

ISSUE 39 APRIL (SPRING) 1992

ISSN 0959-2881

Knotting Matters

Newsletter of the

The logo is a circular emblem. In the center is a detailed illustration of a reef knot (square knot). The words "INTERNATIONAL" and "TYERS" are written in an arc along the top and right sides of the circle, respectively. The words "GUILD OF KNOT" are written in an arc along the bottom and left sides of the circle, respectively.

INTERNATIONAL
GUILD OF KNOT
TYERS

KNOTTING MATTERS

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF KNOT TYERS

ISSUE No. 39 APRIL 1992

PRESIDENT

Stuart GRAINGER

PAST PRESIDENTS

Percy BLANDFORD - Geoffrey BUDWORTH - Eric FRANKLIN - Jan VOS

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EDITORIAL

Thank you to all those members who have responded to articles in KM38, some of which you will find printed in this edition. I made a few faux pas in the last edition too.... and thank you for not bombarding me with letters about those; my apologies follow.

Those of you who are NOT living in the U.K. were invited to submit items of local interest and articles to make up a four page suppliment (in your own language if you wish)..see KM37; the idea being that you have a national or regional suppliment and for those members who do not have a command of the English language that they might gain more benefit from Knotting Matters. Well sad to say no country or region has taken up this offer, but it is not too late - if you think it is what you want please approach your country or regional representative and between us we will get something going.

The question of *copyright* is a mine-field for me and although I welcome articles from other publications which I can EXTRACT INFORMATION but - please do not ask me to PUBLISH such articles, diagrams or photographs UNLESS it is accompanied by WRITTEN APPROVAL from the author/publisher.

AROUND THE REGIONS

ESSEX

The newly formed "Essex Branch" held their inaugural meeting at the National Motorboat Museum, Watt Tyler Country Park on Sunday 9th February. A steering committee was elected consisting of **Don Woods, Malcolm Bates, Neil Henderson, Andrew Treece and Mick Warren.**

The meeting was attended by several well known guests including **Geoffrey Budworth** who gave a very interesting talk on all aspects of the Guild and it's membership and welcomed this new branch. Meetings will be held bi-monthly, the next one - where **Frank Harris** will demonstrate his skill at tying Turk's Heads - will be held on 5th April, thereafter on the third Sunday of the month from 21st June.

Secretary: **Don Woods** (04022-29178)

Nigel HARDING's Address is:

3 Walnut Tree Meadows

Stonham Aspel

STOWMARKET

Suffolk IP14 6DF

PERSONALITY PIECE

Nigel HARDING

Nigel has (or is it was!) volunteered to relieve Frank HARRIS as our Secretary, and if elected at the A.G.M., will take over the reins shortly after his address is on page...

Nigel has been interested in knotting since he was a Wolf Cub back in the mid-fifties, when he would dearly have loved to do the Reef Knot EVERY time.

Progressing through Scouts and eventually ending up in a full circle back to the Cubs again, where together with his wife Nigel runs the local Cub pack at Borehamwood in Essex.

A meeting with Charlie (do it on your fingers) SMITH was responsible for re-kindling Nigel's interest in knotting, and ever since that first meeting he has been a dedicated acolyte and claims to have aspired to the Guild's "Almost a Novice" standard. *(Some people are just too modest!)*

An electrical engineer, Nigel has worked for Eastern Electricity for the past 25 years, during which time he has performed various duties, including, design construction, operation and maintenance of the low

and high voltage distribution systems, both overhead and underground.

The interesting fact about working with overhead lines is that the linemen are one of the few tradesmen who still use rope in their everyday work. In the company they are considered to be THE experts in knot tying, however Nigel soon discovered that their repertoire extended to the Larks Head, the Marline Spike Hitch, and a collection of Half Hitches.

A member of the British Institute of Management for the last ten years, Nigel has been involved mainly in supervisory and administrative posts and as if that is not enough, a whole host of voluntary tasks, including Secretary of the East Anglian Branch of the IGKT, Secretary to the company's Sports and Social Club, Parish Councillor, Treasurer of the Boreham Hut Committee and to cap it all a School Governorship to keep him out of mischief over recent years.

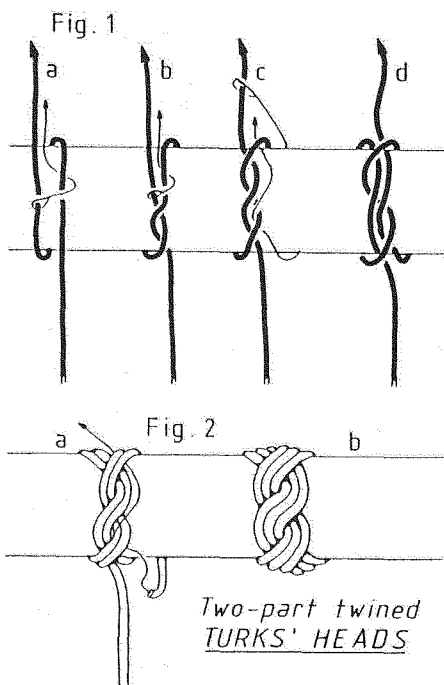
Nigel has recently been appointed to the Distribution Control Centre at Ipswich where all operations on the 11, 33 and 132 thousand volt networks are coordinated.

Ed.

TWO-PART TWINED TURK'S HEADS

By 'Fidspike'

Simple art can look better than fussier work. If in doubt, leave it out. Know when to stop. How seldom we use a two-part twined Turk's Head (Figs 1 & 2): yet this quick and easy version of the knot looks as good as its intricate, ubiquitous relatives, and is eye-catching because it is so rarely seen.



(iii) Keep the wend always to the right (Fig 1d), or left - it doesn't matter which side as long as you keep to it - now tuck it parallel to the original lead.

(iv) When the knot has been doubled, it is complete (Fig 2a).

(v) Follow it around again (Fig 2b) for a fuller three-ply version.

Notes: With hard cord on a firm foundation, twined Turk's Heads may be raised to four, five or more ply, and hold their form.

(i) Wrap the cord once round the item to be covered (Fig 1a).

(ii) With the working end (wend) make a tuck (Fig 1b), or two (Fig 1c), or more, bringing the wend around again to the starting point.

Insert a single twining tuck for 3 rim bights. Use 2 tucks for 5 bights; 3 tucks for 7 bights; 5 tucks for 9 bights; and so on.

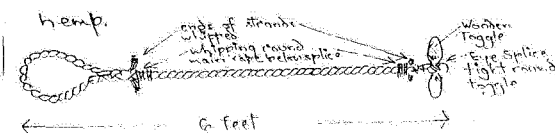
Adopt two part twining Turk's Heads this year. They'll love you for it.

TOGGLE ROPE

Brian LAMB writes:

From what I can recall of a Royal Marines' Commando Toggle-Rope (shown to me in 1943) was that it was 6 feet in length with an eye spliced in at one end and a wooden toggle held in place with an eye splice at the other end, in inch to inch and a half hemp.

I think the Commando who showed me his Toggle-rope had added the whippings below the eye-splices. The Toggle-rope was usually worn wrapped around the waist and "toggled" at the front.



During World War II, Scouts formed War Service Patrols and it was recommended that each member should carry a Toggle-rope, the seven members could make a 42 foot rope.

The publication "The Commandos 1940-1946" by Charles Messenger (pub. Wm. Kimber. London 1985) pages 124/125 explains a rope bridge made with up to 40 of these Toggle-ropes, and a photograph on p64 shows a Toggle-rope bridge being demonstrated by No2.(Dutch) troop of No.10(IA) Commando in the

harbour at Portmadoc in North Wales.

