Knotting Matters

The Magazine of the International Guild of Knot Tyers

Issue 83
June2004

Guild Supplies

Price List 2004

Item		Price
Knot Charts		
	Full Set of 100 charts	£10.00
	Individual charts	£0.20
Rubber Stamp		
	IGKT Member, with logo (excludes stamp pad)	£4.00
Guild Tie		
	Long, dark blue with Guild Logo in gold	£8.95
Badges - all with Guild Logo		
	Blazer Badge	£1.00
	Enamel Brooch	£2.00
	Windscreen Sticker	£1.00
Certificate of Membership		£2.50
	Parchment membership scroll Signed by the President and Hon Sec For mounting and hanging	

Cheques payable to IGKT, or simply send your credit card details
PS Don't forget to allow for postage

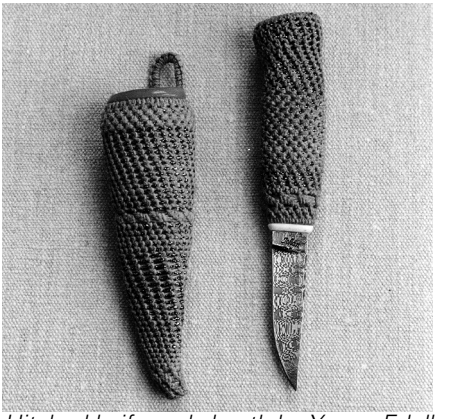
Supplies Secretary: - Bruce Turley
19 Windmill Avenue, Rubery, Birmingham B45 9SP
email bruce.turley@blueyonder.co.uk
Telephone: 0121 453 4124

Knotting Matters

Magazine of the International Guild of Knot Tyers

Issue No. 83

Submission dates for copy
KM 84 07 JUL 2004
KM 85 25 SEP 2004



Hitched knife and sheath by Yngve Edell
Back cover: Thump mat on replica ship 'The Mathew', Bristol

IN THIS ISSUE

ISSN 0959-2881

Notes from the Secretary's Blotter

It's a grey day, with the sun, having slipped quietly over the horizon, is being rather coy, and keeping itself well concealed behind a convenient cover of cloud. It ought to be the beginning of summer here in England, but I think that someone has forgotten to let the seasons in on the secret. The only clue so far has been the host of golden daffodils, which have been, not liked what they saw, and have gone again. All one can do now to brighten up the day is to get out a piece of string and tie a few knots.

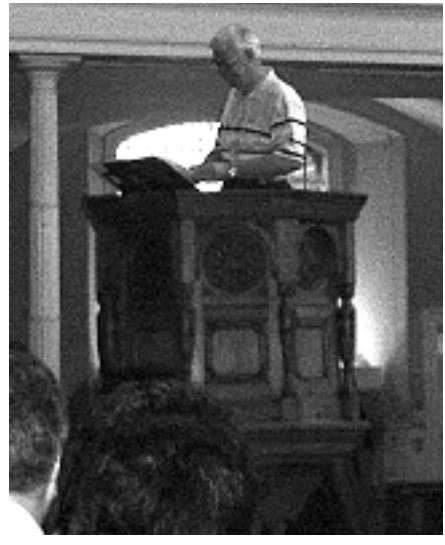
There is not a lot on my blotter this time, as I have managed to sneak away for a three-week break in Indonesia, quite an achievement for me, who has only just discovered the wonders of travelling. What a wonderful place, my mobile phone did not work there, and neither could I make a telephone connection through to the UK, and the letters that I eventually decided to write home, arrived about three weeks after I returned home. The result being the Guild was on auto-pilot for about six weeks, our thanks must go to Sylvia for running the show whilst I was away. When I finally summoned up the courage to tackle my desk, the AGM took priority and so I must apologise to those who applied for membership at the beginning of April, as I was unable to reply until the middle of May.

The AGM was held at the Chatham Historic Dockyard, where I addressed the membership from the pulpit of the Dockyard Church. A wonderful experience, it was only a shame that I did not have anything of great consequence to say. The main item for discussion was the Guilds library; a vast collection of knot related literature, which stays locked up in the librarians home, unread, and unloved, just waiting to see the light of day at the next General Meeting. Some suggestions were made as to how to make this more available, bearing in mind that some of the works are valuable as rare books. The Council will be investigating these ideas, in the hope that members may benefit from this tremendous wealth of information.

I must remind members that the subscriptions did go up in January, and there are a lot of people still paying at the old rate, which is causing both Linda and me a lot of extra work.

My deadline has now gone, and if I don't stop now, so will my allotted space in *KM*.

Nigel Harding



Col's Comment

This issue has been somewhat a struggle to get out, the reason being I have moved house. Everything has been packed in boxes and despite the organisation, you just can't find what you are looking for. Added to that, it has also taken a while to carry over my Internet connection. My current address should only be of a temporary nature, so in the interim *Knotting Matters* will continue to use the Hon. Sec's address as a forwarding point until all is settled.

I have just returned from the AGM at Chatham Dockyard. It's been many years since the Guild last visited this venue, at that time I was a fairly new member. The same feeling of camaraderie was still there though, and it was nice to catch up with all the old faces.

This year I expect to be involved in a number of canal related events where the Guild will be present. Ken Nelson is doing sterling work, raising support. So if you're about at any of them, come up and make yourself known.

On different tack, the Knot Gallery stock is starting to get a little bare now. While I still have quite a number of pictures, it seems to be of the same member's work. I do like to ring the changes, so please send your pics in to *KM,* either photographs or high-resolution digital pictures. These should be of around 300 dots per inch please.

Colin Grundy

The Guild of What?

During the closing days of 2K2 held in May 2002 at Fareham, Hampshire, Knot Tyers were asking me, "What to we do on Monday - can we start again?" At the time I didn't have an answer for them, well I have now.

The answer is YES.

In 2007 it will be the 25th year of the International Guild of Knot Tyers, and at the AGM in Chatham this May, a large majority of the members indicated that they wished to celebrate in some way the 25th Anniversary of the Guild.

Hence, five years after 'Knot Year 2K2' there will be:

2K7

The Silver Jubilee of the

International Guild of Knot Tyers

As before, it is intended that this should be a global celebration so that all members worldwide may be involved.

As well as celebrating 25 years of International friendship and interest in the art and science of knotting, 2K7 will have a theme of 'Youth and Education' so that we will be laying the foundations for the next 25 years of the Guild.

Ken Yalden

Obituary

Bernard ('Jumper') Collins (1920 - 2004)

'Jumper' (we never called him anything else) 'went aloft' unexpectedly on 2nd April 2004. He was with us at our West Country Branch AGM on the previous Saturday, 27th March, and word of his sudden death caused a particular sense of shock and loss. Four of us (Dave Pusill, Tug Shipp, Eddie Maidment and I) attended his funeral on Tuesday, 13th April at Taunton, along with family, friends and comrades numbering in all approximately two hundred and fifty! He joined the Royal Navy at the outbreak of the Second World War and it was fitting that Standard Bearers from the Royal British Legion (Taunton and Norton Branches) and from the Taunton Branch of the Submariners' Association helped to set the scene. One of my most enduring recollections of 'Jumper' is of the mischievous smile that emerged whenever he came into contact with a mariner from the surface Fleet and he could not resist saying - 'ah, so you were a skimmer!' He was, nevertheless, an active member of the Royal Naval Association as well as the Submariners' Association.

'Jumper' was as friendly and cheerful a man as you could hope to meet, who was also possessed of a strong sense of humour and a dry wit. He exuded a spirit of practical helpfulness, directed particularly, though not exclusively, towards young people. He made a substantial contribution to Scouting activity over a very long period. In the West Country area he was ever active in our efforts to take knotting to the public, and his commitment to teaching is evidenced in KM 77 portraying his 'Knot Table for Beginners'. Note the first two sentences of his explanatory article (pages 8 & 9)! At Branch level he took us patiently, amongst other things, through the intricacies of making chest beckets, in which his associated woodwork was as well crafted as his knotting. His decorative work in general was highly distinctive.

We shall be conscious of the empty chair at future meetings, and we have expressed our sincere condolences to his wife Barbara, who used to support him with her attendance on appropriate occasions such as AGMs at Weston and the Fareham celebration, etc.

Vernon Hughes*...on behalf of all members of the West Country Branch.*

2004 Annual General Meeting

This year's Annual General meeting was held in the Historic Dockyard, Chatham, Kent, and a fitting place for a meeting involving knot tyers. Within a stones throw from the ropery where they have been making rope for the Royal Navy since 1618 and now operating as Master Ropemakers, there was a suitable ambience for all us string freaks.

The formal part of the meeting took place in the unusual venue of the dockyard church. With some 100 members sitting in the pews, this gave Nigel Harding the chance to give his report from the pulpit. Our President, Jeff Wyatt opened the meeting by welcoming members from the UK and as far afield as the Netherlands, Italy, Canada, USA and New Zealand.

Nigel commented that the recent tail off in membership numbers was now starting to show signs of recovery. This could be due to the success of the Guild website, administered by Leslie Wyatt. However, the increase in the amount of 'spam' (unsolicited emails) has been a problem.

Europa Chang Dawson reminded the members of the October meeting at Pitsea and reiterated that names for booking accommodation must be in to Don Woods by August (see *KM82*).

Gordon Perry (Guild Librarian) spoke about the problems of viewing the library. He gave proposals for boxes of selected books to be available for loan to branches, and invited comments from the members. The Council will pursue this idea.

In the election of members to the Council, Nigel Harding and Dave Walker were both re-elected. Ken Yalden, who stood down at the end of the 2K2 meeting in Fareham during 2002, was also elected to the Council.

Two members spoke for the Portrait of a Knot Tyer spot, Alex Carson and Ken Nelson. Alex, found his interest in knot tying through Scouting, and joined the

Guild through Charlie Smith who he met at international Scout camps. Ken, christened the 'Nutty Knotter' first became interested as a kid, and then had this interest re-awakened through canal boating. Following a meeting with David Pearson at a canal rally, Ken then joined the Guild.

During question time, Ken Yalden floated the idea of celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Guild in 2007 - watch this space! Peter Goldstone also pointed out that this would coincide with the centenary of the Scout movement.

Following the formal part of the meeting, members adjourned to a room in the nearby ropery to earn their bread by giving displays and demonstrations to the public as part of the agreement with the dockyard museum organisers for using this venue. Lonnie Boggs had considerable interest in his smaller version of the ropewalk next door. Here people were able to have a hands-on lesson at making their own length of rope.

Following the usual raffle, the meeting broke up with some making their way home, while others gathered later in the King Charles Hotel for a knot tyers supper.

Proud to be High - Pt II

by Tony Fisher, FNZEI.

In this issue, Tony Fisher concludes his article on safety in rigging.

The 2 inch (50mm) death.

This happens in many guises, but for me it is usually when walking along scaffold planks. If the planks are butted together (the ends touching), then there is no problem. But when the ends are lapped (one end on top of another), the 2" death is always present!

You walk along, thinking that the next plank is above the next one. It isn't, it is below! So, when you step up to the next plank, you actually place your foot 2" further down than you have planned your brain. This is the two-inch death! It is a horrible feeling.

A similar happening is when the rungs of a ladder are wider spaced than you anticipate or the ratlines on ship's shrouds are unevenly spaced...

A much more serious situation is when working from a ladder, you try to reach out that 2" further than you should. Many people have died, or had spinal cords snapped this way.

Whatever, when it happens, it is VERY scary and the only way to recover from it is to obey the next maxim...

Three limbs secure.

Wherever possible, when you are moving any one limb aloft...

You keep the other three limbs secure.

When I first started climbing on the *Golden Hinde* recently, a number of the ratlines that I was climbing on parted! Had I not followed this rule, I would have fallen. You will understand if I explain that from then on my work schedule changed! I ensured that all the ratlines that I was going to use, were sound after that!

"Under below!" "Watch out below!" "Below!"

I'm not sure how universal the cry: "Under Below!" is, but in my experience anyone in New Zealand, experienced in our work, knows exactly what to do when they hear this call!

Geoffrey Budworth tells me that in the UK "Watch Out below!" or just "Below!" are more usual.

Any of these calls means that something is falling and if you are below, you have to take avoidance action: - FAST!!!!

