

# Knotting Matters

The Magazine of the International Guild of Knot Tyers



Issue 78  
March 2003

# Guild Supplies

## Price List 2003

Item	Price
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Individual charts	£0.20
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# Knotting Matters

**Magazine of the  
International Guild of  
Knot Tyers**

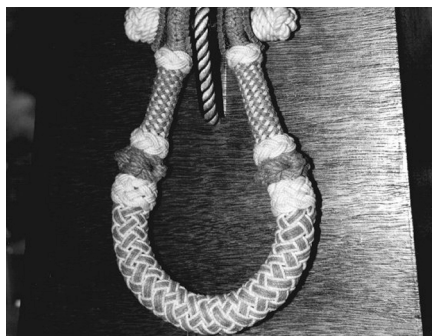
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*A sea chest becket from the work of your  
Editor.*

*Back Cover: A swan's neck on the  
narrowboat 'Taurus'*

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# Notes from the Secretary's Blotter

**T**ime to write another blotter, - well actually I'm rather late, so late in fact that I missed the last one. I was busy redecorating, and refitting my office to give me just a little more working space. I also had problems with my telephone line, which left me totally incommunicado (no phone, no fax, no email) for nearly a fortnight - all very frustrating. Hopefully no one noticed, however that does give me the excuse to ramble on longer than usual in this edition (do I hear voices saying that he doesn't need an excuse to ramble on - he does anyway).

Since KM76 many of us travelled to the Midlands for the Autumn Meeting in Bromsgrove. It was an excellent meeting in very pleasant surroundings, but that came at a price, and raised the question of the financing of our meetings. The Council has been in a dilemma for some years as to whether there should be an attendance fee for our meeting, and the general consensus at Bromsgrove was that there should be, in order to enable us to enjoy better facilities, especially as some members cross the globe to get there. A lot of complaints were received about cost of Bromsgrove, hence the Council are reluctant to base future policy on the opinion of those who were comfortable with the above average cost of a meeting, without opening the debate to those unable to attend.

In the early days of the Guild partly due to the lack of finance, but also the limited number of members likely to attend, we used venues that were both

small and inexpensive. Generally we see around a hundred members and guests, and venues for this quantity are not so readily available. Also in the last twenty years, commercialism has crept into our everyday life, and schools, village halls, and even the Scout Association are obliged to demand the 'going rate' for the hire of a hall.

Over the years we have used a number of Sea Cadet units, where we have been made most welcome, and have given an evenings knot tying entertainment to the Sea Cadets, as a part payment of the fee. At venues such as these it has been possible to sleep in the unit, (usually on the floor). With numbers such as they are now, there are fewer units large enough for us to use, hence the increasing frequency with which we have been to Farnham, Nottingham and Weston super Mare. This does make for an inexpensive weekend of knot tying.

It has been the policy of the Council since before I joined, almost eleven years ago, for the meetings to be 'self financing'. This has become increasingly more difficult, although the income from the raffle goes almost halfway towards achieving this.

So, what is the cost of a meeting to the Guild? Over the past few years we have made a budgetary allowance of £300-£500, which has never been exceeded, and amounts to less than 50p per member per meeting. However, the cost of Bromsgrove highlighted the fact that it was the cost to the member of attending the meeting that was more important.



Certainly, for a couple staying at the conference centre, despite their advantageous rates, the total bill for the weekend would have been quite substantial. Of course, to keep the costs down, it was possible to stay in a local guesthouse, or B&B, and gone to the local hostelry for a meal.

For the moment, the Council, who try to book venues about two years in advance, are trying to satisfy everyone, by choosing a mixture of locations, some more palatial than others, but will bear in mind the 'cost to the member'. As the ultimate compromise, the aim will be for some meetings to be quite inexpensive, whilst others may be the other way about.

The Council aims to serve the membership the best it can, balancing the promotion of the Guilds 'professional image' by using more prestigious venues, against the need for inexpensive venues for those members living on low or fixed incomes. The Council tries to achieve an equitable compromise however, if you think that they have failed and have strong feelings that the Council are out of touch with the membership, let us know, or better still put your name forward as a candidate at the AGM.

Moving on to the AGM, a few years ago, I requested a change to the Guilds constitution in order to streamline the proceedings at the AGM. The change was quite simple, in that potential candidates for the Council had to submit their names in advance, so that they could be printed on the voting slip. This change certainly has simplified the election process, as there hasn't been one since. This was not the intention, and was obviously a mistake, hence the Council are putting forward a Notice of

Motion at the next AGM to reverse this change. Details can be found in the paper with the AGM details. Finally, whilst on the subject of elections to the Council, assuming the Meeting approves this alteration; please consider putting your name forward at the AGM for election to the Council.

The Celebration Tankards (Birthday Mugs) have proved very popular, and initially sold well, there are still quite a number left. They were in short supply around the Christmas 2001, which seems to have left the impression that this has always been the case. If you like one, or more of these beautiful tankards, a genuine collectors item, then please let me know.

Finally, for those of you planning a trip to the National Motorboat Museum at Pitsea to see the 'Ashley Collection', you will be disappointed as we have had to remove the collection and put it in store until a new home can be found for it. For the benefit of more recent members, this was a display of every knot featured in *The Ashley Book of Knots*, tied by members in Knot Year 90, and organised by Frank Harris.

That's all for now, as I must start preparing my speech for the AGM.

*Nigel Harding*

## ROPE ENDS

'The first forgotten genius who cast a bowline, or any one of the bends or hitches in a rope, must rank with the producers of fire through friction.'

*Felix Reisenberg, nautical writer -  
1935*

# Letter from an Ex-President

To all members of the I.G.K.T., my apologies. When I undertook a second term in office, I believed I would be able to see it through, or at least carry on for a significant part of that term.

Unfortunately the progression of my illness is such that although my mind is still clear (except for the occasional morphine-induced high!), I lack the energy and drive to do the job as I would

wish to do it. I have therefore asked the president-elect (Jeff Wyatt) to take over all presidential duties. I am sure that you will extend to him the same support and friendship that you have given to me.

Finally, I thank you all for the opportunity which you gave me to serve at the highest level in what I have come to regard as “the friendly Guild”.

*Brian Field*

# Letter from a New President

It is with pride, tinged with a great deal of sadness, that I’m taking on the duty of President of the Guild. It was a post that I was hoping not to have to take on for at least another two and a half years, but sadly, just before the New Year, Brian rang to say that his health was deteriorating and that he thought it was time for me to assume the role of President. Some time ago he had asked me if I would take over when he decided that it was too difficult for him to continue. I accepted, with some reservations.

I feel that an important part of being the President of any organisation is to ensure that you are a real person who is prepared to be more than just a name on a letterhead. Brian was such a President and it is my intention to do the same. I hope to attend various Branch meetings, both in the UK and overseas, and meet as

many members as possible. Brian will be a hard act to follow because he was the first President to stand for a three-year term of office, and the first President to be re-elected for a second term. This was in response not only for his likeable nature, but also for the great amount of good work he had done for the Guild. Hopefully he will continue but in the less stressful role of a Past-President. I would like to say, as my first act as the new President, “Thank you, Brian, for all you have done for the International Guild of Knot Tyers.”

Please note that my new email address as President is: [president@igkt.net](mailto:president@igkt.net) and my personal email is: [jeffwyatt.wydon@ntlworld.com](mailto:jeffwyatt.wydon@ntlworld.com) (not as indicated in the new Members Handbook!!)

*Jeff Wyatt*



## *Presidential Honours 2003*

*the following are hereby honoured for their efforts in  
furthering the aims and activities of the IJKJ*

*Karl Bareuther*

*for services to the Guild in Germany*

*Peter and Catherine Goldstone*

*for their work with the Surrey Branch  
over many years*

*Marc Lauwereyens*

*for services to the Guild in Belgium*

*David and Sheila Pearson*

*for services to the Guild in the North of England*

*Lindsey Philpott*

*for services to the Guild in California*

*"Willey" Willaert*

*for services to the Guild in Europe*

*Ken Yalden*

*for services to the Council,  
for forging links with the Navy  
and organising outstanding Guild meetings*

## Col's Comment

**A**nother year has begun and along with it a number of vents are being planned around the world.

Old salts will be interested in a naval event being planned for the weekend of 17-18th May at Bletchley Park, home of the WWII code breaking team. The event called *Bletchley's SHARK in the Atlantic* will also include Guild members tying knots. SHARK was the name given to a new cipher created in February 1942 when the U-boats introduced a fourth Enigma machine rotor.

Dutch member Klaas Kuiper is hoping to attract members to demonstrate knotting at *Delfsail 2003*. This event will feature a gathering of windjammers and take place over 10-14th July. Klaas' details are in the Membership Handbook and details of the event can be found on [www.delfsail.nl](http://www.delfsail.nl).

Last year the Guild had a presence at the *Inland Waterways Festival* at Huddersfield. We are hoping to repeat this success again this August Bank Holiday, at Beale Park in Berkshire. Also on the canal scene, the Guild has a stand at the *Crick Boat Show* under the banner of the Surrey Branch, for more information or to offer help, contact Howard Denyer.

This year, the half-yearly meeting has been put back a week to the 18th October, to coincide with *NAB 2003*, the North American Branch meeting. The Council is currently looking at ways to link up these two events so that we can make it a truly International weekend.

If you know of other events where the Guild is demonstrating, be sure to let

your editor and our website co-ordinator, Lesley Wyatt know.

Well known to many Guild members is Willeke van der Ham, author of our "How to . . ." articles. Willeke now has her own website in Dutch and English showing how to make animals, flowers and knotboards. Titled *Willeke's Knotted Ideas*, you can find it on [www.home.zonnet.nl/willeke\\_igkt/](http://www.home.zonnet.nl/willeke_igkt/).

## IGKT Website

([www.igkt.net](http://www.igkt.net))

**T**he basic redesign of the Website is now complete, and the main work on it now is updating events, amending branch information, adding links and adding your pictures to the Galleries.

Would all Branch Secretaries like to check the information on the *Branch Events* page and let me know as soon as possible any changes they want to make.

One thing I have noticed, non-members are putting questions in the *Forum* but they are getting very few answers. Unfortunately, being a non-knotty person, I can't help. A few have been answered, but we do need more responses from members. All you have to do is register and respond - no charge and all it will cost you is a little bit of time. Please help these people if you can, you never know they might be sufficiently impressed to want to join the Guild.

This site was rebuilt at member's request, but your input is still required with pictures for the *Galleries*, comments on the *Feedback* pages.

*Lesley Wyatt*

# The Guild Teaching Policy?

by David Walker

The object of the Guild shall be the advancement of education by the study of the practice of the art, craft and science of knotting past and present.”

The Guild has recently celebrated its 20th birthday and so far we have not organised any teaching courses. Over the years many Guild members have sent their ideas and observations to *Knotting Matters*.

I believe that the main stumbling block is the idea of qualifications. The man who lit the spark in me, Ike Argent, only used a dozen knots in his lifetime. I know far more knots than him, but I know he forgot more about knot tying than I will ever know (he left the Guild because he thought that we were tying too many “fancy knots”)! His qualification was his enthusiasm.

I believe there are two main groups for us to target:

1 Current Guild members. Their needs can be met by “Master Classes” organised at the AGM and October meetings and other branch activities.

2 “Outsiders”. These are the people who are interested in knot tying, but don’t know where to start. I believe we could organise an introductory course possibly entitled, “An introduction to creative, decorative and practical knot tying.”

This course could consist of:

1 A brief history of knotting,

2 The range of knotting disciplines, i.e. single-multi strand, braids, coverings and Turk’s heads.

3 Simple practical projects.

4 A certified acknowledgement of their taking part.

This course could be followed up by more courses, i.e. half-hitch techniques, Turk’s heads, practical working knots. A similar “Taking part” certificate can support each course.

If any Guild member wish, they could take a weekend course for teaching adults and receive a recognised qualification.

At the next AGM at Weston-super-Mare, I am holding a meeting for anyone who is interested in this subject. I hope you can come along and show me your support. If you can’t, send me an open letter with your ideas, i.e. where we could hold the course, what groups of people to target and how we could fund it.

I know that my ideas are based on the UK but if you are a member from other parts of the world, send me your ideas on teaching and how we could support you.

I could fill more pages on this subject, but I think I’ve written enough for now. I look forward to seeing you at Weston.



# Scouts Challenge Sea-Cadet Record

reported by Christopher Conrad

Last summer, 300 Cub Scouts and Webelos from Stafford County, Fredericksburg, Virginia set about challenging the Guinness World Record for tying the longest rope chain in five minutes.

