


ISSUE 36 JULY (SUMMER) 1991

ISSN 0959-2881

# Knotting Matters

Newsletter of the



INTERNATIONAL  
GUILD OF KNOT TYERS

The logo is a circular emblem. The outer ring contains the text "INTERNATIONAL" at the top and "GUILD OF KNOT TYERS" at the bottom, separated by small gaps. In the center of the emblem is a detailed illustration of a reef knot (square knot), also known as a reef knot or reef knot.

## KNOTTING MATTERS

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF KNOT TYERS

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PRESIDENT - Stuart E. Grainger

Issue 36  
July (Summer) 1991

### GUILD ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES RENEWABLE 1ST JANUARY:

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Seniors.....£12.50;

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## EDITORIAL

This is the last copy of Knotting Matters which I will produce.  
Your new editor is:

Lieutenant Commander G. J. Perry, Royal Navy  
171 London Road  
HORNDEN  
Hants  
PO8 0HH

All societies and groups need to change...to develop...otherwise they rapidly become jaded and devoid of good new ideas.

By July 1992 the I.G.K.T. will look very different. Those of us who care must support wholeheartedly the council's efforts in whatever way we can. The guild's new president, Stuart Grainger, set out his vision for the future in his inaugural speech at the 1991 Annual General Meeting in Warrington. Its printed in this issue for us all to consider very carefully.

## A PRECIS of Stuart Grainger's Presidential Speech

Whilst I am deeply conscious of the honour in your voting me the President's responsibility for the next two years, I am also apprehensive, because I suspect that these next two years will be among the most important and testing that the Guild has yet faced.

Frank Harris intends to retire at this time next year. He has run the Guild's day-to-day business for many years almost single-handed and it is time that we allowed him to stand down, but how are we going to manage without him? We have just one year, four council meetings and one general meeting before we face a crisis. Your new council will have to consider this problem as a matter of urgency.

The Guild's membership has increased steadily over the years and is now approaching seven hundred. I doubt whether the administration of so large a membership can be carried any longer on one man's shoulders. I believe that we require professional help, but that has to be paid for. We are constantly seeking volunteers for all kinds of jobs and usually we manage to cope, but it is fair to remember that many of our members are just too far away to help, so that, if we cannot find volunteers in this country, we can not continue to function as we have done hitherto.

If we are to seek professional help, we shall have to make financial provision for it and, unpopular though it may be, the obvious way to do so is to increase our subscription rate. One other way is to sell the Guild's own products, some of which have a margin for retailers.

Another immediate necessity is to find a new editor for "Knotting Matters". Robert Jackson, who has done a good job for us, but faced a good deal of criticism also, is retiring after the next issue and must be replaced. I plead with you not to criticise active volunteers unless you have something constructive to offer instead. Try useful suggestions rather than critical comments.

The guild's life depends upon communication between members, which is why "Knotting Matters" is vitally important, so keep your contributions coming, but do not be too disappointed if yours is not published. There will never be enough space for everybody, but be assured that what you say will be read and considered. Correspondence between members is just as, if not more important, so write to each other.

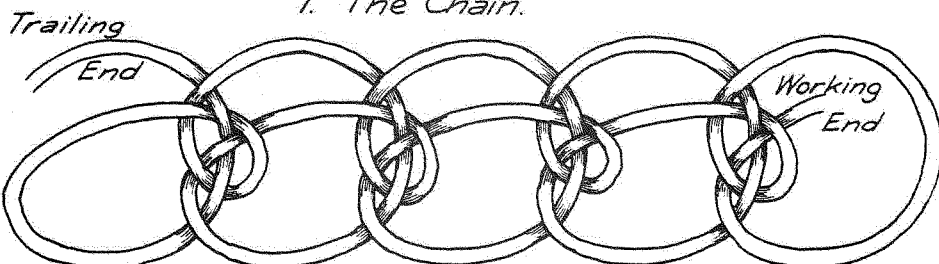
Finally I pay a sincere tribute to our retiring President, Jan Vos, whose contribution has been considerable, if discreet and often out of view. He has earned the respect and admiration of all who have come to know him, with the tact, diplomacy and understanding of a wise head on his young shoulders.

A warm and genuine "Thank you Jan!"

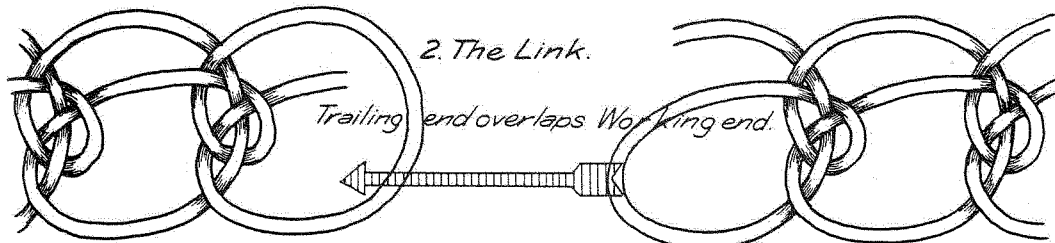
## A DECORATIVE GROMMET by Stuart Grainger

A Decorative Grommet as Alternative Turk's Head.

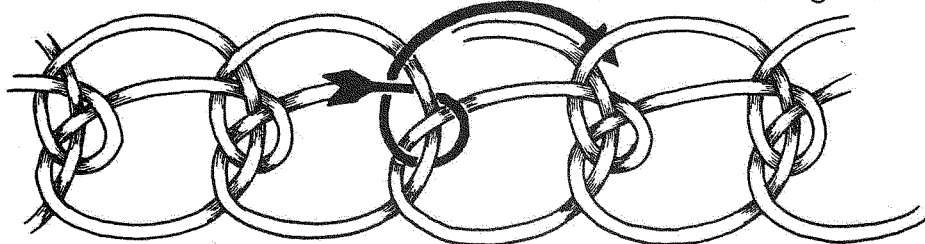
### 1. The Chain.



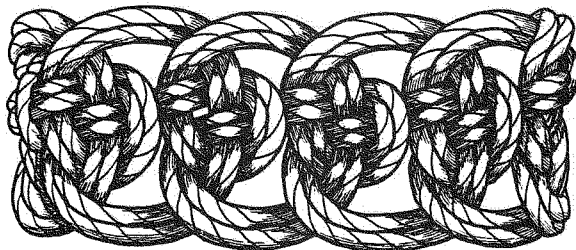
When the Chain is long enough, the ends are joined together thus:-



The ends are linked with a Half Hitch & the lead is doubled throughout.