Assuming that everyone below is away from (that is, out of), the roped off safety area, then the action to take is to run away from that area fast, looking up only when you are away from what you deem to be the danger area. If you look up first, then precious safety time has been lost and you compound any danger

that you may be in at the time the call from aloft was made.

If for some reason, you are in the safety area, then if something was to land on you, it would have done so before you can react. You are best to stand still and hope that your safety helmet does its job! This is one case where avoidance is the best policy.

If someone gets within my sight lines, which is always included within the roped off safety area, I stop the job, climb down and explain to that person the danger of the situation to all concerned. If I feel that the person's attitude is bad, I ensure that they get off the job before work continues.

Avoid vocal distractions.

Rigging jobs should always be well planned, carried out methodically and slowly with a minimum of sound from the team. Voice commands should be kept to minimum, hand signals the norm or the use of radio technology accepted.

NEVER permit the use of shouted orders. Shouting should be left for danger warnings in extreme circumstances. I detest the type who shouts on the job. The person who shouts at others. It is a form of either showing off to an audience or denigration of another person.

In all my jobs I make a plan; a sketch; or a set of procedures on paper. I take my crew through all aspects of the job. I ask for comments; suggestions for improvement; perspectives of worry or doubt. Modifications are made and we go back over the improved plan of action. I then walk through the job with the whole team to ensure that all phases of health & safety are understood.

Once the job is underway, I don't allow others to tell us what to do, that causes confusion, wastes time and heralds Murphy's Law. If we discover a 'shouter' in our midst, I ensure that that person doesn't come back onto a job of mine.

Geoffrey Budworth comments: - "This is not a racial slur on the Irish people. Murphy was, I believe, a designing engineer, who coined this axiom in relation to design features for component parts. He was overwhelmed by people from other professions who agreed with him. They had all experienced the same truth."

Briefly stated, one version of Murphy's Law is:

"If anything can go wrong, it will, and in the worst possible way."

During the job there is only one boss, the person who starts the job and orders each stage of the operation,

But if anyone sees something hazardous, something going wrong then, that person can stop the job.

To conclude on this maxim. The issue here is safety. That's one idea that I will not compromise. In forty years of doing this type of work, no person has been injured on a job that I have controlled. People rushing around shouting are indicators of a lack of planning and training. They are a hazard to all about them.

Twice as hard, twice as long.

Rigging work is hard; tough and dangerous. Its no good being romantic

about it.

Even the simplest task aloft is twice as hard and takes twice as long to do, than when you are at deck or ground level.

Even taking out a knife to cut a thin line takes a lot of thought and effort. You don't want to drop the tool, you don't want to cut yourself or your abseiling rope or the shroud that you are climbing!

It's a maxim that I have always been puzzled about. I go aloft to do the simplest of tasks and it takes SO LONG!!!

Sometimes the people on the ground can see the problem, but can't understand why you seem to be doing something else prior to doing the simple job.

It is often a simple matter. Like, not being able to get to the job at a comfortable angle, so you have to re-adjust something or move to another place. Or you get up there and there is a more urgent job to be done, that you didn't see from the ground.

You are rarely balanced; you have all your Personal Protective Equipment around you; sunlight has a habit of getting in your eyes at the most inopportune moments; the wind always gets up, affecting your hearing, just when you don't want it to! Tools have lanyards on them. Usually about 2cm too short! To cap it all off, the spanner you brought up is the wrong size!

In her remarkable book *Taking on the World*, (Published by Michael Joseph (2002), ISBN 0-7181-4525-9), Ellen Mc Arthur relates in vivid form, her efforts to do maintenance work on her yacht, *Kingfisher*, in high seas. In one episode she tells of going aloft to retrieve a halyard: "I returned to the deck completely exhausted: I had found it hard enough just to hang on, let alone bring the halyard down." She had climbed 90 feet up the mast, in high seas and ferocious winds! She goes on to relate another episode where she was aloft for over four hours and the concern that she had that the automatic pilot would malfunction. She wrote that the seas were so high, had the automatic pilot switched off, the vessel would have heeled over so far, that she could have walked down the mainsail!

"The job only took half an hour-then I began my descent. This was by far the most dangerous part and I had my heart in my mouth... we had been surfing at well over 20 knots while I was up there..my limbs were bruised and my head was spinning, *but I felt like a million dollars as I spoke on the phone.*." (Emphasis mine, Tony Fisher,) what an incredible person.

Initially Ellen thought that she would get the job completed within "...a couple of hours..." It took four.

To her, it was the descent that was the hardest. Despite having a rope she was carrying aloft snagging; despite the horrors of the dead weight of 200 foot of halyard that she was taking with her, after four hours she could still be exhilarated!

I once did an abseiling job on Wellington Stadium's four light towers. I had to replace two split pins on each tower. Four towers, half a day's work-no problems! We assumed that the contractor would have used standard

(same sized) split pins. Accordingly, I went aloft and found that each fitting had different sized pins. The job took twice as long. Mind you, the reason we were up there was the building contractor had put in galvanized pins where stainless steel was specified. Being right next to the sea, the obvious happened. They rusted. Wind, salt sea air and grit erosion did the trick. I had to drill out each rusted-in pin. Very hard swinging up there.

This is where two-way radio systems are invaluable. You can keep your workmates up to date with what is happening; but restrict talk to essentials, or it can be a distraction.

Maybe others are more efficient than me. But I have found that no rigging job goes perfectly to plan.

I think that is the skill of the rigger: to adjust to circumstances on the spot and having the ability to adapt, to accept and to solve challenges in hazardous situations.

I do try to minimise these problems, but I still find rigging hard work. And it does take twice as long as you think that it will.

Do it right, do it once.

* Mrs. Beaton, of cooking fame, put it another way:- "Muddle makes more muddle."

* Jigiro Kano, the founder of Judo put it this way:- "Maximum Efficiency, Minimum Effort"

* Gustav Eiffel, when he built his Tower in Paris, was quoted that by the time they started on the foundations seven-eigths of the job was complete! Through sheer force of will, he insisted on perfect working drawings for all components and meticulous attention to detail in casting & fabrication these components. He argued that this preparation saved time and made the job safer. I understand that no one was killed in its construction.

My contribution to this maxim is to stress that prior planning, research and preparation are so very, very important.

The other rule applying here is the old: "A stitch in time saves nine"

Again in rigging as in all jobs, we see little things that need fixing and go ahead and do them. On a sailing ship recently, I herringboned a hatch cover, which I saw had a small tear in it. I was criticised for spending time on 'secondary issues'. But to me these matters soon become big issues if not dealt with when they are small. Particularly on a ship. A large part of a rigger's job is to walk about the worksite looking at and attending to, small repair jobs.

I recently worked on a sailing ship, which needed major repairs to its running rigging. This was because few people with the necessary skills had the experience to spot deterioration in the gear. Costly.

Risks.

If you are a boss: "Is your profit worth killing for?"

If you are a worker: "Is your boss worth dying for?"

The answer is obvious to each question, but a third one then arises: "Why are so many people still killed whilst earning a living?"

I must admit that I have been on

dangerous jobs where safety has been compromised and I continued in those jobs because I needed the money. But I am not proud of this. It is a two-way matter. The legislation and regulations are there to protect both employer and employee.

Your only protection on such jobs is to ensure that there are always back up safety systems, take your time and then get out of the job as soon as possible. Always keep meticulous records of all you have done on the job and where possible take photographs, before and afterwards. Keep them at home in a safe place. Where possible, get a workmate to agree to testify to the truth of any matters recorded should legal action be taken against you.

Think twice when you are asked to use other people's safety gear. Personally, I never use other people's harnesses or abseiling ropes. If I was ever to do it, I would insist on knowing the industrial background of the equipment. But most important of all, I would thoroughly check every millimetre of this gear and not hesitate to discard it if you have ANY doubts.

Never let anyone else secure your personal protective equipment.

I learnt this lesson, without mishap fortunately. I worked in an Observatory and offered to climb on the inside of the dome to secure a fitting. It meant hanging upside down. I asked a colleague, who was an abseiler to fit the scaffold clips onto the back of my harness. I forgot to tell him to fit the clips onto the metal ring, put there for that purpose. He fitted it instead to the plastic spreader at the back of the harness. I realised what had happened only when I completed the job and was on the ground taking off the harness. I was very lucky. This was completely my fault and I have never again allowed anyone else to secure me or my equipment prior to a climb.

The choice of Personal Protective Equipment is a personal one, or one dictated by the employer. But do make sure that you can read the accompanying supplier's literature so that you can determine all safety aspects of the equipment.

I personally use Petzl gear because I can determine the necessary safety specifications for each piece of equipment. This includes being able to determine who actually made that piece of gear. But most important to me is the ability to determine each piece of equipment against international standards of safety.

Regarding risks. My own maxim is: - eliminate all risks.

If I can't completely eliminate risk on a job, I rethink the whole operation.

There are times when you try to completely eliminate risk and whilst on the job you do silly things, like stretching that little bit too far. If you get away with it, you try to ensure that you don't repeat it. These are the situations where riggers often come to grief.

Another safety practice from the world of diving was explained to me by Geoffrey Budworth, a past police frogman on the river Thames and a Metropolitan Police Inspector. He is also author of the book; *River Beat- a history*

of London's River Police since 1798. (Published by Historical Publications Limited: 1998. ISBN: 0-948667-41-9)

"Divers have a useful trick which riggers may, or may not, use. When divers work under water within reach of something, which if activated, would be a hazard, they personally check before hand that it has been immobilised, de-activiated, padlocked or whatever. They take any key, fuse or other item down with them, so that they know where it is (and that nobody unaware of the situation can come along and switch on or open up the hazardous equipment)."

When rigging, I have a carabiner (snap link) on my tool belt. I always take my own personal keys aloft with me. Keeping keys to potential hazards on this carabiner sounds an excellent idea.

You don't have to be rough to be tough.

Since starting wage working in 1956, I have met many really tough people. Surprisingly the REAL tough people are all rather gentle, polite and courteous. They are also very clean and tidy.

Cuts; bruises; burns and grazes are all part of the rigger's lot. If you were not careful about personal hygiene, you would very soon become septic! And you would be off work regularly.

Tidiness and order on a rigging job are essential. Because when things go wrong and you reach for a tool which is not in the right place, there are always serious consequences.

My early rigging life was with men 40 years older than I was. They may have been drinkers, probably were poor husbands and fathers because of the long hours they had to work. But on the job they were meticulous in their work practices.

I admire and salute real tough people and despise brutal people of any sort.

I do enjoy the company of riggers and other workers because they are positive people, contributing to society, not leeching off it.

7/8ths of the job is completed by the time you start climbing.

This really sums up all the above maxims. Thinking through the job; planning; preparation activities; researching; getting the gear to site; setting up; training and agreeing on work methods. They all have to take place before the job actually commences.

Don't forget the finishing up aspect of the job!

In my work planning I also add onto this maxim, that if all the time in the pre-work phase and the actual work phase is added up as a sum to that time... then one-quarter of that time has to be added onto tidying up, packing away and final reporting. I have noticed that once people come down from a climb, they often walk away and don't even think about this aspect of the job. Finishing the job properly and not leaving others to do it all, is a major indicator to me about the professionalism of a rigger.

In Conclusion:

- **You stay alive whilst working at heights by being sensible about health and safety issues.**

- **I have enormous respect for the people i work with and those who taught me and to those who in turn had taught them.**

Thanks

I especially want to acknowledge the leadership I have always received from the late Brian Field, former President of the International Guild of Knot Tyers. Brian's warmth and humanity has engendered the conditions, which have allowed this article to be written. His urging that the Guild was not only a forum for the exchange of ideas but was a venue for people to be together. He rightly calls it: "The Friendly Guild"

I have had the idea to produce a book called: "Proud to be High" for a number of years, where I record top height workers' professional lives. My son, Robbie is a professional photographer and a climber. It was and still is, my hope to use him to take action shots of these people. I now realise that this exercise has stirred those old plans again. Thanks to you, Des and Geoffrey.

At the editing stage:

To Geoffrey Budworth for the forward to this article and for his wise suggestions. These editing comments have led to many improvements to the article. Thank you also Geoffrey for information about Ellen McArthur's wonderful adventures.

To Des Pawson for suggesting to me that the names of my mentors should be recorded. The lessons that I have learnt have been from people who may never have had their names recorded otherwise.

To Jeff Wyatt, recently appointed President of the International Guild of Knot Tyers, for help in converting metric measures to imperial ones, encouragement, editorial advice and friendship.