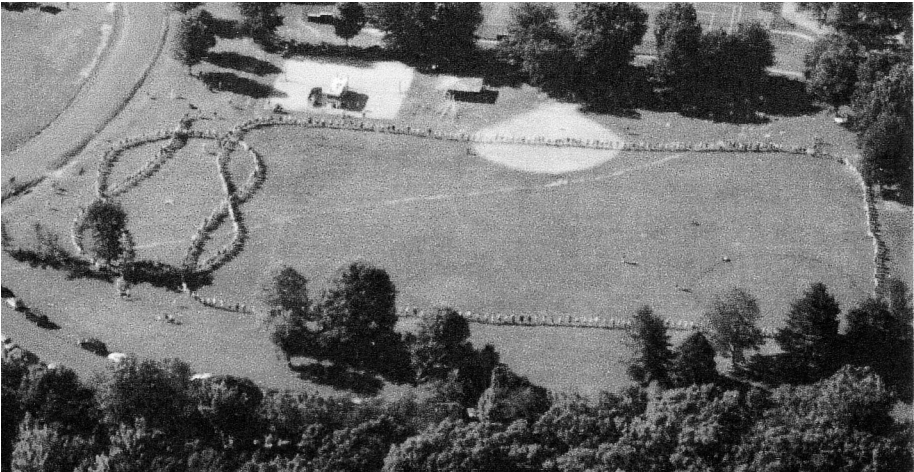
300 Scouts with a length of 5,278.9 feet (1610 metres) have now challenged the record set in September 2001 by 564 Sea Cadets in Birmingham, England of 4,509.5 feet (1374.5 metres) reported in KM73. The event took place on Friday, June 21, 2002 at Curtis Memorial Park in the Hartwood area of Stafford County. It was the last day of a weeklong District Summer Camp for Cub Scouts and Webelos. Along with the regular camp activities, they practised tying square (reef) knots. "Even younger brothers and sisters have been practising with the boys," said Deborah Bengé, the assistant Webelos den leader for Pack 242. "It's so important to us that all the younger

and older brothers and sisters are here today because Scouting is such a family activity."

Earlier in the day, the field had been readied for the event by a three-person survey team headed by professional surveyor John Sehl. "We laid the course out, 320 feet by 190 feet," said Sehl, who was also one of the measurement judges.

There were 20 rows marked on the field, each 320 feet long, and 3,400 pieces of rope, laid out on the rows before the event. Each row was divided into eight 40-foot segments. The participants were grouped in four-person teams: two Cub Scouts or Webelos with a Boy Scout and an adult. Each group would be responsible for the 20 pieces of cord in a segment. The Cub Scouts and

*The attempt on the worlds largest human square knot.*



Webelos would tie the knots and the Boy Scouts and adults would check to make sure they were tied properly.

Shortly before the start of the event, the teams filed onto the field, stood at their assigned segments and waited for the signal to begin.

At the 30-second warning horn blast, all hands went up in the air to signal they were ready and verify that no knots were being tied before the start of the five minute time for the record.

At the starting horn blast, all participants were down on their knees focussed on tying knots. Some granny knots had to be retied and some knots were retied to take up slack.

The timekeepers sounded the horn at one-minute intervals with the last blast when there were only 15 seconds left.

When the finishing horn sounded five seconds before the finish time, the

participants stood up with their hands in the air.

After the teams filed off the field, it was time for the judges to do their work. Each knot had to be inspected. If there were any granny knots discovered, the shorter of the remaining lengths would be disqualified. Unfortunately one granny knot was found in row F. If the entire rope had been tied correctly, the rope chain would have been about 7,000 feet long.

After they filed off the field, the participants attempted to form the largest human square knot - people forming the shape of a square knot - ever recorded.

Once Guinness World Records make the record for the longest rope chain in five minutes official, each Scout will receive a commemorative patch and a piece of the cord from the record-breaking chain.

## **Bletchley's SHARK in the Atlantic**

**17-18 May 2003**

Bletchley's SHARK in the Atlantic will commemorate Bletchley Park's contribution to winning the WW2 Battle of the Atlantic. The event includes a number of special features for the weekend only:

- Displays in the Mansion on: The Battle of the Atlantic, Cape Matapan, the story of HMS Petard and other naval successes.
- The Bletchley Naval Association with a display of unique artefacts
- Sea cadets will be marching and roping on site
- Lectures on 'Bletchley Park's contribution to winning the Battle of the Atlantic
- A display of privately-owned model boats by the Model Boat Club
- Re-enactors wearing authentic 1940s uniforms
- The Enigma cinema showing footage on the Battle of the Atlantic
- A Battle of Britain Memorial Flypast
- The HMS Petard Association with a special display
- Members of the International Guild of Knot Tyers

**The special weekend opens to visitors on Saturday 17 May at 10:30.**

**Last admission on Sunday 18 May at 15:30.**

**See also: [www.bletchleypark.org.uk](http://www.bletchleypark.org.uk)**

# Monkey's Fists from Portugal

by Joaquim Paulo Escudeiro

In KM 62 and 66, Sten Johansson asked some interesting questions about monkey's fist work.

In the book *Arte de Marinheiro* (1924, Joaquim Esparteiro) we can find one of the earliest descriptions of this work.

The name given in this book is 'Pinha de Retendia'. Literally 'Pina' is Pine Cone, this is the usual name for knob work or end rope knots like buttons and stoppers. 'Retenida' is messenger line, giving pine cone of a messenger line. In the book *Dicionario Ilustrado de Marinharia* (1936 Antonio Espartiero) we find the same name and a second 'Pinha de Tacada'. 'Tacada' is stroke. Those two names and only those have been used until modern days by Portuguese Admiralty books.

Joaquim Esparteiro in the referred book explains that it is used for throwing lines at great distance on boarding service. In the construction description there is no mention of anything used inside for giving weight. That is why he says that it can be made with only two parallel turns on each set. As a matter of fact on the Tagus River estuary still in use today we can find 'Pinas de Retenida' without anything inside.

For me, this explains why no mention of a monkey like name was ever used. It is because the real meaning of the monkey's fist name is the fist that never drops what it has gripped. In Africa, natives catch monkeys alive because of the peculiar behaviour of these animals. The hunter puts a peanut inside a hollow

tree through a narrow hole. The monkey inserts its open hand and catches it by closing the fist. But now it cannot pull back the rounded fist because it is bigger, and incredibly it does not open it, even seeing the hunter coming. He catches the monkey easily. Exactly like the line, once closed it does not drop the object inside! That is why Ashley gives a drawing of this situation at the beginning of the monkey's fist chapter of his book.

The description and drawings of Joaquim Esparteiro, gives us a peculiar monkey's fist, different from the usual classical form. I will call it 'Pinha de Retenida de Joaquim Marques Esparteiro' (Fig. 1).

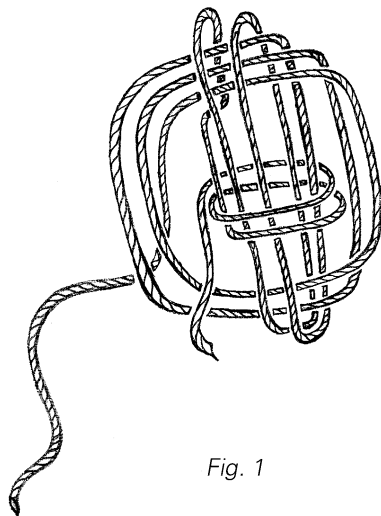
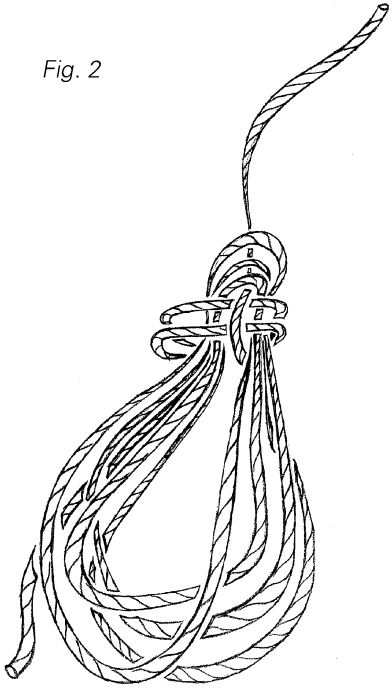


Fig. 1

All the drawings given in this article are originals made by myself after

Fig. 2



studying the referred books and specimens still in use.

What is interesting and of real meaning, is that in his book, he presents a photograph of a knotboard made by himself and two other masters, Saul Gomes Dacosta and Alvaro Pereira. On it we can clearly see in the lower right corner a 'Pinha de Retenida' with at least four parallel passes and with something inside. This should not be strange because the book and the knotboard are different in their origins! This is lucky, for it enables us to make some important conclusions.

The existence of no objects inside 'Pinhas de Retenida' reveal the second phase of this work. But what is the first phase? It is its origin. I have seen an

example aboard a Tagus River traditional boat by an old sailor who used an old coiled rope for boarding service! As a matter of fact it is fascinating that a line that is coiled has an incredible resemblance to the three set structure of the parallel passes of the monkey's fist (Fig 2).

There is no doubt that the first ropes used for boarding service were usual coiled ropes. The second ropes were coiled ropes that were appropriately shortened on the size of the first parallel major turns. The third's ropes were coiled ropes made with equal sets of parallel turns, that by this process were no longer coiled ropes, but were the first monkey's fist constructions! The third phase is the putting of objects inside. We know that in 1924, these two forms coexisted already.

Antonio Esparteiro in the referred book explains a different way of making a monkey's fist, stressing that the turns have to be parallel, with the working line next to the standing line. Nevertheless the second set of parallel turns go inside the first turns! This may give more

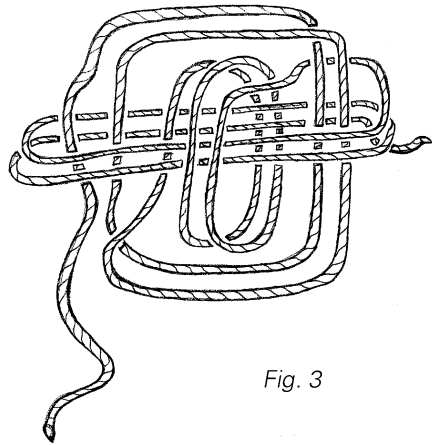


Fig. 3

stability to the turns allowing us easily to work a bigger monkey's fist. I call it 'Pinha de Retenida de Antonio Marques Esparteiro' (Fig 3).

The book *O Navio*, published by David Corazzi editor of an anonymous navy admiralty author of 1885, has the most complete and oldest list of 'Pinhas' that we know, but no 'Pinha de Retenida' is found. The same with another list in the book *Guia de Instruo Profissioal de Marinheiro* (1898, Victorino Gomes da Costa). This seems to show that probably there is no monkey's fist before 1900 in Admiralty Navy books. This fact does not signify that the monkey's fist itself did not exist before. We must understand that this work has several controversial facts. Although described in 1924, there is evidence that it was of no use in the Admiralty Navy until the sixties! Personally I believe that monkey's fists are a river estuary medium merchant boats much older invention. There are reasons that made me think like this. Big ships anchored in deep water. Manoeuvring in shallow water was a risk. There are no descriptions of such manoeuvring in books before 1945. Even descriptions of towing damaged or grounded ships do not use the monkey's fist for heaving or throwing rescue lines. In the book *Tratado de Aparecho do Navio* (1896, Joo de Sousa Bandeira) we find that on towing or manoeuvring, the line for bringing the hawser was heaved with a small sand bag. Moreover, the book *Arte Naval Moderna* (1945, Rogerio Castro E Silva) still mentions the use of a sandbag. In the fifth (revised) edition of the same book (1963), the text of the sandbag disappears completely and the 'Pinha de Retenida' way makes its appearance. Note that this is already between 1945 and 1963. This is again a

very fortunate occurrence for us since we can compare and document things.

In older books like *Nocoes de Manobra dos Navios* (1893, Joao Braz de Oliveira) the recommendations are that a sounding line with a hand lead should be used for messenger service. Its weight is 2 to 3 kilograms and we can understand why they started to use a sand bag!

In the book *Guia de Embarcacoes Miudas* (1931, Antonio Esparteiro) about manoeuvring ship's cutters, punts, ketches and launches, the docking manoeuvring instructions are that they are made only with a pole hook. The same in the book *Guia do Timoneiro* (1907, Joao Rhodes and Raul Cardoso), about skiffs and gigs.

