

Knotting Matters

Newsletter of the

INTERNATIONAL
GUILD OF KNOT
TYERS

"KNOTTING MATTERS"

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF KNOT TYERS

President: GEOFFREY BUDWORTH

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Editorial

Issue No. 20 of 'Knotting Matters' which, with only 4 issues a year, makes it quite a milestone. There were a few faint-hearts at the outset who doubted that such a newsletter could thrive.

The editorial policy remains to put into print, and so make legitimate, information on knots and ropework and those who do them that might otherwise not be disseminated at all. Stuff already in books can mostly fend for itself. If something needs to be rescued or discussed, we'll be there, stretching out a helpful publishing hand; but KM is mainly for you...and you're keeping it going magnificently. Researchers in 100 years time will marvel at what you're now producing.

Note your Editor has, after a lifetime as a city boy, moved to grass and trees down by the River Medway in the orchard county of Kent. Our old cat and me, we are equally bemused by it all!

Contact me by letter, please, if at all possible. I'm a slave to the telephone all day at work: I'm NOT keen on it at home, and also need to be in bed early. You CAN ring me at work.

You have a new and very competent Honorary Secretary. Do make sure that correspondence for him goes to his address in future.

Your immediate past President, Eric FRANKLIN saw us through an eventful 2 years, using his considerable reputation within the brotherhood of Scouting to obtain access for us more than once to the prestigious international training establishment for Scouts at Gilwell. He attended Guild functions, contributed to our publications, and we are grateful that this busy octogenarian was able to fit us in to crowded schedule of family activities and other leisure pursuits. We are the richer for his term of office. Well done indeed, Eric.

New President's Message

My two eminent predecessors, Percy BLANDFORD and Eric FRANKLIN, proved excellent choices...let's hope your judgement hasn't deserted you this time!

The Guild's President serves for just 2 years. We made no appointment during the first year, so I am your third President and will serve through years 6 and 7. I am the youngest President thus far (but I'm 50). Your new Honorary Secretary is older than me. I think we need some energetic younger folk to help steer the Guild's affairs, and so I will use my influence to make sure that elections produce some fresh faces, rather than simply carry along the same old faithfuls (even though we love them for what they do).

My ambition is to leave the Guild so securely establishes it will still be flourishing 20 years from now, no matter who drops out meantime. The past 5 years have been ones of remarkable achievements, establishing the name of the I.G.K.T. far and wide, the newsletter 'Knotting Matters', our 'Extravaganza'. Now we must stretch ourselves still more.

In late September we go to Rotterdam to join with the Dutch members exhibiting and demonstrating knotting and ropework as part of the 'Open Port' week of celebrations. It will be our first European gathering, lasting 7 days excluding travel. I hope that many of you will be able to put in an appearance there for some part of the time. I shall be there as your President from first to last.

(I regret that time and money do not permit me to visit many more of you farther off.)