To other members of the International Guild of Knot Tyers:-

Richard Hopkins who has updated me on UK standards in rigging and abseiling and lent me an enormous literature that he has collected, Europa Chang-Dawson for many kindness' (especially the road map of England) and additional comments; to Ian Schofield for driving me around the country and especially to the Surrey branch meetings and to another founding member of the Guild, Don Woods, for introducing me to the Essex Branch.

I want to especially thank Harold Scott and his wife, Ethel, not only for their courtesy and hospitality, but also for taking me into dimensions and realms of wire and rope knotting practice and theory I never knew existed!

Thank you also, Bob Dean and Louisa King of RGH Rigging Services, London, for your friendly support since my arrival here in England, to fellow crew members on the *Golden Hinde*, Jamoulie; John; Joe; Catherine and Laurence.

Dedicated to my mentors:

Jim Lang, Graeme Keen, Jim Whitty, Fred Peak, 'Bluey' Welch, Charlie Henderson, George McCutcheon, Kenny Ross, John & Joy Ackrill, Bob & Mary Box, John Forsythe, Pat Cunningham, Terry Poynton, Jack Sheahan, David Crockett and all The Chatham Islands Taiko Recovery Expedition Team. All these people, riggers, scaffolders, seaman, engineers, ship owners, and scout leaders. These people all had a huge influence on the experiences behind this article.

Authors last comments:

All errors and omissions are entirely mine. All the above have done their best to help me. My apologies in advance for any of these.

Anyone wishing to add their experiences to this literature is encouraged to send them to:-

The Librarian
International Guild of Knot Tyers
Gordon Perry
171 London Road
Horndean
Portsmouth: PO8 0HH
ENGLAND.

ROPE ENDS

'The knot seemed a combination of double bowline knot, treble crown knot, back-handed wall knot, knot-in-and-out-knot, and jamming knot.'
(*Benito Cereno*, by Herman Melville, US writer, 1819-1891)

Knotmaster Series No. 21

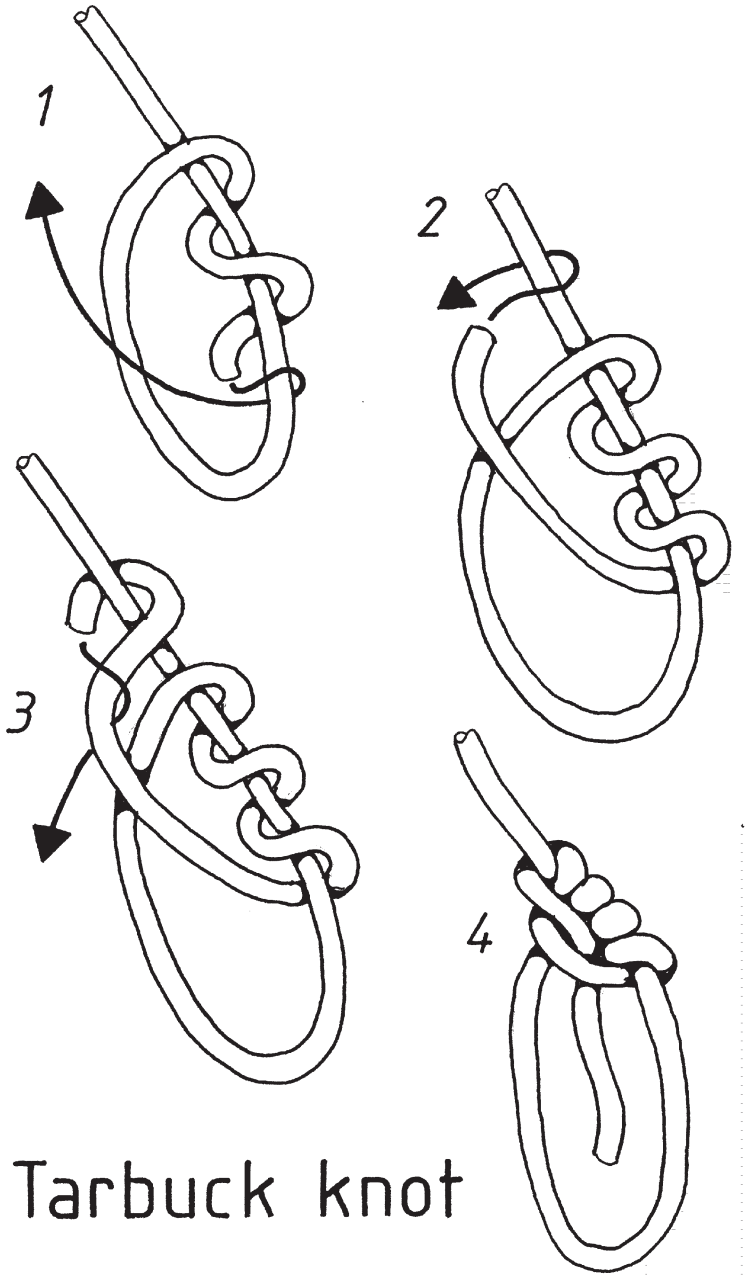
'Knotting ventured, knotting gained.'

Tarbuck knot

This handy slide-&-GRIP noose can be adjusted easily enough by hand to the required size, but it locks under a steady load due to a dog's leg deformation created in the standing part of the line by unevenly loaded wrapping turns.

American tree surgeons in the mid-1940s knew and employed this 'squeeze knot' on their climbing and safety ropes, and it had a brief period of popularity with UK climbers in the mid-1950s, but is now downgraded to being a general purpose tensioning device for guy-lines, washing lines or whatever else you can contrive to do with it.

Take two turns with the working end around the standing part and bring the end forward through the resulting loop (fig. 1). Carry the end around behind the standing part (fig. 2), then bring it forward once more to tuck beneath itself as shown (fig. 3). Meticulously tighten before use (fig. 4).



Tarbuck knot

A Secure and Elegant Alternative to the Spliced Eye

by Jean E. Tardy

As most sailors, I have been using spliced eyes to attach shackles and rings to halyards. Of course, these splices are secure and good looking. However, they have a number of drawbacks. They must be cut, the point of pressure and chafing on the eye never changes, they can jamb in the block and, mainly, making a splice is difficult and time consuming job that I usually contract out.

In fact, John Rousmaniere in the classic book *Desirable and Undesirable Characteristics of Offshore Yachts* recommends using a knot that constricts as a safer and better alternative to the splice for securing shackles to halyards. He recommends the buntline hitch for that application. The anchor bend, another classic knot, also offers the same type of secure and constricting hold. A recent article in the magazine *Practical Sailor* also recommended the same knots for this application.

Even though I knew that a constricting knot was preferable to a splice, I still preferred spliced eyes for the following reasons:

- in the buntline hitch or the anchor bend, the bitter end goes off at an angle to the line and can get easily caught. In particular, lashing the bitter end to the line creates a secondary eye that can get hooked on some obstruction; and
- the buntline hitch and the anchor bend) simply don't look good. They are "messy" looking and irregular in shape.

In theory, appearance shouldn't be a factor in securing a shackle to a halyard, but it is. In fact, this esthetic factor may be the single reason why so many continue to rely on spliced eyes and go to the trouble of having them made even though knots are preferable.

So, I looked for a knot to use as an attachment to shackles that would have the following properties:

- Very secure
- Elegant and symmetrical looking
- Providing a tapered shape from the shackle to the line.
- With the bitter end exiting the knot in parallel with the line for appearance and to prevent the lashed end from forming a secondary eye.

I searched for such a knot in many of references (including Ashley) without any success. So, I started playing with a piece of rope and a ring until I came up with a knot that had exactly the properties I was looking for. After coming up with it I looked for it again and never found anything similar either in shape or having these properties.

The knot combines the solidity of the anchor bend with the symmetric elegance of the scaffold knot. In fact, the steps in tying it alternate between making an anchor bend and tying a scaffold knot. It is a very good looking and secure knot that tapers off the shackle. It has all the properties I wanted and, in addition, it holds the shackle with two turns at the point of greatest chafe and it provides a nice cylindrical form where it can be grabbed.

1. Start by taking two turns round the ring or shackle eye (as in an anchor bend).

2. In an anchor bend, the next step would be to take the end round the line and through the turns. Instead make turns (three or more) in the same direction round the line toward the ring in the same direction, as in making a scaffold knot.

3. After the last turn thread the bitter end through the turns taken round the ring.

4. Then, take it back through the turns taken on the line as in making a scaffold knot so that the end exits parallel to the line.

5. Tighten by constricting the knot and pulling the bitter end. Finish by "screwing" the turns.

This is a useful knot. It is very secure and answers a specific need. It deserves to be known and will likely be adopted

by many sailors as an alternative to splices.

I am of course very proud of it. Since, attached to a ring, it looks a bit like a light bulb it could be called the lightbulb hitch. But, if it is truly an original, I would prefer that my name be given to it and it be called the Tardy hitch.

Wine Lovers

by Bill Smothers

Wine lovers listen up. The unbelievable has happened. This may be difficult to believe but the old wine cork has been redesigned. Read on. Several months ago I purchased a 1.5 bottle of wine. I was quite surprised that the cork was completely redesigned. This design seems to be limited to the 1.5 litre bottles.

It was obvious that a decorative covering could be added to this arrangement. I tried several schemes before I finalised a procedure that I was satisfied with for starters. Obviously a cork is required, directions not provided, if you wish to continue. I glue a wooden plug to the top of the plastic, which has a diameter of 1 1/4 inches. The plug has a diameter of 1 inch. I add hot melt glue to fill the space between these items and trim the glue to provide a smooth taper between the plug and the plastic. I also cover this area with black electrical tape. The plug is 'round head' and available from most hobby stores.

I use 12 feet of #36 hard laid cotton, tripled, and Ashley #2217 to cover this item. Approximately 4 feet is removed during the reduction process. It is difficult, if not impossible, to hold the cork in the hand during the reduction. Inserting the cork in a short section of 1/2 inch Styrofoam pipe insulation will provide a stable-working platform. See *KM54* page 54 and *KM55* page 28 for alternative covering procedures.

I finish with B Moores Stay Clear acrylic polyurethane.

I believe this is a reasonable start but surely it can be improved. So have at it with gusto.

Make Your Own Tools!

by Lasse Carenvall

We use many different tools in knotting - some originally intended for knotwork, some not.

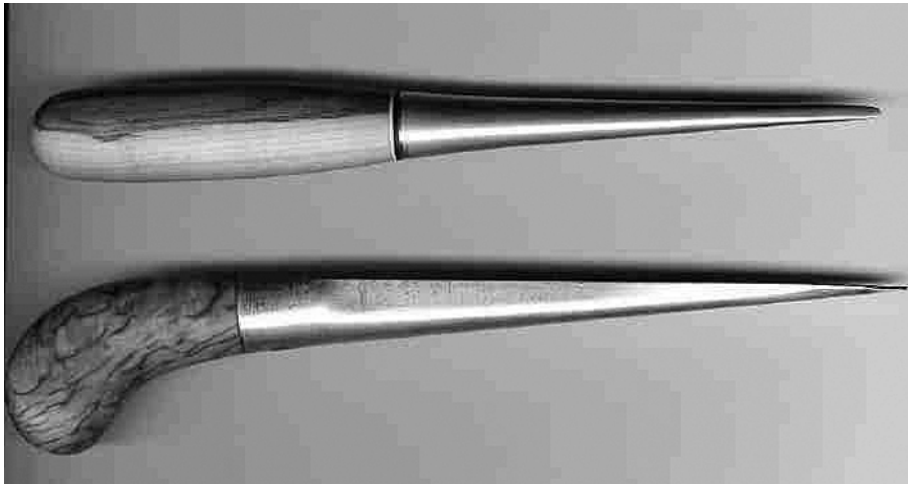
I have been knotting on and off for over 30 years, but I have also been into other crafts, such as knife making and modelling ships in bottles. This means I have often made and sometimes constructed my own tools, and occasionally made and sold tools to fellow craftspeople.

