

# Knotting Matters

The Magazine of the International Guild of Knot Tyers



Issue 90  
March 2006

# GUILD SUPPLIES

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### **Skip Pennock**

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\* Bulk purchases of these items are available at a discount - phone for details

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*The Magazine of the International Guild of Knot Tyers*

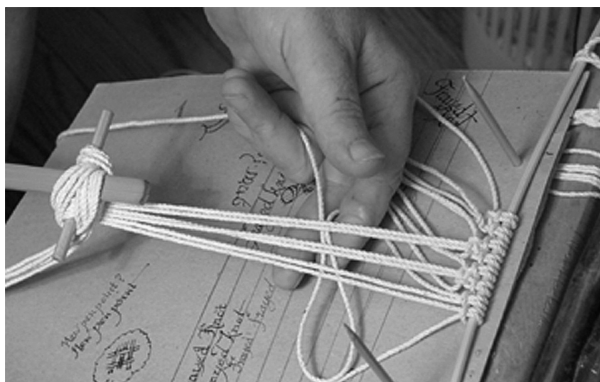
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[www.igkt.net](http://www.igkt.net)

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## Features

### COVER PHOTOGRAPH

A covered bottle by Björn Malmbeck (Sweden). The bottle is covered with half hitching of hemp (2mm) and decorated with one Turk's head (2mm hemp) and another Turk's head with 4mm hemp. The cork of the bottle is a 4L x3B Turk's head glued to the cork.



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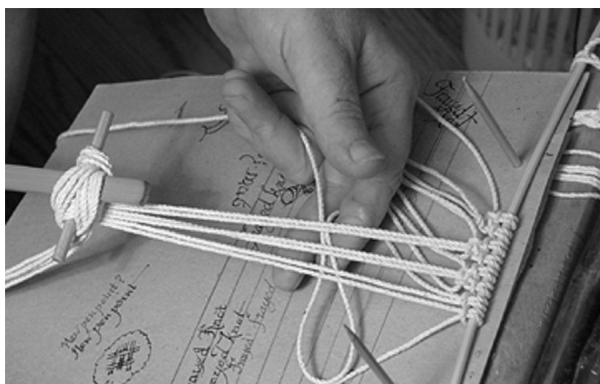
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## Regulars

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## Notes from the Secretary's Blotter

It doesn't seem five minutes since I was last making a note on my blotter, but since then Christmas has been and gone, and we move into yet another year in the twenty first century. Thus another winter is showing signs of fading, with the first signs of spring apparent in the garden. This may all appear very strange when you read this, but what you have to realise is that there is a lead in time of at least six weeks between me writing this and the final version arriving through your letterbox. So enough of the waffle...

So far, I have received no inspiration, or suggestions for sponsorship or other means of financing the grand 25th birthday celebrations next year. For the moment, therefore we are debating the option of an attendance fee, which is likely to be in the region of £10 - £20. This will depend upon how many visitors we expect, and whether such a fee would discourage members from attending. Regrettably, this falls into the category of 'whatever we do won't please everyone', however we need your comments, ideas and opinions to help us make the final decision.

It has come to our notice, that we are not the only association with an interest in knot tying and ropework, although we are the leading English-speaking group. One of these other organisations, which represents a significant group of non English speakers has suggested affiliation with the IGKT. At present we have no mechanism for this, and would have to modify our constitution accordingly. We are open to suggestions as to how we should tackle this, as we do not want to lose the opportunity, either now or in

the future, when other groups may ask the same question. This would be not so much for the benefit or glorification of our own Guild, but for the benefit of global knot tying and friendship, which in turn is one of the primary aims of the IGKT. You thoughts please ladies and gentlemen.

I am sure that you do not need reminding that our membership fees went up in January. The current application forms that many of you have for distribution at your own talks and demonstrations, are now out of date. We are still awaiting delivery of the new forms, so in the meantime, I do have a quantity of the yellow notice that was inserted in KM89, advising of the new rates. If you would like some, please give let me know, and I will send you some.

In the early days of the Guild, the late Frank Harris wrote a short article in one of the first *Knotting Matters*, suggesting that members may wish to remember the Guild in their will. So far, I only know of one member who has done this, the late Ian Murray, who was a long-standing member from Sunderland. We are very grateful to Ian, from whom we have received a gift in excess of £3000, which will be clearly seen on our published accounts. We would like to thank the administrators of Ian's estate for the receipt of this bequest. For the moment at least, we shall ring-fence this sum, until we have identified a suitable project or specific purpose for the expenditure.

Now that I have got into my stride....I had better stop otherwise I shall have run off the bottom of the blotter, and will find myself writing on the table itself. I must also get on with the notes for the AGM and the 2006 Membership Handbook, and ..... if I get the opportunity to come up for air, I will see you all at the AGM in Shrewsbury

Nigel Harding

# Col's Comment

Welcome to the 'new look' *Knotting Matters*, I hope you like it. The layout of KM has been the same for a few years now, and as we are steadily approaching our 100th issue, I thought it about time for a bit of a facelift.

Most of the regulars are still here, Guild matters from our Secretary and President, Knotmaster, Branch Lines and the Knotting Diary. While

on the subject of the diary, let the editor know what is going on in your area with Guild events and branch meetings, so that we can inform the rest of the membership and hopefully attract new members to your meetings. Remember though, KM is produced quarterly and there is about a six week lead in before goes to press, so plenty of notice is appreciated.

The Knot Gallery has also taken on a new face. I am hoping to show work of individual members occasionally, along with information on their knotting interests. In this issue, we feature the work of Robert H. Black of the USA.

Finally, the *Knotting Matters* office is on the move again so see below how this will affect post and email submissions. 🍀

## Knotting Matters Takes to the Water!

*Knotting Matters* is taking to the water, quite literally! Jane and I are preparing to follow the steps of some of our other Guild members and live aboard our narrowboat *Slow Gin* on the English canal system.

'Lucky devils' I hear you say.

This will have an effect on our magazine in so much as we shall not have a permanent postal address. All postal mail therefore should be sent via our Hon. Secretary,

who will forward it on to our location. Emails may not be answered quite so quickly, as we will not have a landline with broadband connection. I shall still be able to pick up emails on a less frequent basis from Internet cafes and libraries. I don't expect our change to a more nomadic lifestyle will affect publication of *Knotting Matters*. I know others who follow the boating lifestyle, still able to produce magazines for various organisations. Please bear with us through this transitional period. 🍀



# President's Letter

Not a formal education moment but a golden opportunity to learn.

During my time with the Executive Council of the IGKT much has been said and written about the education of knot tying, from formal instructional weekends in an educational environment, to informal gatherings were-ever possible. Again during my time, mention has been made of awarding folk with certificates to show their ability in knot tying, this has proved complicated because with the constant questions of who checks the checker and who is willing to give up a weekend, drive miles to get the correct tutor together with the correct student, plus the right subject, this has proved a problem.

In the mean time, if you want to learn knot tying I have some news "it is up to you". *Knotting Matters* and the IGKT web site are having a campaign to publish as many "local events" in their events diary as they can. So they are relying on you to inform them where you are and what show, then others may read all about forthcoming shows and events.

Now to the learning bit - the best way to learn, in my opinion, is to teach. Why not contact your local group or branch and say you will attend one of the events even if you have reservations concerning your own abilities. What you have to do is stand next to the one talking; "look bright and attentive" and you will be drawn in to the conversation. Don't worry about what knot or what

subject, the public think of this even if they come in 'left field'. When you find you really can't answer a question, ask our Guild man/lady next to you (never any shame in asking) when the answer is given, then the two of you will have learnt from them.

If you live miles from another knot tyer and you have an idea to go it alone to join up with your own local show, the words you say to the organisers are "I shall wave my fees on this occasion if you let me have a free stand"

My first show, I was on my own with a wallpaper pasting table, but now years later we have the Solent Branch and we use two large tents.

'What events?' I hear you ask, well there are boat shows, Scout meetings, country fairs. All these things the public attend as they want fun and enlightenment, not to mention air shows, church fetes, and even fishing clubs, now you think of some.

When joining your fellow knot tyers at a show I suggest you take your favourite knot book, your favourite piece of line and your membership handbook as it is surprising just how many attending shows are from out of town, and I have always found this invaluable for putting people in contact with other knot tyers. Always remember, the public ask questions because they assume you know more than they do so you're half way there to start with.

Just one warning, and this must be an English thing, because I have never found it outside of the UK, there is always a man who will stand in line for 20 minutes just to ask if you know the thief knot. I usually pass him on to Jeff Wyatt, unless it was Jeff who sent him to me in the first place. If you want to learn the thief knot - I know a man!

The knots that are generally asked for at shows - the waggoner's or trucker's

hitch, Scout woggle (Turk's head). At boat shows in particular, a wife or girlfriend is often led to us with the instruction "teach them a bowline and a clove hitch, then they can come on my boat again!"

This year once more the Solent Branch will be in attendance at the Queen Elizabeth Country Park which is on Butser Hill Hampshire 8th and 9th July 2006, all my fellow knot tyers will be most welcome to join us there. We will have the 'Six knot challenge' which is always a crowd puller, if not the stop watch bit, the dangling lines always get folks talking.

Anybody interested please contact me.

Most shows in the UK are dependent on our glorious British weather, were else can you get sunstroke and trench foot at the same time? Even if the crowd fails to turn up you still get a good knot tyers meeting and even more time to learn.

So, over to you, what better learning environment can you want bags of stimulus lots of teachers and good camaraderie.

Do please let Colin know how you get on.

Ken Yalden.

## ADDENDUM


from Geoffrey Budworth

Missing from the jargon-busting A-to-Z booklet *The Knot Scene*, published earlier last year by the IGKT, is the term 'bight'; so please read the following and accept my apology for failing to include it.

**Bight** The word is an ancient one, meaning in Old and Middle English a bend or angle, as well as any flexed anatomical joint such as an ankle, elbow or armpit. In rope handling it is, of course, the slack between standing and working ends; and the expression 'tied in the bight' refers specifically to knots such as the artillery loop (or man-harness knot) and the Alpine butterfly loop that are created in that section of a line without using either end.

But sailors may have adopted the word 'bight' from early chart-makers who employed it for coastal indentations or bays so wide that they could be sailed out of on a single tack whatever the prevailing conditions. It was a crucial need-to-know detail for masters of square-riggers whose ships, unable to beat effectively into an adverse wind, were liable of becoming 'embayed' and unable to regain the open sea.

This may be why some early writers on seamanship assert that a bight in rope is wider than a semi-circle. Any tighter and, strictly speaking, it becomes an 'open loop'; but language evolves as terms mutate, so that nowadays a bight seems to include any U-shaped tongue of rope. An overhand loop, for instance, may perhaps be 'tied in the bight' when it is made in a doubled end, but not actually with that end.

Do shout if you disagree. 

## 2K7 IGKT Silver Jubilee.

The date of our three-day special celebration for the Silver Jubilee will be on 24th 25th & 26th May 2007. In Furnham Hall, Fareham, Hants UK.

The present executive council of the IGKT is concerned at the expenditure of such an event. The concern is that it can only be attended by a limited numbers of Guild members, and as such they have stipulated that this event must be self-funding. 'To that end' as with many groups and societies, a conference fee will be levied, of which more details will be supplied at a later date.

The AGM of course is exempt from fees as it is a constitutional event and will be held in the lecture room at Furnham Hall from 11am until 12.30 on Saturday 26th. The Hon Sec will give notice of the AGM in due course.

However, should members then wish to attend, arrangements can be made for payment to the conference pro rata.

To ensure the best value is obtained from our booking of the hall, the timing of events has been revised. We are aware the Guild did not use the facilities to their fullest potential for 2K2. At that time we had a leisurely set up on the Monday, and on most days we closed to the public just at the time they were finishing their days work. We really threw the baby out with the bath water, by clearing the hall completely on the Friday to set up for the AGM the next day, and then closing again after the AGM to set up for the knot supper. So the plan this time is: -

### THE PLAN *(This is the first draft for times.)*

Thursday 24	Set-up 8.00 - 12.00 open to the public 1230 - 2359
Friday 25	open to the public 0900 - 2359
Saturday 26	open to the public 0900 -1045 open to the public 1300 - 1900

### CALL FOR PAPERS

Gordon Perry will co-ordinate lectures and discussions in the lecture room. (These are lively sessions that help build the Guild for the future).

### NOTICE FOR CONFERENCE

Branches and individuals that wish to display and demonstrate during the conference please notify Ken Yalden - *this is the main part that will be viewed by the public, as well as a good point of exchange for Guild members.*

### LIST OF ACCOMODATION

Will be published in a future *Knotting Matters*.