I will still edit and compile 'Knotting Matters' for as long as you deem me competent to do so; and I will continue to promote and publicise our splendid Guild in my own peculiar way.

~~~~~

## 8-Splice

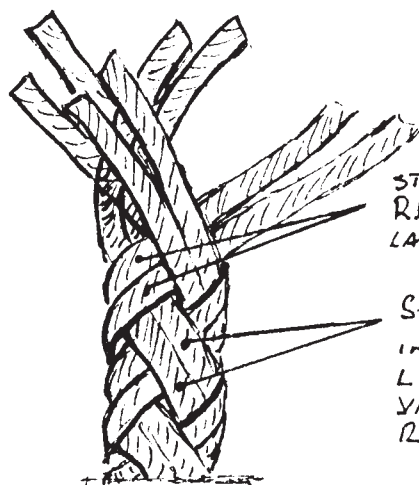
by Neil HOOD  
in W. Australia

A few weeks ago I was asked by one of the seamen crewing the local tugs how to back splice 8-strand square rope. Having a fairly extensive library of books on ropework, I did not anticipate much trouble in coming up with the information; but this was not to be. After going through 50 or so books and pamphlets with no success, it eventually dawned on me that I was going to have to devise my own back splice.

From a few experiments, I came up with the following. Whether or not it's desirable to backsplice cordage was not a consideration; merely how to do it! This version could be cleaned up. Constructive criticism would be welcome.

## BACK SPLICING 8 Strand Square ROPE

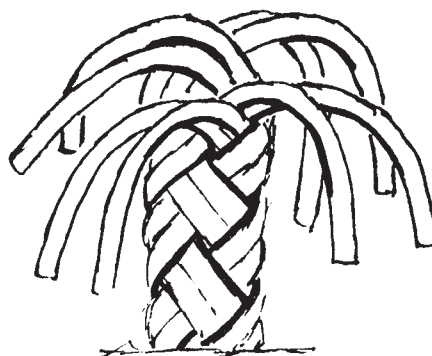
1. Hold the rope vertical and note that 4 of the 8 strands are laid into the rope L.H. and have yarns that are laid R.H. into strands. The remaining 4 strands are laid R.H. into the rope and have yarns laid L.H. into strands. Remember this as a means of positive identification of the strands.



STRANDS LAID IN R.H. HAVING YARNS LAID IN L.H.

STRANDS LAID INTO THE ROPE L.H. HAVING YARNS LAID IN R.H.

2. Unlay the strands a distance equal to about 15 times the diameter of the rope and let them hang down the sides of the vertically held rope.



3. Select the 4 strands that were laid R.H. into the rope and hold them vertical. Crown the remaining strands to the left around the core formed by the vertically held strands — pull firm.



R.H. LAID STRANDS HELD TO FORM A CORE.

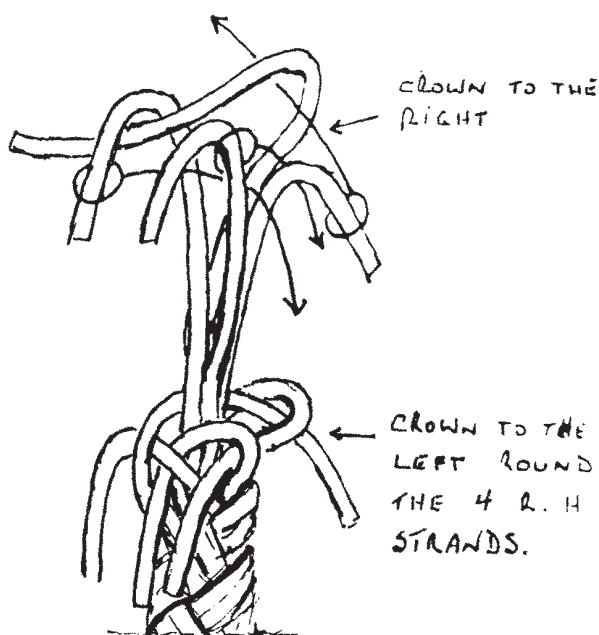
CROWN THE L.H. LAID STRANDS TO THE LEFT.



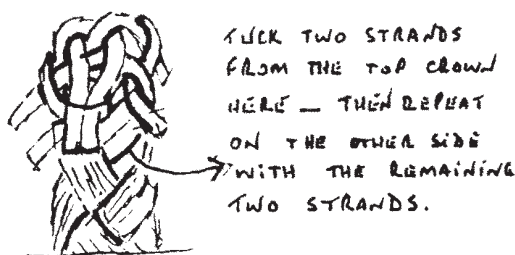
2

4. Now crown the four vertically held strands to the right— Pull firm.

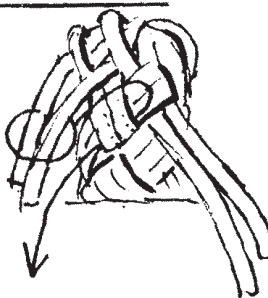
All 8 Strands have now reversed direction and are naturally lying along the sides of the main body of the rope.



5. Look at the body of the rope, immediately below the first crown tied, and select one of the 2 pair of strands laid R.H. into the rope. Take the two strands from the top crown (the last crown tied) that lie naturally just to the left of the selected pair of strands in the body of the rope and tuck under from left to right — do the same with the remaining strands, i.e. tuck under the other pair in the body of the rope.



6. Tuck the four strands from the other crown in a similar way only this time tucking from right to left beneath the pairs of strands that are laid left hand into the rope.



7. The strands are now in position to complete the tucking using whichever of the various methods is Preferred.

# The Business of Knotting - Part 2

by

Stuart E GRAINGER

(PART 1 OF THIS VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION APPEARS IN 'K.M.'  
ISSUE No. 19, PAGE 10)

4. Whatever selling approach you decide upon, you will find some form of advertising leaflet of great value. This should carry your name and address, of course and perhaps your telephone number if you have one; just as important, it should contain some good illustrations of your products. Photographs are probably best, although good drawings may be satisfactory if they accurately represent the product. It is important that photographs are sharp and of high contrast to reproduce well in print. If you can do your own photographic work it may help to know that I always use Ilford Pan F film, developed in Microphen and printed on pearl finish Multigrade paper, but, if you have your own preferences, you may be wise to stay with them. A leaflet need not cost a great deal, particularly if you take the advice of an experienced local printer, who can probably suggest a professional photographer and layout artist if you need and can afford one. A cheaper possibility is to approach a local Speedprint shop. They offer a layout service at low cost usually and may be able to suggest a semi-professional photographer. Sometimes a student can be found who will do a good job, through a technical or art college. Such leaflets can be sent through the post to prospective retailers or handed to potential customers, pinned to notice boards, left in hotel lobbies, tourist board offices, libraries, even under wiper blades in car parks. The very fact that you have such a leaflet will enhance your standing with potential customers, and the better it looks the more good it will do. Do not forget that a well set out price-list will be needed to accompany the leaflet.

5. If your immediate sales are unlikely to support much selling activity and you are unwilling to commit resources to a speculative size, consider whether you might form a partnership with one or two others who may be in a similar position. Running a market stall for instance, two or three times a week may be too much of a burden for one, whereas, operated on a roster system of some kind, with other whose products are compatible but not competitive with your own could be worthwhile... but not worrying or exhausting. Making contact with potential partners should not be too big a problem - a small ad in a local paper and corner shop window, letters to local art and craft societies, adult education centres, day centres for the disabled, W.I., Citizens Advice Bureaux - all these and more are possible sources who might be interested in co-operating with you. More difficult may be choosing suitable partners from those expressing interest. Obviously partners must feel able to trust one another and to discuss any problems which arise, but these are likely to be reduced if products complement each other well and if partners do not take on more than they can genuinely manage.