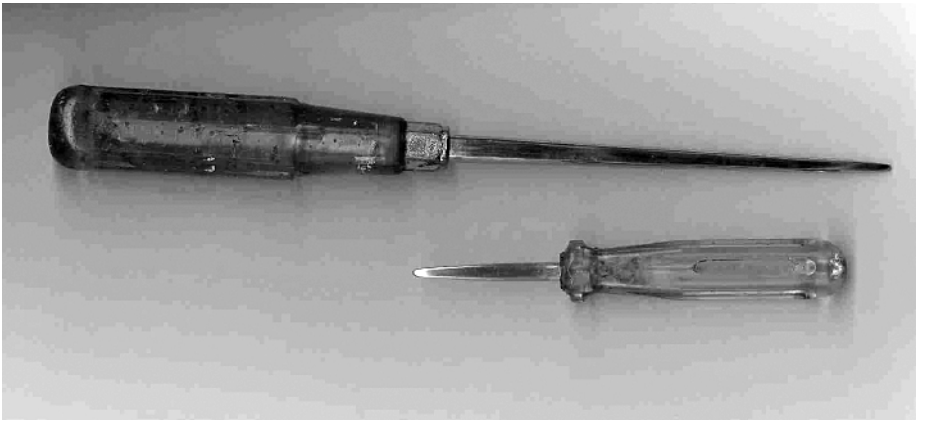
Making your own tools enables you to get tools that are otherwise difficult or even impossible to get, and/or to get tools for a small cost. Last but not least: You can get unique and totally extravagant tools, "tailored" to your hands and style of working. (They don't have to be extravagant, of course, but I admit a few admiring "Ooohs & Aaahs" does add to the fun!)

I'd like to show a few tools I have made, to illustrate what I'm talking about.

The Swedish Fid is an ordinary one with replaced handle. I recommend replacing the usual (and in my opinion ugly & uncomfortable) "lump" of wood or plastic with a handle of this shape! The longer, curved handle is more comfortable to hold & use, and gives me better control of the tool. This one, with a 7" blade, I have used on cordage from 1/8" diameter to over 1", and I seldom need to handle anything thicker. The handle material is Swedish masur birch, sanded silky smooth and generously treated with boiled linseed oil. Glue this handle well in place with strong epoxy, as it will take more strain than the usual "lump"!

The blade of the Japanese marlinspike is turned from an old steel axle, the tip





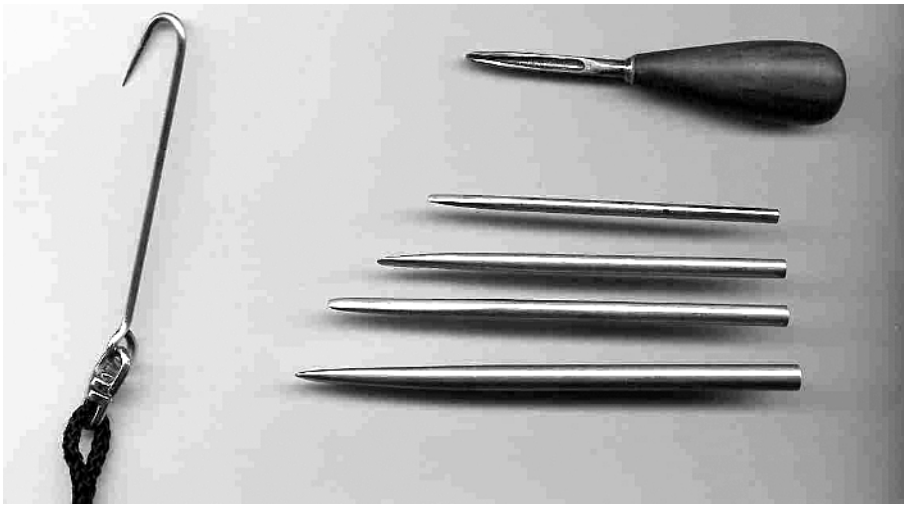
filed to shape and the blade hand rubbed. The handle is barberry (Berberis spp). The wood actually has this colour! It is very rare to find pieces thick enough to be of much use, it is "hard as a tax collector's heart" and the dust makes you sneeze like crazy, so I had to wear a mask while working - but it was well worth the effort! Turned, sanded, oiled and waxed.

Since I learned about gripfids I have tried my hands at making a couple. Personally I don't think my first attempts are at all impressive, but I show one just the same. Since I do a lot of small work I made a small gripfid, with a turned steel blade. The outer diameter is 4.5 millimetres and the inside 3 mm. I decided on steel as I considered brass too soft in small dimensions. The handle is turned from a small piece of Australian Sheoak.

If the handle is covered with knotwork it is less important what kind of wood you choose, since the knotwork will take the wear. For a "plain" wooden handle, use hard and dense wood. Birch, beech, maple, ash, most fruit-trees, etc, are good choices. I advice against oak since humidity makes the acids in the wood aggressive to the metal. I'm also strongly against varnishing handles and prefer oil, wax and similar natural, penetrating finishes.

I like internal thread needles, and made myself a set with millimetre threads of M2 - M5 in one-mm steps. Following the expert advice of Des Pawson the duckbill points are slightly bent, making it easier to direct them in use. (Thanks, Des! You were quite right!)

Other tools, sometimes broken, can be modified. I have re-ground a couple of old screwdrivers to useful tools. One is a marlinspike with long taper, and another the short-nosed little thing. (By the way, does this small one have a name?) As you can see, I have re-ground the broken blade to a duckbill point. It is short and strong, just right to get that final tightening all the way home! Neither one will ever win a prize for beauty or be regarded as extravagant - but they are reliable and hard workers. Use caution when grinding things like screwdrivers, and don't let the metal go hot enough to get annealed and soft! I advice against gloves when doing this - as long as you can touch the metal, the hardness of the steel is safe!



Since I own a small mechanic's lathe that can be adapted to milling I do the metalwork myself. Not only can I get the dimensions I want, it also lets me use scrap metal - brass rods, bits of pipe, bolts... One thing I have found to be good tool material is re-bar. It can be bought for a petty sum or pieces can be picked up for free on building sites. It sprays lots of (very) hot & sharp little metal fragments all over the place when you start turning it, but the end result is quite nice! It may rust in humid conditions, but tools should never be left in humid conditions, anyway.

I always try to keep a supply of stainless steel bicycle spokes in my workshop. They are one of the best and most versatile materials I know of. When I needed a sewing hook, a piece of spoke, a "spinner" from a key ring and 10 minutes of work got me the hook next to the gripfid. Spokes are also good for drawloops, pins... You name it!

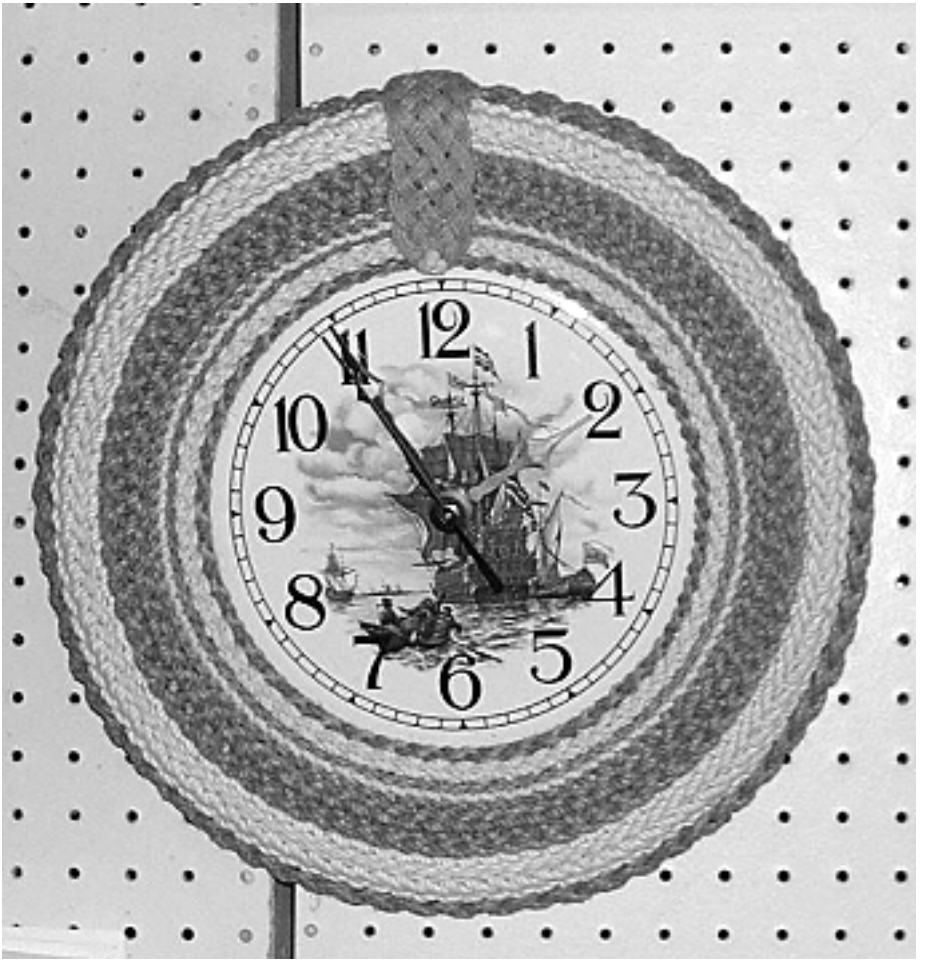
I tend to put duckbill points on the tools. I feel duckbill points are a lot better at passing between the strands in my work - which happens to be exactly where I want the tool to go!

I advice against putting a mirror finish on the tools. Hand rubbing a mirror finish on steel takes a lot of work (I've done it on a couple of knife blades) but every little scratch it will inevitably get while using it will show off without mercy - and break your heart. You might even end up avoid using the tool for fear of scratching that beautiful finish. A smooth silk finish is a lot easier to achieve, does not show off small scratches in the same way, works just as well - and is a lot easier to restore if needed. Just rub it really smooth, and rub the tool lengthwise!

By this I hope I have inspired some of you who do not (yet) make your own tools to give it a try! It is fun in itself, and it is hard to match the feeling of pride you get when you look at a fine piece of knotwork that you have made yourself - using tools you have made yourself!

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at: ogion@swipnet.se

Knot Gallery



Facing: Decorative ropework on the helm of narrowboat 'Ilkeston' at Ellesmere Port Museum, Cheshire, UK

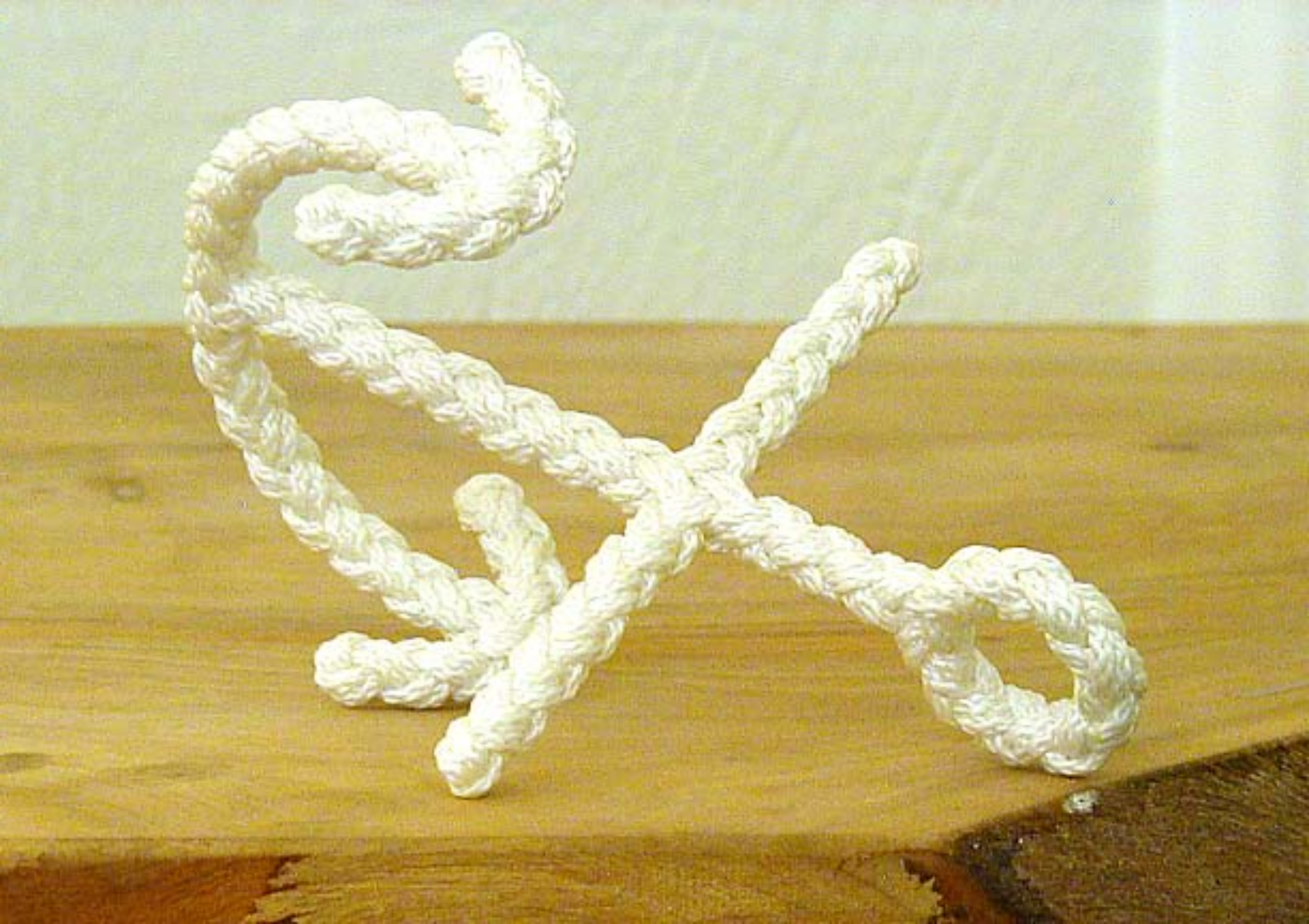
Above - Knotted clock frame by President Jeff Wyatt