### KNOT SUPPER on 26th at 20.00

Will be in the Red Lion, Fareham.



## EARLY ARRIVERS

For knot tyers who wish to make a week of it. The Red Lion Hotel is willing to accept impromptu gatherings of knot tyers in their spacious foyer: - The Solent branch will be on hand to receive IGKT members as they gather for the main event. The manager of the Red Lion says they are waiting for the return of the American Ambassadors of Knot Tying called Gerry, Keith and Dan. Soothills Bakery has had a refurbishment and Abbott's Brewery has had advanced warning!

## SPONSORSHIP

Yes please we need it, have you any bright ideas?

## RED HAT TOURS

(East Anglia and the Knot Museum) Des Pawson has some wonderful ideas. Have you any? These should be before and after the main event.

As with most things it is the enthusiasm of the attendees that keeps the cost down and the venue viable.

# IGKT Knot Chat

The IGKT web-site at [igkt.net](http://igkt.net) is now equipped with a 'Chat Room'.

'IGKT Knot Chat' - which has taken over from the room that Dan Callahan (Alaska -

USA) has provided for members up until now. There are two regular sessions in existence - one on Wednesday evenings GMT/UTC (Knoopenpraat) for the Dutch members and one all day Sundays which is world-wide - where IGKT members get together and talk knots (among other things) and keep abreast of what is going on. It also gives members (especially those outside the UK) the chance to talk to a Council Member.

This new site is open 24/7 - so I would like to encourage Branches to use this facility, perhaps to hold Branch e-Meetings say once a week

or month on a regular basis, so that those members who want to keep in touch with others and have a chat can do so. I will post a 'meeting schedule' on the web page and 'reserve' for any branch that would like to use this facility. A 'date/day/time' slot which will be theirs - please discuss this with your members and let me know your preferred schedule as soon as possible. The whole of Sunday GMT/UTC is reserved for 'Worldwide open chat' for all members and Wednesday 1700 to 2359 GMT is reserved for the Dutch Branch. Otherwise, first come first served.

If you would like to discuss this further, send me an email to [Librarian@igkt.net](mailto:Librarian@igkt.net), giving me a date and time between 0700 and 2300 GMT please and I will meet you in the Chat Room.

Just go to the IGKT web page [www.igkt.net](http://www.igkt.net) and click on the link 'IGKT Knot Chat.'

Gordon

Local Acting WebAdmin

## Knotmaster Series No. 28

‘Knotting ventured,  
knotting gained.’


### Bull hitch

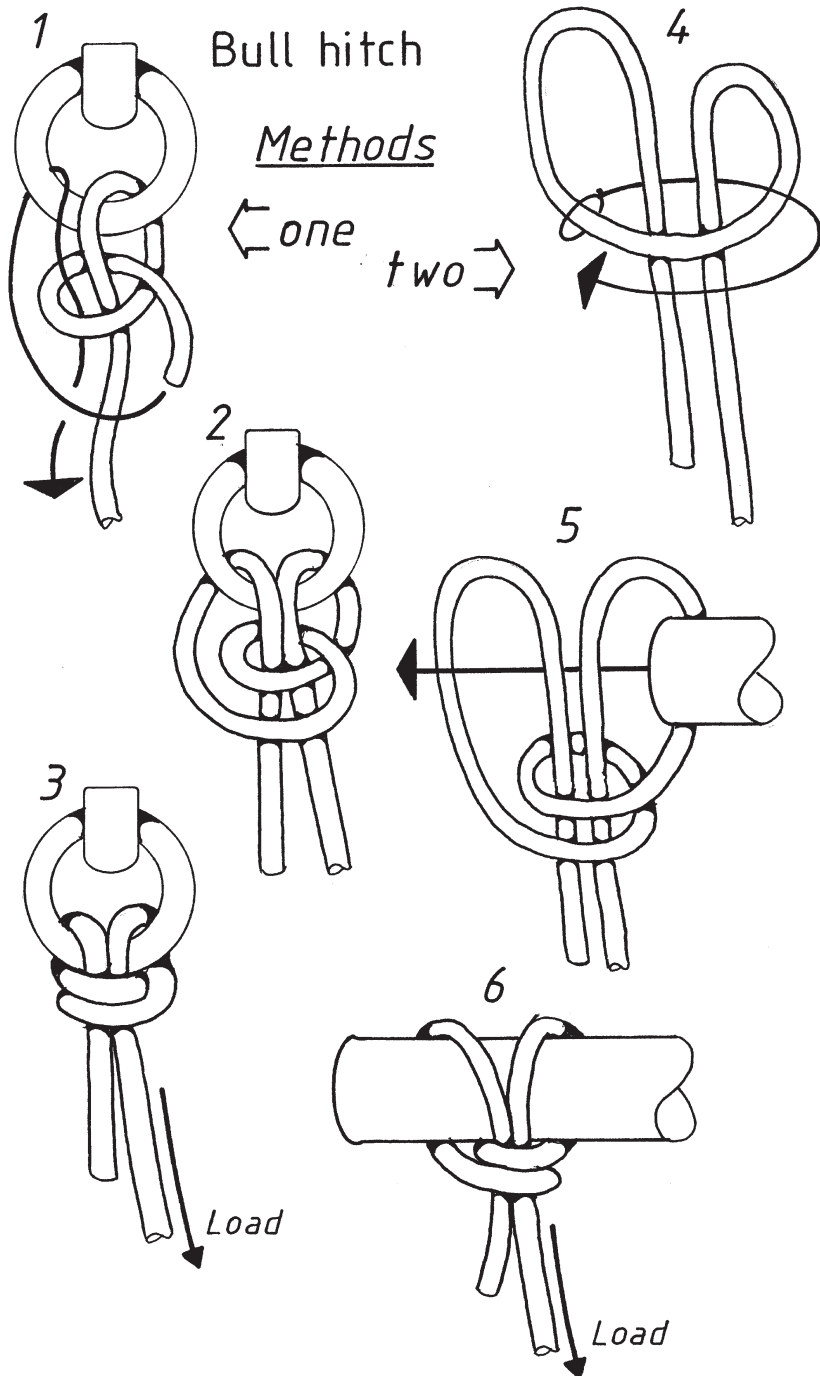
Unlike a bale or ring hitch - tied in an endless sling, with the load falling equally upon both legs - this hitch is designed to have only one standing part. It is more muscular than the cow hitch, hence its name, although readers may recall its introduction by Guild member Robert Pont, in

Knotting Matters (issue No 47, January 1995) where he called it the Piwich knot.

**Method one** (tied with an end): Apply a half-hitch to the ring, rail, post or other anchorage (fig. 1), then wrap and tuck the working end as shown (fig. 2). Tighten (fig. 3).

**Method two** (tied in the bight): Make a bight in the working end

of the line and fold it down to create twin loops, one somewhat larger than the other (fig. 4). Wrap the larger of these two loops around, behind, then forward and across the front to its own side again (fig. 5). Slide the resulting knot onto the intended anchorage point and tighten it (fig. 6). 



# 'YOUNG AT HEART'

**LEARN** to twirl a rope or lariat like a rodeo cowboy or cowgirl. It's really easy, once you know the secret.

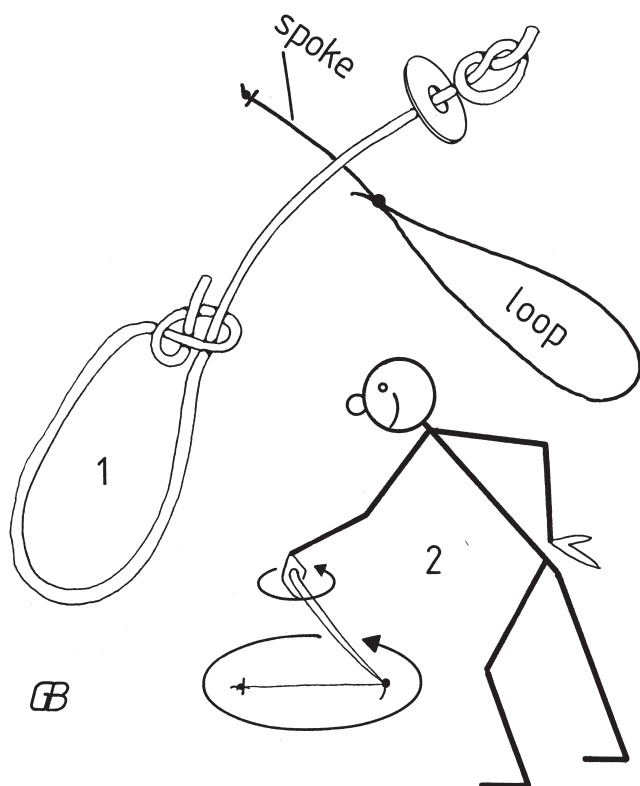
Thread a metal washer or a big bead onto a length of braided cord that is no thicker than your little finger and no

longer than you are tall. The hole in the middle of the bead or washer must be large enough to let the cord twist and turn easily inside it. Then tie a simple knot to keep the thing from coming off one end, and make an adjustable loop with a

tight sliding knot at the other end. Your lariat is now ready to use (fig. 1). Slide the loop knot along until the single bit of line, called the spoke, is a little more than half the length of the closed loop.

## Lesson 1 Grip

the end of the LOOP between the thumb and first two fingers of one hand, so that your lariat hangs upside-down. Twirl it by drawing small quick circles in the air with your finger tips and a relaxed wrist (fig. 2). See how the cord bends, forming a kind of elbow at the sliding knot, so that the spoke comes up straight and level with the floor. Feel it happening. This is how to spin rope. Use your left or right hand and spin the rope either



## HOW TO TWIRL ROPE

clockwise or counter-clockwise (it doesn't matter which).

**Lesson 2** Now swap ends and hold the bead or washer between thumb and fingers (fig. 3). Take care that the knot can turn freely.

Twirl as before, so that the rope bends at the loop knot, causing the loop to lift up and (hopefully) open out into a circle (fig. 4). Often it works first time. Just make the lariat bend at the knot.

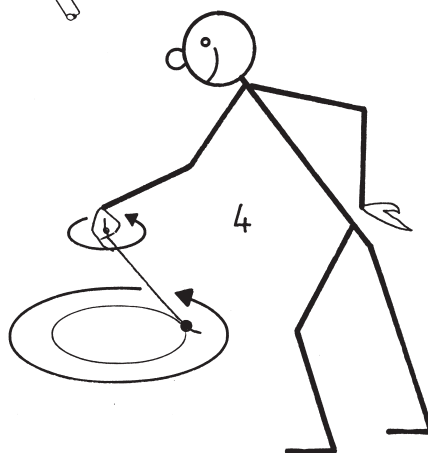
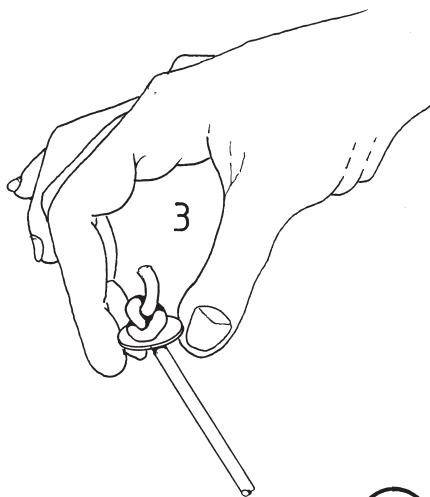
If the loop won't open right away - make sure the end knot is turning freely inside your grip on the bead or washer, not catching on the thumb or fingers. If the loop still refuses to open (sometimes it does) make a few quicker or slower

circles in the air with your finger tips to wake it up. At the same time, make these circles a big bigger too. This should teach it how to behave. Once it is going around

properly, settle down to a gentle rhythmic hand action, no faster or stronger than needed to make your lariat work.

**Hey! Look at you!!**

**You're twirling rope!!!**



*B*



Many thanks to Casper de Boer for his comments and query in KM 88 regarding the security of bowlines (Postbag p44). It is serendipitous that Heinz Prohaska commented on the security of a variation of the bowline with an incorporated figure eight structure in the same issue (Bowline Failure p19).

Climbers, cavers, rope access technicians and rope rescue personnel use the figure eight end loop (aka figure eight follow-through, trace-8, re-woven figure 8 and retraced figure eight) and numerous variations of the bowline to secure a harness to the end of a belay or safety line. Over and above ease of tying and visual checking, convenience of untying after prolonged and severe loading, and even relative strength, the security of any harness tie-in knot is of paramount concern. But what are the characteristics of a knot that makes it more or less secure than other knots? (This discussion is specifically aimed at harness tie-in loops, although reference will be made to related formations.)