The lead can be doubled, and tripled, in either direction, so the original Trailing end can conveniently be left long for this purpose.



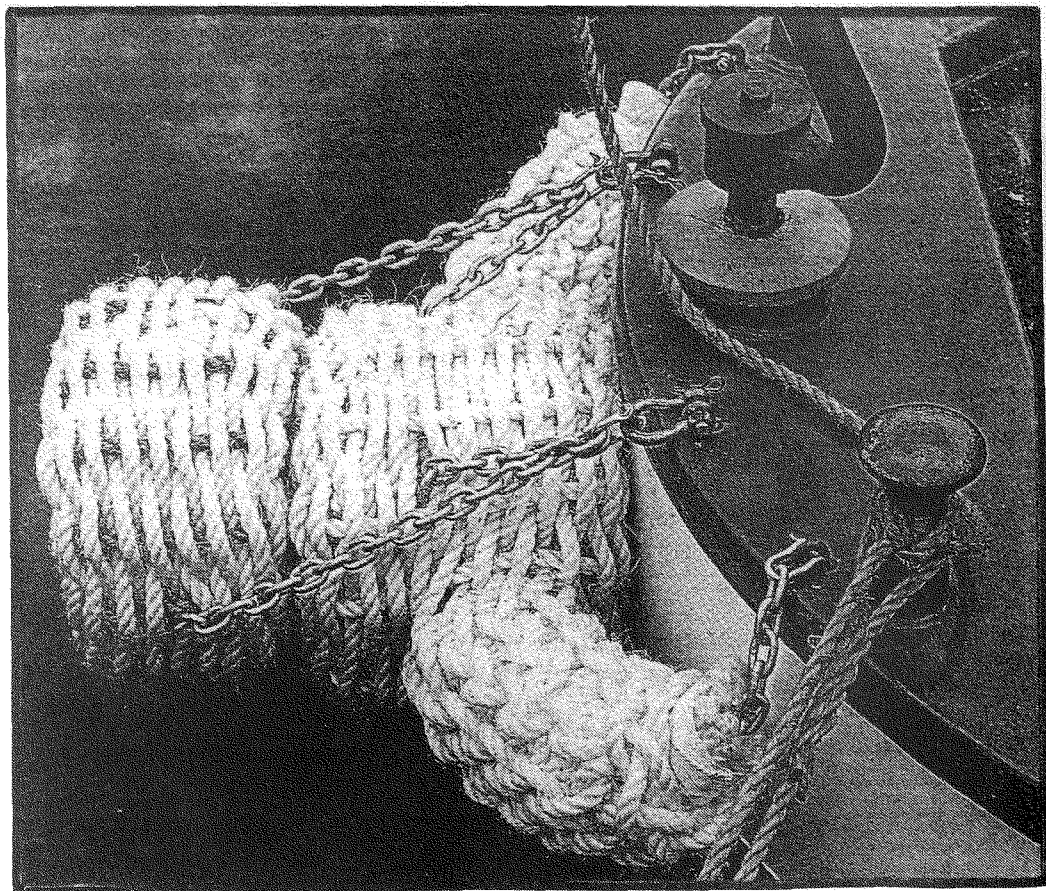
### 3. The Finished Grommet. © & 6.91

## TWO ROPELORE SNIPPETS

1...Some time after 1834 the Institute of Civil Engineers presented its Telford Medal and a quantity of books to a young Londoner, Eugenius Birch, who was then working in the East End at Limehouse. Birch would make his name building - with many other major civil engineering projects - 14 Victorian seaside piers. He was also a talented artist, however, and this award was for his drawings and descriptions of Huddart's rope machinery.

2...Christ Church at ALLOMBY, in Cumbria beside the Solway Firth, contains a memorial to Joseph Huddart who was born nearby in 1741. He is buried in London at St. Martin-in-the-Fields.

## PRACTICAL WORK



CANAL BOAT FENDER BY I.G.K.T. MEMBER COLIN R. JONES  
(CANAL & RIVERBOAT MAGAZINE)

## QUOTATION

"The string is exceedingly interesting" He (Sherlock Holmes) remarked, holding it up to the light and sniffing it. "What do you make of this string, Lestrade?"

"It has been tarred."

"Precisely. It is a piece of tarred twine. You have also, no doubt, remarked that Miss Cushing has cut the cord with a pair of scissors, as can be seen by the double fray on each side. This is of importance."

"I cannot see the importance" said Lestrade.

"The importance lies in the fact that the knot is left intact and that this knot is of a peculiar character."

.....The string was of the quality which is used by sailmakers and at once a whiff of the sea was perceptible in our investigation. When I observed that the knot was one which is popular with sailing,...

*The Adventure of the Cardboard Box, From His Last Bow.  
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle - 1917*

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THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE. MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF KNOT TYERS**

# THUMB & FINGER by Harry ASHER

## A NEW METHOD FOR THE LONG SPLICE

Illustrated by Phil Vernon

In the traditional long splice one of the chief difficulties is to place the strand from one rope accurately into the groove vacated by a strand unwound from the other. Ashley says:

"If the two contiguous sections at the centre are not even and smooth you must rearrange the tension with the left end with which you are now working. Failing to do this, your splice will be worthless. This is the danger point for a beginner."

The method given here is designed to ensure that each of the two strands engages accurately and firmly right from the start with the vacated groove. The structure of the splice ultimately produced is identical with the normal one.

In the old method about 10 turns of one strand were unwound at the start.

*The new method requires twice as much to be unwound at this stage, i.e. about 20 turns. But don't panic! There is no greater loss of rope, because 20 turns is the total. In the old method a further roughly equal amount was unwound as the splice was made.*

So, after unwinding about 20 turns of *ONE* strand from each rope you may like to cut off most of it, leaving only enough for the final tucks. Next unwind rather more than half of the remaining twin-strand portion. Now in each rope you have a completely unwound portion and a twin strand portion consisting of paired turns separated by a groove (Fig. 1). Be careful to keep the foremost pair intact.