Rogeiro Castro E Silva in the referred book (first edition) still keeps Antonio Esparteiro's way of working the second set of turns inside, but in the 1963 edition he gives new drawings and description of its construction. This is yet another monkey's fist, so I call it Pinha de

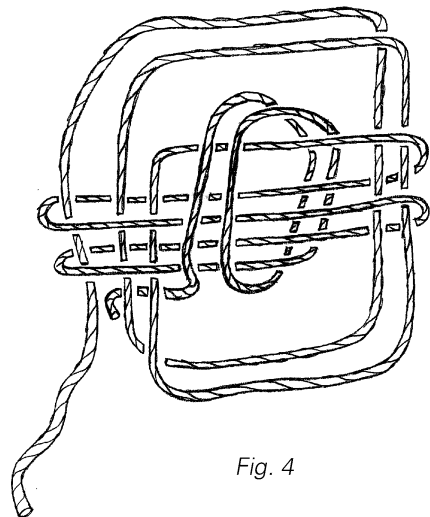


Fig. 4



retenida de Rogeiro Castro E Silva (Fig 4)

In the book *Apointamentos Do 1 E 2 Grau Do Curso de Marinharia de Manobra* (1952, 1960 1968) of the school at the ship Navio Escola Sagres from the Portuguese Admiralty Navy, we find the final or classic description of the monkey's fist. Nevertheless, I call it 'Pinha de Retenida do Navid Escola Sagres' (Fig 5) just for the sake of historical documentation.

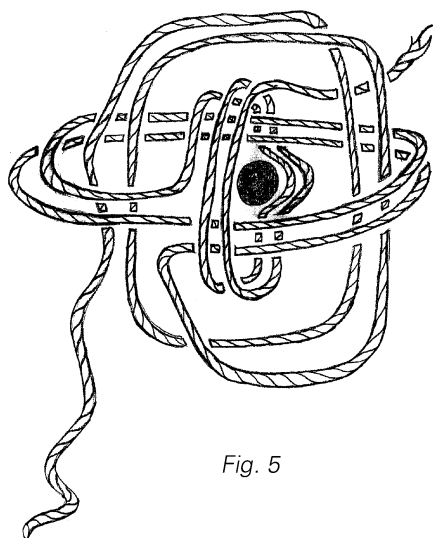


Fig. 5

During my visits to old sailors traditional boats on the Tagus River estuary I have studied some of the traditional forms of monkey's fist that can still be found. They are beautiful, but something is happening. As older masters disappear, the replacement of new ropes are made by persons who tend to make the classical monkey's fist! This is a great loss, so I present for the first time some river monkey's fists and name them by the places where I saw them.

Fig 6 - work recollected from a 70-year-old from Sarichos Pequenos.

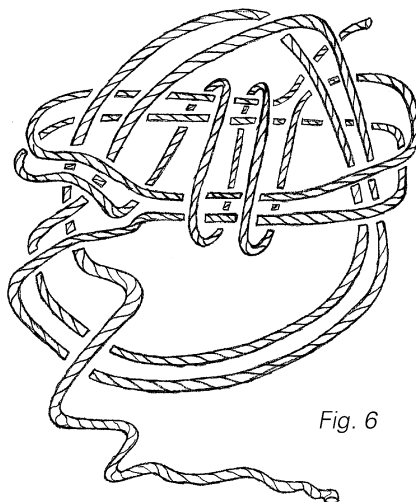


Fig. 6

Fig 7 - work recollected from a specimen made by a 40-year-old person's father from Vila Franca De Xira.

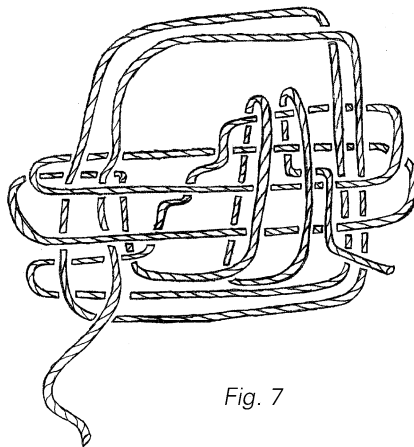


Fig. 7

Fig 8 - the same work but with an object inside. The objects traditionally used are a small pebble or a nut from the helm. These objects use a packing cloth

cover for the purpose of giving them a round form.

On a final note to the illustrations, the round black dot in the middle indicates that an object is used inside. All drawings are with only two parallel passes in each set for a clear view of the structure. In reality those with no object inside are made with two or a maximum of three passes. Those having an object inside, with four or five.

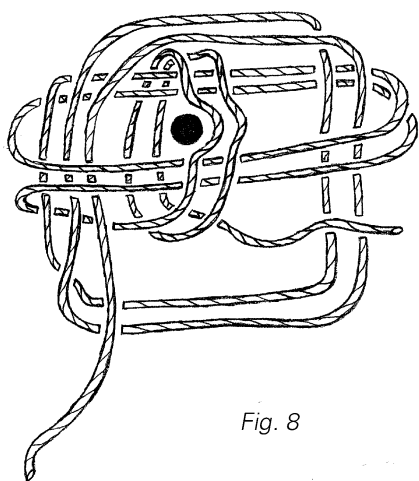
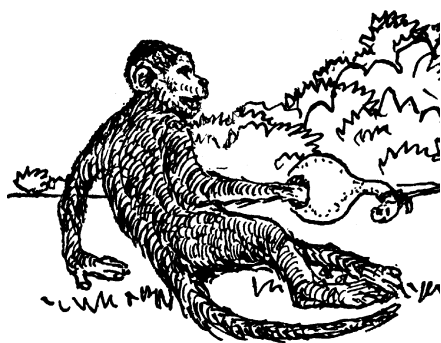


Fig. 8



Drawing - Clifford W Ashley

## Knotmaster Series

*'Knotting ventured,  
knotting gained.'*

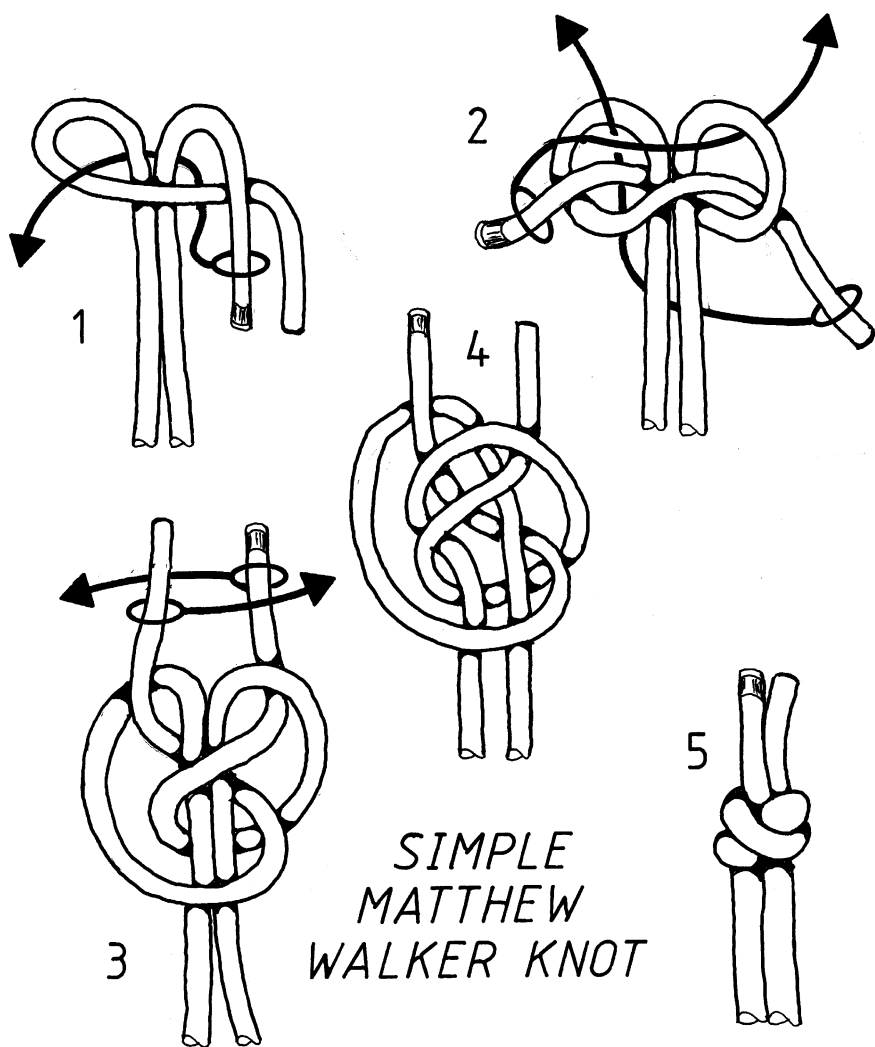
### Matthew Walker Knots - 1

Getting to know the two-strand Matthew Walker knot is a helpful introduction to other members of the family, which can prove troublesome if this easier specimen is not learned first. Like its grown-up relatives it will work as either a lanyard knot or a stopper knot. In small stuff it can even replace a whipping.

- Tie a wall knot (fig. 1).
- Tuck each strand a second time, as shown (fig. 2).
- Carefully pull the two standing parts away from two working ends, keeping an even tension on each strand, to remove slack from the knot, in the process twiddling the wends (one shown taped, the other heat-sealed) so that they swap places (fig's 3 and 4).
- Now gently tug one wend and the diagonally opposite standing part - which are, in fact, bits of the same strand. Repeat with each strand in turn until the knot is firm and tight (fig. 5).

Do not rush tightening MW knots or they will distort and deform. If at first you don't succeed, tie, tie and tie again!

The secret of this Matthew Walker knot is to understand how it consists of a simple overhand or thumb knot in each strand, the two interlocked in such a way that the belly of one binds around the twin S or (in this example) Z-laid parts of the other. The internal friction this generates ensures a very secure knot, the wends of which may be cut quite close to the knot, without the risk of an end coming untucked.



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# The Axis Bend - an Alternative Bottle Sling

by Dick Clements

I have recently observed that there is a close connection between the jug sling knot given by Ashley (#1142) and Ashley's knot #804, described as a two strand lanyard knot and referred to by Ashley as "Another flat quare knot". The traditional jug sling is used to create a convenient carrying handle for any bottle, jar or jug which has a round neck and some form of ridge or protruberance at the top of the neck below which the jug sling may be tightened in a similar way to that shown in figure 3 below. The traditional jug sling is also illustrated in *The Book of Practical Knots* by Budworth, who, in my view, gives a simpler and more reliable method of tying the knot than Ashley's. Figure 1 shows a knot diagram of the jug sling - for the tying method the reader is referred to Budworth. It should be noted that the jug sling is a symmetric bend; in the terms of Mile's analysis (see his book *Symmetric Bends*) the diagram given in figure 1 is a-symmetric, that is rotating the diagram in its own plane by 180° about its centre point and then reversing the sense of all the crossings recovers the original diagram.



Figure 1 - Knot diagram of the jug sling

Ashley's lanyard knot #804 is also described in Mile's book where it is given the name axis knot. Miles, like Ashley, describes it as a lanyard bend. But, if the axis knot is tied in a single piece of looped cord and the centre of the knot is opened out and passed over the neck of a bottle, jar or jug, it can be tightened around the neck and will hold fast and act as a handle in exactly the same way as the traditional jug sling.

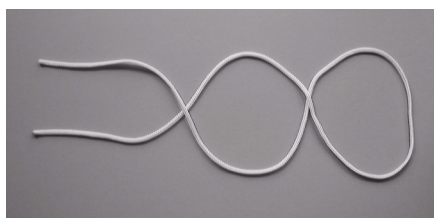
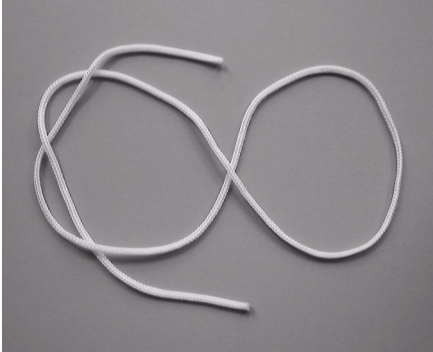


Figure 2a - Tying the axis knot, first step

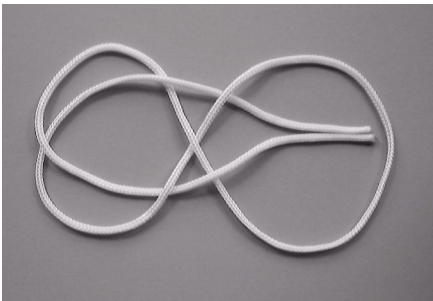
The author has devised a method for tying the axis bend in a single looped cord as follows. Firstly form a simple U shape in the centre of the cord and then twist together the free ends as shown in figure 2a. Next form the two ends into a simple overhand knot as shown in figure 2b. Now pass one free end under and one over the two arms of the loop and bring the two free ends together as shown in figure 2c. It is simple to ensure this is done correctly by noting that the knot is an alternating knot, that is as the cord is followed around the knot over and under intersections alternate. Next the two free ends are passed back through the two crossover intersections on the centre line of the knot, passing





*Figure 2b - Tying the axis knot, second step*

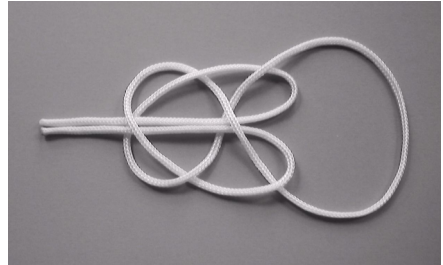
between the upper and lower cords at each crossover as shown in figure 2d. Finally the loop on the right is twisted a half turn clockwise and, at the same time, the positions of the two straight sections immediately leading to the free ends are swapped, with the lower section passing above the upper one so creating the final configuration shown in figure 2e. The



*Figure 2c - Tying the axis knot, third step*

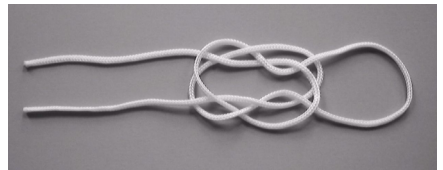
open centre of the knot is now pass over the top of the bottle or jar and worked tight as shown in figure 3. In working the knot tight it is advantageous if the loop, shown to the right of the figure, is made fairly small and the free ends on the left of the picture are much longer and a little uneven in length. The sling

may now be completed by passing the longer of the free ends on the left through the loop to the right and then joining the two free ends using whatever bend is found convenient. Figure 4 shows the completed sling. Note the long free ends looped through the short loop end and joined, in this case, using the shake hands bend.