Overleaf left: Bellrope by New Zealand member Richard Hodge

Overleaf right: Bollards photographed at St Helier harbour, Jersey by Jane Kennedy

Above: Mayoral Chain (c.1960) by Jim Nicholl, ex-Shanghai detective and London river cop.

Facing: An intricate anchor by Australian member Ron Hodgens.



Ring Prusiks

by Heinz Prohaska

Franz Bachmann, Austrian mountain climber, inventor of the Bachmann knot (fig.1) which is much easier to move up on the rope than the original Prusik knot (fig.2), developed still another knot - the Bachmann ring knot. The author spoke with him.

Bachmann's father was an upholsterer and saddler. He used rings of different size, handmade of wire. Bachmann knew that his karabiner knot of 1951 was too big and too heavy for the prophylactic use on glacier tours, and some years later, also in the 1950's, he had the idea for making Prusik knots with rings. He studied several solutions. The best one he found is the Bachmann ring knot (fig.3). In comparison to ringless knots, the ring improved the holding power and simplified movements of the knot on the rope.

Bachmann showed his knot Hermann Huber from the German mountain equipment producer *Salewa*. Huber published a similar knot (fig. 4) in his mountaineering manual [1]. This variation of Bachmann's knot wasn't good. The ring could get lost. Another variation was the "Doppelseilklemme" (fig.5), produced by *Salewa* [2]. A dangerous tool, because the sling could slip out during use. It disappeared from the market.

The solution of Bachmann (fig.3) worked well. But there was a problem: How to find suitable rings. Strong enough, safe, not too small, not too big. The knot didn't come in general use.

A simple way to solve the ring problem is to use chain links. They can be bought in hardware shops and DIY stores. However, the author cannot recommend the use of a single ring in such a knot like Bachmann 50 years ago. Too many climbers lost their life through material failure in pitons, karabiners, ice axes, and the like. We learned that we should always have redundancy, where redundancy is possible - a second piece of equipment for the case that the first one fails. The ring knot recommended by the author 50 years after Bachmann contains two rings (fig.6).

References:

1 Huber, Hermann: *BERGSTEIGEN HEUTE*, Munich 1971, p109

2 Huber, Hermann: *BERGSTEIGEN HEUTE*, 2nd ed., Munich 1974, p44

ROPE ENDS

"He showed us how to rope ourselves together, using the proper knots; the bowline for the leader and the end man; the butterfly noose, a beautifully symmetrical knot, for the middle man....."

(*A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush* by Eric Newby - 1958)

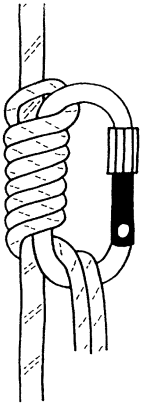


Fig. 1
Bachmann knot

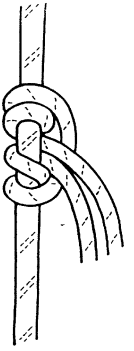


Fig. 2
Prusik knot

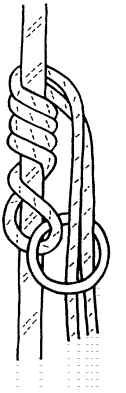


Fig. 3
Bachmann ring knot

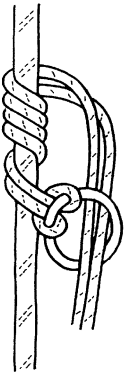


Fig. 4
'Ring-Klemmknoten'

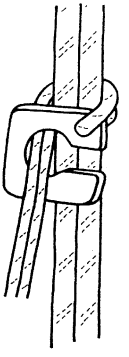


Fig. 5
'Doppelseilklemme'

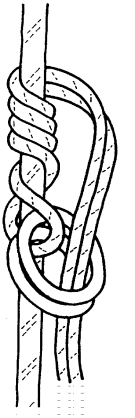


Fig. 6
Prohaska ring knot

Lessons from the Art

by Mike Storch

Knot tying for me is not a static thing, it can be quite dynamic. Small mistakes have a way of growing into big ones. Errors can take on a life of their own. Knowing the right knots and ropework is important, but it isn't everything. Follow me now into the world where, more often than not, lessons are learned the hard way.

S.C. was having a busy season, packing hunters into the high country and setting up their camps. He asked me to ride along one time to help out. Not knowing his ways I decided to fit in where needed most. I worked with the saddle horses and hunters, while he did the packing. There were three pack horses, and he did well at getting them packed, though as we left the trailhead I noticed his mistake. When leading several pack horses it is necessary to tie each animal's lead rope to the animal directly in front. This keeps them in line and following. In practice the lead rope of the rear horse is hitched to a short "break-a-way" cord coming from the packsaddle of the horse ahead, and so on through the string of animals. S.C. didn't use a break-a-way. Tied the heavy lead rope directly to the packsaddle ahead. Said he didn't like having to dismount and reconnect things every time a horse in the string pulled back and broke the break-a-way. Well...it was his outfit, and I had no say in the matter. I would be leading the hunters anyway, while he would be in charge of the pack string, so I went along with it. Five miles up the trail we reached timberline, and the trail turned rocky. We were on a part of the trail that had a steep slope on the right, and a very short way down that slope a sheer drop of about eight hundred feet. One of the pack horses lost his footing on the rocky trail and fell towards the drop off. With no break-a-way, he took the other two pack horses with him. Now there were three pack horses in a jumble, still tied together, and within a few feet of the drop off. With any further struggling they would all go over. I managed to get to them, cut their lead ropes and untangle the whole mess, and lead them one at a time up to safety. We checked for injuries and repacked everything. S.C then went and hitched the pack horses together again hard and fast, no break-a-way. Right knots, wrong rope. I never rode with S.C. again after that.

S.L. was the ranch manager, and while I was working on that ranch it was he that gave the orders. He wasn't much of a horseman, nor did he savvy cattle. He was big, slow moving, and a bit uncoordinated. He held his job through connections and influence, not ability. If ability is not a qualification, then lack of ability isn't necessarily a disqualification for the job. So it was when I hired on for the season. One day S.D. took his lariat and roped a bull. Lost control of his horse and turned the wrong way. Wrapped himself up nicely in his own

rope. The bull took off running. Bull one, cowboy zero. I heard afterward that he was three months recuperating.

A fellow I met up in western Montana went hunting with a saddle horse and three pack horses. Got to his camp and began to unpack. It's common practice to tree tie your horses while unpacking. He didn't. Said he thought his horses were gentle and wouldn't drift while he unpacked. That's when they got a whiff of the grizzly and stampeded. One of them tripped on his own lead rope, did a full tumble and broke his own neck. Later on the forest service told him he would have to remove the dead horse from the trail; it would attract more bears to the area and become a danger to the other people. His options got expensive, and he also had to pay the fellow he borrowed the horse from. Inexperience and some hard luck about says it all.

It's not unusual for a cinch to loosen during a ride. In fact, some horses learn to take a deep breath and hold it while being cinched up, then let it out afterwards. If the horse can get away with it, he'll have more breathing space. It's up to the rider (or wrangler) to keep a check on this sort of thing. I know of several instances where a loose cinch has caused injury. The most recent was when the saddle rolled, spilling the rider. Fortunately, the rider fell clear of the horse and was only a little bruised. The horse ran until two of us could get him caught and unsaddled. A much worse instance was the time the rider didn't fall clear, but went underneath as the horse was pulled off balance. Some broken ribs and a punctured lung. The right tack and the right knots, but a careless and indifferent attitude on the part of the wrangler caused an otherwise avoidable accident.

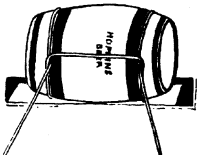
C.M. was a competitive rodeo roper. It's a race against time. Once the steer is roped, the jerk (inboard) end of the rope has to be dallied around the saddle horn. To daily is to take a turn around the saddle horn. The friction of the rope around the horn controls the action out yonder. C.M., like others I've known before him, got a thumb up under a daily. Some expensive surgery, and his thumb has been re-attached, though the function of it is limited somewhat.

I needed a pack horse in a hurry, and the only one available was green. No experience at all. She rippled up when I saddled her, and showed her nervousness as a packed her. I went slowly to give her the time to work past her fears. The manty, the canvas tarp that goes over the packs, added to the fear. I slowed down and talked to her a while. The lash rope was what finally caused her to explode. A lash rope is forty feet of rope spliced to the ring of a lash cinch. The far end of the lash cinch has a hook. The lash cinch gets thrown over the entire load from the near (port) side, then retrieved under the horse's belly and hooked to the standing part of the rope. Encircling the horse and load, the remaining rope is then worked into the final hitch. It could have been the feel of the lash rope on her belly, or the sound of it being dragged across the manty. She wasn't having any more of it and she blew up. Pulled back hard on her lead rope and broke it. Ran through the forest scattering my gear and banging into trees for about a quarter mile till I caught up to her on my saddle horse. Took a while to get things sorted out for another try at it. The second time she did well; I packed and unpacked her every day for six days on that trip with no more

problems. She started hard but was a good learner. I knew pretty much what I was getting into when I took her on, and I went for it anyway.

In each of these incidents rope/knots were at the heart of the problem. Things happened quick and left no time to regain control of the situation. The last incident was my own fault. Ideally I should have packed the mare first with hay bales and worked her into the middle of a string of experienced pack horses. Time wouldn't allow for that, and I took my chances. It could have been much worse. My gear survived, and the pack trip went well.

The thought behind all of this is not to make you afraid to work with rope in dynamic situations. The thought is more towards making you think about the situation you might be getting into. And mostly remember this: Some do not learn from their mistakes, while others do. It takes something extra to learn from the mistakes of others. Enough said.



The Barrel Hitch and the Halter Hitch

An oubliette's a cellar with an opening at the top.
A soubriquet's a nick-name and I'll weave one round the hop.

A hop is the host in a barrel of beer
And a hop is the ghost of garrulous cheer.

Now the hop and the hop-head have this common lot
They are both kept in cellars and use the same knot.

But a barrel of beer is turned on its side
And let down below on a metal rung slide,
While a hop-head forever's stuck with his pride
And free of obstruction intent on his ride.

Thus a barrel hitch may be slightly altered
To make a hop-head's hitch which must be haltered.

Knot and their Vices -
Michael Jenaid

The Bollard Loop Saga

During 2003, some correspondence passed over the editorial desk of KM's editor. Brought about by an article in the Dutch sailor's magazine 'Zeilen' by Erik Smit, concerning a knot called the Bollard loop, the subject has been taken up by some of our Guild members. Here are the letters concerning the bollard loop. After reading the comments, perhap other members would like to wade into the debate.

The Vikings back in our waters!