## The Security of Bowlines and Figure Eight Loops as Harness Tie-Ins:

*The Principles of Pre-Knotting, Post-Knotting and Concatenation*

Rob Chisnall

### High-Strength Loops

Loop knots like the taut-line hitch or Midshipman's hitch, Tarbuck knot (Knotmaster Series, 2004) and the modified Tarbuck knot (Chisnall, 2005) certainly form strong end loops. The standing part has no sharp bends or bights in it before it wraps around the anchor point. All of the knotting is performed after the line has passed around the anchor point and the standing part runs straight and true once loaded. In most

instances, under particular conditions, formations of this kind can have a 100 percent knot efficiency (i.e., they break at 100 percent of the absolute breaking strength of the cord or rope itself).

However, such knots are not as secure as loops with knotted standing parts. It is even possible to untie the Tarbuck or modified Tarbuck while loaded, something that is impossible to do with figure eight end-loops, and nearly impossible to do with bowlines.

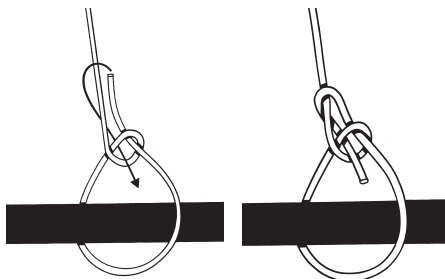


Fig. 1

### Bowlines

The standard bowline (Fig. 1) is a post-bight end-loop knot in that the standing part is tied after the working end is wrapped around the anchor point or passed through the harness (Chisnall, 1995a, 2005). It is possible for the regular bowline to invert or capsize into an overhand slip loop and come undone (Fig. 2). This has led to a number of accidents and deaths. Several decades ago, the now defunct *Off Belay* climbing magazine reported an accident involving bowline failure. When Pam Spence's harness tie-in bowline inverted and untied, she fell to her death at Lover's Leap in Colorado. (I cannot recall the exact issue or date.) There have been other incidents but tracking down all published accounts would take considerable time.

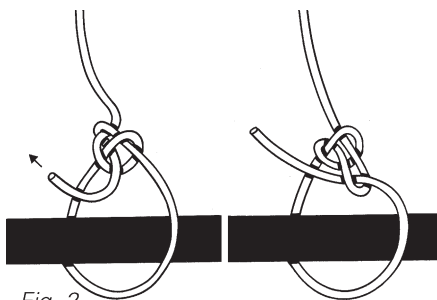


Fig. 2

To increase the security of the bowline, climbers and riggers have added extra security knots or keeper knots for

redundancy, with varying success, the simplest of which is the humble half hitch (Fig. 3; *The Alpine Journal*, 1892). However, Pam Spence was using an extra half hitch when her bowline untied from her harness. More recently, Will Gad mentioned the death of a friend in *Gripped* (2005) resulting from his bowline untying.



Fig. 3

of the loop proper or a realignment of the working end if it gets snagged or yanked in an inappropriate direction. Over the decades, the solution has been to add more elaborate security measures and keeper knots. In increasing order of approximate relative security, these include:



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

The single overhand keeper (Fig. 4), The working end wrapped several times around the actual loop and secured with a half hitch (Fig. 5; *The Alpine Journal*, 1928),



Fig. 6

The double overhand keeper, (aka half fisherman's or grapevine knot; Fig. 6),

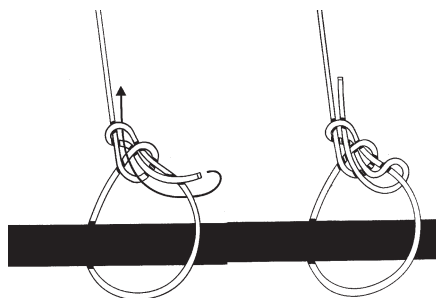


Fig. 9

The tucked bowline (aka Yosemite tuck or tie-off; Fig. 9; Forrest Mountaineering, 1974; Chisnall, 1985; Prohaska, 1988)<sup>1</sup>,

The double loop bowline (aka double knotted bowline or double bowline; Fig. 7; *The Alpine Journal*, 1928),

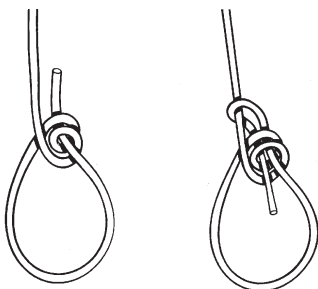


Fig. 7

And the double bight bowline (Fig. 10; Prohaska, 1988).



Fig. 10

Of course, even these versions of the bowline can be persuaded to invert, loosen and untie under the right conditions. For example, the tucked bowline if inverted twice will capsize to form a figure eight noose. That is why some users further

The clove hitch bowline (Fig. 8),



Fig. 8

secure the wend to the standing part with a double overhand keeper knot. Different techniques can be combined to enhance security. For example, the



Fig. 12

double knotted bowline can include a tucked end as well (Fig. 12).

***“Somehow, her bowline tie-in had worked itself lose.”***

Another example of an enhanced bowline tie-in technique coming undone was reported in *Rock and Ice* (Tuohy, 2005). In this case, it was the double knotted bowline that came loose. While top-roping, Joanne Tuohy narrowly missed injury or death owing to knot failure. “Somehow, her bowline tie-in had worked itself lose.” The article advises that the figure eight tie-in “can be safer” because it is “slightly stronger.” It also states the need to dress and tighten the knot beforehand, especially if the rope is new and stiff. As well, the benefit of a redundant backup knot like a double overhand keeper knot, grapevine or half fisherman’s is highlighted. Tuohy did not employ a keeper knot, but she apparently tucked the tail back through the knot in some manner, which is not made clear in that article.

Sport climbers, in particular, like to use the bowline because it is easy to untie after it has been loaded many times. This is important because sport climbers rehearse extremely hard moves on steep and overhanging terrain. Typically, they may fall several times during attempts



Fig. 13

to climb a given route. Figure eight end-loops are hard to untie after this kind of loading, so the easy-to-untie bowline has been popular for decades. Even the less secure

ring or stopper bowline (Fig. 13) with its working end running on the outside of the loop where it is prone to catching on obstacles and its variants have been in vogue for this reason. However, the fact that the bowline can be untied so easily always raises red flags for me. The King of knots can be dethroned if the user is not cautious.

In the same issue of *Rock & Ice* that reported the Joanne Tuohy near-miss, Duane Raleigh (2005) discusses ways of making the double loop or double knotted bowline more secure. The author emphasises the need to always tie the bowline correctly, dress it, add a backup knot, and to test it. He also states that “. . . you’ll find the trace-8 [figure eight follow-through] is the least likely of the knots [including versions of the bowline] to untie itself.” (p107) and that although “the double-loop bowline . . . has worked flawlessly millions of times for climbers and sailors worldwide . . . if the knot is causing accidents, maybe we should rethink it.” (p106).

There are many other ways of further securing the bowline, and climbers have been very inventive about this because the bowline has been known to come loose and untie from harnesses probably more frequently than what has been reported in magazines and journals. Fig. 14 shows one variation reported by David Pegg in *Climbing* (2001), the double bowline with a bowline backup (DBBB,

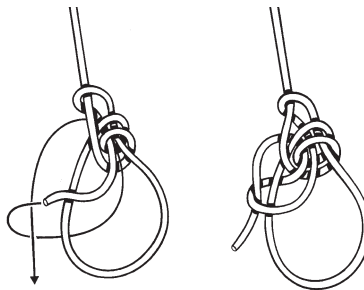


Fig. 14

for short). This and knots like it add more wraps and bights, and the working end is tucked out of the way to make the overall knot more secure and compact, while allowing the climber to untie the knot after falling many times. But the extra wraps and tucks add extra steps to the tying process, and the finished product is often difficult to check at a glance.

### Figure Eights

Most North American rescue personnel apply only figure eight's to moving parts of the safety system namely harnesses, stretchers, and so forth. If bowlines are used, they are reserved for immovable parts of the system, like anchor points, where it is unlikely a moving knot will invert while rubbing against an obstacle or a neighbouring piece of equipment. Unlike the bowline, the figure eight end-

loop is a pre-bight knot in that the standing part is knotted before the wend is passed through the harness (Chisnall, 1995a, 2005).

When it comes to safety and the preservation of life and limb, even the figure eight end-loop or follow-through (Fig. 15) should be

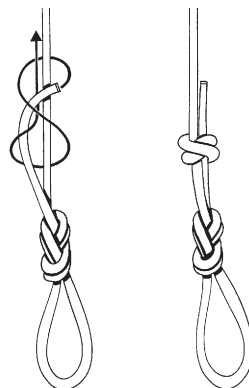


Fig. 16

backed up with a security knot. Two popular methods are, again, the double overhand knot (Fig. 16) and the keeper tuck or Yosemite tuck (Fig. 17). Of late, some folks have

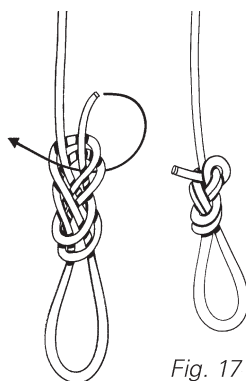


Fig. 17

been erroneously tucking the working end into the lower two bights, closest to the loop proper (Figure 18). If the loop is through-loaded, or some other unforeseen condition arises, this

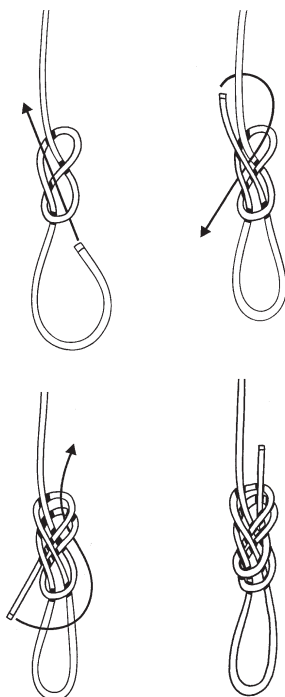


Fig. 15



Fig. 18



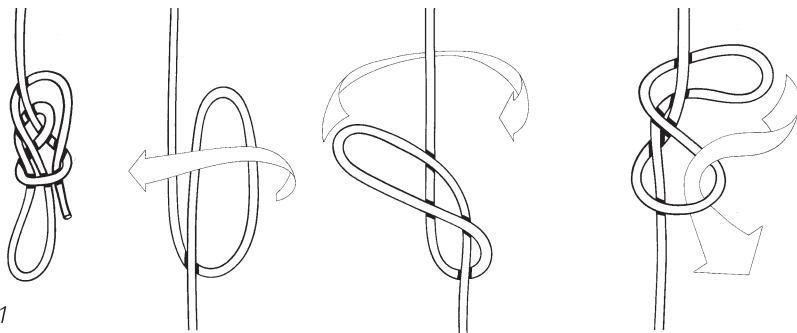


Fig. 21



version of the tucked figure eight can invert and become partially untied.<sup>2</sup>

H e i n z Prohaska (2005) illustrated how the compromise bowline (Fig. 21) can invert and come untied (Fig.

22). Even though it is called a bowline, I include it in this section because its primary structure is a figure eight. The compromise bowline is identical in structure to the single bowline on a bight

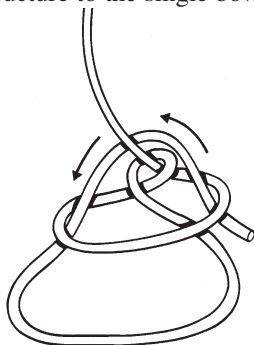


Fig. 22

of the bowline in the bight (aka the rover noose or three-quarter figure-of-eight loop; Fig. 23; Ashley #1057, 1944, p191; Wright and Magowan, 1928, p126; Budworth, 1999, p186).

Interestingly, the compromise bowline shares its structure with the one-way knot (Figure 24; Wheelock, 1967). The compromise bowline can

be tied in two fundamentally different ways: one with the wend reeved outside the loop (Fig. 21; Prohaska, 2005) and the other with the wend reeved inside the loop (Fig.

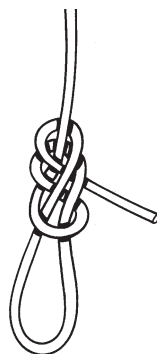


Fig. 23

25). These variants display differences in security, depending on how either version is dressed and how the bights are arranged.<sup>3</sup>



Fig. 24

the knot. The wend is unknotted and does not cross itself in any way. What does this tell us?