*Figure 2d - Tying the axis knot, fourth step*

The axis knot, like the traditional jug sling, is a symmetric bend, but its symmetry is about a different axis. Study of figure 2e shows that, for the axis knot, rotating the diagram through  $180^\circ$  about an axis along the centre line of the knot in the plane of the diagram will transform the diagram into itself. In Miles' terms this diagram is a-symmetric. It should also be noted that the parts of both bends which lie around



*Figure 2e - Tying the axis knot, fifth step*

the neck of the bottle or jar are identical except for a reflection (these parts are, in fact, very nearly simple three strand



*Figure 3 - The axis knot tightened around the neck of a bottle*

plaits). From one side the side views of both the jug sling and the axis knot (as shown in figure 3) are identical. But if the bottle is rotated by 180 about a vertical axis the side view of the jug sling is unchanged except for a vertical reflection whereas the side view of the Axis Knot is identical except for a vertical reflection and a horizontal reflection.

So which is the better knot? I have, for some months, successfully used both knots to create slings to carry a full bottle of wine without mishaps. I have been unable to detect any difference between the two knots in terms of either strength or security. But given their close relationship I would have been surprised if I had found any significant difference. I don't believe there is very much difference in the complexity of tying the two knots, and although I find it slightly easier to remember the tying sequence for the Axis Bend that may be because I devised it for myself? The chief purpose



*Figure 4 - The complete axis knot based bottle sling*

of this article is to point out that Ashley's #804 can be used as more than just a 'flat, square' lanyard knot and that it is a very close relative of the traditional jug sling. This discovery has inspired me to wonder exactly how large is the class of knots which may be used as bottle slings. I shall certainly, in the future, be on the look out for further such knots.

## References

- Ashley, C W, and Budworth, G, *The Ashley Book of Knots*, Faber and Faber, 2000
- Budworth, G, *The Book of Practical Knots*, Adlard Coles Nautical, 2000
- Miles, R E, *Symmetric Bends: How to Join Two Lengths of Cord*, World Scientific, 1995

# Tête d'Alouette ... or What?

asks Jack Fidspike

Pondering the Parsimony Principle suggested by Cy Canute in KM 68 (September 2000), the so-called Lark's Head layout is a prime example. This name first appeared in *Book of Knots* by 'Tom Bowling' - published by Hardwicke & Bogue of 192 Piccadilly, London, in 1876 - although it is generally assumed to have been a translation of tête d'alouette lifted from the an earlier French manuscript, since when numerous knotting authors and countless knot tyers have used it inconsistently. As a self-appointed Guild know-all, I will now try to resolve the muddle that has resulted.

Nobody would dispute, I hope, that the common bowline and a sheet bend are different knots. Despite identical layouts, each is tied and used in a different way and that makes them distinct and disparate. The same applies to the reef and thief knots.

Pursuing the guideline of which end goes where and does what, the bale (or barrel), ring and sling hitches (fig's 1a, 1b and 1c) *ARE* the same because they are all tied and used in a similar way. There is an equal load upon both legs of the working bight, whether this is part of an endless strop or a spliced eye.

The cow hitch (fig. 2) is *NOT* the same, as the load falls upon one leg only, while a couple of reversed half-hitches (fig. 3) are - well - two reversed half-hitches. Finally there is the broken or capsized reef knot (fig's 4a and 4b). This

malformed bit of knot-work is, to my mind, *the only true Lark's Head*.

Some KM readers will no doubt wish to point out they understand these things differently, or that one or another reputable knot book takes a dissimilar line to me; but, as I implied earlier in this item, the term Lark's Head is often misused. If anyone can pin it down better, do let our editor know.

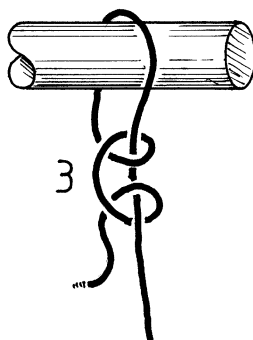
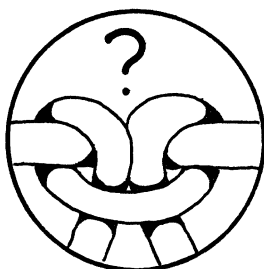
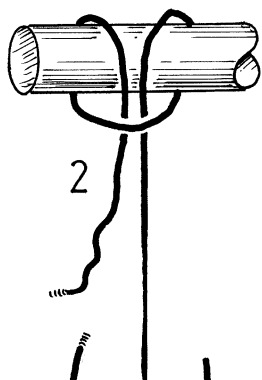
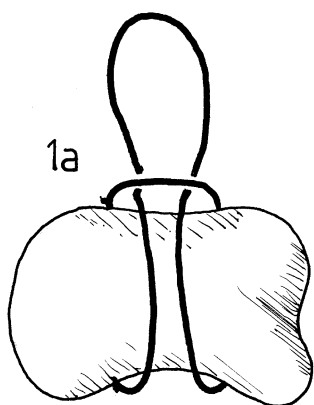
## ROPE ENDS

### The army is quicker than we think.

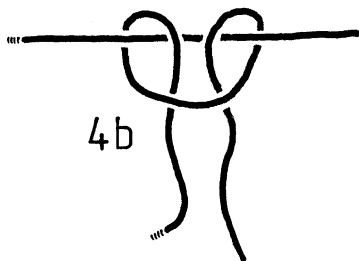
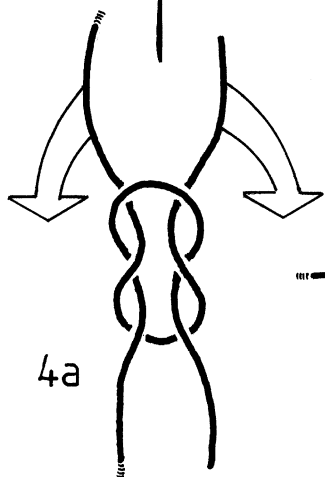
As a result of the publicity given to Dr Hunter and his rediscovery of the famous bend, knot tyers contacted one another and as a result the Guild was formed in 1982.

It may, therefore, be of interest to members to know that already in 1981 Hunter's bend was one of the recommended knots for joining two lengths of man made rope in the *Basic Combat Engineering Skills* manual issued to new soldiers in the Royal Engineers.

Generals may be said to be fighting the last war, but someone in the Royal Engineers Training Development Team was obviously looking forward.



Tête d'Alouette  
 ◇ or what?

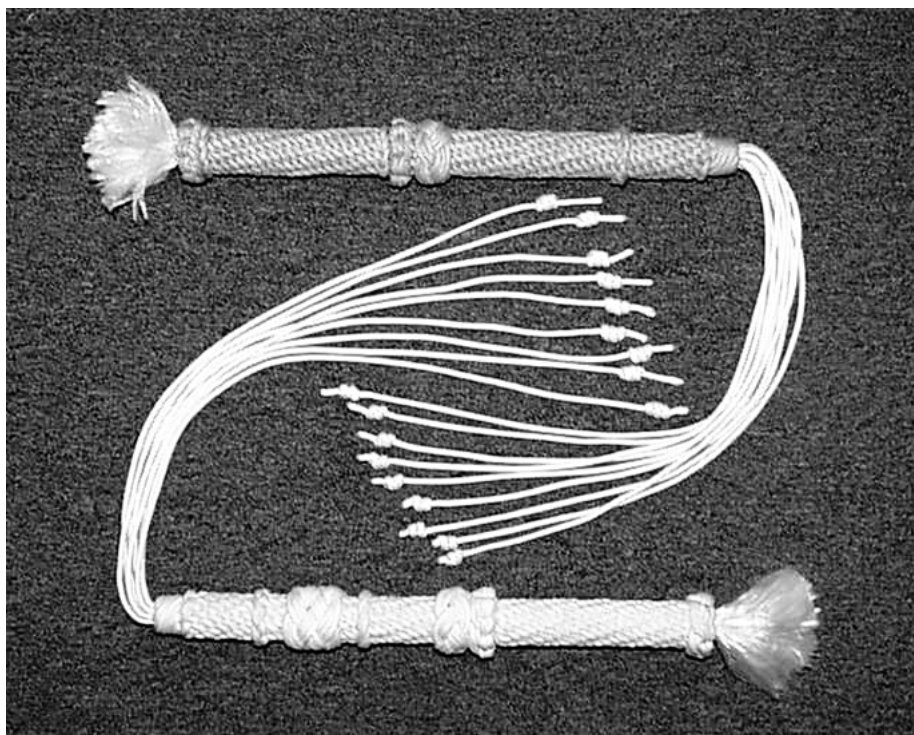


*F*





# Knot Gallery



*Above: Two cat o' nine tails made in 1/8 in nylon cord by Ben Arnold. The handles (13½in) have Mathew Walker and star knots also crowns and walls, with the tails finished in blood knots.*

*Facing: Sea chest becket (door knocker) by James L Doyle. The eyes are 3-strand cockscombing, bails 20strand Spanish hitching and 40-strand coachwhipping with 6Lx5B Turk's heads. The boltrope is finished with manrope knots.*

*Overleaf: A selection of bellropes from Thomas Simpson and serving a very tarry eyesplice (photo: Graham macLachlan)*

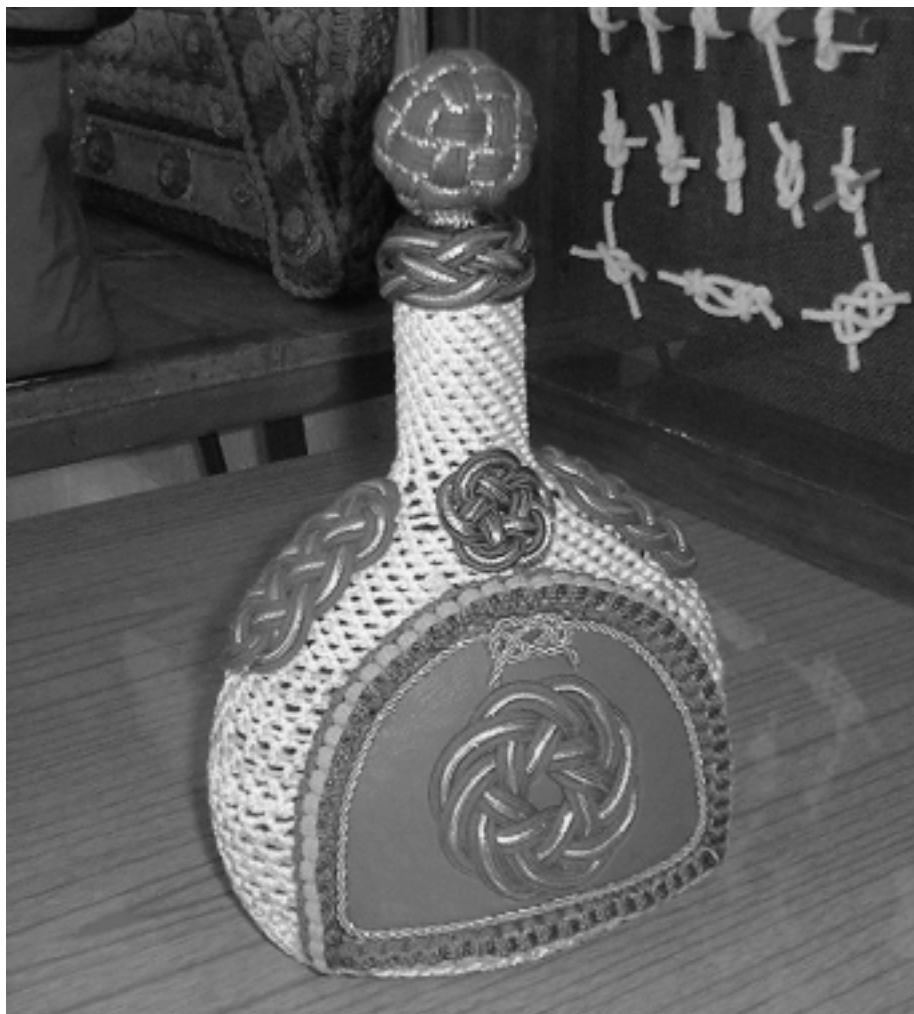












*Above: Fine needle-hitching of a bottle by Denis 'Spud' Murphy.*

*Facing: A single-strand cruxiform Turk's head on a five branch candleabra from Harold Scott.*



# Egyptian Archaeological Cordage

by Dr. A. J. Veldmeijer

Most excavations in Egypt lack detailed records on cordage. However, recently there is an increasing interest in cordage and related artefacts like basketry. The author studied the cordage from Berenike for several years (1995-2001) and is currently working on the cordage from other excavations in Egypt as well (for instance Qasr Ibrim).

