

Knotting Matters

The Magazine of the International Guild of Knot Tyers



Issue 97
December 2007

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Knotting Matters

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Knotting Matters

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Issue 97 - December 2007

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COVER PHOTOGRAPH

A festive offering from UK member Sue Morris

Back Cover

Theo Slijkerman wishes all members a happy New Knotyear



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Knots from the Mousepad

Once again, Colin is reminding me that its time to do my bit. Where does the time go? I must admit I enjoy being the Hon. Sec., I get to hear about all the activities that are going on in the Guild. One minute I am making fenders in my workshop on a dull, cold, wet January day, then its soaking up the warm May sunshine with some knotting friends that I have not seen since the 20th "bash" at Fareham. Throw in a couple of canal festivals, not including the Inland Waterways Festival at St Ives, Cambridgeshire. Yes there was 12 inches of mud outside the tent. I have a photo of our Treasurer, Linda, making her way through it to our tent. I seem to have spent most of the time speaking to the IWA organiser's and receiving, on behalf of the team that turned up, their thanks for putting on such a large entertaining informative display. Many Guild members attended the festival and it was nice to talk to them. It did not seem long before the October meeting was on us. This year it was held on my home ground, Quarry Bank Mill, just outside Manchester. This was a well supported meeting and it was open to the public. It got quite crowded at times. It's very easy to book a room and lay out a couple of dozen tables; the hard bit is putting all those displays together. I would like to thank the local members who helped especially Paul Wright and Sue Morris and all the Guild members who turned up at the venue and displayed their

craft to everyone. Now we are close to the November budget meeting and the Council is planning for next year. If next year is half as good as this year, then I can't wait.

One last piece, there is a mistaken rumour that the Guild pays *Towpath Talk* to have our knotting articles in their paper. Wrong. They pay the Guild (several hundred pounds so far) May I give the Guild's thanks to Christina Ruth for raising the Guilds profile in this way.

Happy Knotting,
Dave Walker

Ewa Thormählen



Presidents Letter

Just recently, I received two handwritten letters, which was a pleasant reminder that not everyone is dependent on modern technology. So as ever I got to thinking that we must be mindful of how we communicate. This magazine is a classic example of just how it should be done, so please make sure that if you have something to say we can all get the benefit of your thoughts and knowledge, therefore continuing in our journey through life receiving and passing on information.

I have noticed an increase in people's attention as to how we are to pass on the skills of knot tying, so well done to those concerned. But now I have to point out our next step in securing the future of the Guild itself. In the same way that the governments of countries, counties and towns have leaders and supporters, we in the Guild also have leaders and supporters. First at the Executive Council level in the UK and then reflected in all our branches throughout the Guild. Leadership is a combination of personality and training, and in my time as 'Chairman' of the Guild I found the true meaning of the word 'Chair-man' in that you get there first, get all the chairs out,..... then the tables, then you 'Chair' the meeting after which you then stay late and put every thing back. That is not a complaint, just that I wish to point out that all good organisations require a fresh supply of willing folk to commit them selves to taking on the responsibility of getting things done.

You will read in this issue of KM that Colin, our Editor is intending on moving to a more peaceful phase of his retirement, since his retirement from the 'Fire Service'. Judgement of his work as Editor is very apparent in the way he has transformed what used to be a newsletter, into the present day vibrant magazine for a unique group of International folk. May I be the first to thank him for all his hard work and to wish both him and Jane much fun in their next venture.

This now leaves us with the question of who has the ability and the inclination of taking over this role.

It has been mentioned to me that some people may feel that we have a 'North-South divide'. Possibly that is a rather provincial view, and only one that could apply in the UK. However this is not a view that I share, because as a Guild we have had members attend our Silver Jubilee from as far a field as Japan, California and Tasmania, and that is as Far East, West and South as you can get. So therefore with today's technology does the Editor of our magazine really have to have eye to eye contact with the contributors of articles, that has to be worth thinking about, when thinking who can do what.