Even though the compromise bowline is a pre-bight knot, inversion is possible. The reason the compromise bowline can invert is because the wend forms an open bight inside



Fig. 19



Fig. 20



Fig. 25



Fig. 26

### Footnotes

**1** Note that the tucked bowline can also be tied on the bight and the working end forms a loop to which a belay device can be attached, which makes the knot quite secure (Figure 11; Chisnall, 1985).

**2** Once, I was teaching a rescue course up in Thunder Bay when the discussion focussed on appropriate bends for connecting rappel ropes. Climbers try to use secure knots that will not jam in cracks when the ropes are being pulled during retrieval. One such bend is the side eight or indirect figure eight bend (Fig. 19), which has several benefits and is also fraught with security concerns, not the least of which is gradual inversion while moderately loaded. An insecure side eight could 'migrate' off the ends of the two lines. There have been various 'solutions,' some better than others, but the most dangerous I've ever seen was presented at this particular rescue course. One participant had been in the habit of tucking both working ends into the lower two bights, the ones closest to the standing parts, in a fashion similar to that described above for the figure eight end-loop or follow-through (Fig. 20). Try this knot out. If you give the standing parts a few tugs, the whole thing can come undone almost instantly! The fellow who showed me this bend, and who had made several successful rappels using it, blanched noticeably when I demonstrated this.

**3** Similarly, the one-way knot can be tied with the ends running opposite to one another (Fig. 26). I have found the latter to be slightly more secure than the Wheelock version (Fig. 24) but it is hard to quantify this.

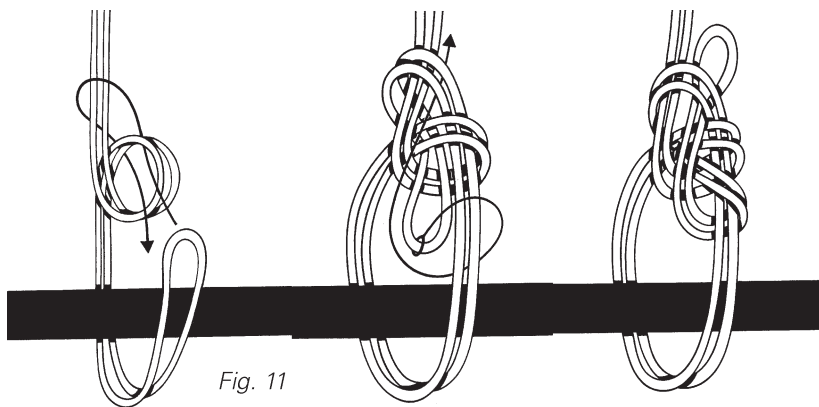


Fig. 11



# Stafford in a Knot

Most people who live in Staffordshire are familiar with the Stafford Knot. Although it is frequently referred to as the Staffordshire Knot, it is more correctly called the Stafford Knot.

S Maurice Smith

This is because of its long association with the Earls of Stafford who adopted it in the early 15th Century as an heraldic badge for use by their servants and others offering their allegiance. The knot can be found in several locations which have had connections with the Stafford family. It is most prolific around Staffordshire but can be found elsewhere in churches, castles and museums, and even Exeter Cathedral. Look out for it locally on lampposts, bollards, policemen's helmets, and of course on local authority vehicles and stationery. More recently it has appeared on wheelie bins.

The emblem was, and is still used with permission of Lord Stafford by the Staffordshire Regiment (whose journal is called the *Stafford Knot*), the Staffordshire Agricultural Society, Staffordshire Police Authority, and the Staffordshire Guide

Association. It is also used by both the borough and county councils of Stafford, appearing as a charge on the Stafford coat of arms in 1583. Over the years its use has gradually spread beyond the Stafford family and it has been adopted by commercial undertakings and other clubs and organisations. Several public houses have used it, sometimes calling it the Staffordshire Knot and even at times illustrating it incorrectly. The North Staffordshire Railway Company used it in the mid 19th Century as an emblem on its rolling stock, and the railway became known as the Knotty. Legend has it that the knot was devised by a thrifty Sheriff of Staffordshire to enable him to hang three men at one time using just the single rope, but there does not appear to be any evidence to support this story.

The knot is also known as a thumb knot, or more generally world-wide as

an overhand knot, although the French know it as the simple knot. It can be tied in the end of a rope as a stopper knot, or away from the end to give a grip. When tied around an article the overhand knot becomes the first half of the well known reef knot. Two Stafford or overhand knots tied together to join two lines form the Fisherman's knot which would have been used by Staffordshire's own Izaak Walton. Joined in a different way they would create a True Lovers Knot, and in yet another way they form Hunter's bend. This last named knot was feature in *The Times* newspaper in 1978 and was the catalyst which brought about several meetings leading to the formation of The International Guild of Knot Tyers in 1982. The Guild now has about 1,200 members worldwide and, needless to say its badge or logo is also a knot, in this case being a Turk's head knot. 

*This article by the late Maurice Smith<sup>IGKT</sup> originally appeared in The Staffordshire County Magazine. and is reproduced with kind permission of his widow, Pam.*

Robert H. Black -  
USA



I became interested in fancy rope work when I bought a small sail boat about ten years ago. I thought that I would never become a good sailor if I did not learn something about the men and ships during the great age of sail. In many of the books that I read, I noticed pictures of fancy rope work on ship's wheels, bell lanyards, mats and all manner of other decorations. Right then and there I decided to adorn my little craft in such a way that a seaman from the bygone days of sail could come aboard my little craft and feel right at home.

I stumbled on the IGKT quite by accident about six years ago. My first meeting was the 20th anniversary celebration in Fareham. Wow!

Did my eyes get opened to not only great knot work but to great people too. Life has never been the same since. I love to tell the seaman's story and what fancy rope work mean to these men.

I teach and write about fancy rope work at every opportunity. This past year, I have published several articles and produced five DVD's on the subject. In 2006, I will be publishing a DVD series for young people too. My goal is to do what ever I can to help keep this wonderful craft alive while helping others enjoy it.

## Photographs

### Key Fob with Tassels.

I use 3/32" lace, dyed to get the colours I want. I used a 4 strand braid (8 inches in length) to get the length. The ends covered with 4 bight gaucho knots, then any other knot combination that looks good to hold the folded assembly together. In this photo, I used twice passed Spanish rings and 7L x 6B Turk's heads with a Gaucho interweave.

### Key Fob Horsehair

This is one used to demonstrate what can be done with scraps left over from other projects. I take a strip of leather 1" wide and 4" long, stamped with simple stamping tools, dye it and fold it over around a bundle of horse hair. Then I add a twice-passed Spanish ring and Turk's heads with a Gaucho interweave for the final decoration.

### Light House Key Fobs

Material is 1.5mm mini blind cord of various colours. Beginning at the ring end - three strand braid folded to yield 6 strand Matthew Walker knot, star knot, twice passed crowning over a tapered piece of wood and finishing with a double diamond with under one - over one pattern.

### Ditty Bag Lanyard

Material - #36 cotton. The loop in the end is a Portuguese sennit covering the four strands that attach to the bag itself. Then 8 strands to do a twice passed crowning beginning in the centre of the handle working to each end. One end is finished with a double diamond (under one, over two, under one pattern) and the other end is the Ashley's #880 button with 8 strands. There is a Turk's head slide that is not shown.

### Bolo Tie

Material is Kangaroo leather. Overall braided length is 38" A four-strand braid is shown, but a 6 or 8 strand braid will also work well. The ends are covered with 7L x 6B Turk's head with a herringbone interweave and a contrasting colour. The slide is a 7L x 6B Turk's head with a Gaucho interweave. The matching bracelet is made from the same materials. Its length will vary with the person's wrist size. The ends are covered with the same knots as the bolo tie and the switch-backed braid is held together with twice passed Spanish ring knots (3L x 5B Turk's head).



# The work of Robert H. Black - USA

Below -  
Bolo Tie



Above -  
Lighthouse Key Fobs



Left -  
Key Fob with Tassels



Left -  
Key Fob Horsehair



Right -  
Ditty Bag Lanyard

# Rhubarb Hitch

*'Tuffy' Turner*


At one of our East Anglian Branch meetings, many of us gave a liberal interpretation of the topic for discussion "My first working knot", illustrating how we first came to an appreciation of what the Victorian tradesmen called the "art and mystery of our craft."

I talked of my early steel-erecting and rigging experiences in my mid-twenties, 40 years ago, when I worked with old sailors from both the Royal and Merchant Navy and learned the basics of knotting and splicing. I told how I had devised,

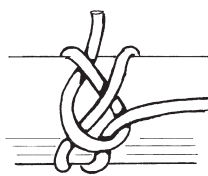
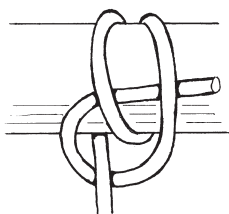
or rather stumbled upon what I have always called the rhubarb hitch, for want of a better name. I said I had never found it in any book until my wife bought me Ashley a few years ago, when I found it (#1684 on page 292) albeit not tied as I tie it. I would go back a page and start with what Ashley calls the studding-sail bend (#1678 on page 291). I too start with a fisherman's bend (really a hitch, of course) and take the working end back as usual under the two turns round the spar or whatever, and,

like Ashley, take the end back the other way over one and under one and out. However, I finish off by taking the turn under which the end passed out back over the turn the end has passed under. This makes the more attractive-looking hitch shown as #1684, my rhubarb hitch. It can be as easily tied by starting either under (as Ashley) or over the spar.

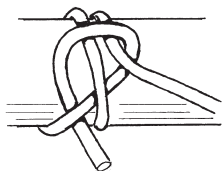
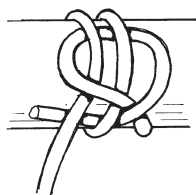
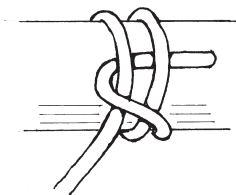
The rhubarb hitch is quite secure even without stopping or half-hitching the end to the standing part. It has the great virtue of being the least liable to jam I have ever used. Even two round turns and half-hitches cannot compare. I have won many pints of beer over the years by having several men pull on a rhubarb hitch, and then

untying it with my (now arthritic) fingers. The secret is that, the more weight hat is put on the standing part, the (slightly) more the bight, formed by the tucked end, opens. 

*Starting under spar (as Ashley #1678 & #1684)*



*Starting over spar*







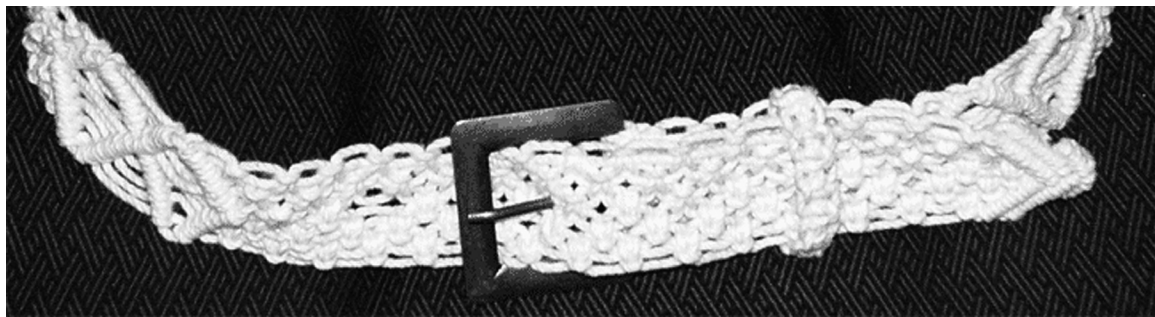
## Quadruple Monkey's Fist

Roger Fuller

After seeing the split or double monkey's fist in the last few issues of KM, I decided to try it myself, and produced a couple of nice ones, using the flattened layout method of Ashley #2207 which I determined was in fact the same knot. I then decided to try to split the cycles again and produced the quadruple monkey's fist in the photos. These were tied on various size wood balls. To make

it possible, I put eight small screws into the ball aligned with the radii of the ball passing through the corners of an imaginary cube just touching inside the ball. The screws keep the multiple strands of each cycle in position as the knot is tied and can be removed when the knot is done (or nearly done to get them out of the way). I find these knots more frustrating than

Turk's heads or the other globe or ball knots (like Ashley's #2216-#2219) since the knot must be tied with the full number of turns in each cycle as opposed to being tied as a single strand and followed around. If the monkey's fist you tie doesn't completely cover the object, you have to start over from zero, while on the other knots you can just follow it around again. 🌀



# A (very) rough Square-Knot Belt Tutorial

Vince Brennan

## The Belly Hook

It's called a bellyhook because when you're working in a standing position it's line goes around your waist and it sits in front of your belly. The belly hook can be any number of differing shapes, sizes and made of almost any stiff material.