*Berenike, Ptolemaic-Roman harbour at the Red Sea Coast.*

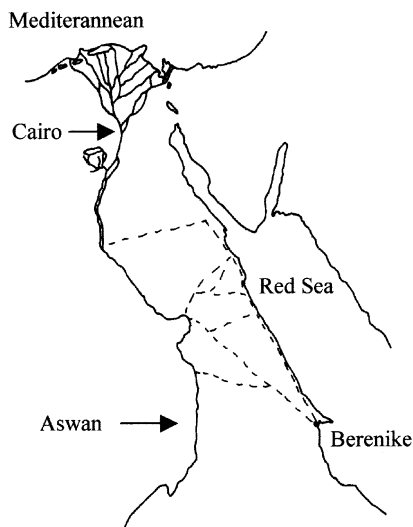


Figure 1: Location of Berenike in Egypt. The scale bar is 100 km; the striped lines are ancient roads (redrawn from Sidebotham and Wendrich, 1995: 3).

Ptolemy II Philadelphus founded the harbour town Berenike at the Egyptian Red Sea coast, in approximately 275 BC. The Ptolemaic army used elephants in warfare and because the supply of Asian elephant became impossible, Ptolemy was forced to get his elephants somewhere else. Consequently, African elephants were hunted and brought to Berenike by - exclusively for elephants - ships called *elephantagoi*, and brought to land after which the journey proceeded on foot towards the Nile Valley. After a hundred years or so, elephants were no longer used in warfare. By that time however, Berenike already had established a reputation as trade and transit harbour, which it would keep until the fifth century AD. The excavations at Berenike, conducted by a joint venture of the University of Leiden, the Netherlands and the University of Delaware, USA, proved that, as suggested by ancient texts such as the *Periplus Maris Erythrae*, goods from various places were traded and contacts with among others India and Arabia are archaeologically attested.

## The cordage research

The objective of the research was to gain insight in the origin, production, use and discard of the cordage on the basis of the study of archaeological attested cordage. Therefore, the production was

dealt with only in passing, as this process can not be deduced in detail from cordage that originate from an archaeological context. Only ethnographic and ethno archaeological research can provide detailed information on production. In obtaining the information various points of attention were formulated. Identifying the material resulted in the origin of that material. Additional information was obtained by looking at the economy, although this, as with production, was only discussed in passing because this too cannot be deduced from the archaeological context. Information on production and strength was obtained by mapping the variety in twist/composition, CIP/CIC (formulae to calculate the strength of plying and cabling) and their mutual relation as well as the relation between these and the material. Information on use was obtained by looking at (1) features in cordage (among others knots and loops), (2) the diameter (string/rope) and (3) tightness of cordage. Studying the associated and identifiable cordage was a third method of gaining insight in the use of cordage. Obviously, the present paper focuses on knots.

## **Aspects of cordage: the feature 'knots'**

I differentiated different aspects of cordage (see scheme below). One of these is the 'feature', separated in, among others, knots. The in total 8793 pieces of cordage contained over 900 knots. The following account is a short summary of the research.

It appears that many knots are derivations of one knot, accidentally or

not. The study recognise therefore few standard knots from which other knots are interpreted as derivations. The standard knot has to be regarded as the most optimum functioning knot of that type and knotted in the most optimum situation. Derivations of these standard knots can, but not necessarily have to behave differently. Obviously, the standard knot must be traceable in the derivation. These derivations are established on different criteria, depending on the influence of these criteria on the knot. The criteria are not the same for different knots because a criterion important for one knot is not necessarily important for the other. Important to remark is that the derivations are based on the corpus of Berenike. This means that it is possible that knots, which are familiar and common to us nowadays and were perhaps in ancient times too, does not occur in the present work simply because these are not (yet) encountered and/or registered in Berenike.

Derivations are noted as 'derivation A', 'derivation B' etc., in which the capitals are assigned randomly and have no particular relation to the number of encountered examples.

A derivation might consist, but not necessarily has to, of different forms. Forms of the knot that does not alter the 'derivation knot' but through which the knot differs from a second knot within the derivation, are regarded as 'variant'. Different criteria are used for different knots. The variants are noted as, for instance, A1 in which the capital refers to the derivation and the number to the variant. Even when a derivation consists of only one variant, this variant is given a number in order to be able to include newly discovered variants. The number

has no numerical or hierarchical value but only refers to the variant as one of the variants of a derivative of a certain knot.

The different orientations of knots (Z and S) are not regarded as criterion for the assignment as derivation or variant. Thus, two identical knots of which one is S orientated and the other Z orientated are grouped with the same derivation and variant. An exception however, is made with netting, because the orientation of 'netting knots' gives an important surplus of information. They are indicators of the working method.

The system used is developed for different reasons. First of all, it visualises the variation of knots that are encountered in Berenike. Furthermore, as already remarked, many knots can be reduced to the few standard knots. The number of derivations and variants thus gives insight in the ability of people to improvise and in their familiarity with cordage. The system might give information, in the long run, whether derivations and variants are intended and which are accidental. Besides, the system gives insight in preferences (for instance the way of making netting by means of knots) and it got round the problems of the way of knotting a knot. Some knots have the same appearance and are the same. However, Ashley (1993) gave them different names and regarded them as different because of the way of knotting or the use and application of the knot. Because the archaeological record does not allow, most of the time, identification of the way of knotting or use and because archaeologists only work with the knot as recovered, no attention can be given to knots of which the appearance is the same but which has different names on basis of the knotting technique.

Consequently, such knots are classed in the same derivation/variant. The system of discussing knots per functional group (Ashley 1993; Wendrich and Veldmeijer 1996) is abandoned. The main reason to abandon this system is the fact that knots often have more than one function. Often these functions cannot be determined with certainty in archaeology. Furthermore, discussing knots per functional group does not create clarity in the variety of knots. On the contrary, it makes the discussion more complicated. Furthermore, the functional groups (*ibidem*) contain two 'non-knots' as well, namely nooses and loops.

## The standard knots

A definition and description of the standard knots is very important.

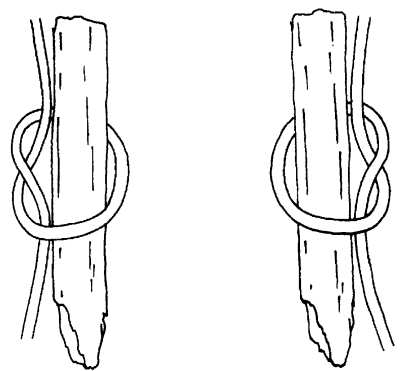


Figure 2: Standard half knot in two orientations.

The half knot (figure 2) is referred to as the 'standard half knot' when a piece of cordage is tied around another object, which is a second thus separate object, other than cordage.

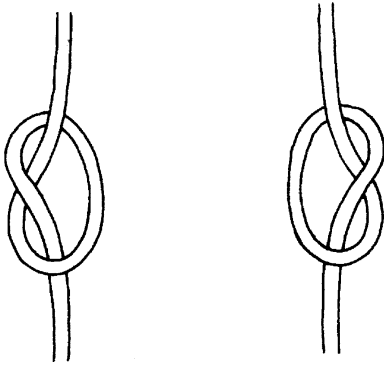


Figure 3: Standard overhand knots in two orientations.

A knot is called 'overhand knot' (figure 3) when the knot is made in a piece of cordage by crossing of two extremities of this piece of cordage and pulled tight.

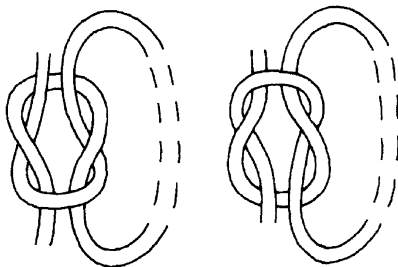


Figure 4: Standard reef knot in two orientations.

A reef knot (figure 4) is created by knotting two half knots of opposite orientation on top of each other. This can be done by first knotting a Z half knot on which an S half knot follows ('SZ' reef knot, see the left one of the two right figures) or by first knotting an S half knot on which a Z half knot follows ('ZS' reef knot, see the right one of the two right figures). A knot is regarded as the standard reef knot if the knot is knotted in one piece of cordage and still shows the created loop. The loop is used as point of reference for the establishment of the orientation. Agreements on the way of describing the orientation is important because the reef knot, as a symmetrical knot, can be mirrored, resulting in an opposite orientated knot. However, when mirrored the loop occurs at the other side of the knot. To avoid these problems, two rules are used for the description of reef knots. First, the loop must be on the right side. Second, the description by means of 'Z' and 'S' follows the reading direction, thus from left to right. With this second rule one should keep in mind that this is not the sequence of knotting the reef knot because the half knot most close to the loop is made first (thus the Z half knot with the SZ reef knot and the S half knot of the ZS reef knot). No orientation can be registered of reef knots of which no loop exists anymore, because the knot can be turned without a point of reference and thus the 'rules' of describing reef knots, as presented above, cannot be applied.

Obviously, reef knots used as bends do not close a loop and are therefore always without orientation.

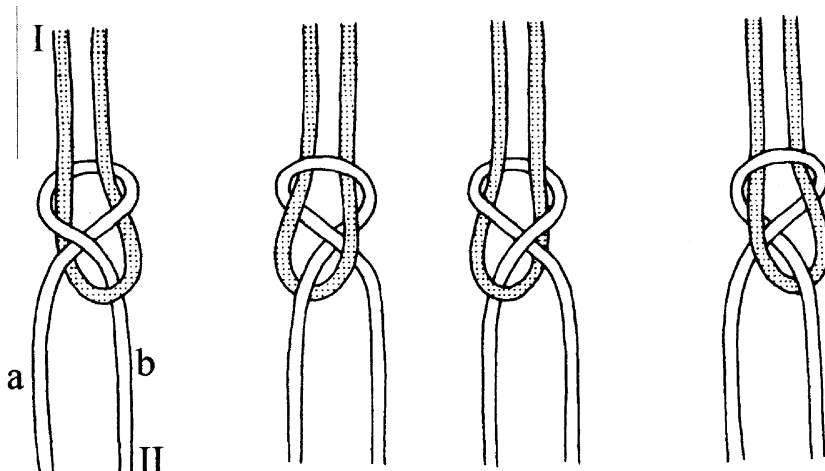


Figure 5a: The obverse (left) and reverse (right) of a Z orientated standard mesh knot.  
 Figure 5b: The obverse (left) and reverse (right) of an S orientated standard mesh knot.  
 The Roman numerals, 'a' and 'b' are used to describe the knot.

No distinction is made between the sheet bend, the weaver's knot or the mesh knot. Mesh knots are made in two pieces of cordage (figure 5). One remains passive, marked 'I' in the figure, whereas the second piece, marked 'II' in the figure, crosses the first one. After the crossing of the extremities of the piece of cordage marked 'II', one extremity, which was crossed and is marked 'a,' runs over the loop whereas the other end, which crosses and is marked 'b,' runs under the loop of the passive piece of cordage (marked 'I'). The knot shown in the left two figures is called an S mesh knot because the end of the piece of cordage that is used to close the knot ('b'), corresponds with the diagonal stroke of the capital 'S.' The figure shows the obverse and reverse of the knot. The left two figures show the obverse and reverse of the Z mesh knot. A mesh knot is regarded as the standard mesh knot when the knot is not part of netting.

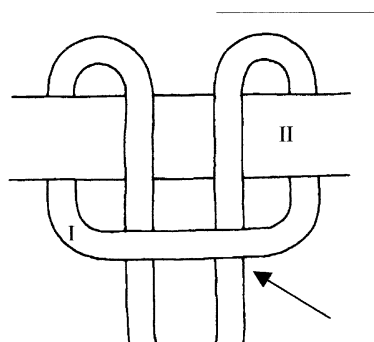


Figure 6: The two standard hitches.