The Swedish Bowline or Bollard loop combines simplicity and effectiveness in a loop that must have been known in Northern regions for centuries but disappeared together with the retreat of the Vikings out of our regions!

During a visit to Sweden, I noticed an unknown knot in a mooring line of a double-ended Colin Archer type fishing boat, in the harbour of Gotenburg . The knot formed a loop to hold a quay bollard.

When studying the structure, I found the easy-going way to make it and the reliability of the two bends which keep each other firmly, without pulling the rope too tight. The reliability of this knot must have been known to the owner of the boat, as he left his ship at the river quay with tide-current passing.

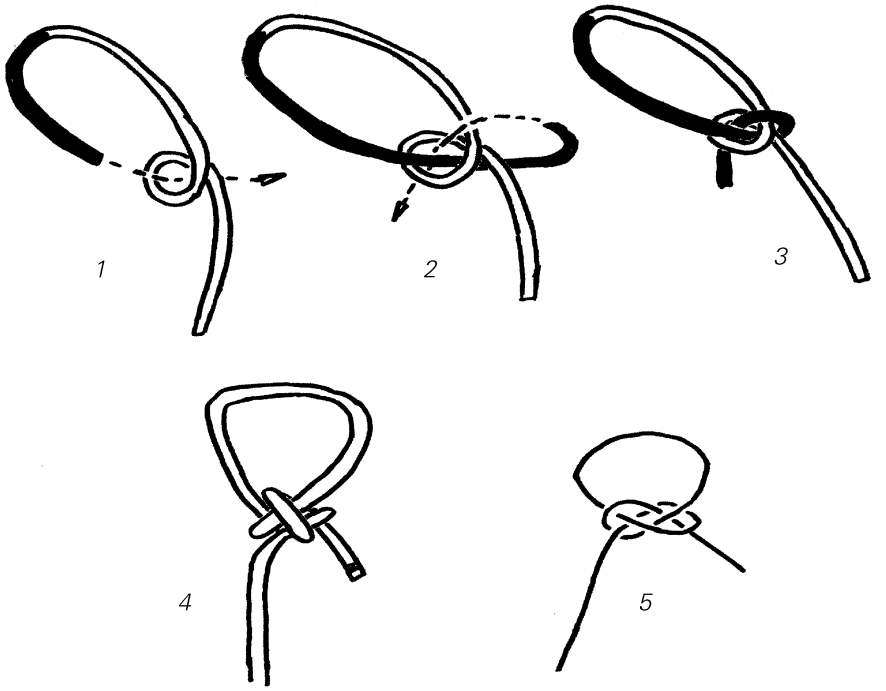
Ahoy

Erik Smit.

Dear Mr Smit,

Sorry I haven't seen that loop in Sweden. It looks like Ashley #1033 called the Carrick loop used as a hawser bend. We call it 'Helling' or sometimes Grönstandsstek. Used this way we siezed the ends and the two half hitches. You can also make it with a granny construction, in both are teo half hitches buty turned 90°.

Sven Erik Andersson
Stockholm



The knot seen and reported by Erik Smit is a Single Carrick Loop, related to (but NOT identical with) the half-full carrick loop portrayed as Ashley #1033 or Graumont &Hensel plate 33, fig. 150.

The concept of loops-from-bends, and vice versa, has been broached only in the past 15 years or so, first by Guild members Harry Asher (*A New System of Knotting - Vol. II,* 1986) and then Charles Warner (*A Fresh Approach to Knotting and Ropework,* 1992), although neither mentions this particular loop knot. Indeed I cannot recall it appearing - with one rare exception - anywhere in the many 20th century knot books, probably because their writers deemed the single carrick bend itself to be not much better than a granny knot.

The sole reference is by Ham Gerber (*Making Discoveries in Knots*, 1990) who illustrates it as a loop and comments; 'Just because the single carrick bend is nothing amazing as a bend ... doesn't mean it's not interesting ... When it's used to make a loop ...there are discoveries to be made about it which I have never gotten around to. I leave them to you.'

So, well spotted, Erik. Now can any *KM* readers supply other instances of this knot in action, or written about?

Geoffrey Budworth's
Tonbridge, UK

As a reader of the Dutch sailor's magazine *Zeilen* I read the article about the "bollard loop" with great interest.

I sent a comment to Mr. Erik Smit, named under the article.

The contents of my fax to Erik in a nutshell:

1. Nor I could find the name of this so called 'bollard loop'
2. Not much difference with the 'three ply knot'
3. A 'slipped bollard loop' is easy to control and check (please find my detailed comment further on).

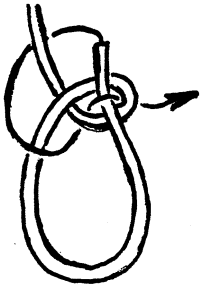
Erik replied and attached your comments.

Please correct me if I'm wrong, but from your comment I understand you presume the 'bollard loop' in fact to be the 'Carrick Loop', related to (but NOT identical with) the 'half full Carrick loop' portrayed as Ashley # 1033.

However, if I consult my Ashley (1993 copy), I find on page 188 fig. #1033 with the description of the 'single Carrick loop'.

If I follow the instructions exactly I end up with a knot which I cannot consider as a correct 'single Carrick loop'.

In my opinion either the Ashley illustration has to be changed or the description, in order to tie the proper 'single Carrick loop'. My illustration would be as follows:

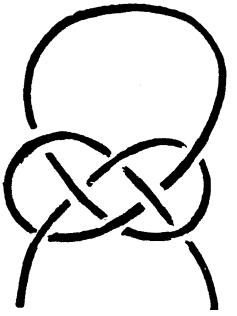


Mr Budworth refers in his reply to Erik to #1033 as the 'half full Carrick Loop", which name I cannot find in Ashley's description. Possibly Ashley meant this too? It puzzles me!

Having consulted the following books:

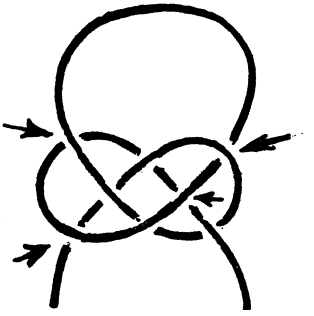
- the Dutch translation Mr Budworth's book *The Knot Book* and a newer edition of the same,
- *The arts of the sailor* by Harvey Garrett Smith
- A book by the Dutch author Floris Hin and others, I found the same knot everywhere as shown here:

Carrick Loop



The illustration of the "Bollard Loop" in the magazine *Zeilen* is very clear:

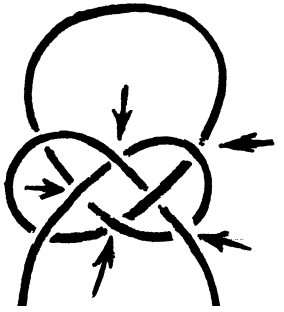
Bollard Loop/CL



The (four) differences between the 'single Carrick loop' and the 'bollard loop' are indicated by arrows:

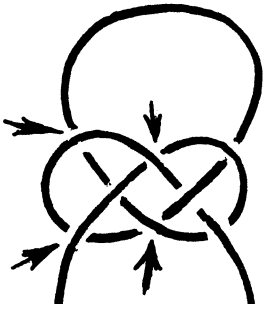
If we look at Ashley's #1033 and study the differences with the 'single Carrick loop" we find five differences!

1033/CL



Next we compare Ashley's #1033 with the "Bollard Loop" and again we find four differences.

1033/BL



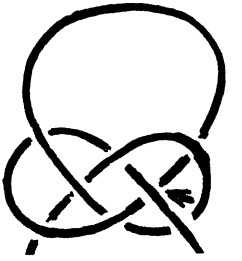
I do realise that the 'three ply knot' is a totally different kind of knot, as loop knots are.

But in fact the knot in the figure Ashley #577 page 96, provided it is tied with a larger bend (loop) is very similar to the 'bollard loop'.

Here one finds only one difference.

Possibly the name 'Carrick Loop' is an overall name for all loop knots with this purpose? Would that explain it?

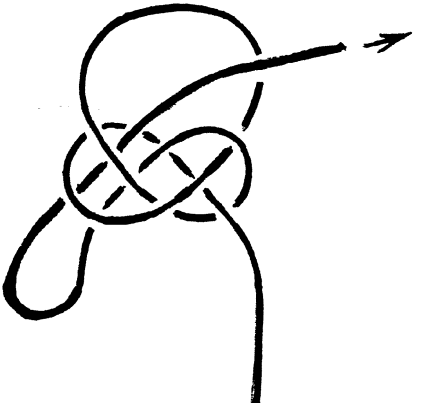
Three-ply knot/BL



Having shown the differences from so many angles I hope to have illustrated that the real name of the 'bollard loop' is not yet established.

Quote first page Ashley: "a knot....is either exactly right or hopelessly wrong"...

Now for another discovery: I found out that adding a slipped end to the 'bollard loop' we add a wonderful new advantage of in my opinion great importance to this loop knot. Imagine mooring in a lock on a large ring using my discovery: the 'slipped bollard loop'.



One can untie this by simply pulling the loose end and the rope will run completely free, out of the ring. Which is important when the water level has lowered a lot. Leaving the lock one would have to reach high above one's head, now a simple tug is enough to undo the loop. At the same time it is a smart way to check if the 'bollard loop' is tied correctly. Because one mistake can have you end up with a Single Overhand Knot (I think it is named so in your language) as a lot of slipped knots end up.

My interest in the art of knotting has originated from my sailing hobby. Nowadays however knotting has become a profession, as I am goldsmith and specialize in objects and jewelry with all sorts of knots and loops in silver or gold. Carefull study of knots is therefor essential - I would not like to sell a silver 'granny'!

Elbert Waller

My Life in Knots

by Alan Hemmings

Brian always tied my shoelaces after PE lessons. I was angry because I couldn't tie them.

'Let's have a fight.'

'All right,' said Brian, ever willing.

Jackets on the school railings, we stabbed out with our fists. Neither boy backed away. Suddenly the hostilities were over.

'Whatever have you done to your face?' said my mum, surveying the many grazes left by Brian's small bony fists. She seemed pleased I'd been in a fight. Did it cancel out my feebleness over the laces? Did she wish she could have beaten ire up herself? Or perhaps it was because Brian was the Mayor's son.

After that I did up my own laces.

Left over right and under: I never got that wrong. The dragon comes out of the pond, goes round the tree and back in the pond. Other dragons may have, my stupid animal got lost. But my favourite knot learned at Sea Scouts was the sheepshank. The name was novel, the rope seemed to grip itself without the usual threading.

From the coconut mats and ship's bell on its grey-painted post, I went up the dark stairs not climbed before to the scoutmaster's den or bridge, full of flags and enormous bare knees.

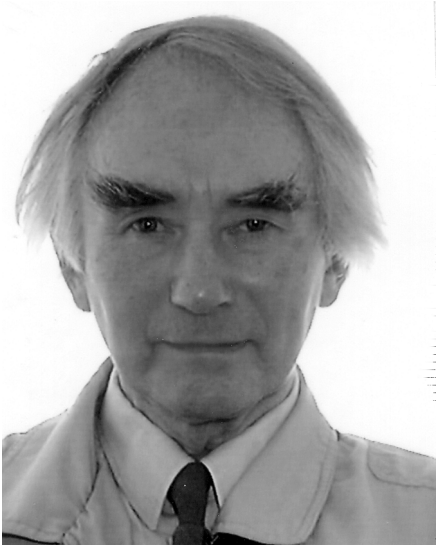
'Tie a sheepshank in that.'

I perked up, being strong on sheepshanks.

'Now do it without using the ends. One end's fixed to the mast, one on the deck. You have to shorten the rope.'

I frowned, puzzled. The ends were always free before. Moments later I was back with the bell and the mats and never did get my 2nd-Class badge.

At the bottom of the eighty-foot pitch I tied each caver to the lifeline with what



was almost certainly a bowline and hitches. Standing down there in the gloom with acetylene lamp for company, I wondered if, last to climb up the wire-rope ladders, I might forget how to tie my own.

Needing to make some netting, I bought books and discovered the IGKT. Have you ever attempted a net using nylon cord? When all my knots sprang loose I found how keen and helpful are the IGKT members.