Next on my 'don't panic' shopping list is the Secretary. David Walker was voted in to the post of Hon. Sec. at the last AGM, for a period of three years commencing from May 2007 so this means we have just two years to find a replacement for him. The main point I am trying to make is that our new and youngest members are not yet in a position to assume the mantle of responsibility, and at the other end of the spectrum amongst those struggling to remember what has been forgotten are those ready to hand over to the next 'incumbents'. A well-trying statement is, "if you want the job done, you ask a busy man to do it". So with

luck somewhere out there amongst the 'fitter and enthusiastic' younger members, who are those up to their eye's in holding down a job, bringing up a family, walking the dog, taxiing the kids to football/ballet etc, visiting Gran and Granddad, are the next core of leaders and supporters, for the various levels within our Guild and it's branches. It is either that or we will have to do some selective recruiting to bring willing folk with administrative and organising skills in to the Guild, so, can you recommend someone.

I did say in KM 87 that our vision is to aim at 'Youth and Education' and our mission is to set the Guild up for the next 25 years. So are the next leaders and supporters reading this letter? I hope so.

Yours Aye

Ken Yalden

Situations Vacant

A vacancy will exist later next year (2008) for the post of Editor of Knotting Matters. This is a high profile post, producing a good quality magazine for distribution to members of the IGKT.

Prospective candidates should have a command of English language (other languages would be useful but not essential), and be computer literate.

Knowledge of the following software applications would be an advantage - MS Word, Adobe Photoshop, InDesign and Acrobat. Artistic skill would be preferred, but not essential.

Salary in accordance with the usual voluntary sector scales. Applicants in the first instance should contact the

Hon. Sec.

Col's Comment

You no doubt will have heard by now that I am currently working on the last few issues in my role as editor of your *Knotting Matters*.

It has been a few years now since I had the phone call asking me if I would take on the job and what a privilege and great time it has been. Having a high profile position such as this has put me in contact with many members of the Guild from all around the world and I feel I've been fortunate in making friends among many of you. Now I feel it is time to move on to other projects - and maybe even tie some knots! So, after KM 100, I shall be handing over the reigns (and files) to another editor who will take the magazine on from there. In the meantime please keep the articles and letters rolling in. For many of our members, this is their only contact with the IGKT and the continuity of *Knotting Matters* is important.

Finally, Jane and I wish you all the best of festive greetings and a happy knotting New Year.

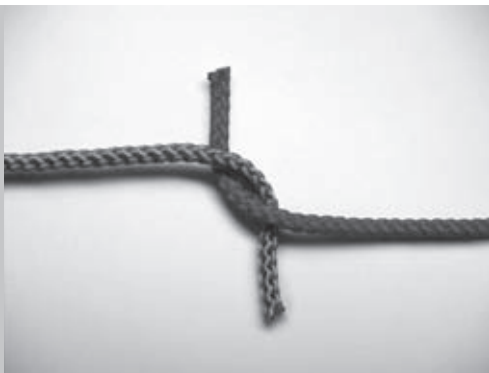
Parle vous Français?

Can you translate from French to English, or for that matter can you translate other languages to English. KM is looking for members who would be prepared to translate the occasional article to English for publication.

If you can and are prepared to assist, please contact the KM Editor.

A Beefed-Up Granny Knot

Roger E. Miles



Lay the ends of the two cords you wish to join as shown in Fig 1. For space reasons the equal length ends are shown considerably shortened - give them plenty of length!



Then simply 'rotate' both these ends clockwise and above about the centre, until Fig 2 is reached.

Thread both these (free) ends under and out as indicated. Close up loosely and, finally, pull the (standing) ends sharply tight, to form an attractive symmetric bend (Fig 3).



The reference to the granny knot arises since, if you loosen up the finished knot and withdraw both the free ends, a granny knot results. However, if you think you can tie it starting from granny, you're a far better knot tyer than I!