The standard hitch is shown in figure 6. A loop of a piece of cordage, marked as 'I' in the figure, is fastened to a solid object, for instance a piece of wood, marked 'II' in the figure, by leading the two extremities (see arrow) of the piece of cordage around the object and through the loop. Either one extremity of the

cordage ends its function by means of a stopper knot and the other extremity is worked with, see figure 6, left, or the two extremities are plied or cabled into one piece of cordage, as shown in figure 6, right. There are no different orientations with hitches. Hitches disintegrate when the object, to which it is tied, is removed. Hitches tied to solid objects function as binding knot most optimal.

The two extremities of a figure-of-eight knot (figure 7) both crosses themselves (arrows) and are stuck into the loops made by the same extremity.

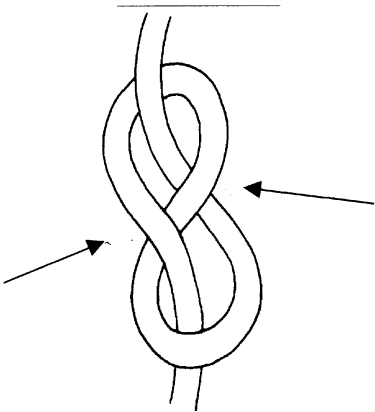


Figure 7: Standard figure-of-eight knot.

### Instances of derivations and variants

half knots	overhand knots	reef knots	mesh knots	hitch	figure 8	other
standard	standard	standard	standard	standard	standard	
A1	A1	A1	A1	A1	A1	granny nameless
A2	B1	A2	A2	A2	B1	
A3	C1	B1	B1	B1		
A4	C2	B2	B2	B2		
B1	D1	C1	C1	B3		
C1	D2	C2		B4		
D1	E1	D1		C1		
	E2	D2		C2		
		C3				

Various derivations of each standard knot were identified (see scheme above), which will not be discussed here. However, an instance of each knot serves as example.

Figure 8 shows a derivation C half knot. This derivation consists of one variant that is represented by this grass zS2 string. A noose is created by means of an S half knot after which a second one is knotted. By doing this, a very unreliable granny knot is created. However, a third half knot is knotted on top of these two and although the last one

has the same orientation as the previous two, it locks the first two and the loop becomes fixed.

An instance of an overhand derivation is seen in figure 9. An E2 overhand knot in a grass yarn. The extremity, marked ‘I’ in the figure, is crossed three times by the other extremity of the yarn (marked ‘II’). The knot forms a cube-formed thickening if both ends are pulled but only when the knot is helped. Ashley (1993: 84) regards the knot therefore as decorative.



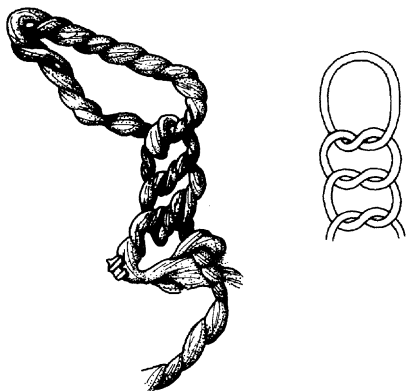


Figure 8: Derivation C half knot (C1)  
(scale = 30 mm; construction drawing  
not to scale).

The reef knot in the cordage shown in figure 10 is used to connect an sZ2 (goat) hair string (marked 'I' in the figure) with an sZ2[S2] wool cable (marked 'II' in the figure). Another sZ2 (goat) hair string (marked 'III' in the figure) is tied

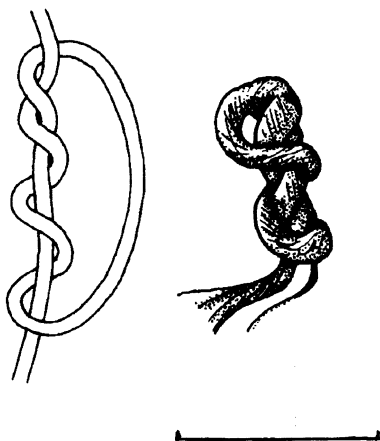


Figure 9: An E2 overhand knot (scale bar  
= 30 mm; construction drawing is not to  
scale).

in with the reef knot. Thus the knot is made with three different pieces of cordage, which results in a particular fragile construction. The strength of the knot is lessened further due to the difference in flexibility, diameter and smoothness of the different materials of which the cordage is made.

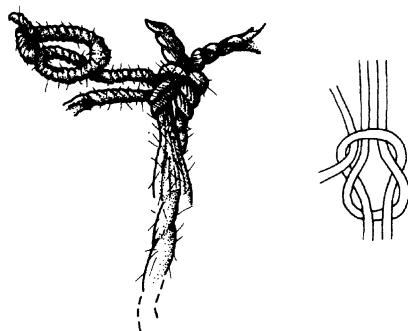


Figure 10: A C1 reef knot to connect an  
sZ2 (goat) hair string ('I') with a soft fibre  
sZ2[S2] cable ('II'). A second sZ2 (goat)  
hair string ('III') is tied in (scale bar = 30  
mm; construction drawing not to scale).

A derivation of the mesh knot is seen in figure 11. Mesh knots are usually encountered as part of netting. The netting in figure 11 is made with S mesh knots in alternating rows of obverse and reverse knots.

Figure 12 shows one of the encountered derivations of the hitch. Two zS2 strings, made of palm, are knotted together. There are no stopper knots or remains of stopper knots visible.

The present report is a summary of the systematics used. One of the conclusions on the cordage is that the knot corpus of Berenike displays definitely knotting skills. The corpus shows a wide variation. Comparison, as far as possible

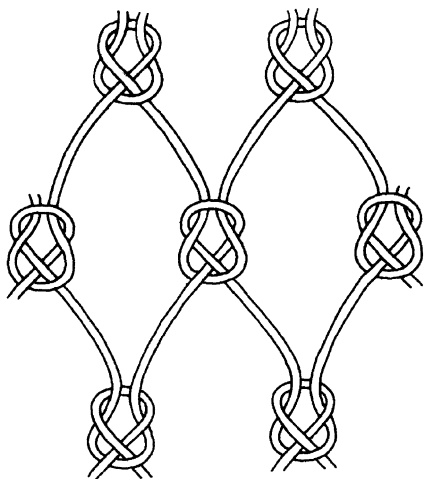


Figure 11: Construction drawing (not to scale) of netting made with obverse and reverse S orientated mesh knots (B1).

due to the lack of comparable detailed research on cordage and knots, reveal a larger variation in knotting relative to that of non-marine related sites such as Amarna. Furthermore, the 'quality' of knotting is far better as well, for instance indicated by only one or two instances of the reef knot used as bend. The higher standard of knotting makes sense because activities such as fishing, sailing and transport demand a professional use of cordage and knots. People, occupied with these kinds of activities in general have a better knowledge of cordage and knotting.

I hope to be able to refine the system of the study of archaeologically attested cordage and knots. Therefore, I'm looking forward to your opinions, suggestions and comments. The complete study will be published next year as a monograph in the Berenike final publication series.

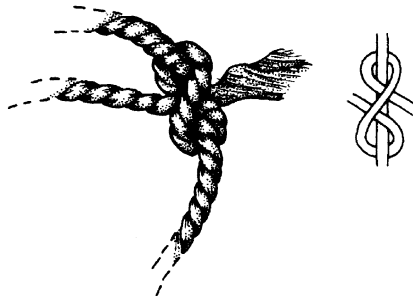


Figure 12: A C1 hitch in palm zS2 strings (scale bar = 30 mm; construction drawing not to scale).

Readers may like to learn more about this subject on the website [www.PalArch.nl](http://www.PalArch.nl)

## A Sailor's Lament

If I'd a fid  
I'd splice a squid,  
The salty sailor swore.

If I'd a quid  
For ev'ry squid  
I've spliced, I'd have a score

But splicing squid  
Requires a fid,  
As I have said before.

And my old fid  
The last squid hid,  
So I can't splice no more.

*Anon*

*SQUID—any one of various marine cephalopod molluscs, usually with an elongated body and ten arms surrounding the mouth.*

# Webbing Knots - Part 1

by 'Jack Fidspike'

**T**imes change. Hawser-laid ropes of flax, hemp and other vegetable fibers have long since been ousted by laboratory-bred braid-on-braid synthetics. Now we ought to consider webbing as a knotted alternative to cordage.

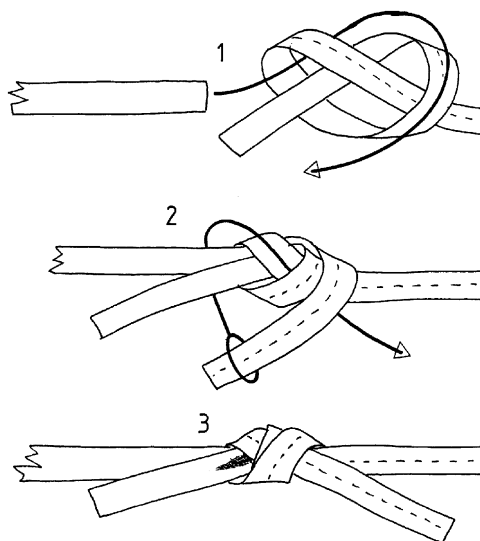
Webbing is basically flat rope - woven in nylon, polyester or polypropylene - and, like rope, it too may be cut and heat-sealed. There are two types: flat (like car seat belts) and tubular (resembling an empty hose). Tubular also comes in two varieties. Chain or needle loom construction can be identified by rolling it between finger

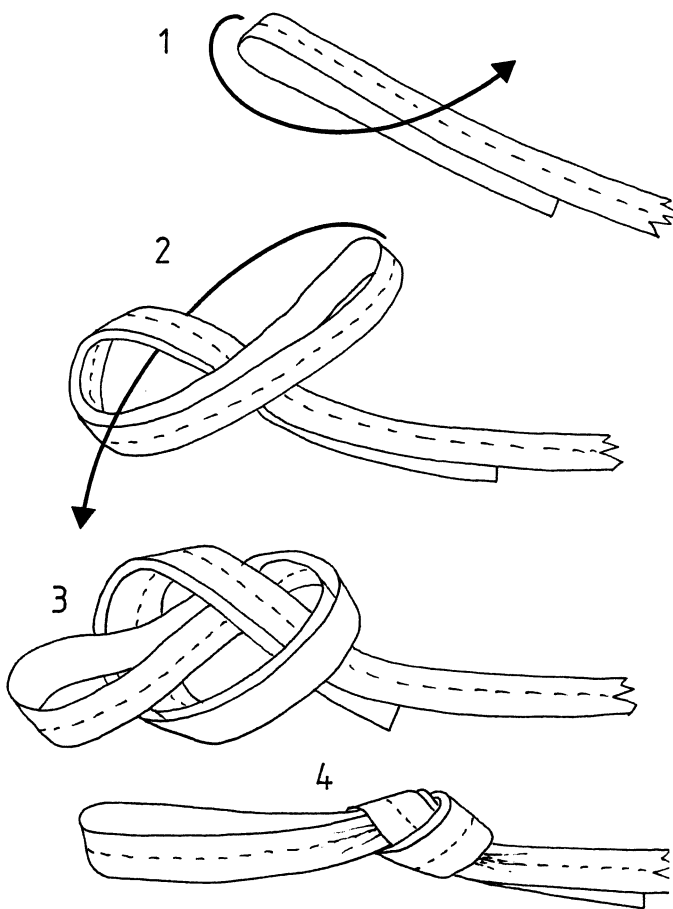
and thumb, when a distinct seam becomes visible running the length of the webbing, and it may unravel like a fraying sweater if a thread is cut. Spiral or shuttle loom construction has continuous ribbing and no such discontinuity. It is consequently stronger.

Webbing may be hand or machine stitched to create permanent loops and fastenings for the attachment of rings, shackles, snap-hooks and other items of hardware. It may also be knotted; and, while many knots bed down awkwardly in this flat material, others appear tailor-made for it.

## The tape or webbing bend

The webbing version of a water knot, this is the only knot recommended by climbers' technical and safety committees for slings and harnesses. Leave the working ends long enough to tape each one to its adjacent standing part.