By Ed. *I thought this item might stir lots of interest from a wide variety of members - ranging from our N.Z. member who relies on a bridge to get to and from his home to the road! The avid mathematicians among you who might do all manner of calculations with such an item*

even down to using 12 to construct a right-angle to plan the bridge;

to the Scouts and Guides who I am sure can think of a thousand and one uses for it...

So, this month's challenge

a. List as many uses of a Toggle-rope (as described above) as you can think of in whatever walk of life or pursuit you wish (Hanging the editor will be ruled out!).

b. Explain WHY you think the Toggle-rope in the diagram is constructed as it is, including the reason why the whippings are placed below each eye-splice and why the ends of the splice are not tucked in or even grafted.

c. Any dangers and safety precautions you would convey to potential users of such an item.

LETTERS

In reply to Lester Copestake's "History of the Constrictor Knot" in KM38

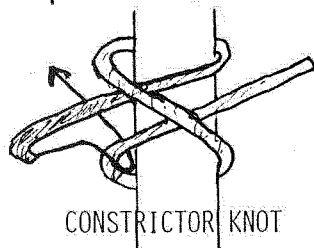
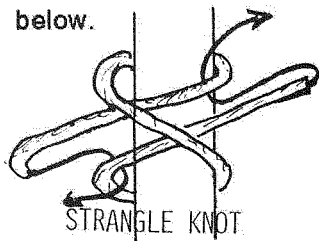
Sten JOHANSSON writes, from Sweden

Lester, I have not missed Tom Bowling, but in my opinion he does not describe a constrictor. The same text about the knots in figs 46 & 47 appears in the first edition 1866 as in the 1899 edition.

In 1986 Pieter van de Griend wrote me the following quote in KM3 (page 13/14) I was reading your letter from 080283 to Geoffrey Budworth about this constrictor knot. Your listing of sightings jiggled something in the back of my mind from Tom Bowling's **BOOK OF KNOTS** (1899 edition). I had to have a look through it, but found what caused the jingle. It was on his page 8 Fig 47(1). I suppose you have this book, but just in case, he writes"....." Tom Bowling's single knot is an overhand knot around a spar/half hitch before spilling. Now couldn't he here have meant either a constrictor or a strangle knot? What do you think about this? unquote

In my reply dated Dec 4 1986 I wrote quote You sure are right but you cannot tell if he means a constrictor or a strangle. Is the simple

knot left or right? unquote. After studying this matter for some time I am sure he means a strangle knot. Tom Bowling writes "by the ENDS of the cords being simple knotted". This means a strangle knot. If he had written "by ONE end of the cords being simple knotted" it had been a constrictor knot. See drawings below.



I also have a query from a Swedish Knottologist. Does any member know about the pseudonyme **TOM BOWLING**? I have four names from the British Library: **I BONWICK, PAUL RAPSEY HODGE, FREDERICK CHAMIER** and **DAVID BOGUE**. Ashley says it is Frederick Chamier? **Any other suggestions?** Why did I get four names from the British Library? Are there four different men using the same pseudonyme? or is it one man with four pseudonyms?

LEONARDO'S KNOT

Your response

The response to the query in KM38 was quite surprising (in more ways than one!) Here are some of the letters I have received....

Tim RUSSELL from California writes...

On the Leonardo's Knot, The plate shown is reprinted in a couple of books I have seen on the life and art of Leonardo da Vinci. The design is presumed to be his (but this is unproven), and appears to be the seal for an "acadamy" which he may have run. The design has been dated c.1499, and consists of six cords in the main design, excluding the four corner designs, and excluding the rather vague cord which attaches the medallion to the whole. As is obvious from the outer design loops, the pattern cannot stand by itself if tied, and will collapse into a simpler design. Like much of the Celtic Knot design work, Leonardo's Knot is far prettier as a printed pattern.

If anyone has the opportunity to visit Milan, I understand that the old Sforza Castle there has a room with a ceiling painted by Leonardo. The design is of four great trees pictured up the walls, with branches intertwined on the ceiling, and a single gold rope knotted throughout the

whole design.

I think that Leonardo da Vinci was probably an IGKT member at heart.

oooOOOooo

And from Chelmsford...Europa Chang DAWSON writes...

This is one of a set of six wood-engravings published by Albrecht Dürer in 1505, on his return from Italy, and sold as patterns for embroidery. Later editions of the six knots are signed with the monogram.

The Academy of Leonardo da Vinci (a school of pure and applied arts) also published this design, as a copper-plate engraving, and with their own "mark".

Less complex interlaced designs were often used to decorate the title-pages of printed books of this era. There are some good examples in the printed books section of the British Museum. Portraits of the time also show these interlaced knots used in costume decoration, and these may be found in the Wallace Collection and the National Gallery. Finally, one Nicolo Soppino of Venice published a whole book of interlaced-knot designs in 1592, "for the use of lacemakers, imbroderers

and artisans in like employment.

oooOOOooo

And from Geoffrey BUDWORTH...

Leonardo's Knot on page 6 of KM38 is by Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), the Italian Painter, sculptor, architect, musician, engineer and scientific genius of the Renaissance. He often drew cordage, knots and other interlacings notable for their realism, but this pattern is the most elegant design. It is supposed to be for admission tickets or membership cards to his school of art; but there is no proof that such an institution actually existed.

APOLOGY

The article on pages 22 and 23 of KM38...

"Some Explorations with the Eskimo Bowline"

was written by John SMITH,
not Harry ASHER as published.
I apologise for this error....Ed.

Please amend your copies for future reference.