This knot appeared in my 1995 book as 'A14: Spherical bend', but I didn't realize then how ridiculously easy it is to tie. 🍵

Braiding on a Disc

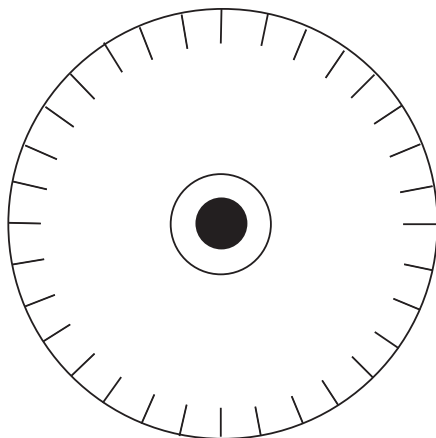
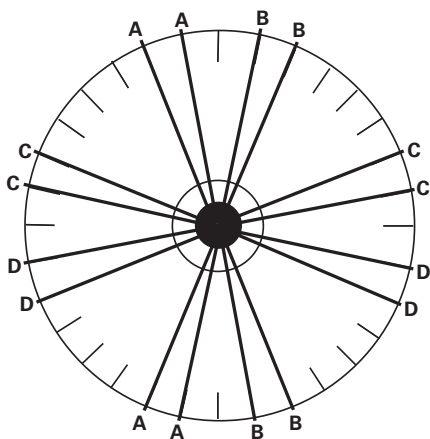
Ken Higgs

Preparation

Cut a 5-inch disc from stiff cardboard. Mark 32 equal spaces around the circumference. At each mark, cut towards the centre $3/8$ inch. Cut a one-inch hole in the centre.

Cut 8 x 2 yard strands of yarn and tie at the middle to give 16 ends. Using two strands each of four colours will help in learning the moves. The diagrams show these as A, B, C, D. Push the knot through the centre of the hole and arrange the strands as shown, gently pulling each one into its slot to give even tension.

Three styles of braid are shown in the diagrams.

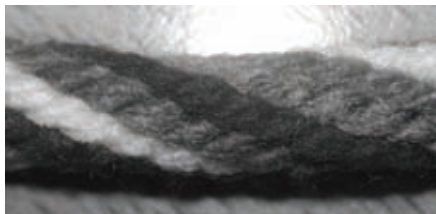


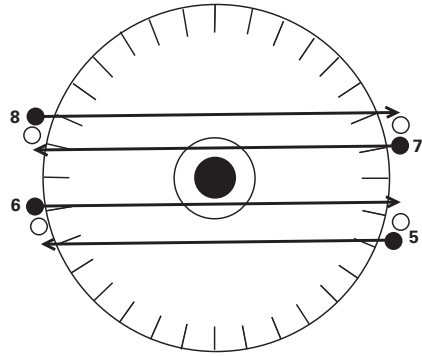
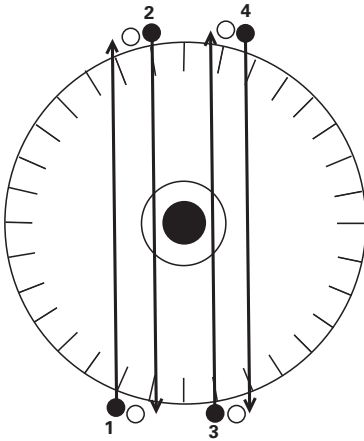
To Begin

Hold the disc flat so that colour 'A' lies at 6 o'clock and 12 o'clock. Take the left 6 o'clock 'A' strand from its slot and carry it across the disc to place it at the left of the 12 o'clock 'A' strands.

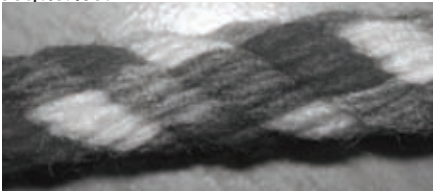
Andean Braïd continues -

The right top strand is moved down to the right of the lower 'A' strand. Repeat with the 'B' strands - left lower, up to the left, and right upper, down to the right lower position.