It's purpose is to hold the standing or filler lines in tension when square-knotting so as to give you a firm base to make the square-knot and keep them all the same size. You could do the same thing with your toes (New Guinea natives making sennit routinely sit crosslegged and use the big toe for the same purpose) or by sitting on the line, or wrapping it around your beltbuckle.

One of the main components of a neat job is the tension applied to the filler lines as this controls the neatness of the knot. To hold the filler lines you'd need a third hand and that is really all the hook is... a third hand.

The simplest of all is formed by cutting the head off an old standard toothbrush, putting a notch in the shaft (at the end where you cut off the head) which is large enough to accept three or four lines but

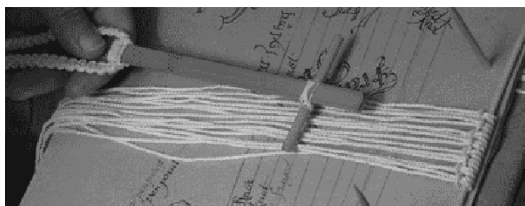


which narrows down to a point. Then just take the line into the notch and make a turn to hold it. The disadvantage is that this hook will handle at most two set of fillers.

More elaborate is my hook setup which is made of a 3/4" wide piece of bamboo with a four or five inch piece of a round chopstick lashed and glued to it about 1" from the end, forming a "cross" shape.

The best way to put line(s) onto this hook is just like making up to a cleat, without the locking turn(s): lead the line from the gripe, under the right arm, around the front of the upright, over and behind the left arm, around the front again and over and under the

right arm, and back around the left, with the second time going behind the upright (as shown). Holding your lines flat on the first pass will give you an easier working surface and the lines will "lock" themselves in quite securely.





### Making the Belt

I use an old rocking chair arm as a stanchion. To the arm I have lashed a  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " square piece of wood and to that lashed two upright large baking skewers. Another skewer skewered beneath those lashings allows me to have a clamp for work in progress. (1)



1

To begin a belt (for real), one would larks-head the number of lines to be used around the fixed end of the buckle, being sure that the tongue is in the proper position and that the larks heads are all facing up. Here I have done this direct to a skewer, since this is only a demonstration belt and have lashed that on top of a piece of cardboard to provide a focal plane as well as a bit of contrast for the pictures. (2)

Most belters will work in a standing position with the work level with their eyes and a long drop at their feet. I prefer to sit down. (2) Shows the larks-heading of the lines onto the skewer preparatory to starting the belt.



2

For a larks-head direct to the belt buckle attachment, measure out EIGHT times the desired length and then "middle" the line into the larks-head.

For a belt where you will be attaching a buckle at a later time, measure FOUR times the length of the belt for each line. Allow some extra for the work of attaching to the buckle (about a half-yard) and start your work FROM that allowance point. It's MUCH better to waste some material than to come up short!

Tip: #24 line used below, for which 16 lines gives approx  $1\frac{3}{8}$ " width belt. Smaller line will permit more sets across for the same width.  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " is about max normal width!

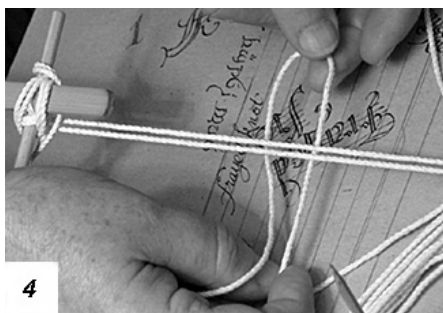


To start the belt, take ALL the lines in your RIGHT hand and drop the FIRST on the LEFT, then hold the next two and drop the FOURTH and FIFTH, drop the next two and so on, until you've reached the other side. (3)



Smooth all the lines from the gripe toward your belly and make them all up (as flat as possible) on your belly hook, just like you were making up to the pier. You want to get an equal (or nearly so) tension on all lines.

Right. Now, there are those who say the only way to make a square knot is to take the two lines and do the "Right Over Left" method, but I use the "Loop and Pull" method, which is much faster. Also, I don't get so confused by all those "lefts", "rights", "unders" and all that lot. (For picture clarity, and to preserve your (putative) sanity, I am only showing ONE set of filler cords!)



Take the line FOUR and make a loop UNDER lines TWO and THREE as shown in (4). Push the standing parts of line Four up around lines Two and Three and pull them through the bight you formed with the LEFT hand. This

should look like (5). If you don't get this part right, just stop and work at it until you do.



Now, take line ONE and pull it THROUGH the double bight formed when you completed the step above. Pull it completely through at this time (6).



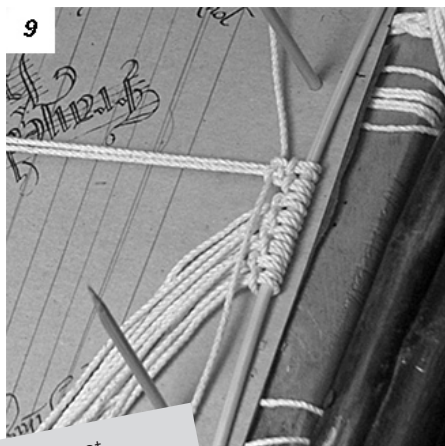
(7) Shows what you now should have after going through the previous gyrations.



(8) SNUG up the top part of the knot to the lark's head, then...







(9) SNUG up the bottom part and you've got the first of the many, many knots required to build the belt.

(10) When you reach the third

set, reverse the direction of the initial loop and you'll have a symmetrical set of knots.

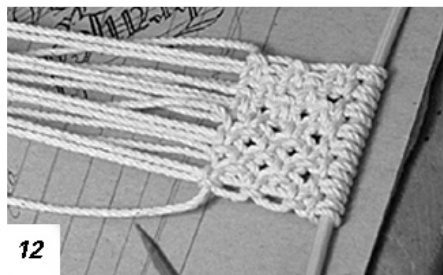


(11) Shows the first row of square knots with two facing to port and two facing to starboard. Note how the knots



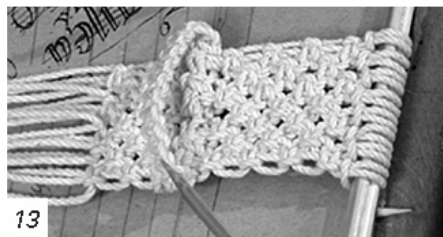
are formed: to either side of the filler cords there is one loop facing UP and one loop facing DOWN: The UP loop determines the orientation of the knot, so an UP loop to the RIGHT is 'facing' STARBOARD and an UP loop to the LEFT is 'facing' PORT.

The next row is made by dropping lines one, two and three, picking up four and five, dropping six and seven, picking up eight and nine, etc., until you have 3 pair of standing parts. Start the knot row as described previously, but reverse direction at the second set. Again, this gives you a "common theme" for the belt of 2L/2R; 1L/2R; 2L/2R and so on.



### Making the Belt Loop

You're going to want to put a belt loop on the belt about five or six rows from where you cast onto the buckle... this retains the tongue if you're wearing pants with only a few loops on them and also is just a nice detail.

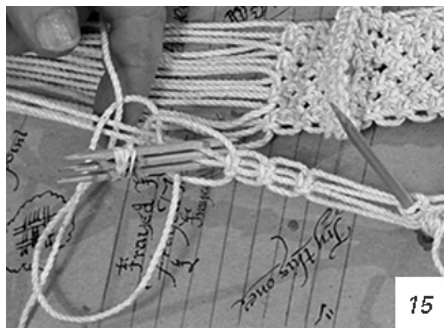


Usually, ten or eleven knots in a row of whatever material you may be using for the belt will give ample clearance for a second thickness of belt to slip inside it easily. I prefer to have too large a loop as

opposed to one that you have to fight with to get the tongue into it. In the #24 size line used in these belts, I like to start by using two and four toothpick spacers to create a space for the belt to go through and secure the loop to the belt.



(14) Starting the loop itself, allow about four inches of line and put an overhand knot in all four lines, then put one square knot about an inch from the overhand and pull it up snug but not real tight... you'll need to untie this one later on. Use a four-toothpick spacer and put it on as shown.



Bring both working lines outboard the spacer as shown and make one square knot behind it, bringing this knot up **TIGHT** to the back of the spacer. (15)

Move the spacer and do another of these, then use a two-toothpick spacer and make one more square knot. These should all (except the first) be nice and tight.

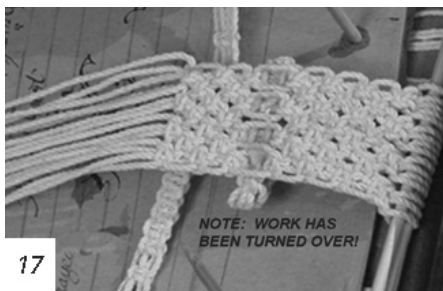
Now do a row of ten or eleven knots, one right on the other, all tight, then



use the two-toothpick spacer, knot, the four-toothpick spacer twice and you'll basically have a "mirror image" of the other end. Again, the last knot should be snug but not tight. (16)

Check for width across the belt... you should have two extra knots (or three in really small material) projecting beyond the edge of the belt to give it an "arch" when it's completed.

Time for some fun. Turn the entire belt over so that you're now working on the **BACK** of the belt.



You'll be taking the standing or filler pairs and passing them through the loops formed by the four-toothpick spacers. The loop formed by the two-toothpick spacer will act as a "hinge" to allow the loop to fold easily.

(18) This shows one filler pair as it comes through the top of the spacer loop. Cross the next two lines and then tuck it through so that it comes out just like it went in. Do this with all four sets of fillers in all four spacer loops. Once you've got all four sets of fillers threaded through the spacer loops, you'll make a square knot below each one to continue the belt fabric and lock in the belt loop.



TIP: Decapitate a toothpick and then cut a shallow notch in the (now flat) end, sort of a "VEE".... use this to 'poke' lines through tight spaces.

Bring your knots up snug but do not over-tighten... check to see you have a fairly straight line of knots when you've done all four. While this will be hidden by the tongue of

the belt, a neat job is a neat job, after all, (nearly done, now.)

OK Now that you've got the knots snugged up and you're ready to go on with the belt, you just have that great lot of line to deal with. Either untie the square knot in the loop end or just cut the line short as shown. (19)



Trim off these lines carefully, so as not to cut anything else. The real goal here is to cut the lines so that they almost meet each other, just as though they were a continuous line.

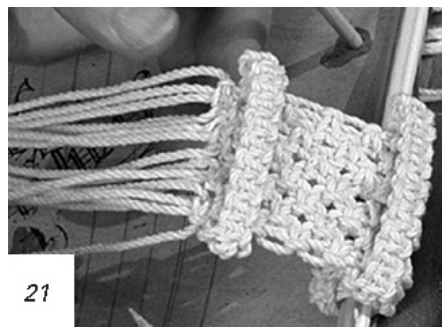
I get this about one-in-three but usually I have a gap... no disaster, that's why God made methacrylate. Put your glue on the lines where they run across the belt and use just enough to secure these lines to

the lines they cross... don't go crazy with the "Crazy Glue" and you'll probably not even see the glue discoloration on the "working" side of the belt.



If you wind up with sharp points from the glue, you can take an emery-board (DON'T steal your wife or girlfriend's nail board.... buy one for yourself unless you want to sing soprano!) and smooth off the sharper points and rough surfaces. Works like a dream, but don't overdo it.

Belt loop all finished and ready to go. Continue with the belt. (21)

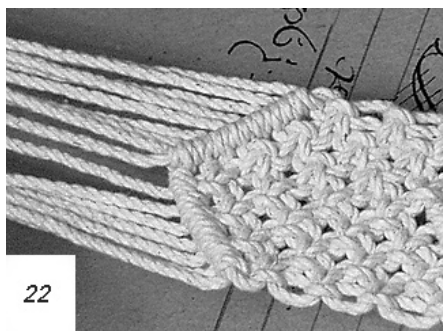


That's it for the basic belt. Just keep on knotting in rows; remember to do the pattern.