I've not, sadly, much aptitude for knotting. My bowlines may or may not work out. A pole lashing I can do, that tidy and delightful knot. My ambition is to make an ocean 'nat. A lady in a train grew fidgety and peevish seeing me fiddle with bits of cord. I will atone when, all the dock hands having fallen into the water, my racking bend saves the QM2 from disaster.

I enjoy the sight, scent and feel of natural rope, I rejoice over human cleverness in synthetics (my white rope glows in the light), the tools are a pleasure to own and handle, history is a bonus. By the way, my surname means - son of a ropemaker!

But the 32 - or is it 64? - ways of forming a simple crossing turn keep me in a state of apprehension. Up there, if my harp string breaks, I just hope Brian will wing over to tie on a new one.

A very learned Frenchman, in conversation with Dr Wallace of Oxford, about the year 1650, after expatiating on the copiousness of the French language, and its richness in derivations and synonyms, produced, by way of illustration, the following four lines on rope-making:

Quand un cordier, cordant, veut corder une corde;
Pour sa corde corder,trois cordons il accorde,
Mais, si un des cordons de la corde décorde
Le cordon décordant fait décorder la corde.

To show that the English language was at least equally rich and copious, Dr Wallace immediately translated the French into as many lines of English, word for word, using the word twist to express the French corde.

When a twister a twisting, will twist him a twist;
For the twisting a twist, he three twines will entwist,
But if one of the twines of the twist do untwist,
The twine that untwisteth, untwisteth the twist

Taken from *Macaronic Poetry* by **James Appleton Morgan** (1872)

Knotless Knots

by John Shaw

The contradictory but catchy term 'knotless knot' refers to any hitch, bend or belay formed with the standing part of the line, instead of the working end which is merely trapped by the tying process. Alternatively, it can be a knot that relies upon the insertion of a carabiner, shackle, toggle or other improvised keeper. So it is the unorthodox tying method that determines if a knot is knotless.

At the 21st AGM of the IGKT, held aboard the sea cadet shore training establishment TS. Weston in the English county of Somerset, on Saturday 10th May 2003, Guild members were able to see and handle a new metal fixture, soon to be sold in the USA as a 'pigtail fastener', which uses one of these knotless knots. Assuming the curly device has been screwed, bolted or otherwise anchored, the rope is tucked (fig. 1), wrapped (fig. 2) and then jammed (fig. 3) as shown. The same arrangement could also attach fishing line to suitably modified fish-hooks, lures or swivels.

[Whether or not this costly invention is a useful gadget - or a useless gimmick - will ultimately be decided by individual preference and prejudice.]

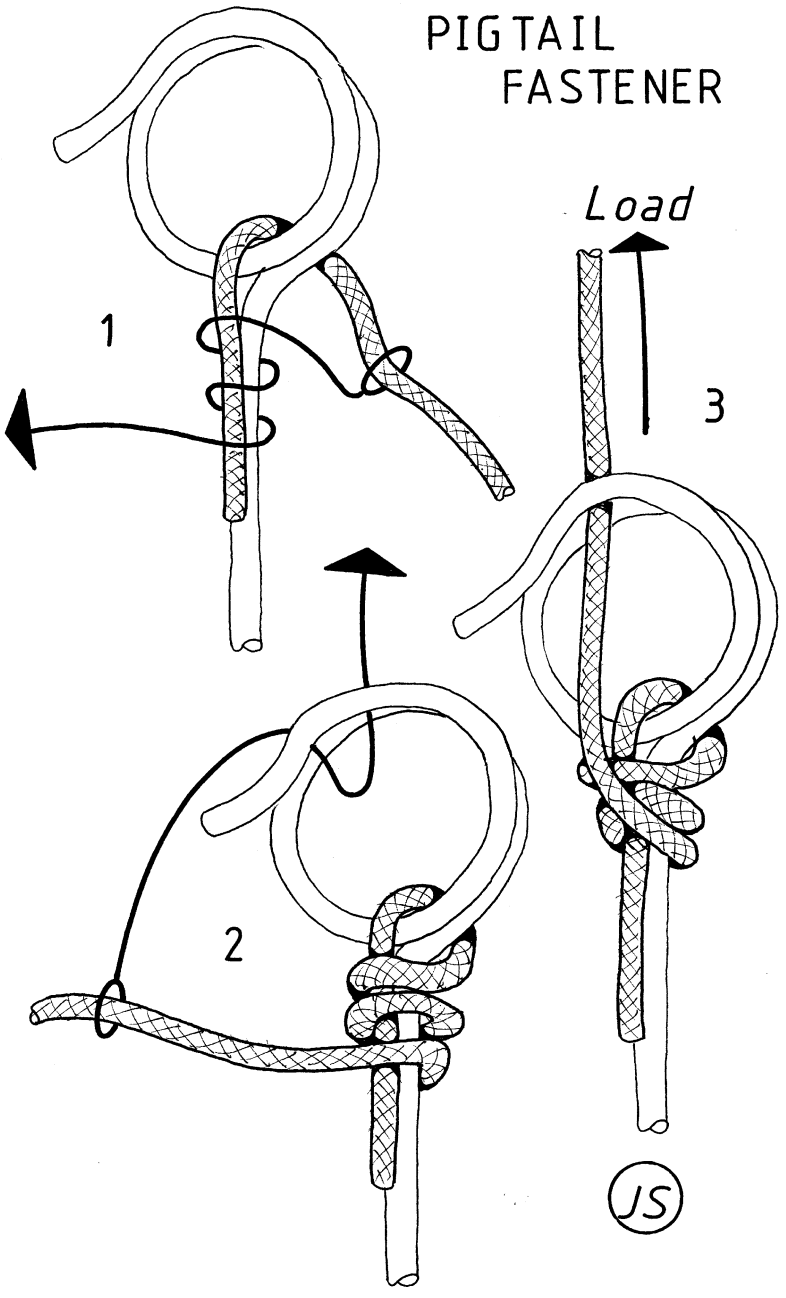
Other illustrated examples of knotless knots are:

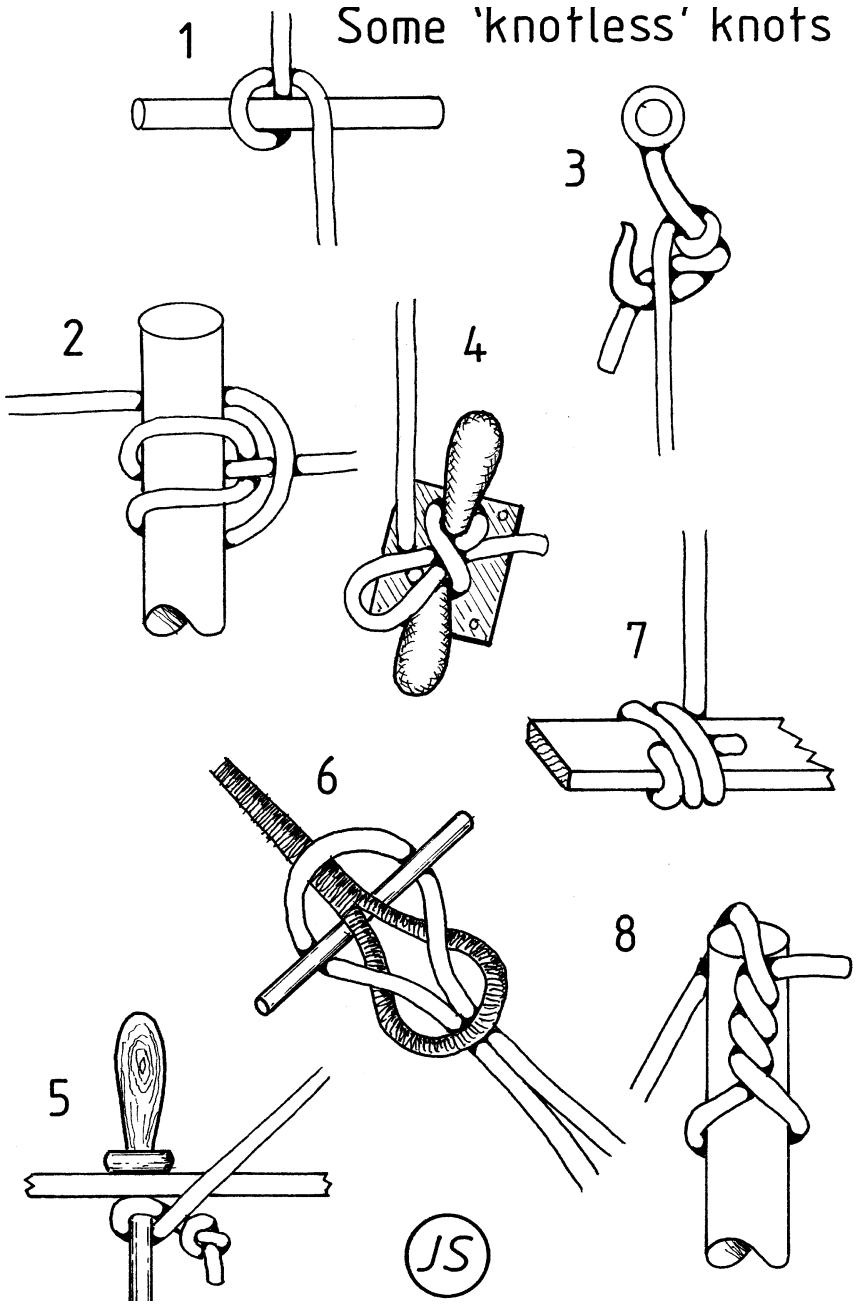
- the crossing knot (fig,. 1) and the zig-zag or collared knot (fig. 2);
-
- the single and double Blackwall hitches (fig. 3);

- the single hitch & draw-loop (fig. 4) and the single hitch & stopper (fig. 5);
-
- a toggled becket bend (fig. 6), a plank sling (fig. 7) and a pole hitch (fig. 8).

Knotless knots are readily applied and just as easily cast off. They are reliable, if carefully arranged and tightened ... but must be constantly watched, since a sudden jerk, a variable pull, or merely the relaxation of the load, may upset and spill them.

A few angling knots are knotless; so are some semi-mechanical prusiking knots used by cavers and climbers; and so too (it can be argued) is the lighterman's back-mooring hitch. What other useful knotless knots exist? Do let the *KM* editor know.


PIGTAIL
FASTENER
Load
1
2
3
JS

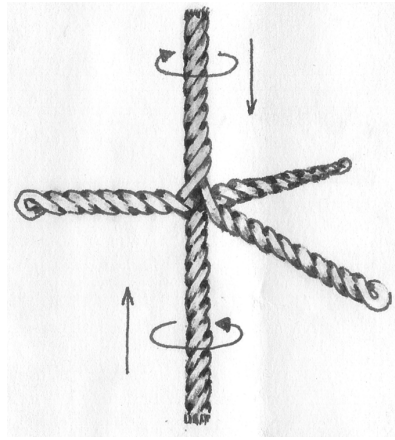

Some 'knotless' knots
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
JS

The Kemp's Trident

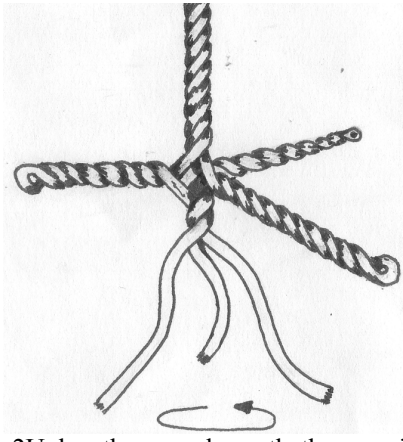
by John Kemp

It all began in the summer of 2002 when I was on holiday in Suffolk with my wife Ali and Basil, our trusty spaniel. We were camping not far away from Des Pawson's home and rope work museum and so I decided that a visit was in order to meet 'Uncle Des', as we affectionately called him, and also to absorb the wonders of his museum. I was looking for inspiration and direction in my own rope working. To cut a long story short, whilst chatting with Uncle Des in the museum I asked him which piece of work really impressed him and he pointed to a length of rope hanging from the ceiling. It wasn't the prettiest piece of work, but then Des showed me what it was: the rope, which went from three strand to four strand containing a Turks Head, with a Monkey's Fist hanging from it before it turned into six strand, had in fact been worked from one continuous length of rope with no joins or added pieces. The order of contents of the above piece of work may not be totally correct as my memory is more of the concept than of the detail but I hope it gives the general idea. This piece of work and its history impressed me beyond measure - I had found the inspiration that I'd been looking for.