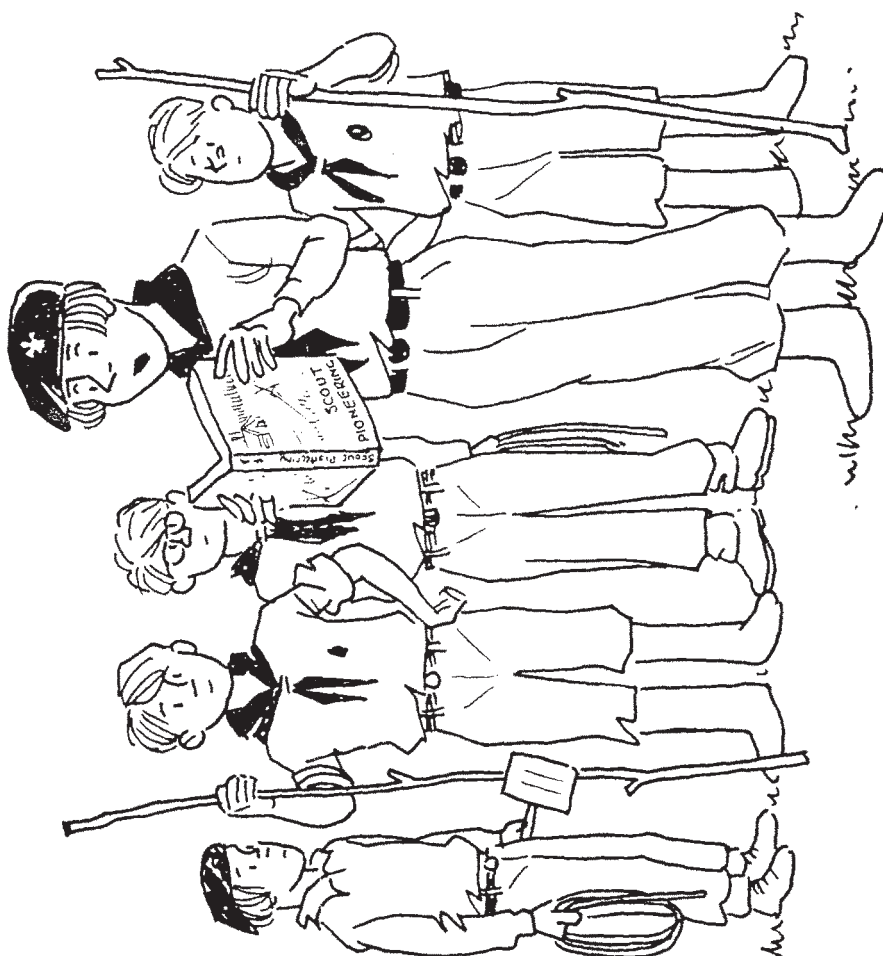
6. If you find that your sales are still disappointing after all efforts. It is probable that your products should be reconsidered. Are you offering a well balanced range? Are your prices too high and, if so, can you improve matters by using cheaper materials or

less complicated designs? Are you using the most advantageous sources of supply? Would a product's appearance be improved by changing the material you use? What about introducing colour, or trying something unconventional like seagrass or cane in a design? Sometimes a simple point-of-sale display aid will make a big difference. For instance, a "tree" on which to hang key-rings, or a board covered with felted Fablon and carrying a few cup hooks on which to hang a few lanyards may be efficacious. Always avoid making customers ask about a product unless they want to, so try to label everything, not only with the price but even what it is. You may feel it is obvious that a polythene sausage full of Turk's Heads is a set of serviette rings, but your potential customer may not and may be too shy to point and say; "What's that?" It is not always obvious that a covered bottle filled with sand is a doorstop, either, so play safe and label everything.

I advise you never to turn down a commission, so long as you are sure of payment. Even if you spend more time on it than the agreed price warrants, it will enhance your reputation and you will learn how to make it quicker and more economically another time. The items I find sell easiest are:- Bangles - Turk's Heads and Star Grommets of various colour combinations; Key Rings - with Monkey's Fist tags in 6 different colours; Table Napkin Rings - sets of 6 colours, Turk's Heads or Star Grommets; Miniature Knot Boards; Door Stops - sand filled covered bottles; Bowls and Wastepaper Baskets - hitching over formers made from plastic plant pots, then stiffened with wood hardener or resin.

I WISH YOU EVERY SUCCESS

**Cartoon**  
from 'Scouting'  
July, 1976  
Pioneering for All



'It says: "Finally, raise your tetrahedron by means of a luff tackle, mounted to advantage, until the true line of the falls bisects the angle between your imaginary datum line and the anticipated co-ordinate on the auxiliary hawser at maximum tension, after which it is a simple

# THE Single Bowline on the Bight

By  
John Smith

Reference to my observations under the heading "VARIANT BOWLINES" in K.M. 19. p.2, makes me realise that the man who developed a drink called "6-Up" and I have something in common...we both stopped exploring too soon! I am very grateful to Pieter van de Griend for some stimulating correspondence which prompted me to look again at the tucked Bowline (fig. 1).

This knot can be tied in the bight. Form a Clove Hitch and pass one loop through the other (fig. 2). Extend a loop to the required size and pass it as shown (fig. 3). This is, of course, what was shown in K.M. 19. Now take the missing step (the arrangement should be as fig. 4). Turn down the "collar" as indicated. The finished knot is shown, both faces (fig's 5a & 5b).

To convert more easily (from fig. 3 to fig. 4) allow the structure to drag over your left hand whilst pulling the loop through with your right. The final move may be achieved with some panache by retaining hold on the loop and lightly grasping around all with your left hand, which is then swept downwards. (Budding magicians will be able to combine these two moves to produce a very quick result.)

Ashley, in #1057, declares that none of the knots called "Single Bowline on the Bight" has parallel ends, as the real (Double) Bowline has. The knot we have just tied DOES, I believe, fit the requirements as near as any knot. It is a Bowline, with but one extra tuck, tied on the bight, having a single loop and parallel ends.

There are at least 3 alternative methods of producing this Single Bowline on the Bight. One is almost given by Ashley indeed as #1036 except for the final turning down of the collar. Another method is to start with a Bell Ringer's Knot (arranged as fig. 6). The upper loop is drawn down and around the whole structure in a manner similar to forming the Double Bowline on the Bight, #1080.

A third way is surprising; start with a Right Hand Slip Knot (fig. 7). Take one side of the loop and curve it around the Overhand Knot (fig. 8). Hold with your thumb and finger the parts within the dotted line. Then hook a finger under the part indicated by the arrow and draw the loop through, all the while keeping your hold with thumb and finger.

Collectors of trivia will note that if any of the above methods are used near the end of the line, a "Tucked Bowline" results, and those who prefer will find a neat flick to remove the tuck produces a traditional Bowline.

I recall seeing in a book by co-authors called (I think) Snyder, the Angler's Loop described as a Single Bowline on the Bight where the two standing parts are to be widely separated. I believe that knot to be preferable. Where they are to be parallel, or quite close, I would offer the knot described as THE Single Bowline on the Bight.





Fig. 1

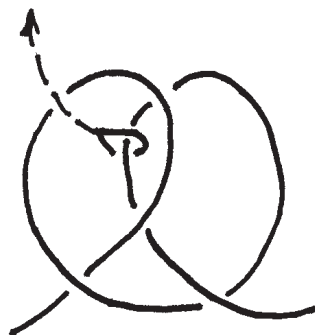


Fig. 2

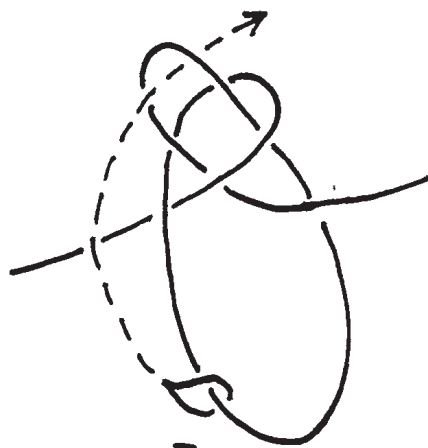


Fig. 3

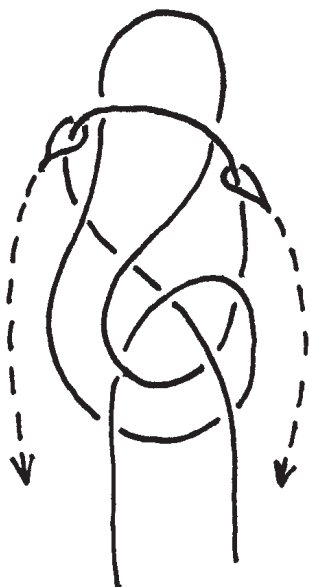


