syndrome, my great passion is ropework. Apart from traditional knots and their original applications, I am at the moment very interested in 'grass' rope fenders but I can find no literature on the subject as yet. Perhaps you can help me please?

Can I take this opportunity to seek your advice on the enclosed knot. It looks vaguely bowline like, though it was formed from the carrick bend used in the 'diamond on a bight' knot, and I have just stumbled on it.

Yours faithfully,  
Tony Dixon

Bideford,  
N. Devon.

20 Sept 8

TONY DIXON's knot (from his letter on the previous page)...

Dear Mr. Budworth,

Although very much a beginner, I've had a life-long interest in knots.

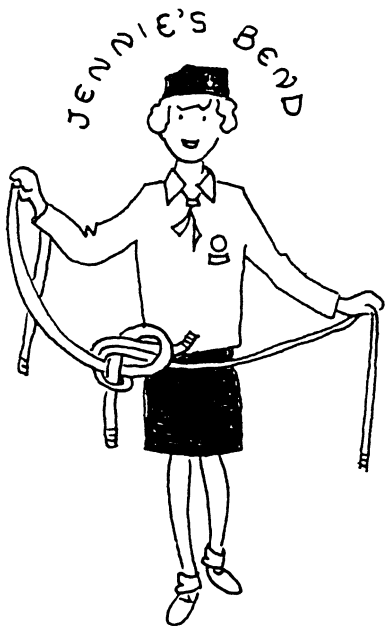
I mentioned to you at Gilwell my own little excursion into knot-inventing. While taking my Girl Guide daughter Jeanie through her knots, I found she was having some difficulty in preventing her sheet bend from spilling before she could work it up tight. There was a very great difference in the sizes of the ropes she was using and the heavier rope had a tendency to straighten out before the two ropes locked together. This was a bit much for delicate Girl Guide fingers.

So I set out to devise a bend in which misbehaviour of this kind could be controlled right from the start. Here it is...Jennie's Bend...for further research and comment by members, please.

4 September 83

Yours sincerely,  
Gregory Hargrove

A.C.C. (International),  
Buckinghamshire County Scout Council

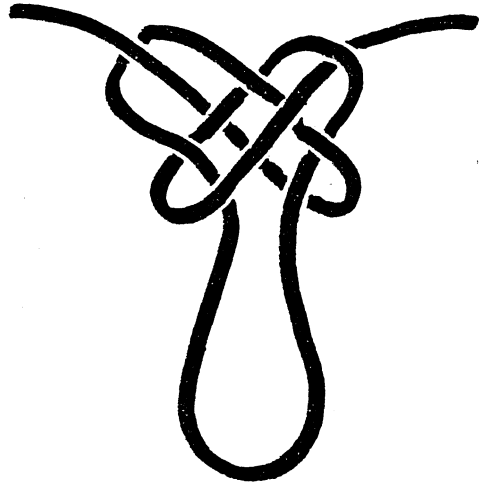


(illustration from an original drawing by John Sweet which was published in "Scouting" magazine, April, 1981 - by kind permission of the Editor)

### Quotation

"They use a certain slip with a running noose, which they can cast with so much sleight about a man's neck, when they are within reach of him, that they never fail, so that they strangle him in a trice."

THE STRANGLERS' (The Cult of Thuggee and its Overthrow in British India), by George Bruce, pub. The Camelot Press Ltd. in Britain (1968)



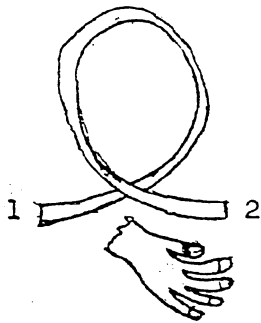
# More Taxonomy

## A NUMERICAL WAY TO CLASSIFY KNOTS

Frederick D. Browne

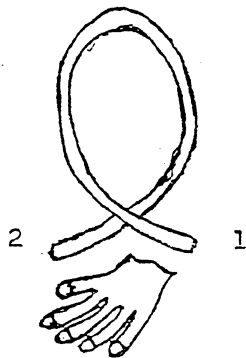
I hope to present a simple and practical way to classify knots. No claim is made that the method presented herein has never appeared before in some other forum. This method will be limited to a single cord at this time. While it can be applied to multiple cords, it seems appropriate to get some reactions from other knot tyers about the simple case of a single cord first.