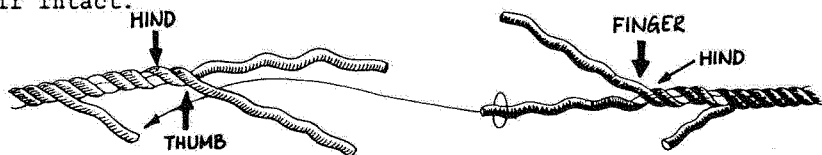
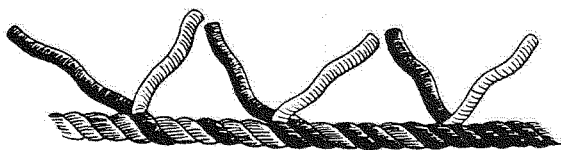
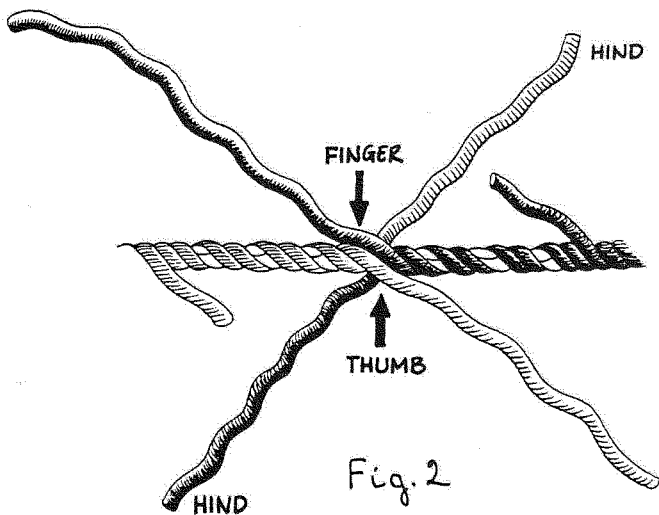


Fig. 1

Marry the ropes by taking the hind strand of the dark pair down through the cleft between the two strands of the light rope as shown (Figs. 1 & 2). Bring the dark strand marked *finger* up against the light strand marked *thumb*, and clamp them firmly together with the thumb and finger of the right hand (Fig. 2). Note that the front strand of each mated twin pair now lies in the groove vacated by the unwound strand, precisely where it is required. Still holding the clamped strands firmly together, with the left hand wind the dark strand some or all the way along the empty groove in the light rope. Now change over to hold the same strands clamped with the left finger and thumb, and with the right hand wind the front light strand along the empty groove in the dark rope. The fit should be perfect.

The ends of the strands now form three pairs. Tie an overhand knot 'left-over-right' in each, then finish in the normal way by tucking 'twice full and once half', or whatever you normally do.

This part is unfortunately still just as tricky as ever, but it should at least be free from difficulties due to previous inaccuracy.





## 1991 SUBSCRIPTIONS

Ladies and Gentlemen, I gather from the Guild's treasurer, Mrs Linda Turley that most members have now paid their 1991 subscriptions. However, as always, one or two of us have overlooked our dues. Its easily done...banks do make mistakes and cheques can be mislaid in the post; and it's so easy to just plain forget.

I mean, since the increase of subscriptions this year MY bank generously paid the guild twice - fortunately Linda's keen eyes spotted the error and quickly rectified it.

So the moral of this is, I suppose, seize the initiative; please check that you have paid your subs this year; look on your bank statement and in your cheque book - we dedicated ropeworking folk don't like trimming off straggly unravelled ends do we?

(The rates, by the way, are shown on page 1.)

## IGKT SUPPLIES

The I.G.K.T. has a very active supplies secretary:

Mrs MARY HARRISON

YEW TREE HOUSE  
GOOSEY  
FARINGDON  
OXFORDSHIRE  
SN7 8PA

Mary handles the sales of the Guild's BOOKS, TIES, and BADGES; she is happy to deal in orders of any size and don't forget that discounts are available if you intend selling the guild's products at shows and events in your area.

N.B. - KNOT CHARTS and BACK ISSUES OF KNOTTING MATTERS are available from the Secretary, Frank HARRIS.

## I.G.K.T. LOCAL SUPPLIES

The I.G.K.T.'s supplies secretary, Mrs Mary Harrison, has set up five small display cases of guild books, ties and badges. These have been issued to key members in five of the more distant areas within the U.K. who will make them available for local functions.

So far, we have arranged for stocks to be held by Mrs Pauline Long in Runcorn, Cheshire, for the North-West; Mr Denis Murphy in Plymouth, for the South-West; and Mr Ken Higgs in Felixstowe for the East.

We are endeavouring to arrange for similar depots in the North-East and the South.

S.E.G.

# I.G.K.T. SUPPLIES

## THE INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF KNOT TYERS

Supplies Secretary, Yew Tree House, Goosey,  
FARINGDON, OXON SN7 8PA.  
Telephone no. 0367 710256.

### 1991 PRICE LIST.

"The Knot Book" (95 gms)		
Geoffrey Budworth - ISBN 0-7160-0704-5	£1.99	each
"Breastplate Designs" (65 gms)		
Brian Field	£2.50	each
"Ropefolk" (30 gms)		
Stuart Grainger	£1.30	each *
"Knotcraft" (130 gms)		
Stuart Grainger- ISBN 0-9515506-0-8	£3.25	each *
"An Introduction to Knot Tying" )		
"Solli's Single Strand Star" ( Available as a set at the		
"Some Splices & Lanyard Knots" ( reduced price of		
Stuart Grainger )	£2.50	per set
"Turksheads the Traditional Way" (110 gms)		
Eric Franklin	£1.50	each
"Lashings" (55 gms)		
Percy Blandford	£2.50	each
"New System of Knotting"		
Dr. Harry Asher Vol. I (160 gms)	£1.85	each
Vol. II (130 gms)	£1.40	each
Postcards, set of 8 (35 gms)	£1.50	per set *
Ties, silk, (dark blue with knot motif)	£6.50	each
Bow ties " " " " " "	£7.80	each
Enamel Badges	£1.80	each
Cloth badges (embroidered)	£1.00	each
Metal badges, 3" dia. painted	£0.30	each
Christmas Cards, pack of ten with envelopes	£3.00	per pack

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\* Quantities of ten or more of items marked with an asterisk can be supplied from central stock subject to a discount of 33.33%.