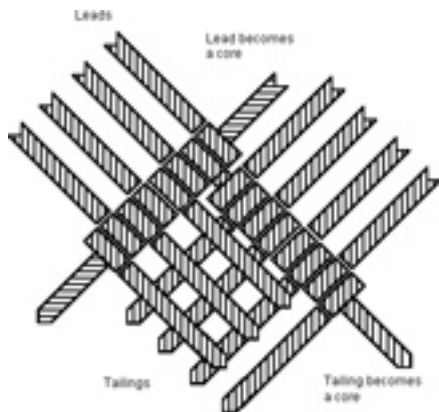
When you get to the end of however long you want the belt to be, knot 4 across, knot 3 across, knot two across and knot the last centre one for a point.

Basically you will be making a simple overhand hitch (half hitch) around a "core" line and you'll note that each set





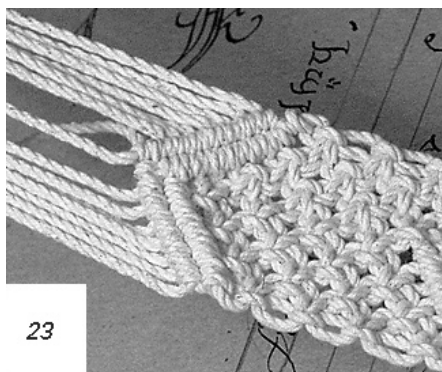
of two hitches forms a clove hitch. A very basic schematic of the hitch as it looks from the front of the work. From this little sketch you can see the parts of the half-hitches: two half-hitches around a core and the remainder of the line from the hitches is the tailing.



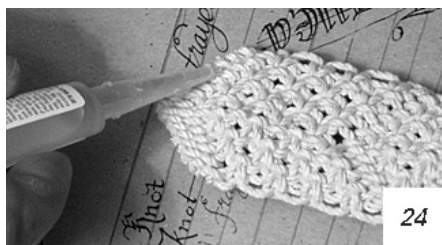
The “lead” comes UNDER the core and around and over the top, then goes behind the core ABOVE the lead and comes out underneath. When you do two of these in a row you wind up with a clove hitch with the crossing part underneath the core and the turns showing in the

front of the work.

(23) Second row added



Once the lines have been trimmed you can varnish the back of the belt-tip or use methacrylate (SPARINGLY!) on the back of the tip to keep it from coming apart. (24)



Note: methacrylate, even the “clear” type, as well as varnish and most other glues/finishes will change the colour of the material, so do it only on the back of the tip and then only use just enough to hold it. 🍷

**CLEANING:** Hand-wash in cold water, (A light scrub-brush is just fine but try not to attack the belt too harshly!), rinse in a 10% solution of white vinegar and water and hang out on a line to dry IN THE SHADE!

*In the next issue, Vince will explain how to create a pattern. For the complete tutorial, visit:*  
[www.frayedknotarts.com](http://www.frayedknotarts.com)

## The Application of Knots in an Indian Context

Satish Patki

This knot employed by the Indian farmers for tying the mouths of their cows and bullocks.

Both the triangular knots appear to be the same on the obverse side.


However the left knot is a three part crown in the bight (ABOK #1097) and the right knot is a typical Indian knot yet to be found by me in any of the books. The loop on the left hand side and the two ends on

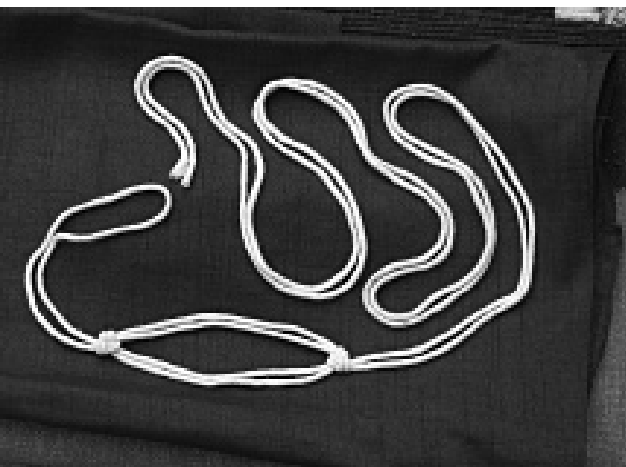


*Obverse*



*Reverse*

the right go around the neck and are fastened together. The mouth of the cattle goes through the central eye of the knot and the two triangular knots adorn the cheeks. 



# An Alternative Technique for Tying the Sennit Knot

Dick Clements

In their article *Knots for Climbers* (*Alpine Journal*, vol 40, 1928) C E I Wright and J E Magowan introduced a new bend which they called the sennit knot. The bend is an attractively symmetric bend. However, the tying method given in their article, shown also by Geoffrey Budworth in his recent article (KM 88), is, I believe, sufficiently complex and unmemorable as to discourage the use of the sennit knot. This article presents a simpler and more easily memorable tying method.

Fig 1



Start by forming a whatnot as shown in figure 1. Now swap the two working ends to obtain the alternative form of the whatnot shown in figure 2. Grasp the two loops, one in either hand, and rotate the righthand loop through  $180^\circ$  anticlockwise by rotating the right wrist towards you so obtaining the form shown in figure 3.

Fig 2



Cross over the two working ends as shown by the full lines in figure 4 - it's easy to remember which way to cross them because it's the natural order in which they'll cross after you twist the righthand loop. Finally tuck the working ends through the two loops parallel to the two standing parts as shown by the dotted lines in figure 4. You now have the knot as illustrated in figure 5.

Fig 3

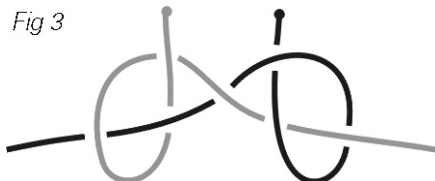
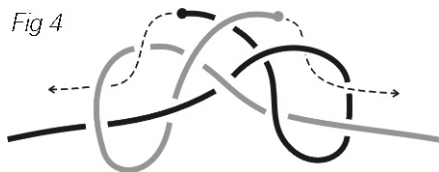




Fig 4



Finally, to work the knot tight, grasp the paired working ends and standing parts and pull firmly away from each other to place the knot under tension. Now, to complete the tightening, first pull firmly on the two working ends (this will deform the bend into a tight ball which is

Fig 5




not the final form of the bend) and finally take the two standing parts and place the knot under full tension. The knot will then extend a little to look like figure 6.

The sennit knot is a flat and compact

bend whose working ends naturally fall tidily parallel to the standing parts. The knot is also secure (resistant to loosening under intermittent load and/or vibration). It is relatively easy to cast off even after it has been under great tension - grasp the paired working end and standing part of one cord close to the knot and push firmly back through the end loop formed in the opposite cord. Repeat this with the other paired working end and standing part. The knot will now be sufficiently loosened to enable it to be worked slack and untied.

The sennit knot is easily learnt and remembered using the method described. It is an attractive knot which is readily identified and it is also easy to recognise that it has been tied correctly. This bend deserves to be better known and more widely used.

### References

Budworth, G, The Reeve and Sennit Knots, *Knotting Matters* 88, 2004, pp4-6  
 Wright, C E I and Magowan, J E, Knots for Climbers, *Alpine Journal*, vol 40, 1928, pp120-141 

## The Cobbler Should Stick to His Last

The distinguished 20th century geochemist Victor Moritz Goldschmidt was rumoured to carry a capsule of potassium cyanide, when planning his escape from Nazi Germany, with which to commit suicide if he failed and was captured. When a friend in the engineering department of their academic institution expressed his interest in doing the same, Goldschmidt is said to have replied, 'Cyanide is for professors of chemistry; but you, my friend, are a professor of mechanics and must carry a rope'.

(from *EUREKAS AND EUPHORIAS* The Oxford Book of Scientific Anecdotes, by Walter Gratzer, published [2002] by Oxford University Press)

## Ray's Jib Sheet Knot

George Aldridge

At a Waterways event, at which the London Knot Tyers were exhibiting, I was approached by Ray Buksh who, explained that he was involved with teaching sailing, also as a Scout leader. He asked if I would be interested in seeing a knot that he had invented, or discovered.

My first thought was, oh, not another new knot! But as he demonstrated the knot and explained how it was used as an adjustable jib sheet knot (in place of the rolling hitch), its usefulness is in the fact that it is easily adjusted. It allows the dinghy to be sailed single-handed; I began to see the value of the knot.

I have not seen this knot before, although I confess I have not checked all the pages in Ashley.

It can be used in the slipped version by tucking a bight instead of the end, and is even being used by Scouts for guy lines, and even as a 'not-so-safe' bowline.

Has anyone seen this knot before? It is similar to a few knots in Ashley, but not the same. I would be interested in comments from readers. 🌀

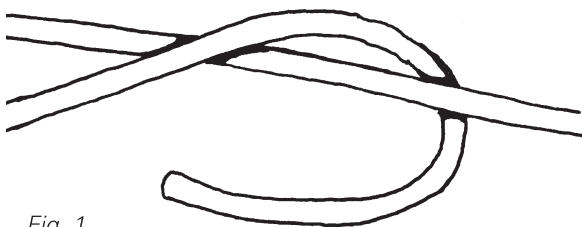


Fig. 1

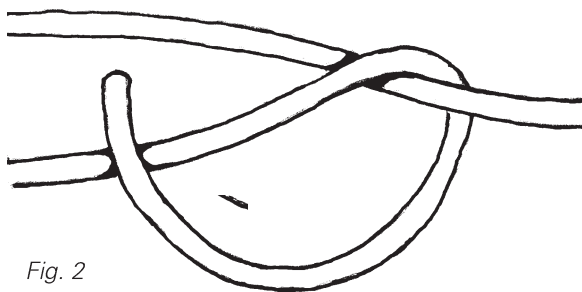


Fig. 2

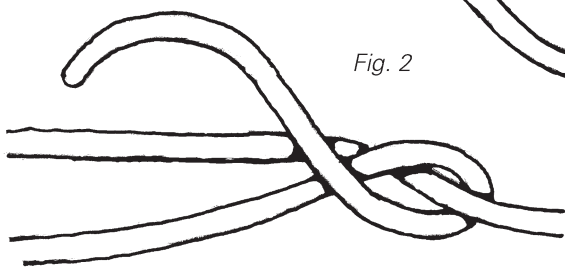


Fig. 3

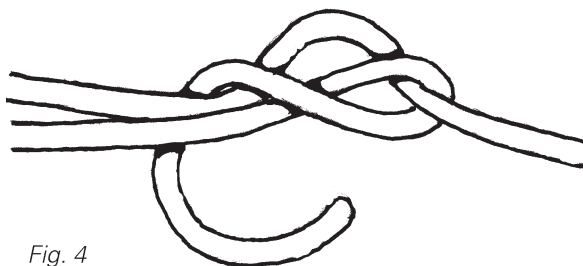


Fig. 4

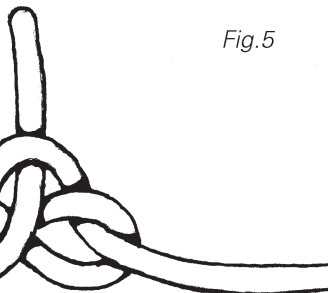


Fig. 5

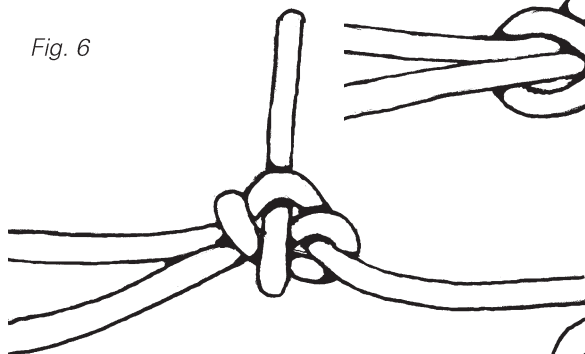


Fig. 6

Easily adjusted when loose (Fig. 5). Locks when tightened (Fig. 6)

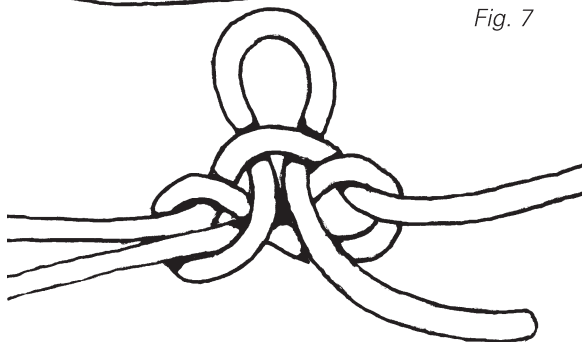


Fig. 7

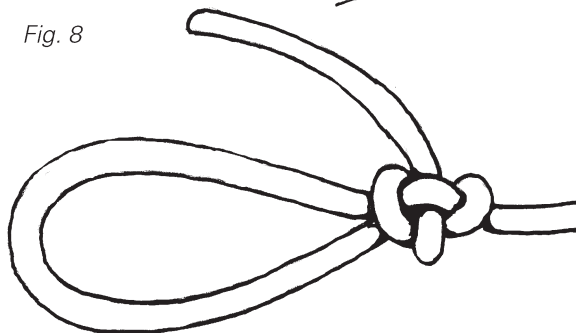
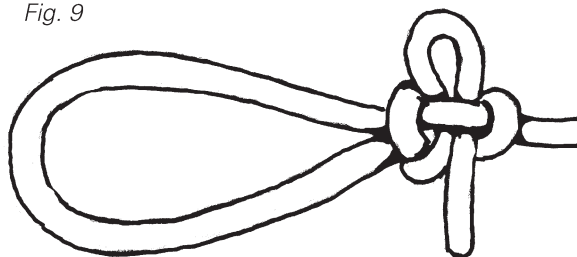


Fig. 8

As a bowline. As adjustable mooring lines (Fig.s 8 and 9).