To begin, a knot will start at end one (1), and conclude at end two (2) in all cases. Four groups of numbers will be used to describe the knot. The first number is the total number of crossings in the knot. The second number indicates whether crossings go under or over. The third number indicates the curl of the cord downstream of each crossing. The fourth group of numbers indicates the order in which crossings are encountered, Some examples follow.



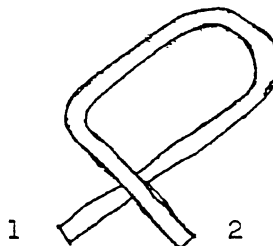
An example of right-handed curl downstream of the crossing. The digit one (1) indicates the start. In a third group, right-handed curl is indicated by a one (i).

1.1.1.1,



An example of left-handed curl downstream of the crossing. The digit two (2) indicates the finish. In a third group, left-handed curl is indicated by a two (2).

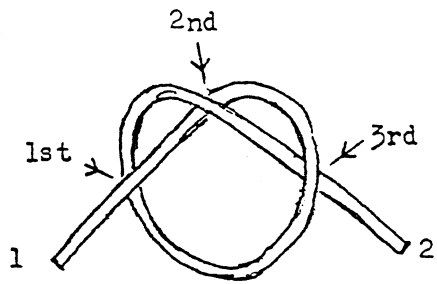
1.2.2.1,



An example of zero curl downstream of the crossing. In a third group, zero curl is indicated by zero (0).

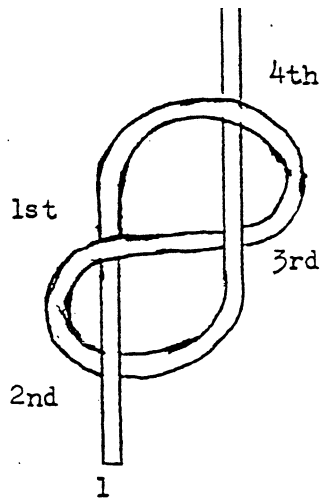
1.1.0.1

3.212.222.1,2,3



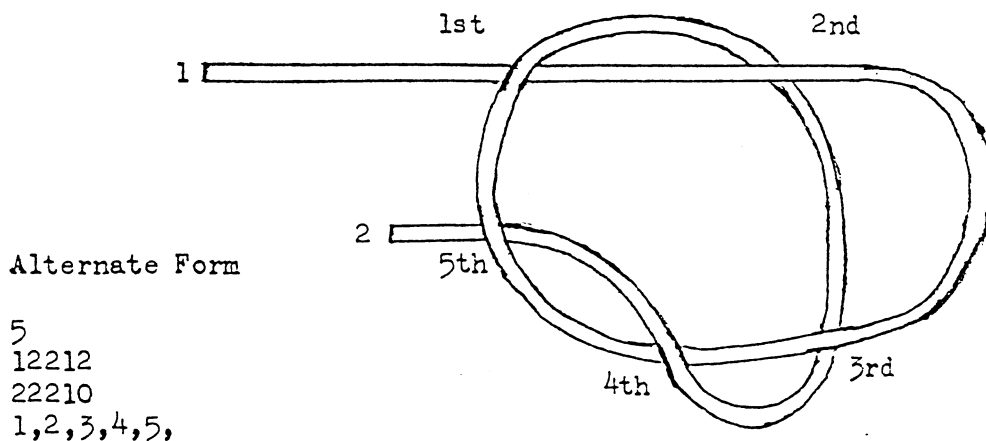
The first three (3) indicates that the knot has three (3) crossings. The second number, 212, indicates that the cord goes under, over, and under as it advances. The third number, 222, indicates left-handed curl downstream of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd crossings. The fourth group means that, starting at the beginning, the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd crossings are first encountered in that order.