Fig. 4



Fig. 5a

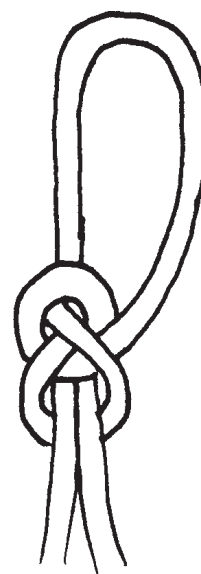


Fig. 5b

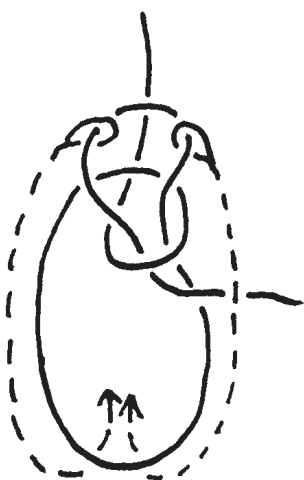


Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8

# Coiling a Rope - 2

by  
Harry ASHER

At the April meeting I received much informed comment from members on my article COILING A ROPE (KM No. 19, p.22) and this has led me to extend the treatment to include the case of a flat coil.

Although, the problem concerns rope, the effects are more vividly shown with tape. I have used a one-inch tape of nylon webbing, though ribbon or a strip of paper would serve as well.

## Experiment 1

Wind a flat coil of tape clockwise, outwards from the centre, and lay it on the floor or a table top. Now unwind it by pulling the outer end vertically upwards. The tape will "come off anticlockwise" (the meaning is clear when you do it), and forms a left-handed spiral between your hand the coil.

Now do the same thing with rope. The left-handed spiral is formed, though less distinctly. When the rope is pulled out straight the lay is loosened. The effect is not striking, but is readily detected by feeling the twist exerted on the fingers. To get clear about this it is best to make separate tests to find which way to twist or untwist rope to tighten or loosen the lay.

## Experiment 2

Once more, first with tape and then with rope, make a flat coil wound clockwise outwards from the centre, but this time pull the central end up. Now you get a right-handed spiral, and pulling it out straight will tighten the lay.

## Experiment 3

Wind the coil as before, clockwise outwards from the centre, but this time turn the whole thing over so that the original upper surface is now on the floor. You now have a coil running outwards anticlockwise (viewed from above). Of course the same effect could have been obtained by winding the coil outwards and anticlockwise at the start, and not turning it over.

## Experiment 4

With the same anticlockwise coil pull the rope out from the centre. The spiral formed is left-handed, and if pulled out straight will loosen the lay.

In any of the cases considered, when the rope is not pulled out straight but is left to lie loose, kinking is liable to occur, and with a flat coil there seems to be no way of avoiding it.

The remarks above are based on tests made by me in the house with short lengths of tape or rope under conditions remote from those encountered by some of our members on the mountain side or at sea, and they are the men that matter. I get the impression that their practices are not in line with the conclusions drawn here, and there must be a case for further discussion.

# Poem

by David PARRINGTON

Cub Scout Leader, 19th. Exeter

## ROPE OR KNOT?

How sad it would be without a rope,  
     And what could we have in its place?  
 Sticky tape or tacky glue  
     Just wouldn't stand the pace.

Can you imagine camping time  
     Out in the summer sun,  
 Trying to erect an eight-man tent,  
     With only paste and gum!

You couldn't fish or make a swing,  
     Or skip or tie shoe laces,  
 Or even tie a parcel up  
     To send to distant places.

We might use worms or snakes instead,  
     But you would have to pray,  
 That when you went to sleep at night,  
     The tent wouldn't crawl away.

So to all Scouters who can't teach knots,  
     Fun comes to Cubs by talking  
 Of Tarzan using knots and ropes  
     To save a lot of walking!

from..  
 'SCOUTING'  
 December 1975  
 Cub Scout Supplement, p46

# Quotation

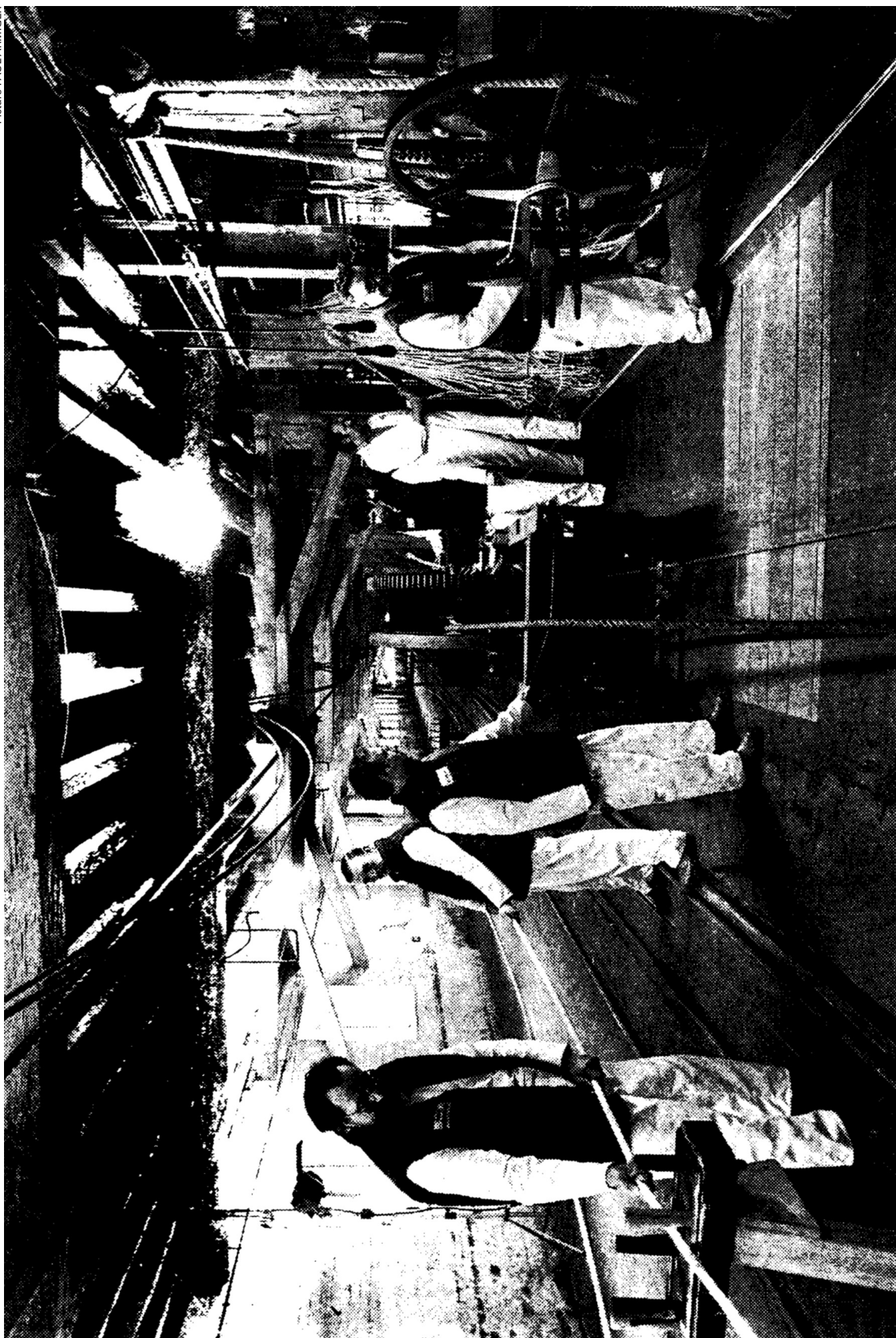
"...and needles for mending the trawl are left charged and ready for use  
 - this being the deckhand learner's special responsibility."

"Hands blue to the wrists knitted diamond mesh to diamond mesh and  
 repaired both top wings with a speed and precision that might have  
 impressed the Royal School of Needlework."

'LOVELY SHE GOES' - A Story of Arctic Trawling, by William MITFORD,  
 published by Michael Joseph Ltd. (1969)



Picture PAUL ARMIGER



Production under way again in Chatham Historic Dockyard, Kent, where the 18th century ropery was re-opened yesterday as a working exhibition. For the six master ropemakers, who have between them 210 years experience, it was a welcome return to work after being made redundant twice in the last four years. At the height of the Napoleonic Wars the ropery employed over 300 people.

# Samson's Rope

contributed by  
Philip D. NOBLE

From the Holy Bible - Judges, chapter 16, verses 5-9:-

"And the...Philistines...said unto her 'Entice him and see...by what means...we may bind him'..."

"And Delilah said to Samson, 'Tell me...wherewith thou mightest be bound'..."

"And Samson said unto her 'If they bind me with seven green withs that were never dried, then shall I be weak'..."

"...then...the Philistines brought up to her seven green withs which had not been dried, and she bound him..."

"...And he brake the withs, as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire..."

- - - oOo - - -

There is an interesting reference on Samson's Rope I've recently discovered in a book 'TREES AND SHRUBS OF OUR BIBLICAL HERITAGE' by Hogah Hareeuveni (page 54).