A TWO HANDED

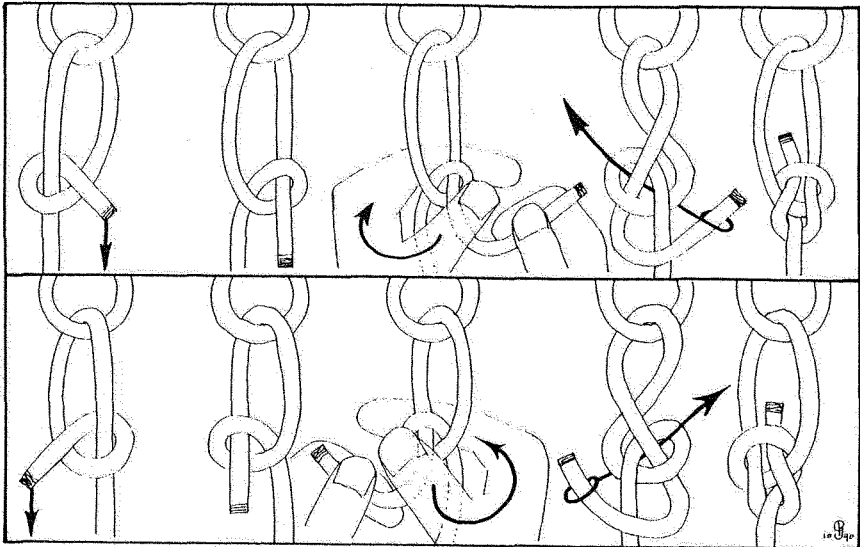
BOWLINE

by Pieter van de GRIEND

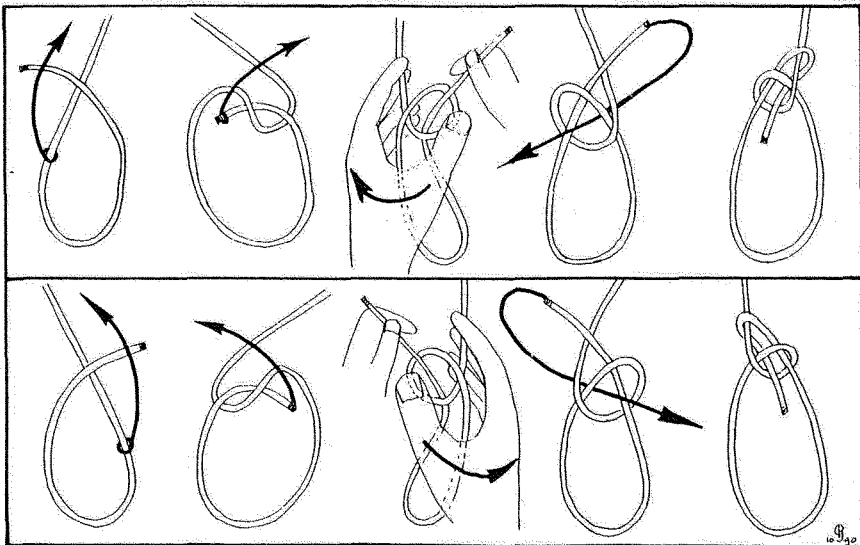
Judging from the scores of stories about rabbits, squirrels and dragons, mastering the art of tying a Bowline seems essential to the superficial rope user yet it is surrounded by tales of difficulty. This is understandable, because, take any knot book and you're likely to find some silly, cumbersome and easy-to-forget tying method. Yet, if you have the opportunity to observe some professional rope users in their natural habitat, you're liable to be rewarded with the learning of techniques, which few or no books show (yet). In this little article I would like to introduce a tying method I once saw a North Atlantic trawlerman using. It is in fact an optimisation of the Spilled Hitch Method by making use of both hands. In doing so he shortcut that method's only snag: letting go of the working end. It works particularly well for stiffer rope.

The illustrations opposite show the versions for right and left handed tyers.

Having mastered this method, try the corresponding Fingertip Method.



A Two Handed Bowline



**The Tying of the Two Handed Bowline's
Fingertip Method.**

LETTERS

Jan HOEFNAGEL

writes from Holland...

I had to mend a heavy boat fender for an old friend and encountered a problem for which I have no explanation. The fender was 5 years old, 23 meters long, with a diameter of 21cm, made from first grade nylon as hard laid as steel with a 14mm cable in the middle. The ends were pointed and marled over a length of 1.5 meters with 10mm thick line. The whole was custom made, and weighed over 300 kg) a very expensive fender!

Now, 1 meter from the end was some mysteriously unexplained damage, a break 10cm wide with the marling still intact, no sign of chaffing on the outside or cutting along a sharp edge, yet the cut was fairly straight across. There were no signs of heavy wear on the rope either.

My question is HOW DID THIS HAPPEN? And how could a heavy rope like this break on a small yacht of 19 tonnes? Normally ropes like this are used by tugs to tow heavy objects over the sea. To the owner and myself this presented a complete mystery. The previous owner could throw no light on the subject

either. We did consider vibration of some sort and curiously the inside fibres were soft and the outside steelhard. Can it be a case of poor manufacturing? Has one of our members an explanation for this, or a case like it?

I would welcome comments I am thinking perhaps of Colin Jones who may have manufactured heavy ropes, or others with rope-walks.

I managed to repair the fender in the end, by filling the gap with 10mm nylon rope, melting every layer together with a blowlamp. I then bored holes through and fastened 4 strips of aluminium at different places on the outside, around which I put a layer of 6mm tarred manilla, then a heavy layer of Bison glue after which the original marling was put back in its place. My friend was satisfied with it. I do hope someone can help me with this problem.

J C HOEFNAGEL,

23 Willy Martensstr DORDRECHT.
3314.XV Netherlands.

By Ed... This should provoke some interesting theories worth printing in the next KM... to me by end June please.

YOU, YOUR TOOLS AND THE LAW

By Geoffrey BUDWORTH

(The writer was an Inspector in London's Metropolitan Police, instructing at the renowned Hendon Training School, before he retired on completion of 25 years service)

A spate of knifings here in Great Britain, with even two unarmed Police officers dead from stab wounds, has revealed that sharp weapons are now carried and savagely used in public places.

Politicians, anxious to be seen doing something, might "unless these woundings soon stop" draft new laws to disarm the vicious few. Police will certainly polish up existing powers to stop, search and detain people they suspect of going armed. Both developments could embarrass the many peaceful crafts men and women who carry some very odd tools about with them.

How does the law view I.G.K.T. members' knives, marlinespikes, and such like? Can the Guild seek exemption from whatever repressive statutes may be proposed? Must we then take steps to vet and exclude villains who might then try to hide amid us?

I cannot advise the entire International Guild membership. Even

Scotland's law enforcement differs from the rest of Britain. So my competence is limited to England and Wales.

The primary object of Police in the U.K. is prevention; the next is that of detection of offenders when crime is committed. Our sworn peace officers are trusted to do the job we appoint and pay them for, protecting life and property, preserving public tranquillity, and preventing crime. Citizens have a duty to assist and cooperate with them: but it will save everyone's time if we prudently keep ourselves above suspicion.

- * Carry only the tools you need.

- * Keep them in a secure locked container.

- * Do not have work implements in your constructive possession (e.g. in a car boot) when you do not need them.

- * Declare tools in advance, if later discovery by officials may arouse suspicion that would then be hard to dispel.

- * Obtain guidance in writing, and carry written authorization with you, whenever it would be helpful.

- * Do not buy and bring back home strange tools from abroad.

* Dispose of any offensive weapon (a stabbing knife, sharpened comb, or martial arts device) you may have inadvertently acquired as a ropeworking tool. If it is indispensable, keep it at home or in the workshop.

* Stay away from rowdy crowds and other riotous assemblies. If they are unavoidable, do not have on you that sharpened screwdriver or chisel (for wire splicing), or anything else that could be adapted as a weapon.

* Leave tools at home when exercising some real or supposed right (hiking a footpath over farming land) or pursuing a complaint, as trespassing on land or in premises is always aggravated if you have with you a weapon of offence.

LAW

Prevention of Crime Act, 1953. Any person who without lawful authority or reasonable excuse has with him in any public place any offensive weapon is guilty of an offence.

Restriction of Offensive Weapons Act, 1959.

It is an offence to manufacture, sell, hire, or offer for sale, or expose for sale, having in one's possession for sale, or to lend or give to any other person, a flick knife or a gravity knife. It is also an offence to import these items. (Note: It is NOT an offence to possess such a knife, except with intent to do any of the above, but a flick knife IS an offen-

sive weapon (so the 1953 Act applies in public places)).

Criminal Justice Act, 1988.

It is an offence to have in a public place, or lend or give, an article with a blade or sharp point, except a folding pocket knife. Even that must have a cutting edge of less than 3 inches. The onus is on any person carrying such articles (even scissors or macramé T-pins) in a public place to provide - if asked to do so - defence of 'good reason', specifically:

- (a) the pursuance of a trade or work
- (b) pursuit of leisure activities,
- (c) a religious reason, or,
- (d) National costume.

Police are empowered by the 1988 Act to stop and search persons and vehicles for articles with blades, or those which are sharply pointed, with which a person has committed, or is committing, or is going to commit an offence. (Note: they must have reasonable suspicion, an object for the search, and grounds for making it. This power of search is NOT restricted to a public place. In many cases, when time permits, a search warrant is preferred. It is also an offence under the 1988 act to sell, hire or import a proscribed weapon).

Definitions:

'Offensive Weapon' - any article

made or adapted for use for causing injury to the person (e.g. a knuckle-duster, cosh, flick-knife, dagger, sword-stick, etc.), or intended by the person having it with him for such use by him or by some other person (ordinary items used as weapons of offence, e.g. a serving mallet or heavy bellrope).

'Weapon of Offence' - has a wider application (and could apply to ropes and adhesive tape to tie and gag someone).