4.1212.1100.2,1,4,3,



This knot has four (4) crossings. The cord goes over, under, over, under as it advances. There is right-handed curl downstream of the 1st and 2nd crossings. There is zero curl downstream of the 3rd 1st and 4th crossings. The 2nd, 1st, 4th, and 3rd crossings are first encountered in that order.

5.12212.22210.1,2,3,4,5,





It is now time to find out if other knot tyers can understand and use the method presented herein. The numerical formulae for ten common knots are presented below.

- #1 6.212212.122211.4,5,6,1,2,3,
- #2 6.121212.211211.1,2,3,4,5,6,
- #3 6.212212.211122.3,2,1,6,5,4,
- #4 6.121121.122200.1,5,2,3,6,4,
- #5 6121121.222222.4,5,1,2,3,6,
- #6 7.1121212.2221111.1,2,3,4,5,6,7,
- #7 7.1121212.2110220.3,2,5,1,7,6,4,
- #8 8.11121212.11111111.4,1,6,2,8,3,5,7,
- #9 11  
21221222112  
10112011111  
1,5,2,3,4,6,10,7,8,9,11,
- #10 112121121212121  
111111100110000  
1,5,13,8,2,3,9,12,4,6,14,7,10,11,15,

It seems to me that the ideal system of knot classification will consist only of pictures and numbers so that we do not have to translate into a host of languages. Numbers will over-awe some people, I know, but those of us able to cope must do the initial work.

Much remains to be done. This may not be the right approach.

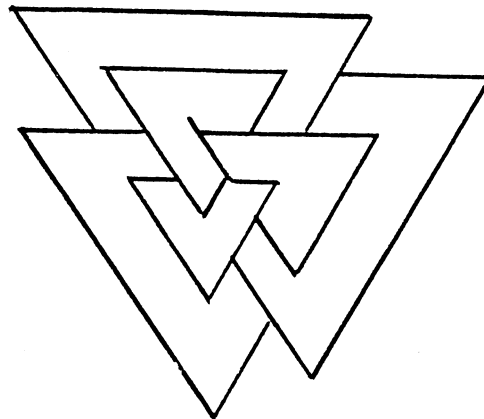
Please write to me about your suggestions for improvements in this classification system. I will also be glad to tell you if you have been able to determine the knots 1 names by means of the formulae.

Frederick D. Browne  
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USA

## Quotation

Knots and hitches found in the Oseberg ship (1904)(circa 800AD) included an overhand knot, a sheet-bend and what appear to be eye splices of some sort a finely braided leather band....and symbols (see fig.) painted on the verge-boards of the tent in the Oseberg ship."

'THE VIKING SHIPS' by A.W. BRGGER and Haakon SHETELIG, orig. pub. 1951, and by Edward Stanford Ltd. in Britain (1953).



# String Writing

by the Editor

Stories persist of knots arranged on cords to represent letters of the alphabet and make up words; not simply numbers - like Inca quipus - but conveying real messages. The origins of these string writings are supposed to be Peru or Mexico, from whence they came to Europe in the 17th century. Although one Padre Francesco Lana advocated an arrangement of string knots in 1676, it must have been of limited use.

However, a remarkable little gentleman in Britain around the time of the Napoleonic Wars devised a knotted alphabet which WAS practised.

David McBEATH, born in Dalkeith in 1792, was almost a midget, 4'-6" tall with proportionate build. He lost his sight early in life after a severe disease which left him with the body, voice and appearance of a boy of 10 or 12 years.

He entered the Edinburgh Blind Asylum as a handicraft worker but proved so learned and cultivated, with an aptness for imparting his knowledge to others, that he was soon appointed a teacher there...and an excellent one.