Fig. 9



As a slip knot, which can be locked.

The knot can be used as a rolling hitch (Figs. 10 and 11). To loosen again, and for undoing, just pull down on the ears.

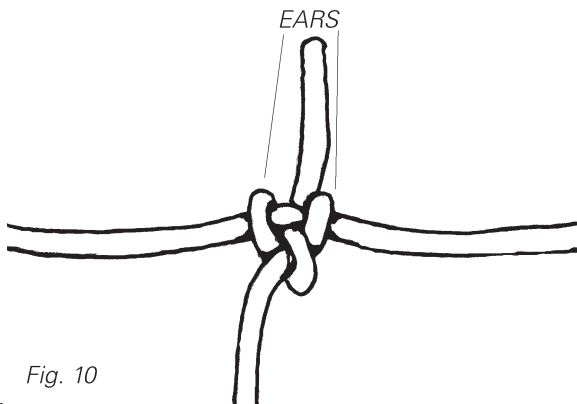


Fig. 10

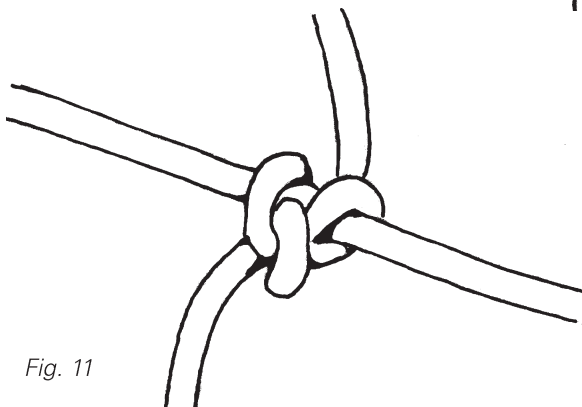


Fig. 11

The knot is extensively used for adjustable guy ropes and tying jib sheets on sailing dinghies.

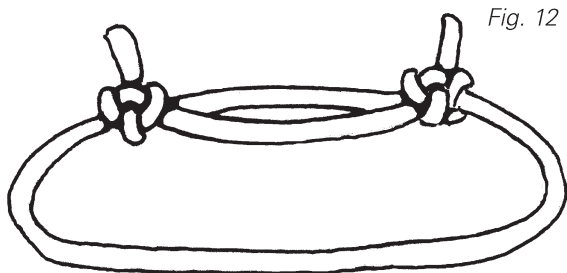


Fig. 12

# Ram Head Knots

Heinz Prohaska

**K**notting Matters 84 published an article on the Hanson patent knot [1]. Drawing 12 showed the Hanson bend (fig. 1). The patent was awarded Hanson in 1987.

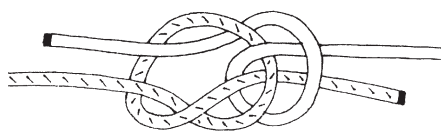


Fig. 1 Hanson bend  
(ram head knot)

The author had the idea in the mid seventies. The matter was as follows: The double fisherman's knot doesn't come undone, but it is difficult to make untied after use. The behaviour of the Carrick bend is contrary. The problem was to develop a knot consisting of half a double fisherman's knot and half a Carrick bend in order to connect the advantages of both. The best solution was the double ram head knot (fig. 2). The simple way of making it untied is explained in fig. 3.

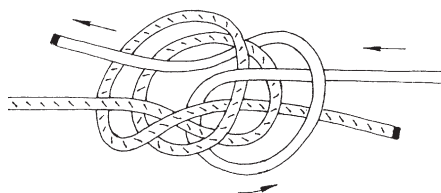


Fig. 2  
Double ram head knot

One of the variations studied within the scope of this development was based on a simple fisherman's knot instead of the double one.

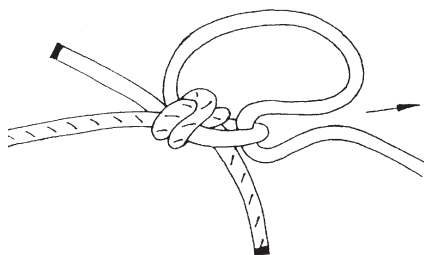



Fig. 3  
Making untied the double ram head  
knot

This variation is identical with the later Hanson bend. It's a little smaller than the double ram head knot, but in smooth and/or stiff ropes less safe.

As said above, the work was made in the mid seventies. The double ram head knot was published in a German mountaineering magazine in 1977 [2]. Sorry, Mr Hanson.

## References

- [1] Anonymous: The Hanson Patent Knot. *Knotting Matters* No. 84, 9/2004, pp18-21.
- [2] Prohaska, Heinz: Wichtige Knoten. *Der Bergsteiger*, 4/1977, pp245-246. 

# Knot To Be Slipped At

Owen K Nuttall

Most bends can be classified as safe by being recognised or just look safe. The crucial test is whether on tightening the knot, its capability can be assessed. By tying Fig. 1 it is quite obvious that this knot is dangerous as a secure bend.

Yet two slip knots joined together face to face can be very secure, and unlike a lot of bends is relatively easy to untie.

To me best bends fall into four categories  
 1 - Easy to tie  
 2 - Secure when tied  
 3 - Easy to untie  
 4 - Bonus if it looks good



Fig. 1

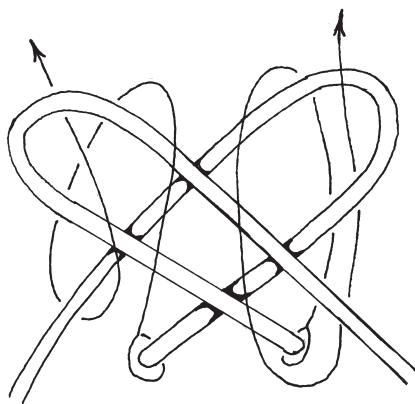



Fig. 2

The three slip knot bends are not easy to pull into shape. The knots two and three fall into what the late Harry Asher called Broach knots. Number four shows how the two slip knots are joined together more easily than the first two. When these slip knot bends are pulled up very tightly, they are very secure and can be undone quite easily.

I don't recommend them for serious bends in rope. To me the three slip knot bends are just an experiment, do not take some knots on face value. Knots are like shape shifters, they can turn into other knots. The late Desmond Manderville was an expert at this type of knot work with his Trambles. 

Have fun





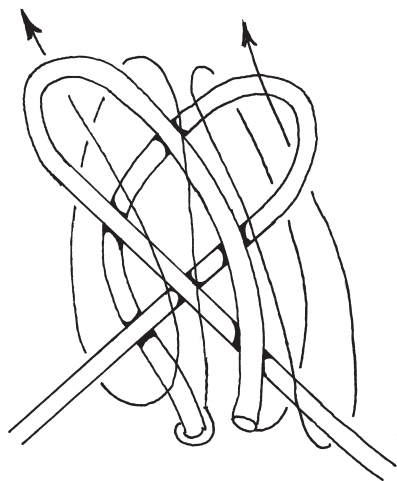


Fig. 3

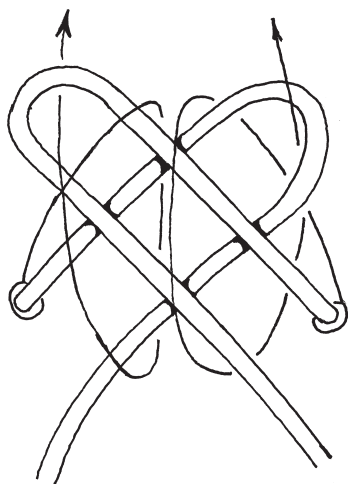
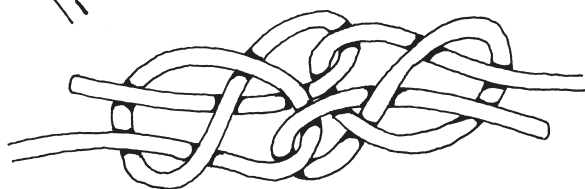


Fig. 4



4

*The two slip knots interlinked*



# Branch Lines

## West Yorkshire

Last November we held a meeting with a theme of "Mats and Macramé" and despite the fact that we had inadvertently clashed with Remembrance Sunday we still had around twenty attending. We are attracting people from even further away as we had a member visiting from the Solent Branch. No names given as he may be a traitor to the Solent or he may have been sent as a spy. We had Bill Meakin to give a talk and demonstration on interwoven mats, he is dry in his humour and very willing to explain his techniques.

For our macramé we requested a Lancastrian to visit (People who know about the War of the Roses will know that this is not done lightly) Sue Morris is the most prominent member in the north who specialises in macramé and gave a very well planned and informative talk. Whilst these meetings started out primarily for West Yorkshire members there are a lot of people attending from outside the area and I reiterate that all

members are welcome. Our next meeting is on 19th March 2006, the theme being "Splices & Stopper Knots". Any enquiries regarding this meeting, please contact Graham Smith 01484-846785, or [graham@getnotted.org.uk](mailto:graham@getnotted.org.uk)  
**David Pearson**

## West Country Knotters

Our first meeting of 2006 was held on Saturday 28th January, between 1pm and 4.30pm, in the Almondsbury Scout HQ, just a kilometre or two from the M4/M5 junction to the west of Bristol. Seventeen members came from as far away as Cornwall, South Wales, Wiltshire and the United States of America (Jim and Cindy Wolf, here in the UK courtesy of the US Navy). Many of us dutifully clutched Chinese plafond knots which we had tied from illustrations in the newsletter notifying us of the meeting.

A brief business agenda was smoothly dispatched by our able yet unassuming Chairman (Vernon Hughes), assisted

by his Hon. Secretary (Derwent 'Tug' Shipp) and Hon. Treasurer (Richard Hopkins). An informal exchange of news and views from the members included discussion of a possible knotting commitment at Lulworth Castle in Dorset, future fund-raising, and our commitment to continued involvement in the national affairs of the Guild (including its silver jubilee celebrations in 2007).

An interval for tea or coffee was all the better for coconut cakes and cheesy bits made and donated by Christine Haines, after which we viewed the exhibition of members' decorative knot work (notably this time from 'Tug' and Eddie Maidment).

The highlight of the afternoon, however, was a workshop by Christine and Jonathon Haines on making fancy key fobs. Their preparation and planning had resulted in a travelling boxed display board consisting of prefabricated step by step stages leading to the completed product, all of which could be detached, handed round and studied close up. They had also produced an instruction booklet, illustrated in colour, featuring lists of the requisite knots,

tools and materials, tying techniques, as well as contact details for cordage supplier KJK Ropeworks (proprietor: Kevin Keatley<sup>IGKT</sup>). Copies of this were sold at the cost price of £1.00 each.

Everything needed was provided, from cordage and thimbles to mandrels (or formers) on which the knots would be tied. Nothing had been overlooked. Several determined souls sat down to attempt, with Jonathon's guidance, the actual tying of key fobs, while the rest of us gathered round to observe and absorb the techniques.

Christine and Jonathon also handed round a catalogue from the firm of Proops Bro's Ltd. of Fleckney, Leicester, England, which included the universal work-holders (catalogue numbers H4069 [with presentation case], H4070 [nylon] and H4071 [aluminium]) which a number of Guild members use as jigs for tying monkeys' fists of various sizes and in large numbers. Vernon, who is no mean wood-turner, showed us a prototype for a different monkey's fist jig he has designed to sit atop the solid sinnet braiding tables produced and described by him in KM65, Winter 1999.