'Public place' - includes any highway and any other premises or place to which at the material time the public have, or are permitted to have access, whether on payment or otherwise (which includes being in a vehicle on a road).

Case Law (precedent set by previous decisions of the courts):

A whip (e.g. Cat-o-nine-tails) is NOT at present deemed to be an offensive weapon. **Forgetfulness** (e.g. that you unintentionally left an offensive weapon in your pocket when you went out into a public place) is no defence.

Miscellaneous:

In the case of a made or adapted offensive weapon, the onus is upon us to prove lawful authority or reasonable excuse. If, instead, it is alleged one of us intended to use an otherwise innocent item as an offensive weapon, then the burden of proving that guilty mind rests

with Police.

The preventive charges of 'going equipped' to steal or cause criminal damage, contrary to the Theft Act, 1968, and the Criminal Damage Act, 1971, can arise from the possession of any article(s) imaginable.

Never keep any article by you for self defence. It is unlawful. If you were unexpectedly attacked (or put in immediate fear of it) and you defended yourself with a handy ropeworking tool, a jury might consider such an instinctive reaction justified. But they have to be satisfied that you used no more force than was necessary in order to acquit you. Otherwise, you would be convicted of homicide or assault, although you might still plead self defence to lessen the penalty.

Conclusions:

Police should stop, question and search only individuals acting suspiciously or aggressively. Officers exercise discretion. At a big football match, they would go into action if they spotted you wearing a sheath knife; but they would ignore your rigger's knife worn in a yacht marina.

Concern over Draconian new laws may be unnecessary. Still, the IGKT Council and all of us should keep alert for news; and write to our M.P.s to protect our interests if anything is mooted.

The Guild could quiz applicants for

membership about relevant current criminal convictions not yet spent in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, 1974. It might be better to bide our time and simply disown any member who was later convicted of using tools for an unlawful purpose.

Recommended reading:

"Weapons Law" -

by J.B. HILL, LLB(Hons) Solicitor,
pub (1989) by Waterlow Publishers,
ISBN 0-08-033104-1,

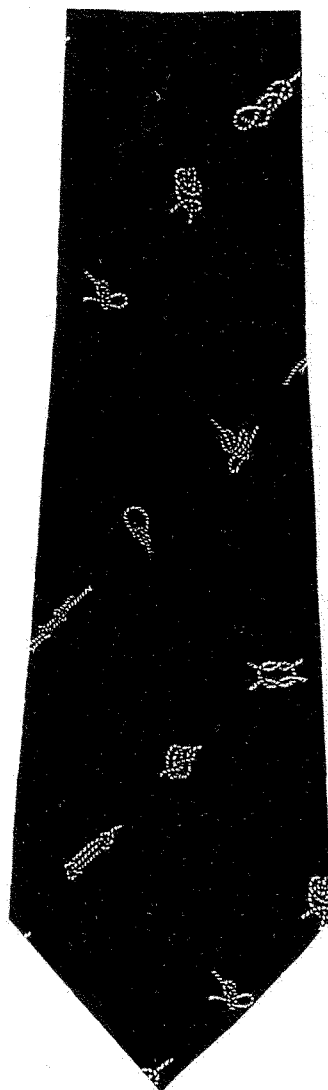
A clear but more detailed explanation with stated cases, to satisfy both lawyer and lay person.

QUOTATION

"As it is of the greatest importance that every sapper should be thoroughly acquainted with the different knots before going to pontoon drill or spar bridging, the greatest pains should be taken by the instructors to see that their men can make each of the knots here described in all situations."

**INSTRUCTION IN MILITARY
ENGINEERING, Vol I,**

Published by the Adjutant-General's
Office, Horse Guards (1st January
1870).



GUILD NECKTIE

Bow tie has same pattern

GUILD SUPPLIES

I.G.K.T PRICE LIST (1992)

ITEM	WEIGHT	PRICE
THE KNOT BOOK Geoffrey Budworth	95gms	£1.99 each
LASHINGS Percy Blandford	55gms	£2.50 each
BREASTPLATE DESIGNS Brian Field	65gms	£2.50 each
TURKSHEADS THE TRADITIONAL WAY Eric Franklin	110gms	£1.50 each
KNOTCRAFT Stuart Grainger	130gms	£3.25 each*
ROPEFOLK Stuart Grainger	30gms	£1.30 each*
TURKSHEAD ALTERNATIVES Stuart Grainger	30gms	£1.20 each*

**AN INTRODUCTION TO KNOT TYING
SOME SPLICES AND LANYARD KNOTS**

Stuart Grainger

Available as a set
while stocks last
at a special price
of £2.00 per set.

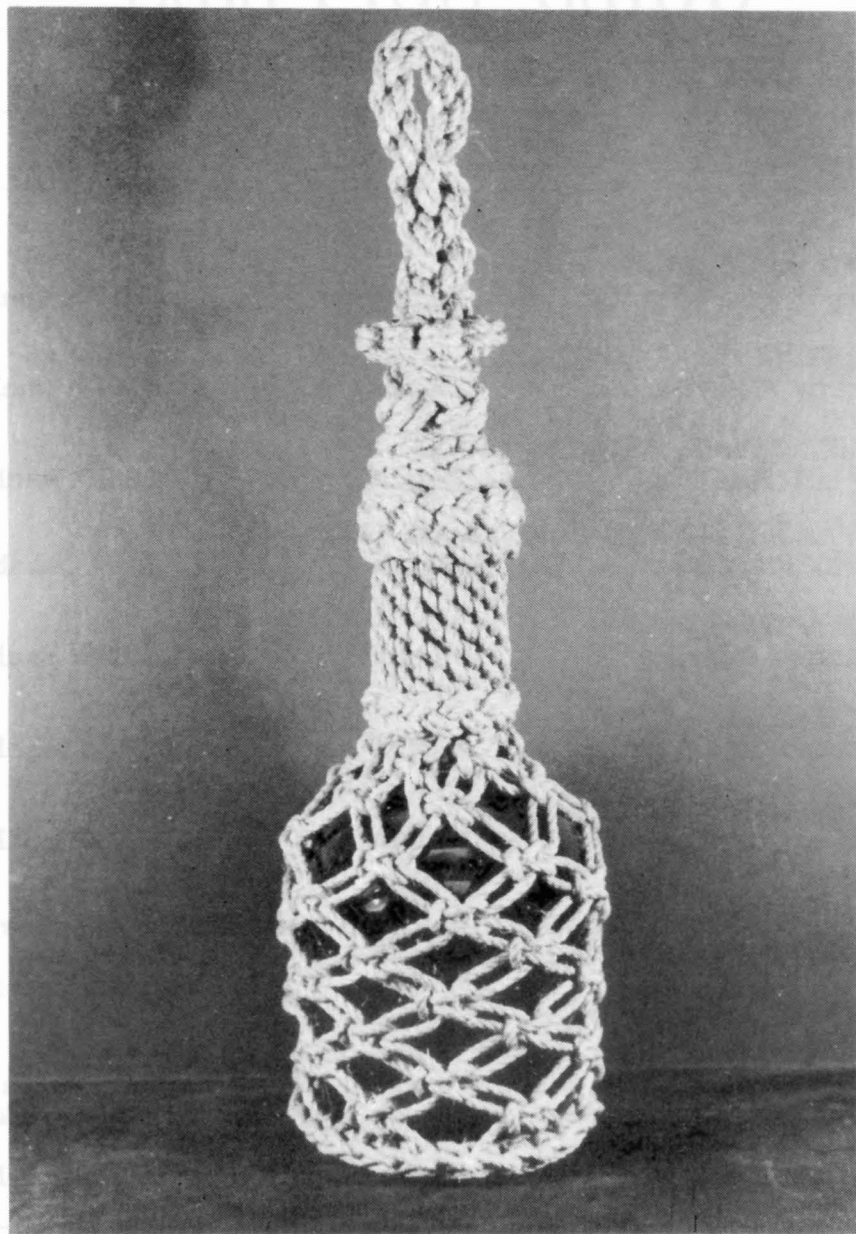
* Indicates 33.3% discount available on orders worth
£30 at retail prices. Subject to availability of stock.