McBeath had a strong inventive streak and - years before Samuel Morse compiled his Code - with a pupil, Robert Mylne or Miller, devised his string alphabet for communication amongst the blind. It's difficult to believe that this invention was ever anything more than a curiosity but assurances are solemnly given that it was regularly used in several schools.

By all accounts chunks of the Bible and other improving writings were transposed onto string and then wound onto vertical revolving reels, which could be passed through the reader's fingers (like rosary beads).

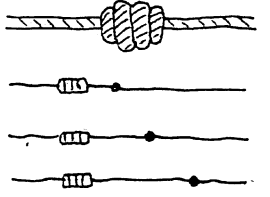
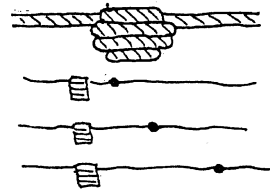
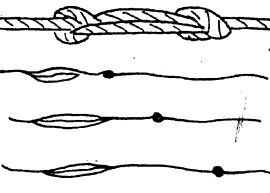
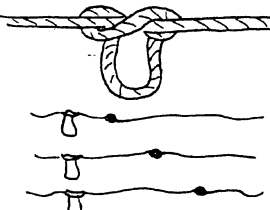
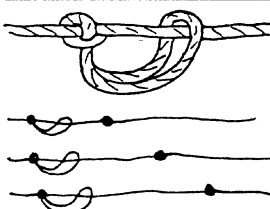
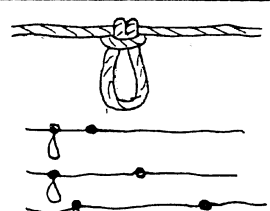
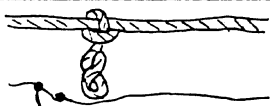
In March 1822, the Asylum's Directors agreed to pay McBeath twenty-one shillings as a mark of their approbation. He sent them a letter of thanks. . .in string writing!

Two and a half years later a girl pupil used the string language to compose a letter of appreciation to the Board of Directors: and in October 1825, the Directors further awarded David McBeath a silver watch suitably inscribed.

He died suddenly, aged 42, in 1834; and by 1842 one writer was commenting that string writing was only an object of curiosity in blind school museums.

Now, where are those reels of knotted string writing? I have failed to unearth one. Have they all rotted or been thrown away? Where are there relics of the arithmetical and musical notations also knotted for blind folk? Is it also true that soldiers used knotted cords for silent communication in the trenches? If so, where and when?

McBEATH'S ALPHABETICAL GROUPS

<p>A B C D</p>	<p>"large, round or treble knot" (as above) ...close by" "plus ....<math>\frac{1}{2}</math>" away" common knot... ....1" away"</p>	
<p>E F G H</p>	<p>"a knot projecting from the line" (as above)</p>	
<p>I J K L</p>	<p>"a series of links known as the drummer's plait" (as above)</p>	
<p>M N O P</p>	<p>"a simple noose" (as above)</p>	
<p>Q R S T</p>	<p>"a noose with a line drawn through it" (as above)</p>	
<p>U V W X</p>	<p>"a twisted noose with a net knot cast on it" (as above)</p>	
<p>Y Z</p>	<p>"by a twisted noose" (as above)</p>	

David McBeath's knotted alphabet can be found in "Knots, Ties & Splices" by J. Tom Burgess, published in 1896, but only the early editions. Later versions omit it.

Unfortunately, the artist - as usual - merely gives an impression of how the knots appeared; and very peculiar some of them look too. You can only guess what knots were used. Surely they must have been tied mainly in the bight if tedious pulling through of lengthy working ends was to be avoided. It's an enigma which can only be resolved when preserved specimens are found.