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## SPLICED EYE BOWLINE and Variations by John SMITH

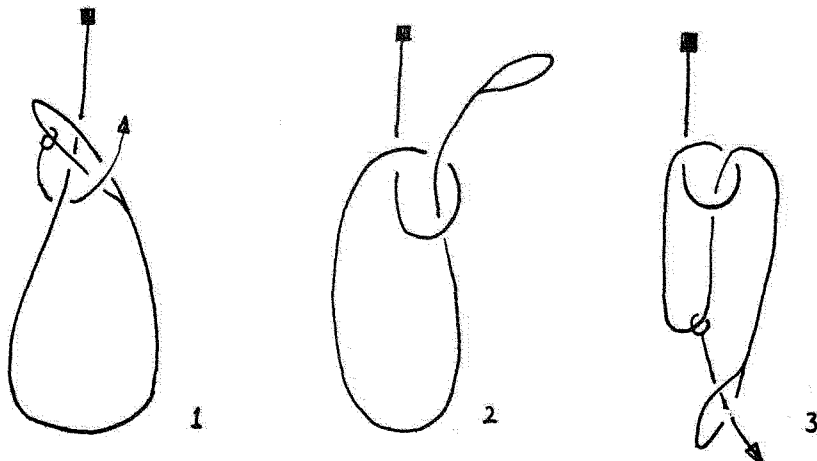
In some circumstances, the Bowline may need a little extra security. The working end can have a half hitch added, be seized or given an extra tuck.

Perhaps the best security would be provided by splicing the end to one of the legs of the loop. This raises two questions; could it then be undone and why not splice your loop in the first place?

The answer to the second question is flexibility. An Eye Splice in the end of a working rope is very useful but there are times when fixed loops of differing sizes are wanted.

To answer the first question, try it. The knot can be undone and Harry Asher's law tells us therefore that it can be re-tied. This is how:

1... Start as if the the Eye Splice wasn't there - Fig 1 and Fig 2.

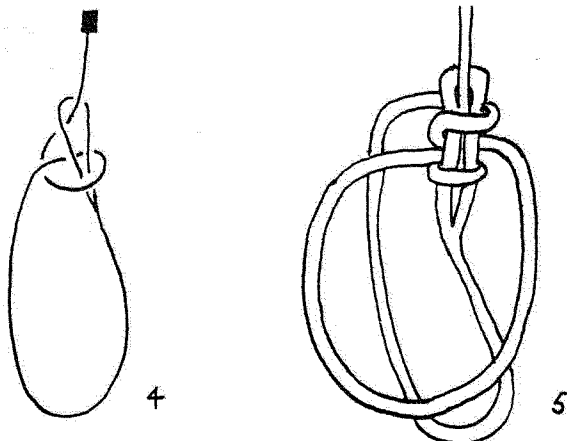


2... Pass everything through the Eye Splice - Fig 3. This action is the same as forming the Bowline on the Bight (Ashley No. 1080)

3... Draw up after making any desired adjustment to the size of the loop - Fig 4, the Spliced Eye Bowline.

It will be appreciated that where the size of the loop needs to be changed frequently or quickly, this knot is ideal.

A knot with two loops can be made by starting with a round turn at the Fig 1 position. The method is well described for the Portuguese Bowline (Ashley No. 1072).



A disadvantage is the way one loop can be drawn into the other when this is not wanted. There is a solution far more simple and elegant than its description:

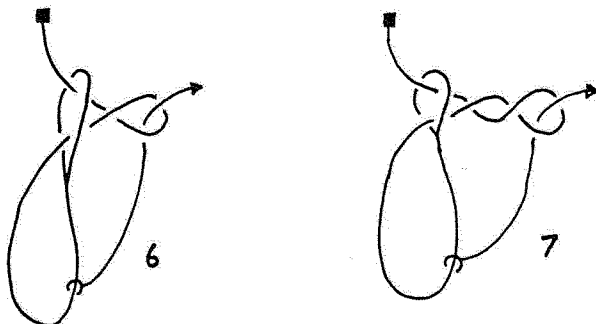
Start as if making a knot with THREE loops by having an extra round turn at the beginning. When all is formed but not yet drawn up, enlarge two of the loops at the expense of the third. Arrange this "surplus" loop to finish up like a collar or turn around the central part of the knot. Try it out and you will soon see which loops to enlarge. The finished knot, with two secure loops, is shown in Fig 5.

#### More Eye Splice Knots

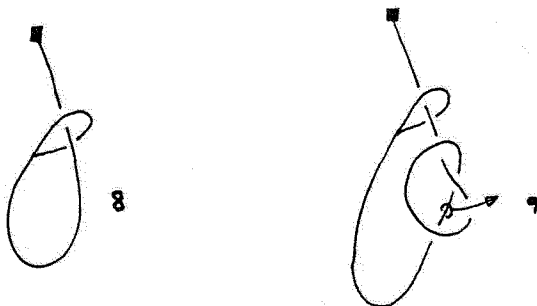
4...A loop which could claim to be called an Eye Splice Anglers Loop is made like this:

Pass a bight through the eye splice and give it a twist to the right. Then pass the major loop through the small loop just formed (Fig 6).

The result has a structure very similar to the Anglers Loop, except that the part which would have been the working end, sticking out at the side, now goes through the "collar" and is spliced to a leg of the loop.

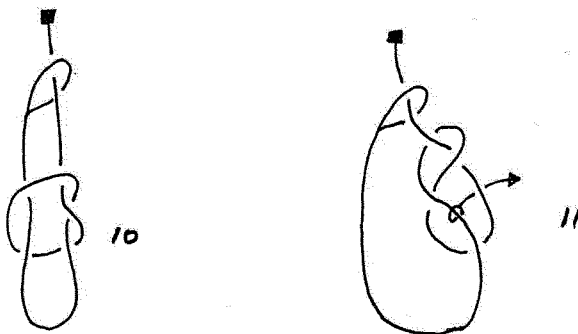


5...An extra twist of the bight passed through the eye produces an eye splice figure of eight loop (Fig 7).



Two more to examine start from the eye splice around the standing part, as in a noose (Fig 8).

6...The action is just like tying an overhand knot (Figs 9 & 10).



7...The previous knot leads logically to this one, where a Figure of Eight action replaces the Overhand action (Figs 11 & 12). This can be drawn up with the eye splice above or below the figure of eight shape. Perhaps someone will test which is stronger and which is easier to open after a heavy load.