Weights are stated as a guide in calculating POSTAGE.

SUPPLIES SECRETARY

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Goosey
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Oxon SN7 8PA

Tel:0367-710256



Stuart GRAINGER covered this Courvoisier brandy bottle of bright green glass, filled with clear glass balls, which looks very handsome with the light behind it. The Macrame' netting at the bottom allows the light to shine through. Knotting in 4mm hemp for use as a door stop.



TEXEL ANCHOR

Mr B. PLOKKER gave this photograph to me. The four-claw anchor is fully covered with half-hitching and a crown of Macrame, each fluke is beset with our emblem - the four bight Turk's Head, sewn to it. A little over 5 feet tall, it stands proudly in front of The Marine Base of Texel. This is the first one of our Frisian Islands. My information is that it was made by an instructor there in the last year or so.*Jan Hoefnagel*

I.G.K.T PRICE LIST (1992)

POSTCARDS, Set of 8 instructional
(Brown on Cream) 35gms £1.50 (Set)

POSTCARDS, Set of 8 single strand
Ornamental Knots
(White on Blue) 35gms £1.50 (Set)

TIES, Silk (Dark blue, white knot motifs) 30gms £6.50 each

TIES, Bow, Silk (As above) £7.80 each

BADGES, (Guild logo) 5gms
ENAMEL BROOCH TYPE £1.80 each

CLOTH BLAZER TYPE £1.00 each

CAR STICKER (Soft Plastic) £1.00 each

3" PRESSED PRINTED METAL £0.30 each

CHRISTMAS CARDS "A Star & A Crown" £3.00 for 10
(with envelopes)

T-SHIRT 145gms
Size - XXL £7.45 each
Size - XL £6.95 each
Size - L £6.95 each
Size - M £6.95 each

MUGS

I.G.K.T. 10th ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE MUG
(Dark Blue graphics on white china)
£3.00 each
(+ postage)

SUPPLIES SECRETARY

Yew Tree House

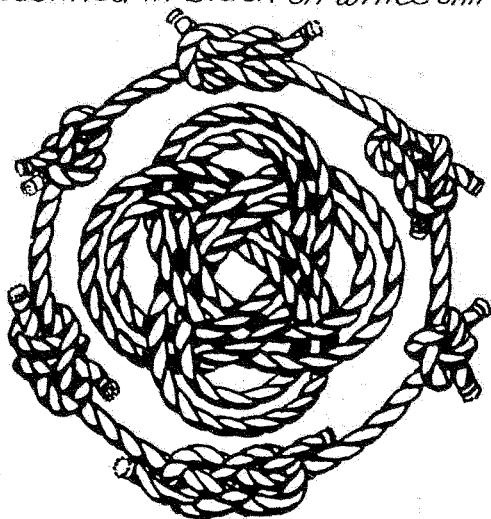
Goosey

FARINGDON

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*T Shirt Motif - yellow
outlined in black on white shirts.*



**TENTH ANNIVERSARY
COMMEMORATIVE MUG**

Dark blue graphics on white china. £3 plus postage
or at the A.G.M. Individually packaged.

LETTERS

Roger CARTER (N.Z.) writes....

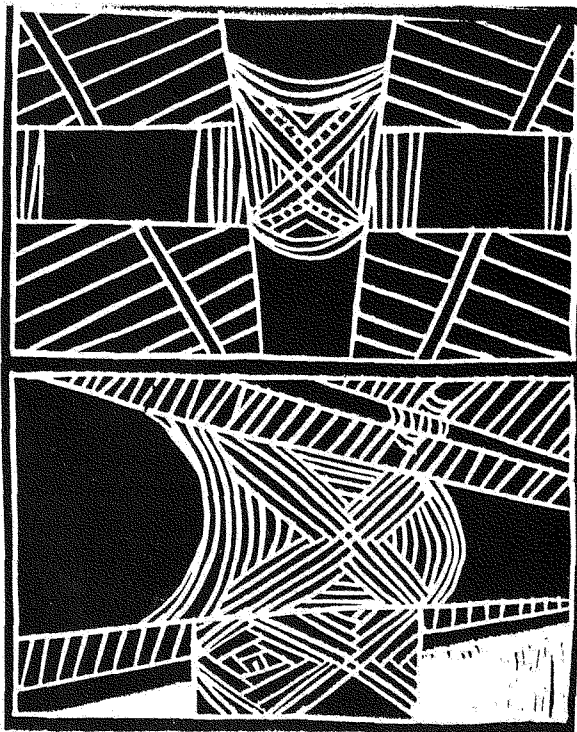
Having done most of the apprenticeship in cordage through the years, from the basic bends and hitches, knots and splices, then all the fancy work things,

(On my first ship, HMS DUKE OF YORK, when she was Flagship of the Home Fleet, in the late forties, I supplemented my 4/6d a week by making fancy dog leads, and bell ropes for the people, and covering telescopes for Junior Officers and Midshipmen) my interest now has extended to the historical and Ethnological aspects of

our subject. With that in mind I enclose an interesting piece of "Knotting Art". The work is a series of Lino-Cut prints which are a stylised representation of the lashings

that bind the beams of a "FALE" a SAMOAN MEETING HOUSE. This work was done by Levi SALAMA-SINA, a lad of Samoan/Tokulauan

Parents, residents of New Zealand. Levi is a 7th Form pupil at Porirua College, his art teacher is Murray BLOXHAM. I have never heard it voiced, but of all the things that are "Common Ground" for almost all the worlds various cultures, Knots and Cordage must be the most



common. Cordage and Knotting in the Pacific Islands, where there were no nails until Europeans arrived, was advanced to the most sophisticated degree, and is a field ripe for study

Mike STORCH (USA) writes...

I've just received my winter/92 newsletter - It's always a pleasure to be reminded of the efforts on everyones behalf to keep our craft alive - I was especially impressed with the knotboard and frame by Bernard Cutbush, good work all round.

I also have something to offer the "Knots without Words" (KM38 page 27). I have an article submitted to the "Heart of the Earth" Journal here in Colorado - It concerns a knot I am using (one of several in a series) in constructing a camp shelter of low impact on the environment - the only difference I can see between the knot I depict (The Harness Loop) and the first one in the newsletter is the half twist in the bight before tucking up through the crossed section - the half twist is superfluous. I specifically chose this single loop knot for its simplicity, even though others would seem more suited to the purpose. I do not have my copy of Ashley at hand, but from memory alone I thought it strongly resembles the "Harness Loop", and have risked naming it so. The second knot in the newsletter is identical (also except for the twist) to the one I've named the "Picket Line Loop" - again simplicity overall, and this one has the advantage of being able to be put in the bight - (extra horses can be added to the picket line at will without having to untie from the second tree

and add the loop). In both the "Harness" and "Picket Line" loops I advocate the same method of adding tension to the line.

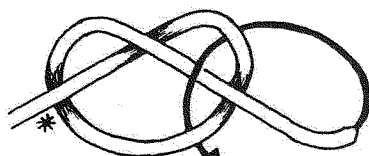
Both the above knots are adequate for their intended purposes, and yet simple enough for the novice to learn and REMEMBER (I have come to believe knots tend to be intimidating to the "uninitiated", and my intended audience in both cases is the novice).