(The latest knotted alphabet is Desmond Mandeville's "Alphabend" - see Issue No. 4)

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## Corrections

Issue No. 6, page 2, 'STARTING SQUARE SINNETS' by John Constable, para. 4, 'Eight strand square sinnet, lines 6 and 7, should read; "Lead 4 forward over 1 and under 2 and lay beside and in front of 3."

Issue No. 6, page 8, 'TESTING KNOTS' by Alan Walbridge, para. 2, line 2, amend '500mm' to read "300mm"; also in the diagram, amend '440mm' to read "240mm".

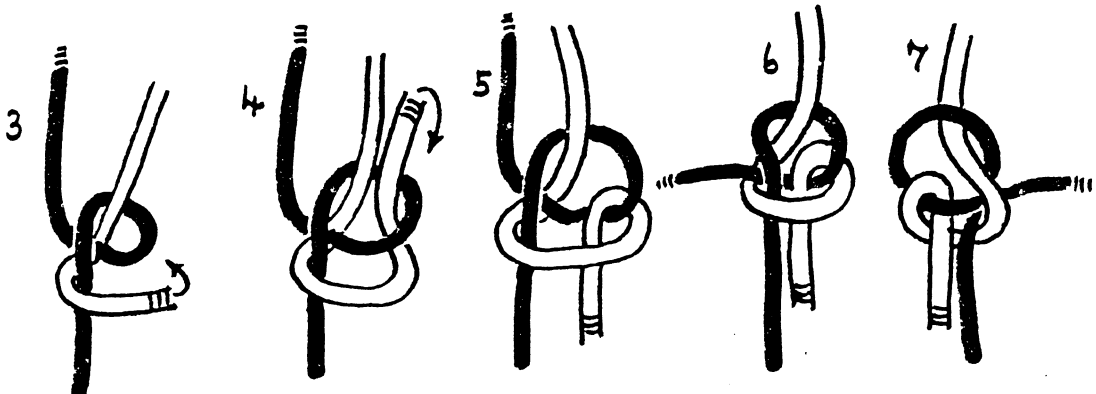
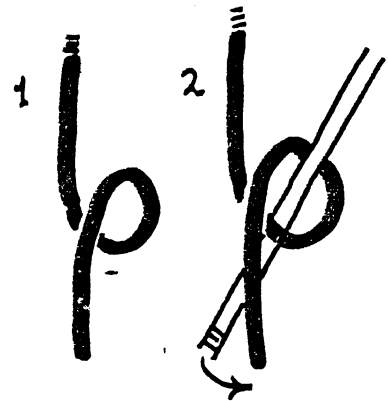
## New (?) Knot

Miss. Katherine M. Saunders of Halesowen, West Midlands, discovered this bend for herself around Christmas, '82. Neither she nor her father have been able to find it recorded in books; and her friends assure her it is original.

She would like to name and publish her invention.

The bend is easy to tie and untie. It is fairly strong and very secure, as well as being kind to the line in which it is tied.

Has anyone seen it before?



## Book Reviews

'NETS AND KNOTS for Fishermen and Others', by Quinton Winch, pub. by Dryad Press (1972)(reprinted 1979); price - about £2.

This attractive little work by an I.G.K.T. member contains all most of us need to know about net-making, explained with a straightforward yet informative text.

Some basic knotting has been appended - almost as an afterthought and perhaps only at the publisher's insistence; but the addition is worth it for Quinton's directions for tying Turk's Heads.

An inexpensive gift which would be appreciated by any knot-tyer.

'A HANDBOOK OF CELTIC ORNAMENT', by John G. Merne, pub. by The Mercier Press (Dublin and Cork)(1974; reprinted 1980); price - £2.99p.

This is a simple but complete course in the construction and development of Celtic ornamental knot interlacings for Art and Craft students, with over 700 illustrations.

For those keen to use knot patterns in the graphic arts, the systematically developed instruction in this book is invaluable.

(see also Issue 4, for George Bain's 'Celtic Art')

'ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RAWHIDE and LEATHER BRAIDING' by Bruce Grant, pub. Cornell Maritime Press Inc. (1972); price \$20 US.