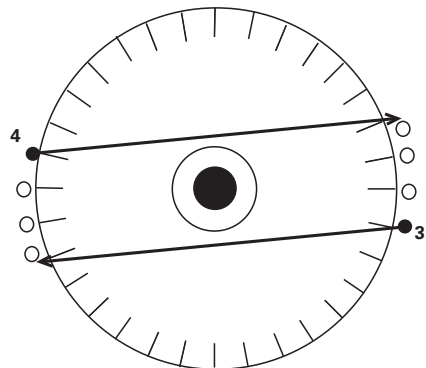
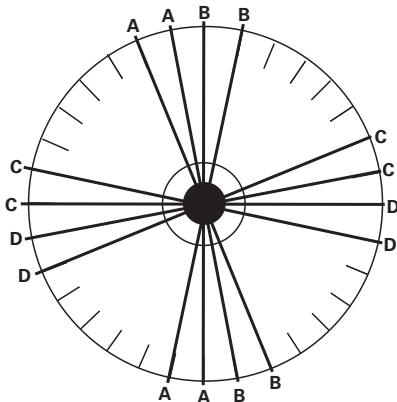
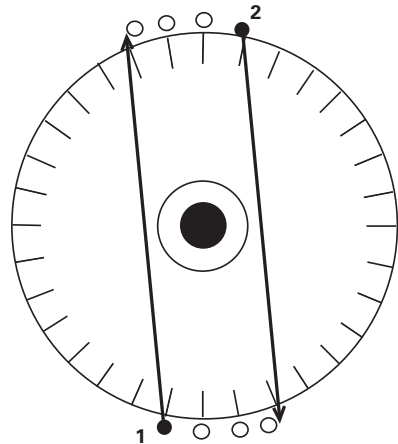


Turn the disc to bring the 'C' and 'D' strands to 6 and 12 o'clock and repeat as with 'A' and 'B'. Remember, left - up and right - down. There are eight moves in each full sequence.



Four by Four Braid continues -

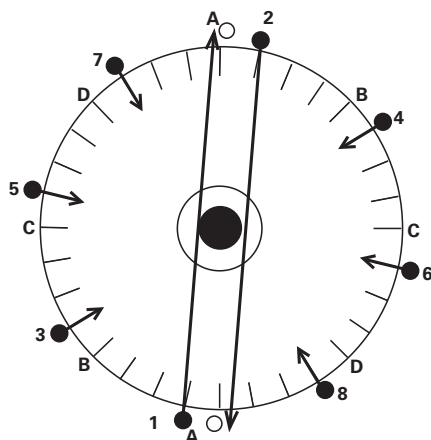
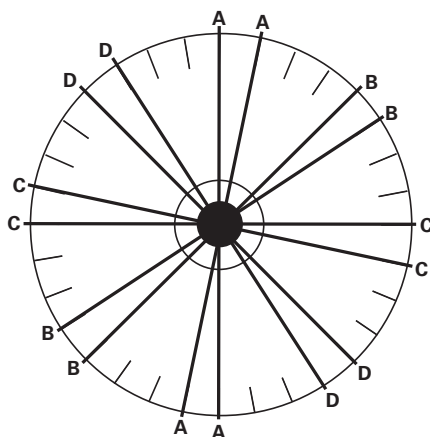
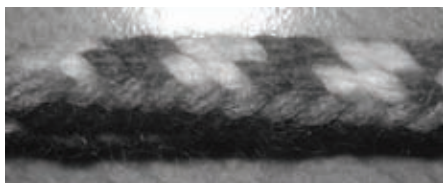
Right top strand moves down to the right lower. Turn the disc and repeat with 'C' and 'D' strands. There are only four moves in each sequence, but note - the colour layout will vary with the set of moves.



Kongo Braid continues -

The right top strand moves down to the right of 'A' strand. Turn the disc to bring the 'B' strands top and bottom, and repeat the left - up, right - down sequence. Repeat with 'C' and 'D' and back to 'A' again.

Note: Moves left - up and right - down will give a spiral twist to the right. A further set of moves going left - down and right - up will give a spiral to the left. Alternate sets will give a zigzag pattern.



A ridged braid will result from starting with 'A' and 'B' as the Andean, and 'C' and 'D' as the Four by Four. The sequence here will have just six moves.



A Most Delicious Knot

One of my Christmas presents (from some non-knotting friends) had on the label, "We know you will like this because you mention the name with such enthusiasm." The present was a Christmas pudding made by the firm of Matthew Walker! I wonder what a knot would taste like served up with rum butter?