By Ed. *Mike's article "Picket Line Loop" and his drawings of both knots can be found on page ...28.*

Something else of interest to report... This season I find myself on a large construction site in RENO, Nevada - with a sense of mischief I left a "Monkey's Fist" lying about to see the reaction of my co-workers in this landlocked, desert state - at days end the job superintendent had seen it, sought me out to enquire about it - I explained the lore associated with the Monkey's Fist and knew immediately he was hooked. I suggested, and he has accepted my offer to teach some ropecraft to any of the 100 or so fellow employees so inclined - I will include 2 or 3 basic hitches, as well as a like number of splices that relate to on the job needs - always nice to see our craft well received and appreciated.

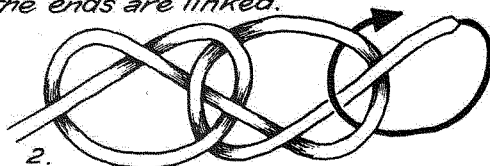
Hi to all at the Guild>

Michael STORCH, PO BOX 914,
BAYFIELD, COLORADO. 81122,

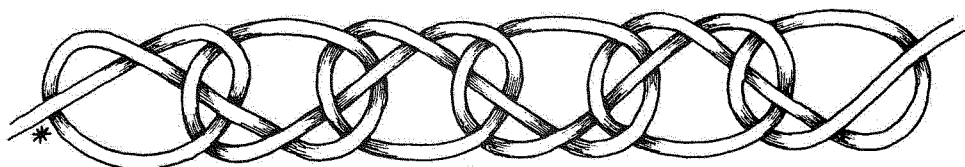


1. First step.
Note * the first crossing is for convenience only and it is changed when the ends are linked.

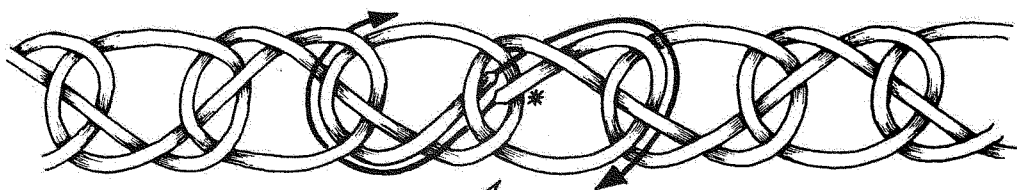
Second step.



The first and second steps are repeated alternately to

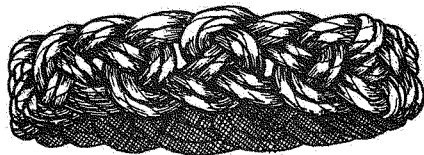


3.
form the Chain, which is extended until long enough to overlap around the circumference, the



4.
The Link.

ends are then linked and the lead is doubled, and may be tripled, in either direction, or both.



The Grommet after Doubling.

Decorative Chain Grommet IV © & 8-91

SURVIVAL OF THE SIMPLEST

AND SOME MORE HERESY

by Pieter van de GRIEND

Man kan göra knutar på många sätt, men somliga knutar *hålla* till skillnad från andra och äro äfven i andra afseenden att föredraga. Några af dessa knutar hafva därför i konkurrensen mot andra, sämre knutar segrat och blifvit genom urval och tradition inrotade i folkens vanor.

Hjalmar Öhrvall Om Knutar 1908.

One can tie knots in many ways, but some knots *hold* compared to others and are also in other ways to be preferred. Some of these knots have therefore won in the competition against inferior knots and due to choice and tradition became rooted in people's customs.

Over the past few years whenever I have had opportunity to work at my book on knots used by the peoples living in the proximity of the North Atlantic Ocean, I couldn't help but notice a partially submerged set of ideas. A set which I haven't seen described in the knotting literature yet. They will form the central theme of this article. In a reductionist view I tend to see knots as solutions to rope problems. That means that given a medium in which to realise a knot, such as a rope, and a problem, like tethering a cow, one holds the basic ingredients for what I term: a rope problem. Whilst tangling the rope attemptive solutions, i.e knots, to that problem are generated. This raises a philosophical point, because what is a *solution* in this context? The structure? The way that structure is derived? (i.e the method) The specific way that structure is applied? (i.e the purpose) In this trilogy of interpretations the first is fundamentally different from the others. I have reasoned elsewhere that structures are not prone to invention, but the latter two I am usually willing to grant as could-be-inventions. Finding an algorithm to produce a particular knotted structure is something which

demands (sometimes quite) a lot of intelligence. However in this article no elaboration will be attempted and solution is meant to comprise all three viewpoints.

Those structures which result as solutions can count on being able to enjoy a spell of *being known*, which we could suitably call their lifespan. When rope users are involved in the bringing forth of a knotted structure I have observed that there is a complex play going on. The empirically most frequent encountered knots are usually structurally relatively simple. However they are typically also *concurrent* solutions, which moreover are subject to evolution.

In this light consider the work done by Prof. Dr. Andras von Brandt in *Fischnetzknöten* Berlin 1957 p83, where he attempts to outline evolution classes of some specific knots used by fishermen.

During their afforded lifespan there is a continuous battle between all these solutions taking place and the knots seem to use all possible means offered by the terrain in which they have to survive. In this article I will come to show that survival is influenced by a number of factors and, under dynamic circumstances, eventually results in what I would like to name *Survival of the Simplest*. Simplest not solely in a structural sense, but rather a combination of elements from the aforementioned trilogy. As a rule the simplest is found to triumph over its competitors sooner or later. A not totally unknown phenomenon in the world of prag-

matical knotters. The two most prominent exterior effects taking the stage are what I call *The Propagation of Technological Knowledge* and an ethnographical concept known as *Cultural Identity*. The former speaks for itself and relates to the question as to *Why do knots come into use?* The latter means to denote the fact that individuals display characteristic behaviour, like using certain knots, because their social environments have taught them to do so or perhaps forces them by tradition. This moreover is deliberately maintained as a mechanism for uniting the social group. The concept answers parts of the question as to *Why do certain groups of people use specific knots?* I intend to use these ideas by showing that in a sense the former provides the required dynamics whereas the latter displays a tendency towards arresting a knot's progress during its lifespan. Occasionally they collaborate and effectively protect a knot. The classical example of a renowned utility knot is the Bowline. This is a quite simple structure with a considerable functionality as a fixed loopknot, but having a number of known variants. Using the introduced concepts I will explain why these variants occur in two usergroups, which differ in both time and place, but are not necessarily devoid of interaction. The first will be a so-called modern primitive people, by which I do not mean *primitive* in a pejorative sense, but

merely living in an environment whose options are not affected by a high degree of culturising such as for instance our own. The second will be slightly less primitive. We will start in Inuit territory with the so-called Boas Bowline. A knot first described in print by the ethnographer Franz Boas, who recorded its use by Inuit hunters in Cumberland Sound and Hudson Bay's west coast towards the end of the 1890's. <Franz

Boas: The Eskimos of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay. Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History XV, part I, 1901; Reprint New York 1976; Considering a few of the other knots displayed in Boas' article one is inclined to believe that there has been a strong influence from fishermen and whalers, since they are typical 19th century fisherman knots.[J.C Wilcocks: The Seafisherman 1865 p38] Notably Dutch whalers were already trading and hunting in the Davis Strait area during the last decennia of the 17th century. An activity which lasted for well over 100 years. [Dr. Louwrens Hacquebord: North Atlantic Studies Vol 2. Arhus 1990. p15] Since then there have been several other references in the literature. Dr.Cyrus