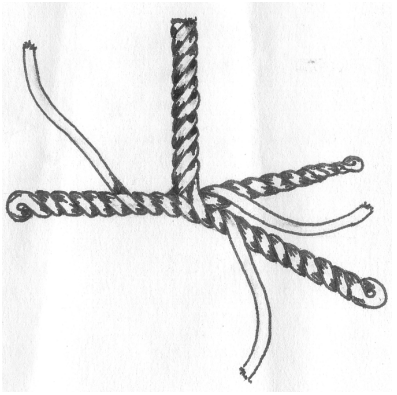
Over the following months I experimented endlessly with this idea of creative ropecraft. One evening while I was cockling a piece of three strand rope to form a crow's foot I had the idea of unlaying the rope beneath the crow's foot and relaying one of the three strands along each of the three crow's feet. This was in my mind the conception of the Kemp's Trident.



ITo cockle the rope, hold in both hands then twist the rope against the lay and gently push your hands together. This will form a crow's foot as shown.



2Unlay the rope beneath the crow's foot



3Lay one of the strands along each of the three crow's feet. This forms the basic trident.

You have now apparently created the impossible - three-strand rope that splits three ways into three separate three-strand ropes each of which has the same properties and dimensions of the original rope. But as Sir Isaac Newton once said, 'to every action there is an equal and opposite reaction'. In this case we have created three times the volume of rope but if you inspect the central hub of the Trident you find the' reaction '- each of the Trident legs is only connected to the original rope by a single strand therefore the overall strength has been reduced to 1/3 of the original. As long as we bear this in mind there is no problem.

From this point of a basic Trident the applications are endless - it solves the dilemma of how to splice three eye splices at the same point on the end of a rope, and can be done in various forms e.g. standard eye splice, Flemish eye

etc, also it becomes possible to make a Cat 0' Nine Tails from small diameter rope with no additions or joins, as opposed to starting with large diameter rope to enable the formation of smaller rope to make the tails

I displayed examples of some of these applications at the half yearly AGM of the Guild in Ipswich, Suffolk, England in October 2003 and I was greatly encouraged by the overriding reaction of Guild members that "this is something new and exciting". Well, I know that the history of rope work and knotting is considerable and a great deal of knowledge has been lost, or simply never recorded, and the principle of the Kemp's Trident may actually be as old as the hills, but I have never seen it described or done before and so far neither has anyone at the Guild. I found it exciting and it opened new avenues of rope work for me so I thought it was worth sharing with you.

Coiling cotton rope at the now defunct Turner's Ropeworks - photo Ken Nelson

The International Guild of Knot Tyers
Pacific Branch

Knot Faire

Splicing, Rigging and Fancy Ropework

Bellingham, Washington

Saturday - June 26th & Sunday - June 27th 2004

Lindsey Philpott (562) 595-8854 marline.man@verizon.net

Jose Hernandez-Juviel (310) 833-4575 jose@knotnerd.com

Web Site: www.IGKTPAB.org

Branch Lines

Pacific Americas Branch

The New Year has come and now it's trying to get away from us! Hello from all of us over here. We started out our Branch meeting in January with a full agenda of upcoming shows and exhibitions - we are joining the good people at the Newport Nautical Museum (Newport, California, not Newport, Virginia) for a day of showing off, right on the foredeck of a simulated paddle wheeler tied to the dock in Newport harbor, with the Lady Washington - a square-rigged ship - tied up alongside. We had a day of endless visitors and would-be tyers who oohed and aahed at our display. Some even took information that may lead to their becoming members. So many remember their days in the BSA (no, not the Birmingham Small Arms Company, the Boy Scouts of America!) that we wondered aloud just how many of our world-wide membership came in to our ranks through an interest in the Scouts? Just wondering... In March we joined our friends down at Dana Point again for another foray with the Whale Festival - funny, really, there were no whales to be seen! We had a delightful day and never got totally bored listening to sea-shanties sung by the crew of the Pilgrim, the beloved brig now being restored to sailing condition by the volunteers at the Ocean Institute. The volunteers had put together a very professional CD of their shanties - we have copies available for $10 American if you would like to contribute to the very worthy cause of putting the sticks back in this great vessel built just after WWII in Denmark and then sailed throughout the Baltic Sea.

Our April meeting will be followed in quick order by the Earth Day Festival for Kids in Culver City, and then our glorious AGM in Bellingham, Washington State in June. For any who would care to join us in our two-day extravaganza, we will be in the second floor of the municipal ferry building on the seafront in Bellingham for the 26th and 27th of June, 2004. If you are reading this there is no entry fee, otherwise its $2 for adults and $1 for kids. Brion Toss has said that he hopes to be there and we cordially welcome all of our friends throughout the world to come and join us - call me or e-mail me for details, or look at our web-site (www.igktpab.org) for more complete details. Jose Hernandez-Juviel, our Librarian, will be collating papers and other presentations, so please do join us!

We love hearing from all of you and we especially welcome contributions great and small to the greater tangle of knotting wherever it exists. On a side note, I shall be stepping down as President at the AGM (I hope we find someone else!) this year, so that I can pursue some more knotting and sailing. It has been my great pleasure to write, read and lead along with all of you and to serve our small Branch for the last few years. My thanks to all of you for putting up with my infrequent and disjointed maunderings - on with the motley and never let your string be tangled!

Lindsey Philpott

West Yorkshire Branch

Our branch had another full day meeting, on Sunday March the 7th and this time we chose our theme to be Turk's heads.

Graham Smith gave a presentation where he explained to the meeting his interpretation of Turk's heads and the supposed origins of the knot. He did remark at the beginning that it was a bit like preaching to the converted, because we are fortunate to have some very experienced knotters who choose to come to our meetings. However it was a good presentation and

Graham can always be relied on to bring humour into any talk. Following the talk we split into informal groups and got on with the serious business of tying knots

At these meetings a lot of knowledge is being shared. Whilst it is a pity that more of the Yorkshire members are not able to attend, we are delighted that interest is coming from all over the north of England and any members are welcome.

We are holding our next meeting on the 21st November 2004 where we intend to have a theme of Braids and Borders. All members and interested people are always welcome to attend.

Future events:

24-25th April... Golcar Folk Museum

3rd May...Skipton Waterways Festival

16th May...Bronte Historical Vehicles Rally

3-4th July...Leeds Waterways Festival

Anyone interested in joining us at any of these events, please contact David Pearson for details. 0113-2572689

David Pearson

Postbag

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

Egyptian Cross

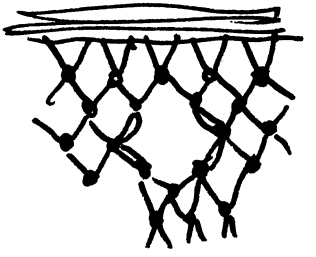
Does the Guild have a member that can tie an Egyptian Cross? If so I would like to hear from them.

David Hosegood

Frankston, Australia

Queen Anne's Lace

I have never heard this name used for a knotted structure. It is a common English wild flower, supposed to be named in memory of Queen Anne and her ladies walking through the field making lace. But, of course, this is total bollacks, as they would have done pillow



lace, and you can't walk while doing it, and anyhow, the flower doesn't grow in fields.

But I think I know what you are describing, a common way of finishing warp ends decoratively.

It is a Solomon's or square knot mesh, with two threads of one knot separated after the knot, ready to join with their neighbour. Your memory of tying joined pairs together is, I think, incorrect, but only a bit so. To create the gaps for the pattern, two neighbouring joined pairs are knotted to the single thread the far side of them each, then separated out again, and joined "to themselves" before going back to into the normal mesh (see diagram).

The other similar work are the "tasselled aprons", where the mesh is regular, but the edge thread is thrown out in each row, so the work tapers to a single pair at the base, and a fringe of ends down the side. This could be used as a dagged edge to a big piece of work.

Anne Dyer

Craven Arms, UK

A Knot to Know!

For the purpose of securing a temporary toggle in a line, I'd rather use the marlinspike hitch as described by Des Pawson in his Handbook of Knots on page 84 than a pile hitch.

Advantage: You can tie it elegantly anywhere in a rope or thin line, even better when it is tight and you want to pull it tighter. And that's what you want to fix the toggle for, temporarily.

The marlinspike hitch - a knot to know!

Klaus Kreft

Hamburg, Germany

On the Move

With effect from 6th February 2004 my permanent address has changed to 20 Senior Drive, Salisbury, SP2 8QD, Wiltshire, England, and my new phone number is +44 (0) 1722 338 299.

Anyone who has written recently to my previous home address should nevertheless receive an answer in due course, because I have arranged for the post office to redirect such mail for a period of 12 months.

Geoffrey Budworth

Salisbury, Wiltshire, UK

The Alpine Butterfly

A note of interest re The Alpine Butterfly Loop, by Cy Canute, KM81.

I use the knot via the 'Twister' method - I use it along the 'High Line' to which I tie my horse's lead ropes in mountain camps. I've been using it for years now, and have never had a failure. I recommend it too anyone with a similar use - nice to know my horses will still be where I left them the night before.

Mike Storch

Colorado, USA

Knotting Diary

AGM's & 1/2 YEARLY MEETINGS
Half-Yearly Meeting
8th - 10th October 2004
Pitsea.
Contact: Don Woods
Tel: 01708 229178[

23rd AGM
13th - 15th May 2005
Beale Park, Pangbourne.
Contact: Ken Nelson
Tel: 07836 722198

BRANCH MEETINGS
Midlands Branch
9th August 2004
The Old Swan (Ma Pardoes), Halesowen Road, Halesowen
Contact Bruce Turley
Tel: 0121 453 4124

East Anglian Branch
10th July 2004
Eaton Cottage, Thornham, Hunstanton
Contact: Duncan Bolt
Tel: 01485 512508

EVENTS
Heritage Boat Weekend
26th - 27th June 2004
Braunston, Northants
Contact: Ken Nelson
Tel: 07836 722198

Leeds Canal Festival
3rd - 4th July 2004
Contact: David Pearson
Tel: 0113 2572689

Wooden Boat Show
23rd - 25th July 2004
Museum of Yachting, Fort Adams, Newport, RI
Contact: John Burke
Tel: 313-562-4393

Inland Waterways National Festival
28th - 30th August 2004
Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire
Contact: Ken Nelson
Tel: 07836 722198

SECRETARY:
Nigel Harding
16 Egles Grove,
Uckfield,
Sussex, TN22 2BY
Tel: 01825 760425
E-mail: nigel@nigelharding.demon.co.uk

Guild Annual Subscription rates:

Juniors	£5
Seniors	£18
Families	£22

Corporate by arrangement
Payable by cash/cheque Eurocard, Mastercard or Visa. Taxpayers in UK - we would prefer a covenanted subscription.

EDITOR:
Colin Grundy
c/o 16 Egles Grove,
Uckfield,
Sussex, TN22 2BY
Tel: 0794 6841157
E-mail: knotting_matters@btinternet.com

Advertising Rates:

	Members	Non-members
Full page	£32	£49
Half page	£19	£22
Quarter Page	£10	£15

Guild Supplies

Price List 2004

Item	Price
Geoffrey Budworth	
Notlore *a miscellany of quotes from fact and fiction*	£2.50
The Knot Book	£4.99
Plaited Moebius Bands	£2.50
Knot Rhymes and Reasons	£1.50
Brian Field	
Breastplate Designs	£2.50
Concerning Crosses	£1.50
Eric Franklin	
Turksheads the Traditional Way	£1.50 *
Nylon Novelties	£2.00 *
Stuart Grainger	
Knotcraft	£4.00 *
Ropefolk	£1.30 *
Turks Head Alternatives	£2.20 *
Creative Ropecraft (Hardback - 3rd Ed.)	£9.95
Knotted Fabrics Hardback *price includes UK postage*	£9.00
Colin Jones	
The DIY Book of Fenders	£9.95
Skip Pennock	
Decorative Woven Flat Knots	£12.50*
IGKT	
Knotting Matters copies of past editions	£2.50

(Some past editions available - contact the Secretary for details)

*bulk purchases of these items available at a discount - phone for details

Cheques payable to IGKT, or simply send your credit card details

PS Don't forget to allow for Postage

Printed by Gipping Press Ltd., Needham Market. Tel: (01449) 721599 Fax: (01449) 721372