"Familiarity with the YITRAN plant and the lengthy, complex rope-making process enables us to understand how Samson outmanoeuvred the Philistines, and at the same time publicised his strength far and near. Samson's conditions (fresh rope not re-wetted) required the Philistines to get an enormous amount of work done in one day: they had to gather huge quantities of YITRAN fibers on the coastal plain where they grow; these had to be worked clear of twigs in preparation for the actual plaiting - immediate plaiting before the strands dry out - all the time paying the strictest attention to the quality of the rope that had to be plaited, with special care to ensure the greatest possible strength. All this required the marshalling of a number of experienced teams capable of finishing the work in the morning hours. For, after the ropes were finished, they still had a long journey of at least twenty kilometers from the land of the Philistines to Samson's home, many hours walk in the heat of the day."

Then comes making the rope (page 55):-

"The bark (of the YITRAN) is cut at the bottom of the branch to a depth at which the woody part of the branch is felt. The bark is then peeled upwards, making certain that only one strip is taken from each branch in order to avoid girding (killing) any single branch. The bark slips off easily as a thin strip, long and strong, together with all the small branchlets growing out from it. The strips of bark must then be carefully cleaned by hand or with a knife until they are smooth and easily worked. A few strips are held together and folded in half, and then twisted together between the palms of both hands. When the thickness of the rope begins to diminish, new fibers are added, also folded in half, so that a rope of unlimited length can be made without a single link or weak point. Making ropes from YITRAN takes time and patience, but the result is a rope strong enough to tow a Jeep from hubcap-deep mud."



# What's It All About?

asks

John WOOSEY

A colleague recently set me a 'knotty' problem which I solved partially but with difficulty. He is a keen exponent of all forms of Oriental Martial Arts, and in connection with one of them he recently bought a Japanese sword or Katana. The sword is sheathed in a wooden black shellacked scabbard or Saya. Around the Saya, close to the top, is a flat, braided, black cord about 1 cm. wide.

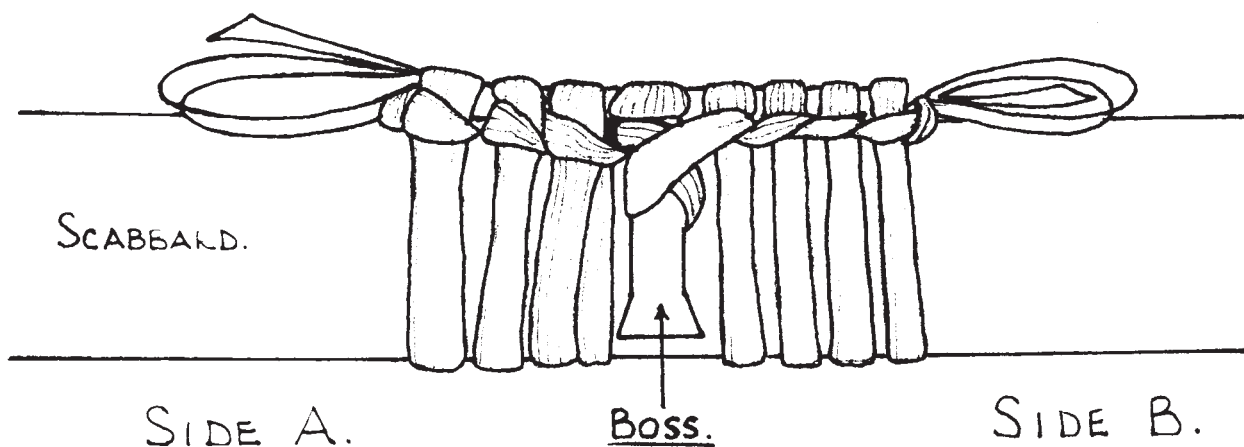
This cord, about 1 metre long, is middled at a small wooden boss on one side of the scabbard. The ends are half-hitched around the scabbard with a loop on the bight being left at the top of the hitch. The loop is twisted through 90° so that it sits in line with the scabbard edge. The cord is taken down to form another hitch in a similar manner, until 4 half-hitches with loops have been formed on each side of the boss.

Both ends of the cord are now passed through the 8 loops, so that they lie at opposite ends of the knot ('A' through to side 'B'; and 'B' to 'A'). This was achieved by inserting 2 wire loops fashioned from coat hangers through the cord loops and pulling both ends through simultaneously to the opposite sides of the knot.

The ends of the cord are now looped back on themselves through the loops using the same wire tools, so as to appear like the knot shown in the drawing.

I understand that the knot is not solely for decorative purposes, but that the tying (and more especially the UNtying) of it is an important element in its use...in a ceremonial sense. In order to untie the knot prior to the sword's use, the 2 ends are pulled causing the whole arrangement to collapse.

Does anyone know this knot's name, purpose, how it should be made, and with what sort of implements? I would be pleased to know so that I could pass it all on to my friend.



# Letters

Dear Geoffrey,

The following sign appears over a comprehensive range of ropes at the Cambrian Small Boats and Chandlery Ltd., in Swansea. I am sure others will find it as useful as I do:-

PLEASE NOTE THAT WE SELL ROPE BY THE METRE.  
FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE DIFFICULTY WITH THE  
METRIC SYSTEM, THE OFFICIAL DEFINITION OF A  
METRE IS:

"1,650,763.73 times the wavelength in a vacuum  
of the unperturbed transition (2p<sub>10</sub> - 5d<sub>5</sub>) of  
Krypton 86."

WE HOPE THIS WILL ASSIST YOU IN CALCULATING THE  
LENGTH OF ROPE YOU REQUIRE!

Regards,

50 Arethusa Way,  
Bisley, Woking,  
Surrey GU24 9BX,  
England.

John SMITH

20 May 87

Dear Geoffrey,

At a guess, the "rope strop" in the Egyptian hieroglyph (K.M. No. 19, Spring 1987, page 23) could well be a pair of jesses as used by falconers to tether a hawk.

If the "Newcastle Branch" referred to in the Minutes of the meeting of 11/10/86 is based on Newcastle on Tyne, and if the members are not already aware of it, it could be worth while them getting in touch with Shipley Art Gallery, Gateshead, which is most supportive of all types of crafts.

19 Ansdell Road North,  
Ansdell  
Lytham St. Annes FY8 4EZ,  
England.

Tony BLOOMER

25 April 87

Dear Geoffrey,

Thanks for the latest copy of 'Knotting Matters'. It really looks fine - and I thought it about time I made some contribution to the material. You ask about the world record for tying the six assorted Scout knots. Now it clearly cannot be done in the time of 8 sec's from one piece of rope, knotting and untying; neither can it be done, I suspect, in a series of six separate ropes unless some very special way of grabbing the next

rope is devised (perhaps to be handed the rope at the appropriate position and height?)

Most liely of all, the knots are tied and timed INDIVIDUALLY, i.e. 1.04 sec's for reef knot, 0.96 sec's for a bowline, and so on. In this way a composite time of around 8.00 sec's would not be impossible. I think though I haven't tried it yet). It would fulfil the requirement of tying the knots within a certain time limit, simply missing out that there is a gap between each tying. What think you?