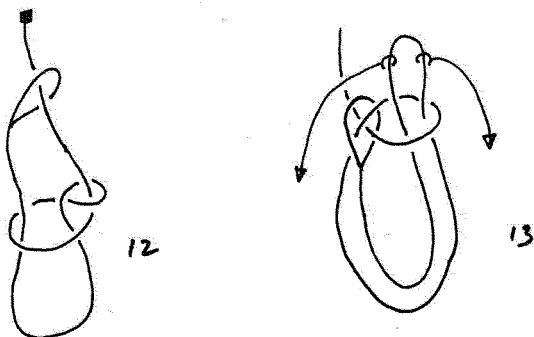
Interestingly, making a left or right hand version of the overhand knot or the figure of eight knot has no effect on security, since there is no end! Whether there is a difference in strength when laid line is used would require considerable testing to establish.

8...A better way of getting a double loop Bowline is shown in Fig 13. Open out the last tucked bight and pass it down and around the whole structure. (This is exactly like making a Bowline on the Bight.) As an exercise in manipulation - and to help visualise its potential uses - thread two solid rings onto your line before you start. Tie this knot so as to leave one ring on each loop.

These knots have a place where slippery or springy line is used and security would otherwise be suspect. Once a sound eye splice is made, loops of any size may be may with complete security.

#### Further work:

Some idle moments may be filled by experimenting with a line with an eye splice. Try passing a round turn through the eye before tucking the major loop through. There are two directions in which it may be tucked; from in front and from behind. Try a Clove Hitch (and tuck the loop both ways) and even a fixed loop in the standing part.



#### QUOTATION

"THERE!" they will say, making some pretty old knot or intricate sennit.

"There, my boy! There isn't one man in a hundred in the Navy now that can show you how to make that."

*ALONGSHORE...Stephen Reynolds, 1910.*

## AN ASHLEY PROJECT Suggests Frank HARRIS

I.G.K.T. Secretary Frank Harris recently had correspondence with knot tyer Brian A. Glenon of South Boston, Massachusetts. Brian makes knotted items for sale along the Boston waterfront and at various museum gift shops - most notably the New Bedford Whaling Museum and Kendall Whaling Museum.

Seeing some postcards sent by Brian from the New Bedford museum, Frank reminds us that back in 1985 (K.M. issue #11) there appeared a profile of knotsman Clifford Warren Ashley. It happens that Ashley was quite a prolific artist; the whereabouts of over 130 of his 350 or so oil paintings are still unknown.

Frank comments:

"As a guild we revere the name Clifford W. Ashley. I think we should make an effort to collect as many postcards as possible of his works to put into our archives. I would also like to see efforts made to list the whereabouts of all Ashley's paintings, and one day for the guild to own one of them.

"Would any of Ashley's knot tying countrymen like to take on the task?

## KNOTTING CLASSES

Allemaal touwtjes op een bord  
Heb je gezien hoe mooi dat wordt?  
Dat leerden we van Meester Jan  
Nou, die kan er echt wat van  
Jedere week een andere „knoop”  
Goh, wat was er veel te koop...

We begonnen met een grote klas  
Wat een hele drukte was  
Gelukkig was er hulp genoeg  
Die klaar stond als je er om vroeg  
De lessen vlogen zó voorbij  
En dat geldt niet alleen voor mij

We zijn nu voor de laatste maal  
Bij elkaar in deze „zaal”...  
En met een drankje en een hapje  
Nemen we het laatste stapje  
Naar het einde van de les  
Heus, het was een groot succes!

Composed by the knot tying students of Jan Hoefnagel, from Dordrecht, Holland.

## A PLEA

In future could the council not arrange Guild meetings to be held on the Soccer CUP FINAL DAY?

(Especially if Notts. Forest, Notts. County, West Ham, or Southend are playing in the final.)

Bernard Cutbush

## BOOK REVIEW

1. CELTIC DESIGN, A Beginner's Manual ISBN 0-500-27629-3  
(with 258 illustrations) Price: £5.95p
2. CELTIC DESIGN, Knotwork - The Secret  
Methods of the Scribes ISBN 0-500-27630-7  
(with 434 illustrations) Price: £5.95p

both by Aidan Meehan  
published (1991) by Thames and Hudson,  
30 Bloomsbury Street,  
London WC1B 3QP,  
England.

These two soft-covered, 160 page books are complementary. If you must buy only one, make it 'A Beginner's Manual', but you will do better with the pair.

The author has for 20 years helped lead the revival of this art form. His masterly black and white drawings, and neat calligraphic text, simplify it for the rest of us.

Book 1 shows how to construct dot-to-dot and compass-work knot layouts: also how to draw and embellish Celtic style letters.

Book 2 is a fuller treatment of knot patterns, including how to design borders, panels and other layouts.

Celtic artwork now adorns and sells jewellery, greetings cards, dress fabrics, book jackets and pottery. Many graphic designers and craft workers have added it to their repertoires.

If you fancy joining them, I can highly recommend these two books for starters.

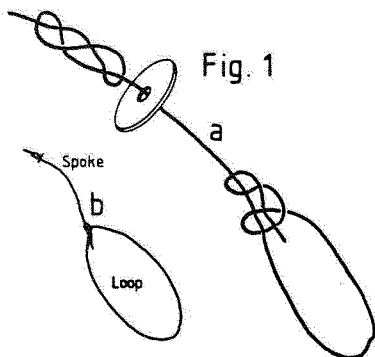
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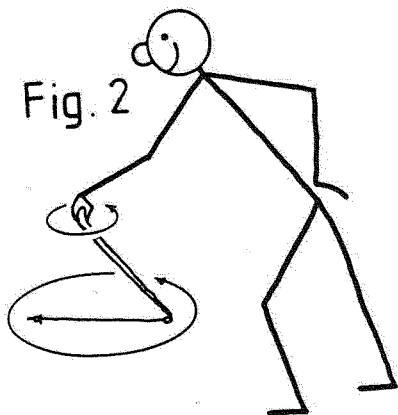
## ROPETWIRLING by Geoffrey Budworth

Learning to twirl a rope like a rodeo cowboy or cowgirl is easy with the following beginner's gimmick. I've never known anyone fail to do it with a little guidance.