Day: Quipus and Witches' Knots. Lawrence 1967. pp 84-85; KM7p4; KM8pp16-17 letter Ian Marson; Geoffrey Budworth: The Boas Bowline KM27pp9-11 1989; John Smith: Invention, Accident or Observation? KM28pp20-21 1989; HC Gullov: Denmark's National Museum; In a more recent publication Geoffrey Budworth, who christened this knot, discusses an application of it found in lashings on an Inuit sledge presented to Sir John Ross during his 1818 expedition which reached into

Lancaster Sound. Primitive hunters made abundant use of flexible monofilamentous media, such as sinews having relatively small diameter and thin strips of seamammal skin. These materials enabled them to use the Cowboy Method. Dr. Cyrus

Day: Sailor's Knots 1935, p42; A method for making a Bowline by spilling a Noose [ASHLEY p203#1114]. Also used by weavers to make a Sheetbend. The method is also known as knot-trick. [ASHLEY p412 #2562], for making a Bowline. However since most people are right handed that algorithm, of which the corresponding variant is graphically displayed in <1-3>, is liable to yield the Boas Bowline. Dr. J Lehmann: Systematik und geographischen Verbreitung der Geflechtsarten, 1907 Ankerstich fig 178, p27; Graumont and Hensel: Encyclopedia of Knots and Fancy Rope work. Cambridge/USA 1939. Camper's Hitch page 600 plate 320. Both refs show how to form the Boas Bowline as a hitch. This structure's spread along the coast of Baffin Land and beyond would require the Propagation of Technological Knowledge, which in this context alternatively could be worded as that *hunters tend to learn from each other*. Basically an orally aided copying process, made operational since other hunters would have encountered exactly the same rope problem of making a rigid loop with the available media. Cultural Identity's effect in this case reinforces propagation by getting the knot taken up in the necessary learning process prior to becoming a hunter. Survival of the Simplest is

established because there simply remains no other knot for the purpose under the circumstances to stand a chance in the competition.

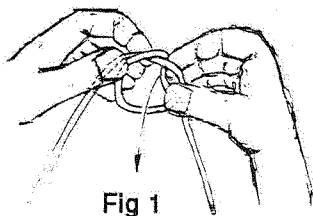


Fig 1

Studying small scale user-groups offers clearer observations than large scaled ones, but the principles under discus-

sion are applicable to both. I will show this by considering an example which stems from the maritime heritage of The Netherlands. Before going over to the actual example I would like to define what I mean by the social group *mariners*. To many people the sailor profession of the clipper heydays has the supreme claim to knots, but in my eyes the romantic powers of the sea have caused that claim to become an exaggerated common misconception. With mariners I mean to denote western seafarers from the period ranging from the early 17th until the second half of this century. Mariners, by nature of their trade, have had a considerable exposure to rope problems along with the

necessity of having had to find fitting solutions. During this process they have developed the technicality of knots somewhat further while getting those transactions recorded in the best of ways of their days. Knots entered respectable seaman-ship manuals for a number of reasons. Just like everything else at sea one has to save *expensive* rope, since it quite obviously is not

an immediately replenishable resource. In the aftermath analysis of a dangerous situation apparant trivial things get con-

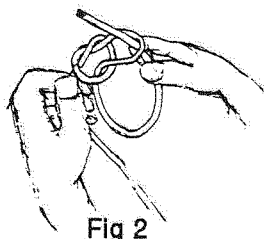


Fig 2

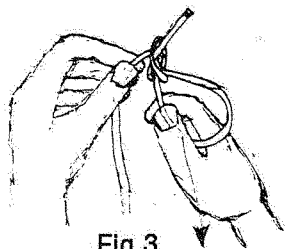


Fig 3

sideration and nomenclature to describe them is generated. Eventually this hard-gained (knot) knowledge ends up in the literature too where it hopefully will be studied by aspiring mariners. This process implements the Propagation of Technological Knowledge.

Survival of the Simplest is also to be found in the following bit of Dutch knot lore about the *Marine Paalsteek* and the *Koopvaardij*

Paalsteek. *Marine Paalsteek* is called Bowline proper [ASHLEY p186 #1010] and the *Koopvaardij Paalsteek* is the Lefthanded Bowline [ASHLEY p186 #1034...]. In a direct translation the Dutch names mean respectively Naval Bowline and Merchant Naval Bowline. These names are not to be found in the literature, but merely in spoken Dutch. Knots frequently display the tendency to be named after the environments in which they occur. In this case the names arose from descriptions of Bowlines pictured in the seamanship literature of the second half of the 19th century. To that extent consult: Dr.

Eduard Bobrik:
Handbuch der Praktischen Seefahrtkunde. Leipzig 1848:
tabel XXXIIA fig 46;
J.C Pilaar: Handleiding tot de kennis van het tuig. Amsterdam 1858: plate VI
fig 99; Vilhelm Lin-



Koopvaardij Paalsteek
figure 4



Marine Paalsteek
figure 5

der: Lærobok i Sjømanskap. Stockholm 1896:
p450 fig 321; Depicted in respectively
<4> and <5>. Strict naval etiquette
would dictate that the wend

Acronym
to denote Working End, introduced by
Desmond Mandeville. be kept inside the
loop, since this could be considered
safer by preventing this type of knot
under tension from snagging its
wend behind for instance rigging. A
state of affairs which otherwise
could lead to potentially dangerous
situations. In addition, Irrespective
of the rope user's handedness, the
common fingertip

Brion Toss: The Rigger's Apprentice. Camden 1984, page 41 fig
64. method for making a Bowline

clearly favours the Bowline proper by
incorporating less awkward moves. All
of this causing the Koopvaardij Paal-
steek to lose ground in its tragic
battle against its naval counterpart.

This brief article can not possibly
adequately outline the workings of
these complicated and far reaching
mechanisms such as in the cases of
symbolic, heraldic and decorative
knots. Their Survival of the Simplest
appears to not be pursued and
neither is it attainable since the knots

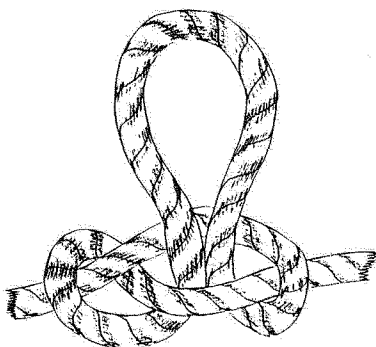
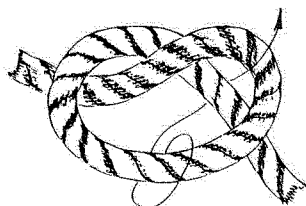
are pinned
down in vir-
tually static
conditions
mainly due to
Cultural Identity's influence.
This does not
imply that
those knots do
not try to

exploit other propagational means to
reach analogously desired states.
However these cases, it must be kept
in mind, are a far cry from what
actual rope users encounter. Even
though all knots appear the same to
most people, intensive rope users
are usually well aware of the dif-
ferences between the various solu-
tions they concoct for their rope
problems. Therefore no professional
rope user would want to experience
the learning of a complicated knot for
thereafter to find that a simple one
can do the same job. Survival of the
Simplest in action!

PICKET LINE LOOP

by Mike STORCH (U.S.A.)

Here's a good loop knot to use in the picket line. It has the advantage of being easy to untie after being pulled tight or rained on.



PICKET LINE LOOP

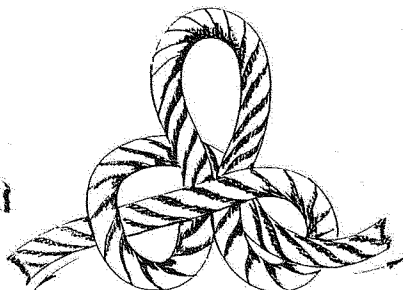
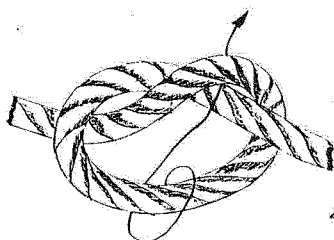
For more than one horse, space the loops a few feet apart, then picket the horses on opposite sides of the line. The ropes should be long enough to allow ground feeding, but not so long that a leg can get tangled.