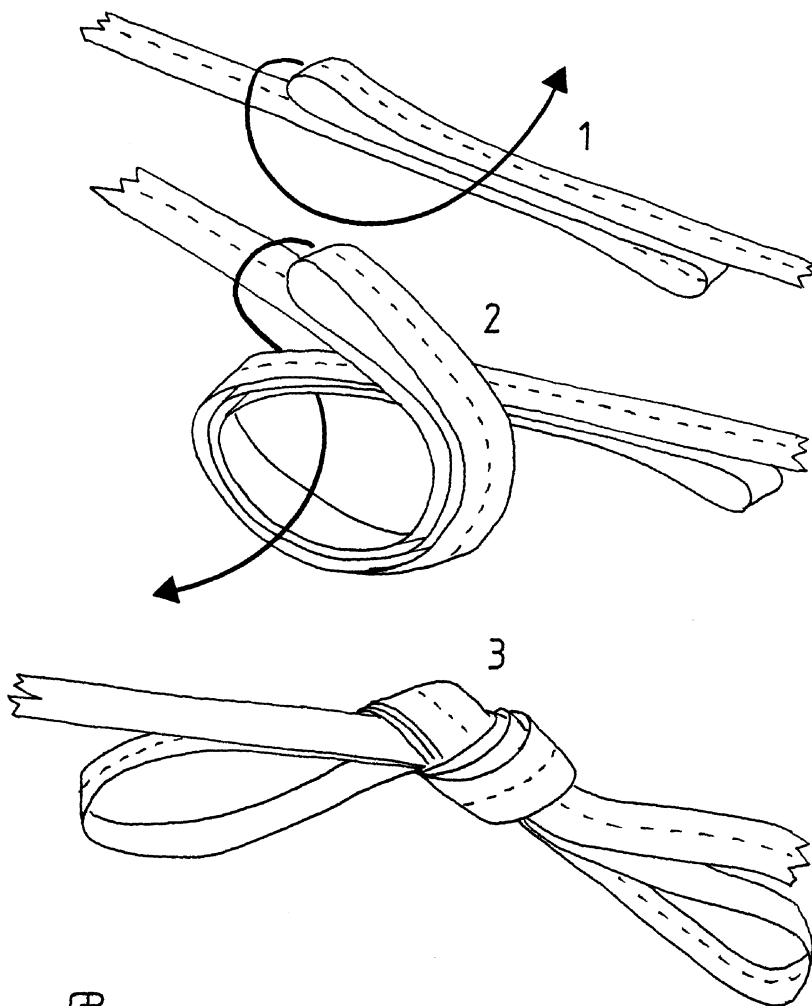


## Overhand loop

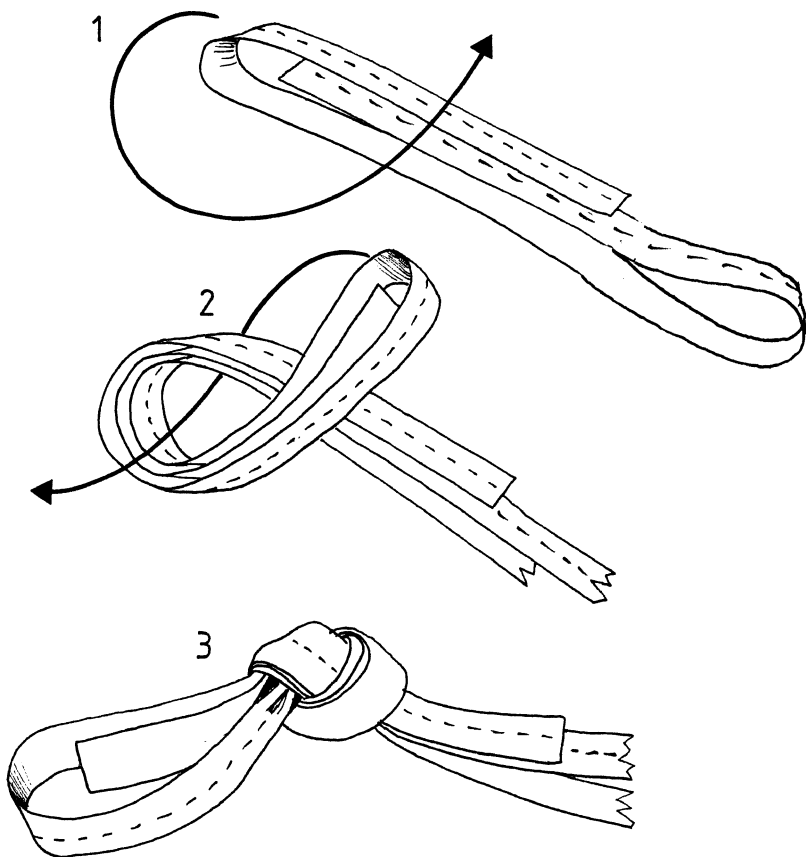
Form a bight of sufficient length in one end of the webbing and simply tie an overhand knot in the doubled part. Ensure that no unwanted twists intrude, then tighten the knot.

## Overhand shortening

This is the webbing alternative to the time-honored sheepshank in rope, although it cannot be tied in the bight, but then a piece of webbing is unlikely to be so long that one end or the other cannot be pulled completely through during the tying process. Because the knot has twin fixed loops, it might also be used as a point of attachment for snap-hooks, karabiners, shackles and such-like.



Ⓟ



GB

## Frost knot

Kissing cousin to the overhand shortening, the Frost knot is a method of beginning endless slings that will be turned into the short stirrup ladders known as etriers or ascenders, and was devised by Tom Frost in the 1960s.

# KNOT BOOKS -

due out shortly

Some readers of KM may like to know that three more knot books by me will be published in both the UK and the USA during 2003. I mention these, not to plug or push them, but merely so that you can be aware of what is what

## The Book of Practical Fishing Knots -

from Thalamus Publishing, commissioned in the USA by Stackpole Books, PA., is produced by the same UK team as *The Book of Practical Knots*;

## FlowMotion Knots -

from Axis Publishing Ltd. here in the UK, but for Sterling Publishing Co. Inc. of New York, illustrates tying knots et cetera uniquely by photokinesis (strobe-like, wide-format photographs, created with cutting-edge digital technology, that capture entire movement sequences and highlight key steps).

## The Knot Directory -

from The Ivy Press Ltd., for (I believe) Chartwell Books Inc. of New Jersey, will appear under the pen-name 'John Shaw', at the request of my publisher (because she felt that my previous eleven knot books might by now be competing with one another for buyers and readers).

*Geoffrey Budworth*

## OBITUARY

**ROY BAIL** was an IGKT founder member. In the photograph taken aboard RRS Discovery at the inaugural meeting of the Guild in April 1982, see him in the back row, by the mast, standing on a hatch-cover and wearing a cap. He was a merchant seaman who lived at the yachting haven of Cowes, on the Isle of Wight, and worked aboard the ferries plying daily across the Solent between the mainland and the island. Those of us who knew him in the 1980s recall his knotting speciality was tying what appeared to be impossibly large knots inside bottles.

Roy let his membership lapse due to age and travelling difficulties, although he kept in touch with the occasional cheerful and chatty letter and was always pleased to hear of the Guild's continuing growth and development.

His final years became an ordeal due to diabetes and we have only recently been able to confirm that, after surgery from which he seemed to be making a satisfactory recovery, Roy suffered a relapse and died in November 1999.

*G.B.*

## ROPE ENDS

'Remove the tire and take fifty-two feet of old clothesline. . .' [which every cyclist has to hand at such a time!]

C W Ashley, *The Ashley Book of Knots*

# Branch Lines

## NAB-2003

**What:** The International Guild of Knot Tyers - NAB 2003

**When:** October 17 - 19, 2003

**Where:** Mariners Museum, 100 Museum Drive, Newport News, Virginia 23606. Telephone: 757-596-2222

**Hotel Accommodation:** Point Plaza Suites & Conference Hotels, 950 J Clyde Morris Blvd, Newport News, Virginia, 23601. Located approximately 4 miles from the museum. 30 Deluxe GuestRooms are being held in a block for the IGKT-NAB.

The room rate for the Deluxe GuestRooms are \$69.00 per night, plus city and state taxes, which are currently 12%.

**Amenities:** All rooms feature in-room coffee makers, full size ironing boards with irons and data port capability. The hotel provides free shuttle to and from the Newport News/Williamsburg Airport.

**Reservation Procedures:** USA Attendees may make their reservations by calling toll free (800) 841-1112 prior to Wednesday September 17, 2003. Overseas reservations can be made by calling the hotel directly at (757)-599-4460. Reservation requests received after this date will be accepted on a space-available basis and a rate available basis. In order to receive the special

group rate, guests need to identify themselves as attending the International Guild of Knot Tyers- North American Branch. At check-in, attendees may present a credit card or refundable cash deposit to cover any incidentals charged to their room.

**Hospitality Room:** Available for Thursday, Friday, & Saturday nights.

**Saturday Evening Dinner:** The IGKT-NAB will be holding a dinner on Saturday Evening at the hotel (TBA).

*John Burke*

## West Yorkshire Branch

At the start of another year it is opportune to look back and review what has been happening for our branch. We have had regular branch meetings and a few outings with our displays.

We supported the North West Branch who had a full weekend display in Liverpool Maritime Museum in February where they had about eight tables of knotwork and we took up the invitation to join them.

Our support at the Skipton Waterways and Canal Heritage Festival was only for one day and we did it in great style with ten members present, we had lots of knotty chat and gave a good presentation with good public interaction.

At 2K2 in Fareham our branch was well represented and we had a great week, learning among other things that our hobby is truly world wide, and that knotters are friendly and willing to share their knowledge.



We had a one day display at the Leeds Waterways Festival and again had good interaction with the public and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves.

At the half-yearly meeting in Bromsgrove we were again well represented, and had more fun meeting knotters and learning new techniques.

We also had the Huddersfield National Canal Boat Festival as reported in *Knotting Matters* No 77. We hope to get more bookings this year.

This year we are suspending our normal branch meetings and holding a meeting for all the Yorkshire members, (and a few others as well) in the hope of sharing knowledge and interest. The meeting is to be held in the Scout headquarters opposite St Bartholemews church in Wesley Road, Armley, Leeds, on Sunday the 2nd of March from 11am to 4 pm with a theme of flat knotting.

It doesn't matter if flat knotting is not your thing, there will be plenty of opportunity to talk about all aspects of knotting. Tea and coffee will be available all day so please bring a packed lunch and come and join in. It would be interesting if you were to bring some examples of your knotwork with you to share with us. The Guild Chairman has promised to be there, so it will give you a chance to meet him, though I won't let him talk too much. Please respond to this letter so that I can have an idea how many people are coming.

If you would like directions or details of local bus services please contact me well in advance.

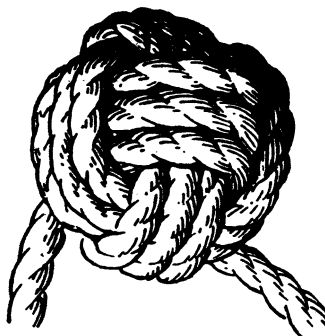
Come along and hopefully meet lots of Northern Knotters.

**David Pearson**

## French Branch

**Wanted.** French/English translators and contributors to produce a francophone version of *Knotting Matters*. Provisionally called, *Le sac de noeuds*, the newsletter will be produced for all French-speaking members of the IGKT (Quebecois, Walloon, French etc.) and hopefully increase the non-English-speaking membership. The idea is to translate into French existing articles that have appeared in KM, and translate into English articles written by French speakers. That way we all stand to benefit. Funding and distribution have as yet to be figured out and discussions are on going between the IGKT council and IGKT France, as well as European funding authorities. Needless to say, the project will never get off the ground without the enthusiastic support of francophone and francophile members. Anyone who has any ideas on this matter, and can help, please contact me at Graham macLachlan, IGKT FRANCE, La Verneuillerie, 50200 ANCTEVILLE France. Tel. /fax (00 33) (0) 2 33 07 67 04. [igktfrance@club-internet.fr](mailto:igktfrance@club-internet.fr)

**Graham macLachlan**



# Postbag

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

After being shown round the beautiful Baroque cathedral and local paper factory, we were treated to a typical local lunch prepared by his wife with a breathtaking view from the balcony of their flat.

It is really good to contact other knot tyers! Our thanks to Domenico, and family for their hospitality.

*Dave and Anne Walker  
Chester, UK*

## An International Welcome

While on holiday in Sorrento, Italy, we decided to contact IGKT member Domenico Colonnese who lives in Amalfi.

We were invited to spend the day with him and his family. After a hair-raising but spectacular drive on the local bus, we visited his well-stocked shop of home made knot boards, key rings and all things nautical!

## Keelhauled

I feel somewhat bedraggled, having been keelhauled by Dan Lehman (KM 74 pp 46-47) in his critique of my letter on the awning hitch.



Guilty as charged m'lud. Should have known better, especially having done a research appreciation course at Manchester University in the 1970's. Although this was not a real research, I should have been more careful in looking and compiling the findings. Perhaps it's my age showing.

Having got my ABOK out again, I agree with Dan. The Roband hitch as in ABOK is the nearest hitch. The awning hitch I presented (not mine by the way) is as I mentioned the hitch officially approved by the British Board of Trade - at the time - for teaching in approved Merchant navy certified courses and published in my copy of the *Boatswain's Manual*, 1944, reprint 1946.

I would like to point out that all the examples shown in ABOK are numbered. Whether these are knot numbers or just numbers referring to paragraphs in the text I cannot be certain, but they are certainly separate from page numbers, and I agree the numbers in the index are page numbers which I referred to wrongly.