Take a piece of flexible braided cord about 2m (6ft) long and 3-5mm (about 1/4") dia. The heavier it is, the better. You also need a 2cm (3/4") dia. metal washer. Thread the cord through the washer and knot it as shown (Fig. 1a). Tighten both knots and adjust the sliding knot until the spoke is a little more than half the length of the extended loop (Fig. 1b)



### Lesson 1



Hold the end of the *LOOP* firmly between the thumb and first two fingers of one hand so that your homemade lariat hangs upside down. Now twirl it by drawing small quick circles in the air with your finger tips by means of a wristy action (Fig. 2).

See how the cord bends, making a sort of elbow, and the lower half comes up straight and level with the ground.

Feel what you are doing. That is how to spin a rope.

### Lesson 2

Now reverse the cord end-for-end and hold the *WASHER* between the same thumb and fingers (Fig. 3). Ensure that the double overhand knot is free to twist around on top of the washer without your grip putting the brake on it.

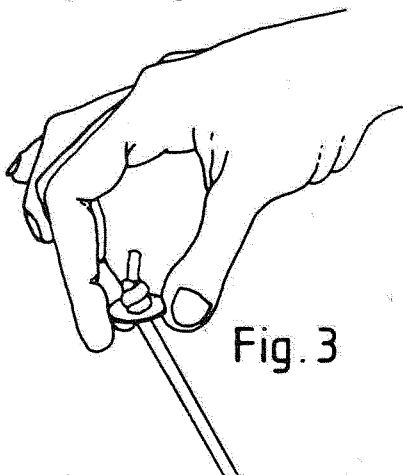
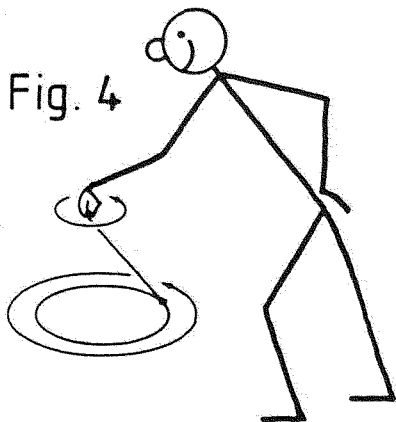


Fig. 4



Use the same hand movement as before so that the spinning rope bends at the knot. This will bring the loop up horizontal where rotation will cause it to open out into a circle (Fig. 4). Try it. Often it works straightaway. Just concentrate on making the cord bend the right way.

Sometimes the loop is reluctant to open. Check - is the end knot turning freely above the washer? Keep your fingers away from it. Then, do a few quicker (or slower) circles in the air with your hand. Make them fractionally larger too. This usually wakes up the loop to act as it should.

Once it's going around properly, settle into a rhythmic and gentle wrist action, no faster or stronger than necessary.

#### YOU'RE TWIRLING ROPE!

(Note - Expert rope spinners do not have washers on full-size lariats. They must twiddle the spoke-end in their fingers, or else it kinks and snarls up; and it is hard to do that and learn to spin the loop at the same time. That's why I introduce a washer. It's much easier that way.)

Rope twirling starter kits like this are popular items to have at I.G.K.T. exhibition and display stands. Adults and youngsters alike quickly acquire the skill and, if you then sell them the devices at cost price, they wander off demonstrating them to all and sundry. It's a crafty advert.

#### **A ROPE IN CASE**

When Lillian Beckwith first went to Bruach in the Hebrides she was told: 'Always carry a rope - in case.' And whether it was for repairing a fence, tying up a boat, securing the roof of the local taxi, making a halter for a horse, or preventing her clothes being blown over her head in a storm, there was no denying the wisdom of the advice. So she kept a coil on a peg behind her front door and went nowhere without it.

A ROPE - IN CASE, by Lillian Beckwith,  
Published by Hutchinson & Co. Ltd (1968)

## LES ROSES DE SAADI

J'ai voulu ce matin te rapporter des roses  
Mais j'en avais tant pris dans mes ceintures closes  
Que les noeuds trop serrés non pu les contenir.

Les noeuds sont éclaté. Les roses envolées.  
Dans le vent, à la mer s'en sont toutes allées  
Elles ont suivi l'eau pour ne plus revenir.

La vague en a paru rouge et comme enflammée.  
Ce soir ma robe encore en est toute embaumée -  
Respires en sur moi L'odorant souvenir.

---

- He must have taken a short-cut along the beach in his dressing gown! The knot or knots in the cord were clearly granny knots (or even whatknots). The Zeppelin Bend had not yet been invented.

D.M.

## TARDY TAR

By 1856 the rigging of British ships was changing. Clumsy hemp shrouds and stays were replaced by wire rope. Cunningham's patent self-reefing gear enabled topsails to be shortened from the deck: pulling one part of a double halyard revolved the yard and rolled up the sail. By 1860 some ships were fitted with capstan windlasses.

Many old sailormen despised such developments, preferring to lay out on a topsail yard and hand-reef for hours; although the same job could be done in minutes from the deck.

One Captain transferring to a ship fitted with all the latest improvements was keen to take his serving boatswain with him. The man was a hardy shellback and an excellent seaman. He was offered an increased wage and accepted. But, when he saw the new ship, he shook his head and begged to be allowed to back out. Asked why, he said he did not trust '...those damned fiddlestrings' and was contemptuous of self-reefing topsails '...same as a girl rolls up a bloody window blind'.

## LETTER - P.C.HERWIG

The letter from Des and Liz Pawson in K.M. #35 brought back memories spanning some 40 years.

I first contacted Chief Herwig about 1953, '54 and occasionally during the following years when ordering material from him.

His 'Booklet "B"' catalogues reflect the many moves he had to make over the years as shown by the address changes on the front covers. One NOT shown was his first address a few doors away at 97 Sands Street, Brooklyn, New York.

About 1965,66 I had the opportunity to be in Brooklyn, N.Y. and made it a point to visit him, after more than 10 years of exchanging correspondence with him. At that time he was living in an apartment above his store either at 39 Henry St. or at 264 Clinton St. I am not sure which it was, but I do remember enquiring as to why the many moves and he told me it was because of the new construction continually going on.

He eventually moved to Minnesota, the address there was: P.C.Herwig Co., Rt.2, Box 140, Milaca Minnesota 56353.