Thanks for all you do,

56 Ayr Road  
PRESTWICK  
Ayrshire, Scotland

Philip NOBLE

April 19th. 1987

Dear Geoffrey,

In Ashley's Book of Knots, page 235 (#1321) is mentioned of a privately published article about Square Turk's Heads ('Turksheads' by George H. Taber, Pittsburgh, 1919). I have been hunting this paper for years now; now, finally, an exhaustive search by the Science & Technology Department of the Library of Congress has revealed no trace of this (reportedly "acclaimed") mathematical treatise among the American collection of mathematical writings.

I would like to read Taber's paper because I once found his results but am curious how he put up his line of inquiry to find the 4 starts... and also why Ashley did not publish them, when he treats the Narrow and Wide TH in a manner never seen before.

So does anyone know what happened to Ashley's library? Can any member locate Taber's writings?

Kind regards from,

Argjavegur 39,  
ARGIR  
Faroe Islands (via Denmark).

Pieter van de Griend

May 87

Dear Frank,

Now happily retired, and catching up with the backlog of garden and house from 10 years overwork in shop. We hope actually to come to one of your meetings before long!

Please send K----- M---- to address below (left); and, if you haven't recruited Nigel BLAKE (new owner at the shop), suggest you write to him there.

Best wishes,

Lumley Croft,  
Lumley  
EMSWORTH,  
Hants. PO10 8AQ,  
England.

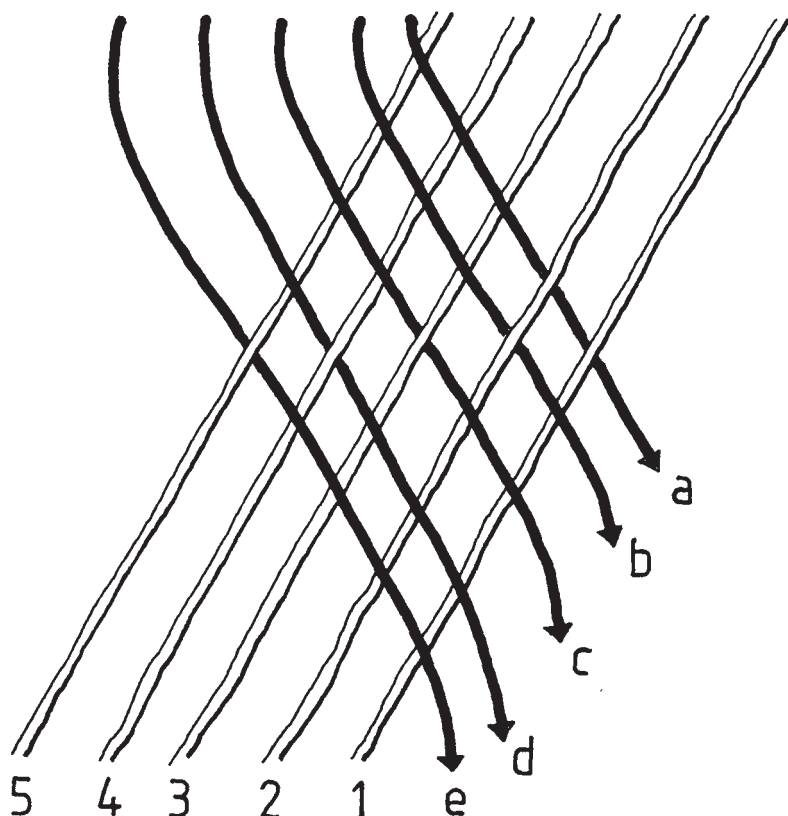
John HOLLISS

3 May 87

formerly of:-  
'The Rope Shop',  
26 High Street,  
Emsworth  
Hants. PO10 7AW,  
England.

# 5 - Splices

by Frank THOMPSON



## NARES' splice

At April's meeting in B'ham Frank HARRIS was asked how to put an Eye Splice in 5-strand rope. Like him I have never come across 5-strand rope and neither has anyone else I have asked. However, I have a copy of a recent reprint of 'NARES' SEAMANSHIP' (1862) and, sure enough, it mentions splicing 5-strand rope. Not to be outdone I made up a specimen so that when the gentleman in question produces his sample, Frank can say; "Snap!" The diagram here (left) follows the description given in Nares'...

## GERMAN -type splice

...but I prefer a German type of locking splice (diagram right) which turns out to be not so long-jawed at the staddle.

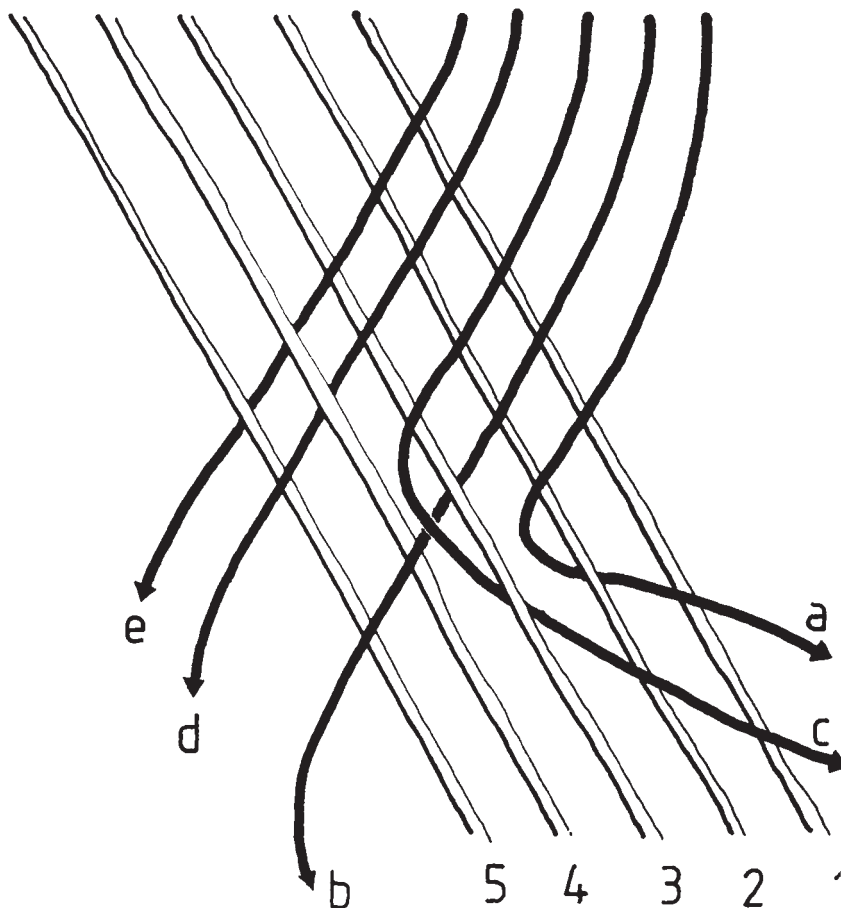
Summary:

Nares' tucks are all made AGAINST the lay.

The German-type splice has strands 'a' & 'c' only against the lay;

all others tuck WITH the lay.

Subsequent tucks are all made regularly over-one-under-one for either type of splice.





## NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM

Our reference: 2G6/12/06  
 Mr G Budworth  
 7 Hazel Shore  
 TONBRIDGE Kent  
 TN10 3QE

10 June 1987

Dear Mr Budworth

Your contribution to Saturday's events was one of the most popular and crowd-pulling of the day. Thank you for all your efforts, and please pass this on to all the other knot-tyers too.

Yours sincerely

*April Whincop*  
 April Whincop  
 Assistant Education Officer

Letter of thanks  
 received after the  
 I.G.K.T.'s display  
 at the Museum's  
 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary  
 celebrations on  
 Saturday, 6 June 1987

*National Maritime Museum Greenwich London SE10 9NF Telephone 01-858 4422 01-858 5265  
 Old Royal Observatory Telephone 01-858 1167*

JW

## Quotation

"Sometimes the puncher, for the fastening of his horse when afield, carried on his saddle a hempen stake-rope or picket-rope, or else bore there a line of woven horsehair.

This horsehair line was useful for picketing, and laid about one's bed was supposed to keep rattlesnakes away. Tradition had it that certainly no snake, and probably no centipede, scorpion, or trantula, would cross its scratchy surface.

'THE COWBOY' by Philip Ashton ROLLINS,  
 published by Charles Scribner's Sons (1922)



# Book Reviews

by your Editor unless stated otherwise)

## 'The HARDY BOOK of FISHERMAN'S KNOTS'

by Alan B. VARE

published 1987) by Camden Publishing Co. Ltd.  
323 Upper Street, Islington,  
London N1 2QY, England.

Price: £2.00p

ISBN 0-900249-12-9

Produced sensibly on water-resistant paper, with a glossy cover, this slim and flexible, pocket-sized (well, almost) book is an excellent little work, very reasonably priced.

Anglers should find the clear black-&-white photographs of hands tying knots invaluable. A single diagram of each completed knot's layout complements the step-by-step instructions.

Knot students will find the Allbright, Arbour, Double Grinner, Offshore, Palomar, Spider, Vare and Turle Knots, plus 20 others, and want this book for reference within their collections. The author - who served 10 years in the Merchant Navy - also knows fishing and is a manager in the fishing tackle industry.

## 'KUMIHIMO - Japanese Silk Braiding Techniques'

published (1986) by Old Hall Press, by Catherine MARTIN  
Hatfield, Leominster,  
Herefordshire HR6 0SF, England.

Price: about £8.95p

ISBN 0-946534-03-9

This is an unusual book by an artistic Englishwoman who lived in Japan for 4 years where she studied and graduated from the most prestigious school of braiding by hand the beautifully patterned ropes and cords traditionally used for bags and banners, garments of dancer and priest, even securing a Samurai warrior's armour. Simple looms are used. Warping (and dyeing, only if you wish it) is an essential preliminary. It's a finer version of Ashley's solid sinnets at least 1,200 years old.