This masterpiece by the late Bruce Grant contains all the braiding material from his two earlier books 'Leather Braiding' and 'How to Make Cowboy Horse Gear' (see Issue 3); and it is expanded with more than 200 pages of new material. There are more than 350 illustrations and photographs - real archive stuff.

Although written for leather-workers, knot-tyers can extend their repertoire considerably by following his guidance step-by-step. The book contains perhaps the most detailed treatment of Turk's Heads outside 'Ashley' enhanced by Larry Spinelli's painstakingly drawn staged diagrams.

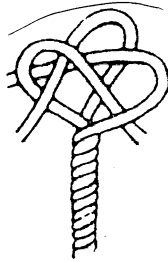
Available from major bookshops in Britain.

'MODERN ROPE TECHNIQUES in MOUNTAINEERING' by Bill March, pub. by Cicerone Press (1973, reprinted 1983); price £2.25p.

The title says it all: knots, slings, harnesses, improvised stretchers and other carries, sliding friction knots, belaying, rappelling (abseiling) and double-rope techniques, this is a summary of wholly practical basic rope work in modern climbing.

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WALKER, Christian E.	Box 84, Hanover, NH 03755, U.S.A;
WALKER, Jean	2918, Berkshire Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118, U.S.A;
WALLER, Richard de W.	Evergreens, The Avenue, Ascot, Berks;
WARD, Brian	52, Abney Road, Gleadless Valley, Sheffield S14 1PD;
WARD, Helen D.	35, Rosebank Cottages, Westfield, Woking, Surrey;
WHITE, Reg E.	42, Greenfield Street, Aberystwyth, Dyfed, SY23 1PJ;
WILLIAMS, W. O.	153, Whitehedge Road, Liverpool L19 7NA;
WILLIAMSON, Mrs. Pat	32, Elm Way, Worcester Park, Surrey KT4 8LT;
WINCH, Quinton	23, Brook Way, Romsey, Hants. S05 8JZ;

WINGFIELD, Lewis John    Top Flat, St. John's Vicarage, Paignton,  
Devon TQ3 3AQ;

WOOD, Alan John            "Panorama", 1, Barnoon Terrace,  
St. Ives, Cornwall;

WOODS, Don                10, The Rodings, Upminster, Essex RM14 1RL;

WOOSEY, John             15, Glenmarsh Way, Formby, Merseyside L37 8DX;

WORDEN, David            171, Westcombe Hill, London SE3 7DP;

WRIGHT, P.J.              30, Cambria Close, Dibden Ferns, Hythe,  
Southampton, Hants;

WRIGHT, Richard         11, Abinger Road, Portslade, Brighton,  
Sussex BNLI. 1SD;

YALDEN, Ken J.            29, North Stroud Lane, Stroud,  
Petersfield, Hants. GU32 3PP;

ZEE, Thomas F.            412, Coral Ridge Drive, Pacifica,  
California 94044, U.S.A;

ZELTZER, Harry I.        107, High Street, Ipswich, MA 01938, U.S.A.


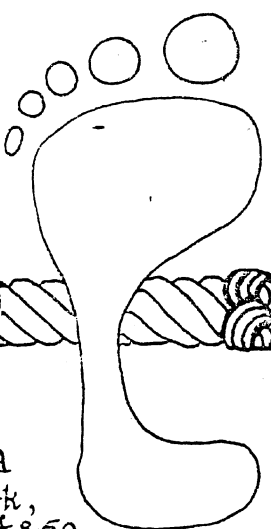
(An updated membership list will appear each year in April's newsletter. New members will also receive a supplementary sheet when they join. Established members feeling the need for a current list between April issues of 'Knotting Matters' can always obtain a computer print-out of the Guild's records from Anglia Computer Services, North Acres, Willisham, Suffolk IP8 4SS, on payment to them of £1.00p.)

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