I said was because when I tried to contact him about 3 years ago I was told - by phone - that neither the store nor his name was listed and there fore I believe he has passed away. I included the complete address so that if there are any I.G.K.T. members living anywhere nearby they might choose to make a more positive check.

I wouldn't be surprised at his passing as he wasn't feeling too good the day I visited him. I don't believe he really wanted to open the store for me. This was because, as he told me, he had recently been released from the nearby Veterans Hospital. He did eventually open the store and then I really became embarrassed as I couldn't find anything I wanted to buy. I had bought what I wanted during the previous years. I finally found a copy of a book I didn't have - the "Encyclopedia of Needlework" by Th. de Dillmont, which I believe is still in print...after all it does contain 50 pages of Macrame.

Sincerely Yours,

Bob Schwartz  
10th May 1991

3418 West Dalke Avenue  
Spokane, Washington,  
99205, U.S.A.

## ERRATUM

ERRATA: A last minute change in diagrams, in the article 'A Proof of the law of the Common Divisor in Braids', Knotting Matters, No. 35, Spring 1991, pp 6-10, caused the following confusing errors in text to occur:

p.7, 3rd line above the diagrams; 'p=3' should read 'p=6';

p.8, 5th line down; 'left-hand diagram' should read 'right-hand diagram'.

# ON A FEW LONGLINER KNOTS

by Pieter van de GRIEND

"De saa kaldede Linier bestaar af nogle tusende Favne Snøre og ligesaa mange Angler eller Kroge."

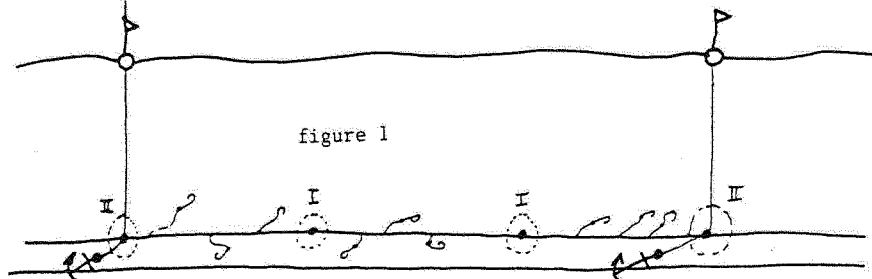
Henning Junghans Kaurin. Steigen 1783.

One way of catching fish is by lowering a line with baited hooks into the water, waiting a while and taking it up again in the hope that there were fish down there, who cared to swallow the bait and the hook. This method of fishing is called longlining. The procedure described above is a bit simplistic, because there are a lot of difficulties involved in real-life longlining. The lines are usually a few miles long, you have to prevent the lines from dragging and chafing over the ocean bottom and above all you have to be able to find and heave them back onto the deck again. With some 300 lbs halibuts from 1200 fathoms depth, it is not hard to picture that the involved knots must be specific constructions.

Since most of my deep-sea fishing experiences come from the Faroe Islands, I will describe some of the methods I have collected on that archipelago.

In <1> is shown the principle of a longline. It can consist of up to 350 fathom (630 metres) segments of up to 12 mm lines which are called STAMP. (Plural: STAMPAR) Stampar are connected to each other with an elaborate knot construction, which is called STAMPASKIFT. The suffix SKIFT meaning the transition from one stamp to another. In the drawing <1> these bends are encircled and marked with a I.

Every somanieth stamparskift is replaced with a, different, special knot to attach buoys and grapnels to the line. The buoys, fitted with radiotransmitters are to enable relocation of the line by the boat and the grapnels prevent the line from dragging over the seabed. The knots in <1>, encircled and marked with a II are called MEDAKNUTUR.

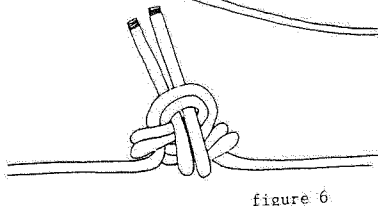
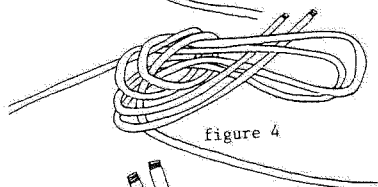
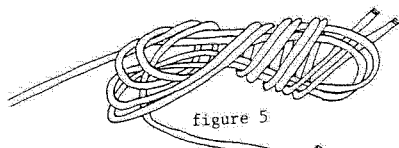
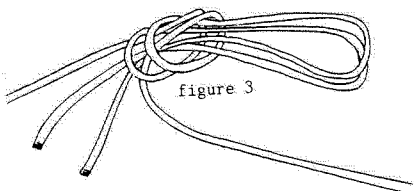
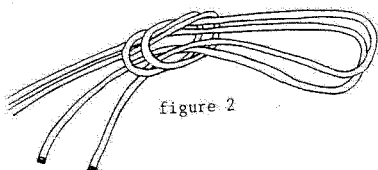


In this article I want to discuss 2 forms of stampaskift and 2 forms of meðaknútt. I have not had the opportunity to question any other longline fishermen. I therefore stick to the færøese nomenclature. Nor have I been able to find any literature on the constructions I am about to describe. I therefore share Ashley's amazement that many fisherman knots actually are unrecorded.

### STAMPASKIFT

Longlining is a quite old fish catching method and it has been subjected to a lot of changes. Throughout times lines have been made of such exotic materials as horsehair and hemp [WILCOCKS], which had much lesser dimensions than the lines made of artificial fibres today. Whereas a line used today is typically something between 5 to 12 mm in diameter, the old hemp lines were 3 to 5 mm. Whereas a modern linesegment (stamp) can be between 100 and 350 fathoms (i.e 180 to 630 metres), the old ones were seldom over 100 fathoms. I will first explain how the old stampaskift were made.

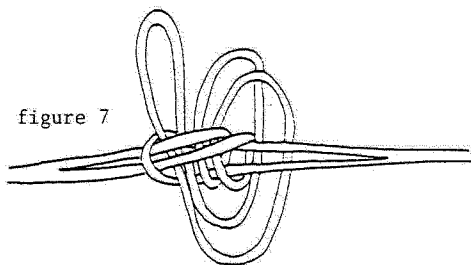
The ends of a stamp were laid up into a Wall Knot to prevent unraveling. To join two stampar, both ends were tied into a Doubled Slip Knot. <2> There after the stends were taken away from each other <3> and the wends taken under the knot and tucked through the Slip Knot's loop after zero <4> or more <5> rounturns around that loop.