While assuring us of the absorbing pleasure and tranquillity to be experienced in this creative pastime, she is an effective instructress who spells out clearly fast how to do it all. We are then given 12 examples of real traditional Japanese braids to make and use.

For those of us striving to fit several lifetimes into one, this soft-covered book (realistically priced) will provide yet another splendid pursuit.

# Video Reviews

(by your Editor unless stated otherwise)

## 'ROPES, KNOTS & SPLICES', instructor Robert DEARN

available (1987) from Freetime Television Ltd.,  
8 Carvers Ind. Estate, Southampton Road,  
RINGWOOD, Hants. BH24 1JS

Price: £14.95p  
incl. V.A.T.

VHS/BETA

In about 55 minutes running time, we are shown basic knots, bends and hitches for use afloat on yachts. Rope handling and protection from where are shown. Robert Dearn, the presenter, is a Yachtmaster instructor and Senior Dayboat instructor at the Island Cruising Club, Salcombe, Devon and this documentary video film has - what I guess is his home waters as its background.

The programme visits a rope factory to watch the stuff made; and professional riggers there demonstrate splicing laid line, braided cordage and even rope-to-chain (briefly), from which a few tips may be picked up. We are even treated to a rope strength test or two.

It's good viewing...but I wouldn't buy it, nor need you since Stuart GRAINGER has generously donated a cassette to the Guild (contact video librarian Howard DENYER for details).

#### 'SAILORS' KNOTS & SPLICES' with Brion TOSS

available from      WoodenBoat Video,  
                          P.O. Box 78,  
                          Brooklin, Maine 04616,  
                          U.S.A.

Price: \$39.95

VHS/BETA

I have not had the chance to view this video by our good friend so will reproduce the leaflet I was sent by WoodenBoat Publications.

SAILORS' KNOTS & SPLICES is an informative how-to video program covering the basic knots and splices every sailor should know. It is a video for all seasons, a teaching or reviewing tool for both armchair and avid sailors. Presented in a relaxed and informative context, the knots and splices are shown in close-up detail from the viewer's perspective, so that you can follow the steps with ease, even the more complex ones.

BRION TOSS is a professional rigger, and an impassioned champion of knots and ropework who utilizes both three-strand and double braid rope in natural and synthetic forms. He is the author of 'The Riggers Apprentice', and of numerous articles in 'Sail' and 'WoodenBoat'. His relaxed style, his methodical approach, and his clear commentary make this an invaluable contribution to the art of seamanship today.

Some of the knots covered are:- the Bowline; Figure Eight; Slipped Reef Knot; Rolling Hitch; Capstan Hitch; Anchor Hitch; Eye Splice; Double-Braid Eye Splice; Sheet and Becket Bends; Constrictor Knot; Palm-and-Needle Whippings; Kink-free Coils and secure Belays.  
 Running time: 60 minutes.

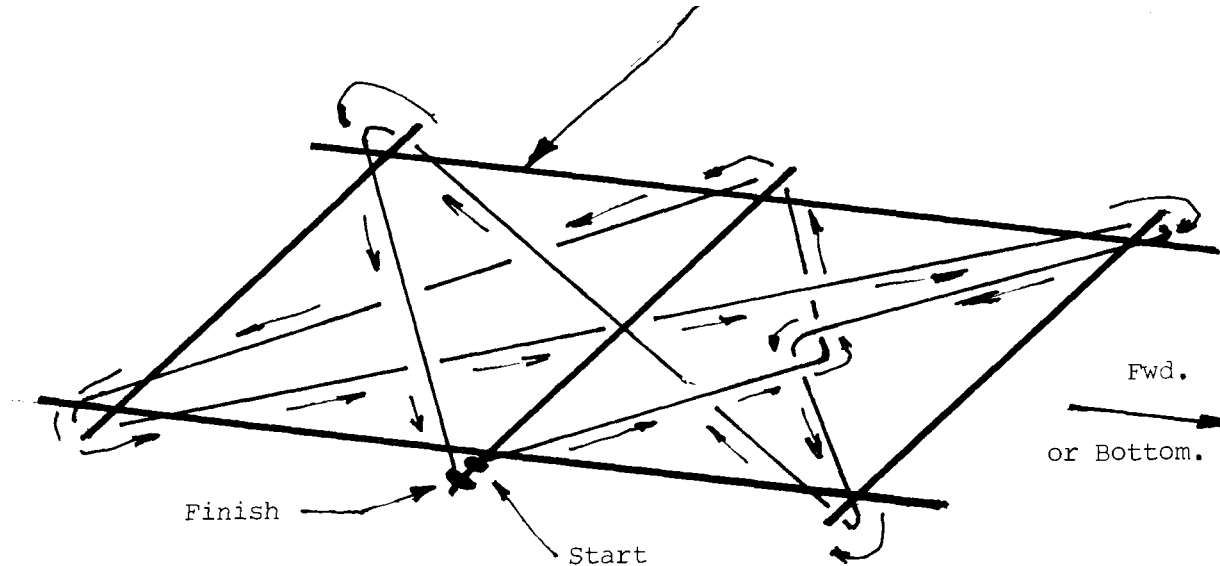
## Quotation

"Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of the bird."  
 (PROVERBS)

# Pack Horse Cradle Lashing

found in Canada by Jack BELL

Six Point Cradle or Frame.



Can also be used on a Back Pack or Roof Rack, pulling up the slack on vibration.

## Crisis Cordage

from 'HOW TO SURVIVE ON LAND  
AND SEA (INDIVIDUAL SURVIVAL)

(U.S. Naval Institute, Maryland) 2nd. Printing, 1958, pages 104 & 105...

TABLE 1

SOME PLANTS FROM WHICH CORD, LINES AND ROPES MAY BE MADE

Throughout the world there are numerous plants whose roots, outer and inner barks, and leaf and stem fibres, can be twisted and used as cord or rope for fishing, lashing and climbing. Fiber from palms, rattans, bamboo, and various vines, are common in the tropics. The tough inner or outer bark of trees is the easiest and simplest material to use. Soaking often helps to separate the fibres.

continued overleaf...

| <u>NAME</u>                                                         | <u>PART USED/ (WHERE FOUND)</u>                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.       Leather wood (Dirca)                                       | Strands of split bark<br>(Eastern North America);                                                                                                           |
| 2.       Basswood or Linden<br>(Tilia)                              | Shredded layers of inner sapling bark<br>(Temperate countries of Northern hemisphere.<br>Rich humus soil);                                                  |
| 3.       Mulberry (Morus)                                           | Inner bark of trunk and roots<br>(Temperate regions of Northern hemisphere);                                                                                |
| 4.       Spruce   (Picea)                                           | Barked rootlets<br>(Cold climates of Northern hemisphere);                                                                                                  |
| 5.       Hemlock (Tsuga)                                            | Fibers of roots and the roots themselves<br>(Northern North America and Southern<br>mountains);                                                             |
| 6.       Tamaracm (Larix)                                           | Fibers of roots<br>(Cold climates of Northern hemisphere.<br>Swampy wet region);                                                                            |
| 7.       Elm (Umus)                                                 | Shredded bark of trunk and roots<br>(Temperate climate of Northern hemisphere);                                                                             |