This exercise has taught me another lesson. Rather than keep my mouth shut and say nowt ever again (as some might do) I must exercise my grey cells a little more and get some good sea air into my lungs.

This hiccup has made me get my ABOK out again and I find the introductory pages from one to 11 has given me some spiritual refreshment and I recommend you read them.

Lastly I want to thank Dan Lehman. All reviews and researches however small should have references, which are there for people to check and follow up. That's how the human race has added to its store of knowledge and gone forward. The editors of publications do not

necessarily agree with what is published and leave it for others to reply, in this case all the way from the USA. The IGKT is truly an organisation for international progress and hopefully friendship.

*Peter W Hughes  
Erith, UK*

## **An Irregular Knot**

I have been reading the comments about the two ways of tying the fisherman's knot (KM 75). I'm inclined to agree with Geoffrey Budworth - the principle being symmetry, but! I have been tying and retying the two versions in a piece of cordage. Although the 'orthodox' method perfectly matches the drawings (fig 1-3) I cannot for the life of me get the 'irregular' form to look anything like fig 5.

Not only that but the irregular result I get actually looks more symmetrical than the orthodox. The irregular version is the same whether viewed from the front or back in the sense that either way there is the thumb knot of one line and simply a bight of the other visible.

So now I think I might throw in my lot with the minority rather than the majority!

*Alex Kleider  
Bolin, CA, USA*

## **Concordant Knots**

Responding to my own contribution 'The Fisherman's Knot Anomaly' (Pages 36-7 of KM 75 in June 2002) and whether or not it is best to use identical twin overhand knots....

There is further support for those who, like me, favour like-handed knots in *The History and Science of Knots* (1995), edited by IGKT members J C Turner and P van de Griend. Where chapter nine - 'A History of Life Support Knots', by Guild member Charles Warner - mentions a 1928 article 'Knots for Climbers' printed in issue #40 of *Alpine Journal*, the co-authors C E I Wright and J E Magowan of which report test data revealing that concordant knots (that is, knots of the SAME handedness) were found to be STRONGER.

**Geoffrey Budworth**  
Tonbridge, UK

To get the fibres from the British nettles, grasp the stem at the base and firmly remove the leaves and stinging hairs from the stem. I would recommend a glove but if done quickly and firmly it is not supposed to sting. Then flatten the stems and bend near the middle. This allows the pith to protrude. Using a thumbnail remove the pith, pulling the stem away with your teeth. The green fibres of the stem may then be used as they are for cord or boiled with wood ash, soaked overnight, beaten and washed again before separating the fine fibres for textile applications.

**Richard Hopkins**

## On Nettles

I wonder if Wendy Smith (KM 77) is aware of the booklet *The Nettle in Nepal* available from Fibrecrafts, Style cottage, Lower Eashing, Godalming, Surrey GU7 2QD.

I believe it costs about £3.

This covers in detail the harvesting, separating out the fibres, preparing the fibres and then goes on to spinning and weaving, giving examples of many garments and patterns.

I am sure that there is a supplier of seeds for the rather tall and vicious nettle grown in Nepal but I would think that this might take some time to mature. Perhaps Kew Gardens would be able to assist.

I have made some useful cord from conventional stinging nettle and have often seen places where the stems are around five feet tall and abundant. This gives a good supply of long thread, which could be a start while waiting for the crop of Nepalese nettle.

## Finest Rope?

I was prompted to write regarding the purchase of the finest Manila rope in the world and where I may obtain it.

From what I understand, it is called 'First Line' Manila, with a characteristic red thread in the lay.

I would also like to know where the multicoloured cordage could be purchased that is usually featured in knotting publications.

I am a merchant seaman sailing on the Great Lakes, but have no knowledge of the above enquiries.

**Anthony J Sendzick**  
Berwyn, USA

## Wire Rope Eyes

Having meant to contribute a note commenting on Roy's article regarding

‘Superloop/Flemish eyes in wire rope but somehow not having time (lame excuse#1). I have just received KM 77 and reading Andrew S Lyle’s comment, I feel it is now time to put in my twopenny-worth.

As a professional ships rigger with Devonport Royal Dockyard for the past 23 years I too have experimented with this procedure as well as being naive enough to believe that I alone indeed developed this procedure (they say you get wiser as you get older)

Anyway, as a Lloyds qualified Lifting Equipment proof testing engineer, I decided to conduct a series of tests on wire rope ‘eyes’ so constructed on my 60 tonne proof load testing machine; and quite astonishingly found early failure at well below the ‘Proof Load’.

The eye would start to distort at about three-quarters of the way up to the maximum proof load for the size wire on test. At almost the test weight the wire would start to unlay as if it were trying to ‘pull out.’ At this point the test was considered over and the machine was ‘unloaded’ the reason being as the ‘load cell’ is not designed for destructive testing and damage might occur to the machine should we deliberately ‘break’ the item in question.

I then decided to phone the technical department of Bridon Fibres and it would appear that the ‘Superloop’ is almost always constructed from ‘Solid’ cored construction wire rope and It must be pointed out at this stage their eye’s are finished with a swaged steel sleeve and not a flat seizing as mine were, ‘Jute’ or fibre core varieties clearly are not suitable for this procedure,

In conclusion I have to say that having made more eyes by this method than I care to admit and never seen one fail

other than in test conditions gives one mixed messages. Of course I would never use this method with fibre cored ropes where life is an issue also I would never use a wire so “spliced” for any kind of ‘lifting operation’ and would suggest that you do the same.

Only use items that are fit for the purpose they are designed for If you are not sure look on the label/tally which should be clearly visible if it ain’t don’t use it

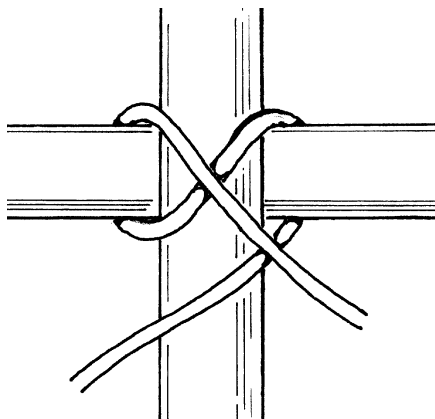
*Nick Palmer  
Plymouth, UK*

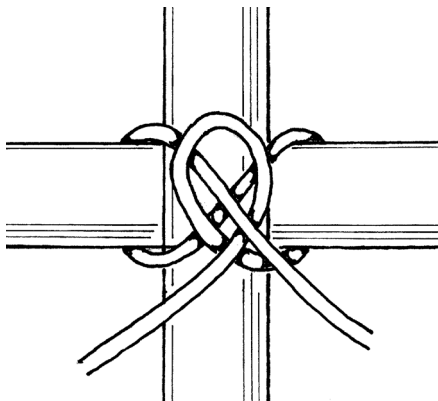
## The Ibo Knot

In KM 70 there was an enquiry about the Ibo knot. I have seen no further letters about this but enclose a picture I found on the Internet on a gardening page.

It is not very inspiring but seemed to hold when I tied up some pencils although I would not think of it as my first choice for bean sticks.

*Richard Hopkins  
Bristol, UK*





## Overdue Library Books

Our new Guild Librarian has been going through the inventory of books in the library, and discovered a number missing. As they have not been out since the 2K2 celebrations at Fareham, we can only assume that someone has borrowed them, with the intention of returning them before the close of the week. So if you have any of the following, I'm sure Gordon will be pleased to see them returned under plain wrapper, no questions asked.

*Celtic Art* by George Bain

*Knots & Crime* by Geoffrey Budworth

*Turk's heads the Traditional Way* by Eric Franklin

*Solly's Single Strand Star* by Stuart Grainger

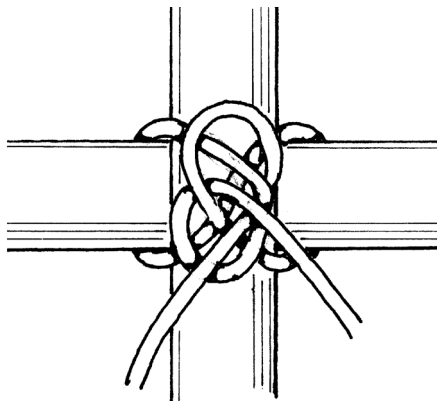
*Over het Maken van Smalle Turkse Knopen* by Pieter van de Griend

*Fisherman's Knots and Wrinkles* by W A Hunter

*Knopen & Splitsen*

*Tovvaerkskunst* by Kaj Lund

*Knots Splices and Fancy Ropework* by Chas L Spencer



*Hackamore Diamond Knot* by Eugene Ulrich

*SC4* by Pieter van de Griend

## Asian Indian & English Knots

My name is Kawita and I am a photographer. I am interested in incorporating traditional Asian Indian and English type knots into a series of photographs I am currently at work on. The theme of the series has to do with the interesting/intricate/intimate relationship between India and England, some of which I wish to represent through traditional knots, and particularly the type of knots before/during India's partition. So, I suppose, I'm asking a multi-part question:

What type of knot or knots Asian Indians would have used at this time?

What type of knot or knots the English would have used at this time?

How does one tie each type? (Guess who will have to learn how...)

I would like to make every effort to represent the knots you may suggest in the most accurate manner.

**Kawita Kandpal**  
***K\_kandpal@hotmail.com***

# Knotting Diary

## AGM's & 1/2 YEARLY MEETINGS

### 21st AGM

TS Weston, Weston-super-Mare  
9th - 11th May 2003  
Contact: Nigel Harding  
Tel: 01825 760425  
E-mail: [nigel@nigelharding.demon.co.uk](mailto:nigel@nigelharding.demon.co.uk)

### NAB 2003 Meeting

17th - 19th October 2003  
Mariner's Museum, Newport News, Virginia  
Contact: John Burke  
Tel: 313 562 4393  
E-mail: [knottyrope@prodigy.com](mailto:knottyrope@prodigy.com)

## BRANCH MEETINGS

### Midlands Branch

14th April 2003  
The Old Swan (Ma Pardoes), Halesowen  
Road, Halesowen  
Contact Nick Jones  
Tel: 01384 377499

### East Anglian Branch

7th June 2003  
'Eaton Cottage', Thornham, Hunstanton  
Contact: Duncan Bolt  
Tel: 01485 512508

### West Country Knotters

29th March 2003  
Almondsbury Scout Hall  
Almondsbury, Nr. Bristol  
Contact Tugg Shipp  
Tel: 01275 847438

## EVENTS

Von Hundepints, Schweinsrücken und  
Neunschwänziger Katz (Pointing,  
Cockscombing and Cat o' Nine Tails)  
May - September 2003  
Flensburg Schifffahrts Museum, Flensburg,  
Germany  
Contact Karl Barethur  
E-mail: [jacktar@foni.net](mailto:jacktar@foni.net)

## Delfsail 2003

10th - 14th July 2003  
Delfzijl, Netherlands  
Contact: Klaas Kuiper  
Tel: 0596 619 513

## SECRETARY:

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

## Guild Annual Subscription rates:

Juniors	£5
Seniors	£16
Families	£20

Corporate by arrangement

Payable by cash/cheque Eurocard, Master-  
card or Visa. Taxpayers in UK - we would pre-  
fer a covenanted subscription.

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## Advertising Rates:

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

# Guild Supplies

## Price List 2003

Item	Price
<b>Geoffrey Budworth</b>	
Notlore <i>a miscellany of quotes from fact and fiction</i>	£2.50
The Knot Book	£3.99
Plaited Moebius Bands	£2.50
Knot Rhymes and Reasons	£1.50
<b>Brian Field</b>	
Breastplate Designs	£2.50
Concerning Crosses	£1.50
<b>Eric Franklin</b>	
Turksheads the Traditional Way	£1.50 *
Nylon Novelties	£2.00 *
<b>Stuart Grainger</b>	
Knotcraft	£3.60 *
Ropefolk	£1.30 *
Turks Head Alternatives	£2.20 *
Creative Ropecraft (Hardback - 3rd Ed.)	£9.95
Knotted Fabrics Hardback <i>price includes UK postage</i>	£9.00
<b>John Halifax</b>	
Something Different <i>with over 50 Button Knots</i>	£3.20
<b>Colin Jones</b>	
The DIY Book of Fenders	£9.95
<b>Harold Scott</b>	
On Various Cruxiform Turks Heads	£2.50
Sliding Template Method for Designing Cruciform Turks-Heads Vol. 2	£3.00
<b>Skip Pennock</b>	
Decorative Woven Flat Knots	£12.50*
<b>IGKT</b>	
Knitting Matters copies of past editions	£2.50
(Some past editions available - contact the Secretary for details)	
*bulk purchases of these items available at a discount - phone for details	
Cheques payable to IGKT, or simply send your credit card details	