Isak Matras, an elderly very experienced longlinerman from Klaksvík, the færøese longlining harbour, showed me the knot with the roundturns <5>. He told me that it had been used up to around 1955 when it went out of the commercial longlining scene due to a preference to a method I will describe under <7>.

The method without any roundturns was shown to me by Aage Vestergaard from Tórshavn, who still used it during his occasional longlining sprees. He said he had learnt it from his father in the 1920's. If this method <4> is carefully drawn taut it results in a compact bend <6>. The Klaksvík method <5> is very difficult to draw taut.

Nowadays the line segments (stampar) have spliced-in eyes of around two feet in length. The stampaskift has become a Doubled Sheetbend, in which the second (redundant) roundturn is left slack. <7>. This effects like toggling the knot and causes it to open relatively easy.



#### MEDAKNUTUR

The purpose of the meðaknútur is to attach the buoys and the grapnels to the line. For this one requires loops at regular intervals on the line. This is achieved by constructing the stampaskift in a special way.

Make a Slipped Sheetbend <8> and take the wend of the one stamp under the knot to meet up with the loops formed by the slip <9>. It is important that the wend is taken under the knot, because by taking it the other way around the knot will work loose and can become a ravaged tangle with the hooks. The grapnel is connected to the buoy with a single line which is attached to the three loops with a Double Sheetbend. <10>

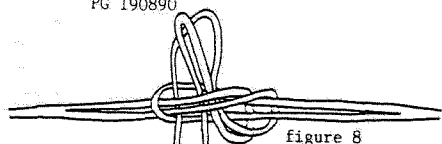


figure 8

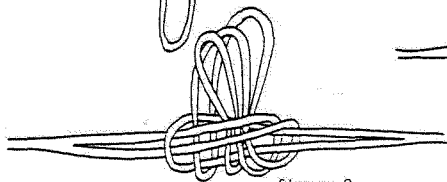


figure 9

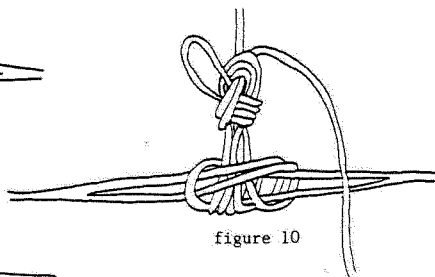


figure 10

Usually the meðaknútur described above is made every 7th or so stamp, but for some species, like cod, it may be necessary to lift the line somewhat off the seabottom. Here buoys are also connected to the middle of the line segments. This requires a loopknot on the bight. The way this is done was shown to me by Eivinn Jakobsen from Sörvágur.

First make a Doubled Slip Knot on the bight, <11>, take the ends apart, away from each other <12> and take the single loop from under the knot up over to meet up with the other two. <13>. Now we also have three loops on the bight to which the buoys and grapnels can be attached. <14>

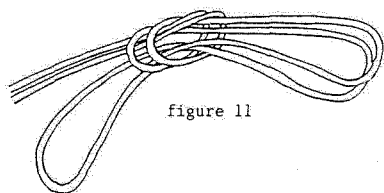


figure 11

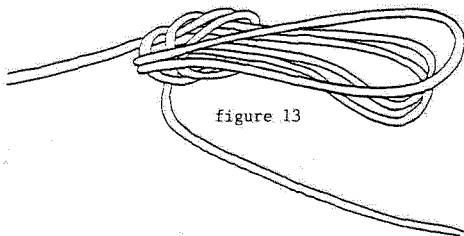


figure 13

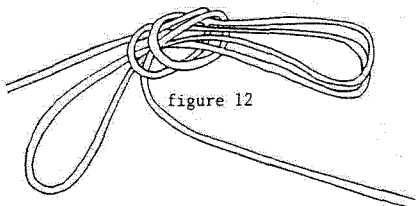


figure 12

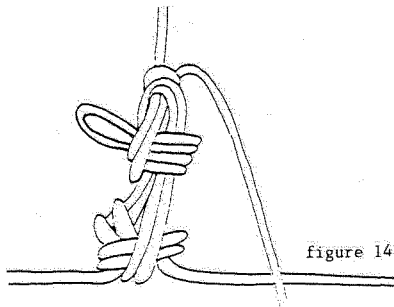


figure 14



## LETTER

Dear Robert,

I've just arrived back in Colorado after a year in Hungry Horse, Montana.

Winter in the Rocky Mountains can be severe and "cabin fever" hits hard - I put time into writing "How-to" knot tying articles for Western Horse oriented people. I also started freehand sketching the knots myself after being disappointed in photos of knots as an aid to tying. Having never written an article or sketched anything before I was pleasantly surprised at the response I received for my efforts. Better yet, I've just agreed to do a regular knot tying column in a new quarterly journal here in southwestern Colorado - the journal deals with issues related to environment, native American culture, natural history in this area and so on... The editor considered ropecrafts and knot tying low tech and of ancient lineage, likely to benefit the outdoors interests of readers. I have a free hand to deal with the wonderful world of knots as I see fit. I'm now being asked to do feature articles on hammock making and other ropeworking crafts. I seem to have involved myself in something (Knot tying instructor?) almost as pleasurable as knot tying itself.

I plan to mention the Guild in the column in an effort to locate others that may be interested.

Hello to all

P.O.Box 914  
Bayfield  
Colorado  
U.S.A. 81122

Mike Storch  
June 20th 1991

## EDITORIAL

KNOT YEAR 1990

In my editorial in April I declared this issue (July 1991) to be devoted to the results of knot year 1990; the anecdotes, experiences and lessons for the future. I have received very few replies. Knowing that great efforts were made by many members last year it would be very misleading and unfair to us all if I had presented only the material so far in my possession. That's why this issue turned out the way it did - a regular "Knotting Matters".

The I.G.K.T. is worthy of a proper report of Knot year 1990 and it will be an inspiration to all of us for future projects. So, for my final plea as your editor, could you please send a brief report of your events to the new editor. I will pass on all that I have already received. That goes, too, for all your splendid contributions that have not yet appeared in K.M.

R.L.J.  
June 1991