| 8.       Indian hemp (Apocynum)                                     | Bark fibers<br>(Temperate regions of Northern hemisphere.<br>Open land);                                                                                    |
| 9.       Yucca (Yucca)                                              | Fibers in leaves<br>(Southern United States, Mexico, tropical<br>America. Many are semi-desert plants);                                                     |
| 10.      Breadfruit (Artocarpus)                                    | Strands of inner bark<br>(South Pacific Islands, Malaya, Southern<br>Asia);                                                                                 |
| 11.      Plantains and<br>Bananas (Musa)                            | Fibrous tissues in mature leaf stalks.<br>Musa produces manila hemp<br>(Throughout tropical and sub-tropical<br>countries);                                 |
| 12.      Coconut palm (Cocas)                                       | Fibers of coconut husks and midrib of<br>the leaves<br>(Throughout tropical countries);                                                                     |
| 13.      Liana (Entada<br>scandens)                                 | Whole smaller stems and fibers of large<br>stems<br>(Native of tropics of both hemispheres.<br>South Pacific Islands. Also furnishes<br>drinkable sap);     |
| 14.      High climbing fern<br>(Stenochlaena palus-<br>Tris)        | Wiry stems, very durable under water<br>(India and South Pacific Islands.<br>Another species in Africa and Madagascar.<br>Found in swamps or near the sea); |
| 15.      Climbing can (Flag-<br>ellaria)                            | Stems<br>(India, Australia and South Pacific<br>Islands);                                                                                                   |
| 16.      Climbing or scrambling<br>aerial plants (Frey-<br>cinetia) | Flexible stems<br>(Indian Archipelago, New Zealand, Pacific<br>Islands, etc.);                                                                              |

| <u>NAME</u>                                          | <u>USED/ (WHERE FOUND)</u>                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 17. A climber of open country (Pachyrhizus erosus)   | Stem fibers<br>(Tropical America, East and West Indies, South Pacific Islands. Found in thickets in open country); |
| 18. Common tropical weeds (Urena sinuata and lobata) | Fiber from inner bark<br>(Common in tropics);                                                                      |
| 19. Shaw trees (Sterculia)                           | Fibrous inner bark. Rope not affected by wetness<br>(Tropics of both hemispheres);                                 |
| 20. Wild hibiscus (Hibiscus cannabifolius)           | Stem fibers<br>(South Pacific Islands);                                                                            |
| 21. Screw pine (Pandanus)                            | Leaf fibers<br>(South Pacific Islands).                                                                            |

## Answer

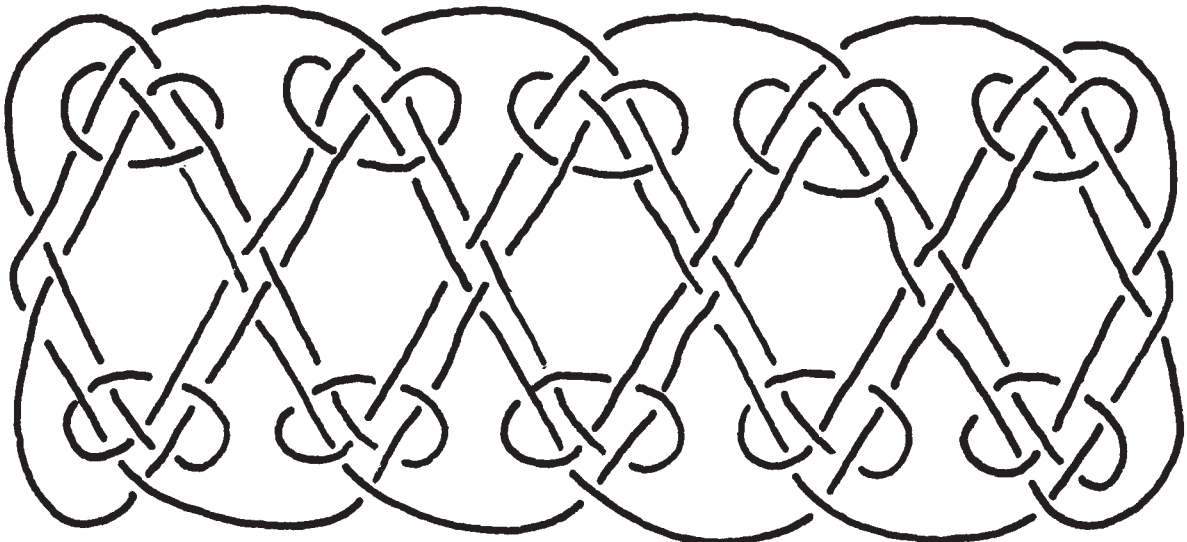
The solution to the question "What is a Lady's Waistcoat?" posed in Issue No. 19, on p.18, has - I regret - been mislaid. Until it is retrieved, your guess is as good as mine!

## Mat

The rectangular mat design (below) was spotted by Neil HOOD in the Seafarers' Centre at Port Hedland, Western Australia, where he is a voluntary worker.

He suspects it could be of Celtic Art origin...perhaps someone more into mats and weaves than he is will know.

It looks as if 3 cords are needed for the complete layout; work it out for yourselves.





BELOW:- Pages from a Danish Scout manual

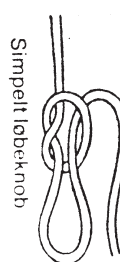
OPPOSITE:- Cover of Ashley Book of Knots (French style)

Knobtavle 2

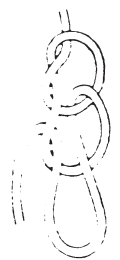


Enkelt knob

Flamsk knob



Simpelt løbeknot



Kædeknot



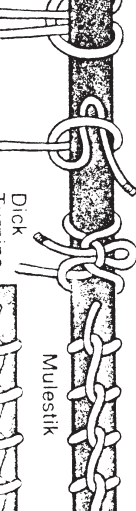
Trompestik



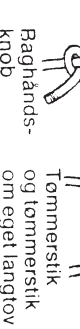
Trompestik m. væverknot



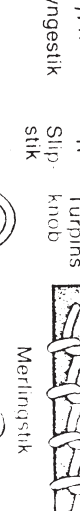
Rådånds-knot



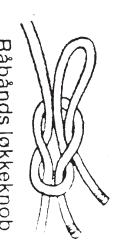
Mulesstik



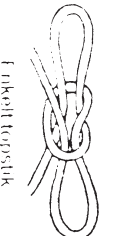
Tømmerstik



Slipstik



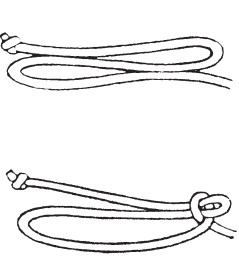
Rådånds løkkeknob



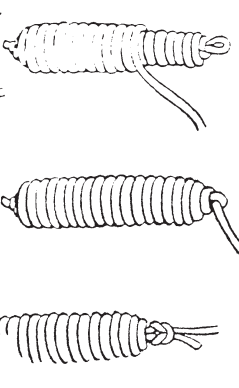
Enkelt topstik



Pærrens rose



Høfteknude



Pærrens rose

Knobtavle 1



Rådånds-knot



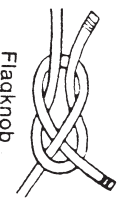
Kællingeknude



Tyveknot



Kirurgisk knude



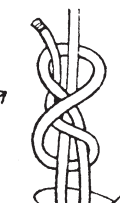
Flagknot



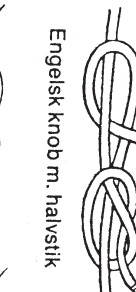
Væverknot



Engelsk knob



Engelsk knob



Engelsk knob m. halvsstik



Enkelt knob m. to parter (til bændelov og tape)



Flamsk knob m. to parter



Frihånds-knot



Enkelt knob på en bugt



Flamsk knob på en bugt



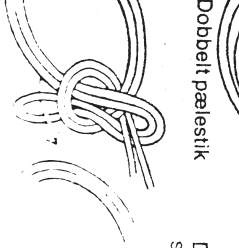
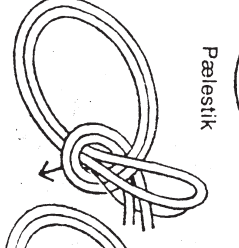
Pælestik



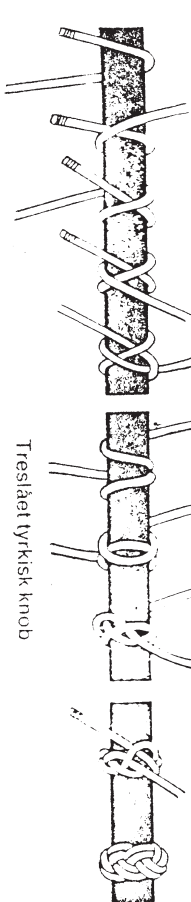
Dobbelt pælestik



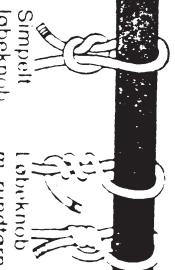
Dobbelt slyngestik



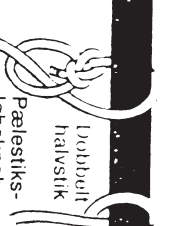
Dobbelt pælestik m. to faste øjer



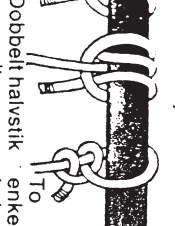
Treslæst lyrkisk knob



Simpelt løbeknot



Løbeknot m. rundtørn



Pælestiks- løbeknot



Dobbelt halvsstik



Forkert dobbelt halvsstik

*les mauds  
du marin, de l'artisan,  
du bricoleur, du montagnard,  
du pêcheur, de tous les  
jours... 3800 mauds  
à tout faire*

*par Clifford W. Ashley*  
*traduction de Karin Huot*

VOILES/GALLIMARD