So, one way or another, it was an enjoyable, illuminating and worthwhile day out.  
*by our SW England stringer*

### ***Pacific Americas***

**I**t is very odd experience to administer a branch which is geographically so large, over 3400 miles from our most northern member to our most southern member. We don't even want to address longitude... Mid Pacific to East Central USA. The distances are so vast that I will never meet even half of my membership. Yet to subdivide by geography would leave us a membership of "one" in many sub branches, not a good idea. Thanks must therefore go to our *Knot News* editor, Joe Schmidbauer, for holding us together on paper so that every member has a connection with the Guild. My thanks also go to Lindsey Philpott for being the defacto president in California and helping to keep the Southern members active.

I really could post our whole member roster for "special thanks", for although we are far apart on the face of the earth we are linked in the spirit of knotting. I get E-notes and snail letters from many members and can say that the branch is alive

and well!

Here, in Washington State, just below the 49th parallel, it has been a long, dark, wet, winter. Yes, I know many IGKT members are far closer to the pole. We are just far enough North to have very long nights and just far enough South to be required to do all the day to day tasks.. only now in the dark and wet. Our summer is the season of shows and events and public exposure. This last quarter has provided us with no opportunities to be "out and about". Personal triumphs have been many. New skills, new posting to the electronic sites, new papers hatched for future publication... good times all... but nothing to post here.

I did have a fellow member visit my home... the first since I joined IGKT-PAB about nine years ago. That was quite an experience; to have someone else in my knot loft so like minded that we could just sit chat about the rope and forget clocks and food.

It is the separation of geography that makes IGKT and IGKT-PAB so valuable to me. Without the Guild I'd still think I were the only person keeping these skills alive!  
*Roy Chapman*

# 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.

## Any relation?

George Russell Shaw dedicated his book *Knots Ornamental & Useful*, first published in 1924 (reprinted 1933 and 1973), to his brother Robert Gould Shaw. Can a KM reader tell me if he was related to the heroic 26-year-old Colonel Robert Gould Shaw who in 1863 led the 54th Massachusetts regiment of volunteer black soldiers in the historic but ill-fated charge on Fort Wagner where he and many of his men met their deaths? We knottologists need all the knot lore we can discover.  
Geoffrey Budworth  
Salisbury, Wiltshire, UK

## Reever and Sennit

In *The Reeve and Sennit Knots* (KM-88, p.4) Geoffrey Budworth states that "The Reeve knot is obviously identical with the Vice Versa devised by the late Harry Asher." In fact, the vice versa has one of its standing parts and end reversed, with both ends

emerging from the same side of the knot instead of diagonally opposite each other as they do in the reeve. Following the lines as they double back at the knot's ends, one of the vice versa's lines crosses over itself and the other line crosses under itself, while in the reeve both lines cross over. Thus the pull on both standing parts is symmetrical for the reeve, but not for the vice versa. Unsurprisingly, the reeve, being symmetric, is the better knot. Un-tuck both ends and it remains an excellent (double harness) bend. Do the same with the vice versa and it falls apart.

Rudi Petschek  
Nevada City, California, USA

## Suit of Cards

In KM75 [June 2002], Richard Hopkins mentioned a 15th Century pack of playing cards, the suit symbols for which were "horns, dog collars, double nooses and ropes". He hadn't been able to find an illustration. I recently did so. These cards are on display in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and there is a picture on their website. To find it open [www.metmuseum.org/](http://www.metmuseum.org/) and enter, then go to The Cloisters and view

highlights. On the next page, click on the collection highlights. The cards are the last item, number 48, so view in sixes, not singly, and go to page 8.

The museum has not unreasonably chosen to show the whole set of cards, but at the expense of detail. There is supposed to be a zoom feature, but mine didn't work. However, the whole thing is about hunting [i.e. the "dog collars" are nothing to do with the clergy]. The "double nooses" are said to be hound tethers. In neither case could I see any knot structure.

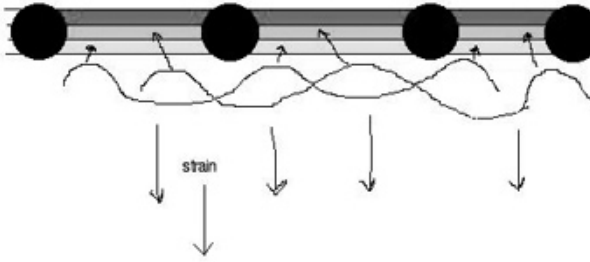
Any knot historian who really wants to know about this stuff may have to visit New York or ask someone to look on their behalf.

Robin Gray  
Ascot, Berkshire, UK

## Hammock Edges

I am hoping you can help me. I am trying to make a Mayan style hammock. I kind of have the sprang weave figured out, but the hammock sides are eluding me.

I need to join three lines in such a way that they will take strain perpendicular to the lines and not shift or unravel. I looked in three knot



books, and on the net, but I am not finding how to do this.

I have tried playing with three lines, just to see what I would get by doing a 3-way "repeat" (don't know what to call it), and I got something that looks like a Turk's head, but I don't think it will take the perpendicular strain well.

Can you give me some clues as to what direction or name of knot I should be looking for, or suggest who to ask?

The big black circles are the unknown tying I seek.

Robert Dye

Muskogee, Oklahoma, USA

### Stockholm Tar

Stockholm Tar is pure organic substance derived from old pine roots. It was shown how it was made in *Ray Mears Bushcraft* series on T.V. in the episode on Sweden. Old pine roots are dug up and cooked in a kiln, when the kiln reaches 430 degrees centigrade

a tarry substance runs off. It is then collected in a container. In the past it was used for waterproofing boats and used for prolonging the life of ships rigging. It was also used as a mosquito repellent and as an antiseptic (Ray used it for making a hand made pair of skis waterproof). If you cannot wait for the repeat on TV you will find it in Ray Mears latest book on *Bushcraft*. Hope this is of some use to Alan Hemmings.

Owen K Nuttall

Huddersfield, W Yorkshire,

### Stockholm Tar - Finally

Long interesting phone calls and letters have come from members in the UK, Sweden and the USA. Thanks, this shows the benefit of being a member of the IGKT.

The problem now is not where to get my tar, but how. 'Flamable liquids, paints, varnishes' - the Royal Mail can't carry

them. Finally though, I managed to obtain it from an equestrian supplier!

Alan Hemmings

Sherbourne, Dorset, UK

### Snelling a Hook

I was given *The Handbook of Knots* by Des Pawson for Christmas

In this book is a knot that binds a line to a hook, and is called "Snelling a Hook"

Do you or your colleges have any information on the naming of this knot or its origination.

As you can tell from my surname I find this very intriguing

Keith Snelling

Via Email

### Knotting Matters

I recently did a display/talk in the Ropery at Chatham Dockyard, and one of the guides asked me if I knew who had left a number of *Knotting Matters* behind presumably from the meeting at Chatham. They are numbers 35-73 and were in a plastic bag. I will keep them until someone claims them (or after a period of time, try to find a good home for them)

Derek Chipperfield

Gillingham, Kent, UK

# Knotting Diary

## GUILD MEETINGS

### 24th AGM

13th May 2006  
Lord Hill Hotel, Shrewsbury  
Contact: Alex Carson  
Tel: 01743 356466  
Email: geoknot@msn.com

### Half-Yearly Meeting

14th October 2006  
France  
Contact: Graham macLachlan  
Tel: 0033 233 076 704  
Email: igktfrance@club-internet.fr

### France

IGKT France AGM  
2nd April at 1000 hrs.  
Contact : Graham macLachlan  
Tel: 0033 233 076 704  
Email: igktfrance@club-internet.fr

## BRANCH MEETINGS

### UK

#### East Anglian Branch

8th April 2006  
Museum of East Anglian Life,  
Stowmarket, Suffolk  
Contact: John Halifax  
Tel: 01502 519123  
Email:  
john@endeavour-knots.freemove.co.uk

#### 4th Annual East Anglian Meeting

3rd June, 2006 from 10.30am  
Buffet lunch at 12 noon  
Eaton Cottage, High Street,  
Thornham, Norfolk PE36 6LY  
All Welcome, possibility of camping ,  
please check.  
Contact: Duncan Bolt  
Tel: 01485 512508

### Midlands Branch

10th April & 10th June, 2006  
The Old Swan (Ma Pardoe's),  
Halesowen Road, Halesowen  
Contact: Bruce Turley  
Tel: 0121 453 4124  
Email: bruce.turley@blueyonder.co.uk

### North West Branch

19th-20th August 2006  
Quarry Bank Mill, Styal, Nr. Manchester  
Contact: Dave Walker  
Tel: 01244 682117

### Solent Branch

11th April 2006  
The Traveller's Rest Inn,  
Newtown, (Nr Wickham, Hants)  
Contact: Gordon Perry  
Tel: 023 9259 2808  
Email: GORDON5463@aol.com

### Surrey Branch

3rd April & 5th June 2006  
Guildford District Scout Centre,  
Nightingale Road, Guildford  
Contact: Peter Goldstone  
Tel: 01483 763045  
Email: goldstonepg@aol.com

### West Country Knotters

7th May & 9th July 2006  
Almondsbury Scout Hall, Almondsbury,  
Nr. Bristol  
Contact: 'Tug' Shipp  
Tel: 01275 847438  
Email: tugshipp@tiscali.co.uk

### Non-UK Branches

#### Alaskan

Every Wednesday evening 6.30-8.00  
Anchorage Senior Center  
1300 East 19th Avenue, Alaska  
Contact: Mike Livingstone  
Tel: 907 929 7888



### **Netherlands**

29th April, 27th May, 24th June 2006  
*De Hoop*, Nr Rotterdam Maritime  
Museum, Rotterdam  
Contact: Jan Hoefnagel  
Tel: 078 614 6002

### **Pacific Americas**

11th April, 9th May, 13th June 2006  
Los Angeles Maritime Museum,  
San Pedro, California  
Contact: Joe Schmidbauer  
Tel: (909) 737 4948  
Email: koolkatz@prodigy.net

## **EVENTS**

### **UK**

#### **Skipton Canal Festival**

29th April 2006  
Contact David Pearson  
Tel: 0113 2572689  
Email: wayzgoose\_uk@yahoo.co.uk

#### **Crick Boat Show**

Crick Marina, Northants  
27th - 29th May 2006  
Contact: Colin Grundy  
Tel: 07946841157  
Email: colin.grundy1@btinternet.com

#### **Solent Branch**

8th - 9th June 2006  
Queen Elizabeth Country Park,  
Butser Hill, Hampshire  
Contact: Ken Yalden  
Tel: 02392 259280  
Email: ken.yalden@igkt.freemove.co.uk

#### **Middlewich Folk and Boat Festival**

17th-18th June 2006  
Middlewich, Cheshire  
Contact: Dave Walker  
Tel: 01244 682117

#### **Stainforth Canal Festival**

24th June (provisional date)  
Contact David Pearson  
Tel: 0113 2572689  
Email: wayzgoose\_uk@yahoo.co.uk

### **WoW - Wild over Water**

24th-25th June 2006  
The Boat Museum, Ellesmere Port,  
Cheshire  
Contact: Dave Walker  
Tel: 01244 682117

### **Braunston Historic Boat Show**

24th-25th June 2006  
Braunston Marina, Northants  
Contact: Colin Grundy  
Tel: 07946841157  
Email: colin.grundy1@btinternet.com

### **Saul Canal Festival**

30th June - 2nd July 2006  
Saul, Near Frampton on Severn,  
Gloucestershire  
Contact: Ken Nelson  
Tel: 0783 6722198  
Email: knotnut@vodafone.net

### **Non-UK**

#### **French Knotting Day.**

Saint-Malo, Brittany.  
1st April 2006.  
Set up in the morning, open to the public  
in the afternoon 1400-1800 hrs.  
Mairie annexe de Paramé,  
Place du Prieuré, 35400 SAINT-MALO.  
Contact : Graham macLachlan  
Tel: 0033 233 076 704  
Email: igktfrance@club-internet.fr

#### **German IGKT-Members Meeting**

30th June - 2nd July 2006  
Exhibition and Displays of Ropework in  
Kressbronn-Gohren at beautiful Lake  
Constance, Germany  
Contact: Peter Willems  
Email: peter@fancyworks.de

### **Australia - Advance Notice**

9th - 12th February 2007  
Australian Wooden Boat Festival  
Hobart, Tasmania  
Opportunity for Australian IGKT members  
to meet - visitors welcome  
Contact: Frank Brown  
Email: frank\_brown@bigpond.com