Tie off to the first tree.
(Always use

padding under rope to protect the tree). Tie as many loops as necessary, then add one more two feet before the second tree. Pass the rope around the second tree, back through the last (extra) loop, apply tension and tie off to the second tree.

Going through the last loop before applying tension creates a primitive block and tackle. The ratio of energy applied to pull received approaches two

to one. No more picket line sag.



HARNESS LOOP

TOOL TIPS

By Geoffrey BUDWORTH

TOOL TIP No.3

An engineer's pin vice is a chuck on a knurled handle. It will grip and hold sailmakers' (or any other) needles, bodkins, crochet hooks, etc., to improvise a tough poking or pulling tool. There is more than one size.



TOOL TIP No.4

A stationary (i.e. paper work) bodkin is - I am assured - for threading ribbon onto legal briefs. It can also be used sometimes for prodding and poking a little slack in tight fancy work prior to that final tuck or two with another tool. Be gentle. It isn't strong.

GB



The PEDIGREE COW HITCH

Your Response

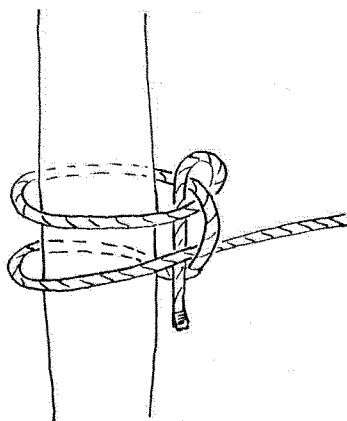
The PEDIGREE COW HITCH

It would seem we all know what a "Cow Hitch" is, however the Girl Guide knotter's badge (see KM38) lists the requirement for a "Pedigree" version. It would seem that not only many of our members were confused, but so were some of the Guiders and their knot badge testers. Devised by our very own Dr Harry ASHER *he explains.....*

On p18 of KM38 Bill MARSHAL enquires about The Pedigree Cow. Let me explain. Ashley (#1683) shows a modification of the Cow Hitch, which is vastly improved by making a final tuck in which the working end is passed under the two turns on the spar. Unaware of this knot, I devised a closely similar hitch in which the final tuck is made in the reverse direction to that in the Ashley knot. In my book: THE ALTERNATIVE KNOT BOOK (Nautical Books 1989.) I named the hitch "THE PEDIGREE COW", to emphasize its great superiority over the ordinary Cow Hitch. The additional tuck, whether made in one direction or the other transforms one of the least secure of all hitches into one of the most secure. It must have been this great security in a simple hitch which led to it being

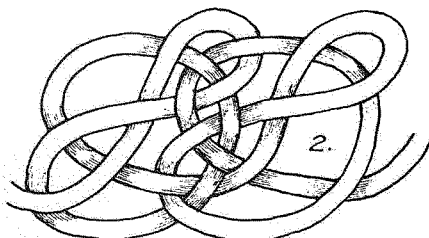
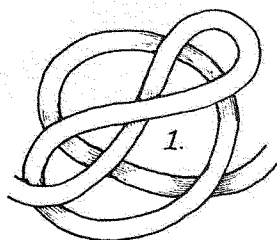
included as one of the nine knots required for the Girl Guides Knotter Badge.

For those of you who do not own Harry's book or have the Guide magazines the diagram below, sent to me by Colin Grundy of Coventry, should explain all.

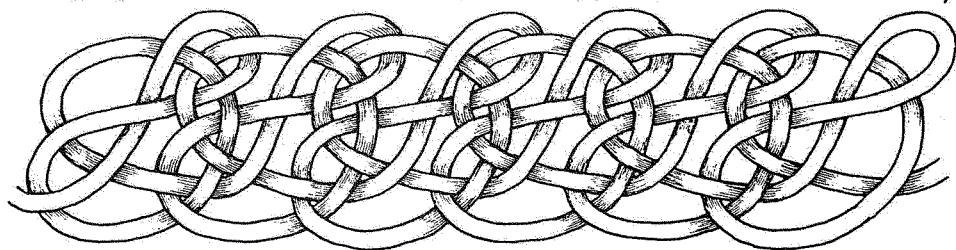


Colin also makes note of the fact that level one of the test requires both (a) Thumb Knot and (b) Overhand Knot, and says he has always believed these to be one of the same.. *WHAT DO YOU THINK?*

Thank you - Harry Asher, Geoffrey Budworth, Colin Grundy for your response to this article.

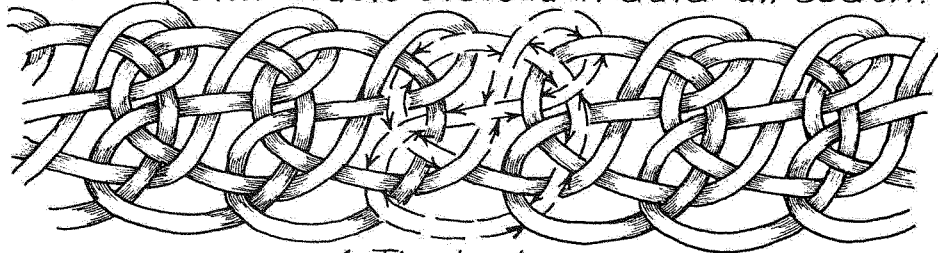


Repeat this sequence until the chain is long enough to link the ends around the intended circumference,

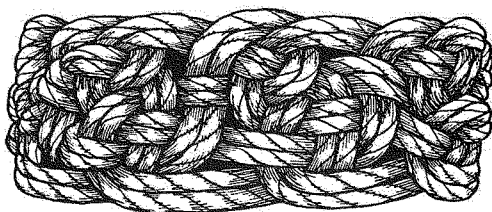


3. The Chain.

as shown, then double the lead in either direction.



4. The Link.



5. The Completed Grommet.

Decorative Chain Grommet XIV. © & 2-92

BOOK REVIEW

ROPEMAN'S HANDBOOK

3rd edition (1980), reprinted 1989

published by the National Coal Board

In collaboration with the Health & Safety Executive and the Federation of Wire Rope Manufacturers

Obtainable from the British Coal Corporation,

Technical Services & Research Executive,

Ashby Road, Stanhope Bretby BURTON-ON-TRENT, Staffs. DE15 0QD England.

The ropeman is the person responsible to colliery management for the examination of winding, haulage, guide and balance ropes, and this handbook is intended to assist him in carrying out his duties. Since the first edition in 1952, it has become an international book of reference. In this third edition - A5, soft cover, 176 pages, with 82 photographs and drawings - the text has been updated again and includes new illustrations.

Ten chapters deal with: types of wire, strand and rope; rope handling, serving and splicing; rope lubri-

cation; methods of capping wire ropes; rope examination; types of deterioration in ropes; winding ropes; balance ropes; guide and rubbing ropes; haulage ropes.

Two appendices detail: a method of determining the minimum breaking strength required of a haulage rope; when to discard a rope.

A bibliography lists regulations, specifications and official publications dealing with ropes.

There is an index.

Note that the word 'rope', wherever it appears above, means iron or steel wire rope: so only the dedicated student of rope working and rigging is likely to benefit from owning this book

QUOTATION

"The tramp in the park who taught me to make cats' cradles - aye - there was multum in parvo, much in so very little."

GRAFFITI

by Peter Van Greenaway

published by Victor Gollancz Ltd (1983)