Europa Chang-Dawson



Despite having been associated with the Scout Movement since became a Wolf Cub when I was eight, I was not introduced, or should I say induced to attend a jamboree until some forty years later. It was in 1988 when I was encouraged by Charlie Smith to join the staff team at the 1988 Essex International Jamboree, - that man has a lot to answer for....

It was ten days of continuous hard work from about six am until midnight every day (but then I was only a novice at this sort of thing). It was exhausting but unbelievably rewarding, and as a result I have been invited to be part of this event every fourth year since then, when typically six or seven thousand Scouts and Guides from across the globe have gathered together in a muddy field on the Essex coast.

Whilst I was the Hon Sec I often said that I never got the opportunity to tie knots; however this was the exception to the rule, when I met many likeminded people with a desire to learn some traditional scout-craft. It is this enthusiasm which has encouraged me to be part of the Guilds team at the Gilwell Reunion each year, where I am to be found under the oak tree on that sacred turf of the Training Ground mainly tying woggles, a privilege not afforded to many.

Periodically, one reads in the National Press that a group of British Scouts and Guides are just off to some exotic location to attend a World Jamboree.

Some of the apprentices Thorbjorn Stephenson, Maureen Wachtendorf, and Nigel Harding

The World Jamboree

or - "What retired Hon Sec's do when no one's looking."

Nigel Harding



Like the Essex Jamboree these are held every four years, but each time in a different country. As each country's contingent is limited in number, places are highly prized and only after a demanding selection process are invitations issued.

This year marked the Centenary of Scouting, and as the Founder was British, this year's World Jamboree was to be held in the UK. As it is fifty years since the last time this country was the host nation, I felt that this would be my one and only opportunity to attend. It was more than three years ago, since I first approached the organisers to offer them a group of knot tyers who would be prepared to teach this most fundamental of all Scouting skills. After much persistence my offer was eventually accepted, and I attended the World Jamboree with Charlie Smith, in Hylands Park, Chelmsford, which ironically, is where we had both spent many years with our own Cub and Scout groups, as this was our home territory. Naturally, we had to pay for this privilege, and those of you who also managed to attend, will have an idea of the cost - but at least the more hours we worked, the less it cost us per hour to do so.....

We ran our base for ten hours each day for nearly ten days, and if we had recorded the number of woggles we turned out, I am sure the *Guinness Book of Records* would have been impressed.

Mikio Kogure (Japan) demonstrating the Gilwell Woggle





*Pioneering Project - Ferris Wheel
by the Swedish Scouts*

We were allocated a team of supporters, who were keen to learn, and in turn teach their new found skill to others. Bupender Singh was from the Dehli region of India, Thornbjog Johanssen from Denmark, and Maureen Backendorf from Chile, and between us we were offering knot tying in six different languages, which in itself is quite and achievement.

There were over 42,000 Scouts and Guides on site, with up to 10,000 day visitors each day. I cannot claim that we saw them all, but we did see a large number, including many Guild members from all around the world. Naturally, it was not long before they too had their piece of string out, and were teaching, demonstrating, and generally having an amazing and memorable time.

Charlie Smith, who was not as well as he would like to have been, fended off the non novices, who wanted more of a Master Class - although some might have mistaken this for long chats and reminiscences with friends and acquaintances of many years standing - I was too busy with the four bight three lead Turk's head, 'tied on the hand', to notice.

Although I should not single anyone out in particular, I must mention



Mikio Kogure and others

'Akela' Jolanda Ng who turned up every day to see us. She was from Netherlands Antilles, Curaçao somewhere in the Caribbean, and I have had to get the map out to find it. Having started with the our simple Turk's head, each day she moved onto the next challenge which included an eight strand square sinnet, 'tied in the field' (which I had to master before I could demonstrate it to her - I hope you are impressed)

At the end of the ten days, we said goodbye to our team members, and presented them each with a copy of Lindsey Philpots latest book - which I had to scour the county to find - as 40,000 Scouts had cleared all the local bookshops of anything remotely connected with Scouting. I had to rush back to work, somewhat exhausted, but having enjoyed every minute of the experience, so much so, that I am hoping to be invited the next World Jamboree which will be in 2011, in a field somewhere in Sweden. 🌿

Knotmaster Series No. 34

'Knotting ventured, knotting gained.'

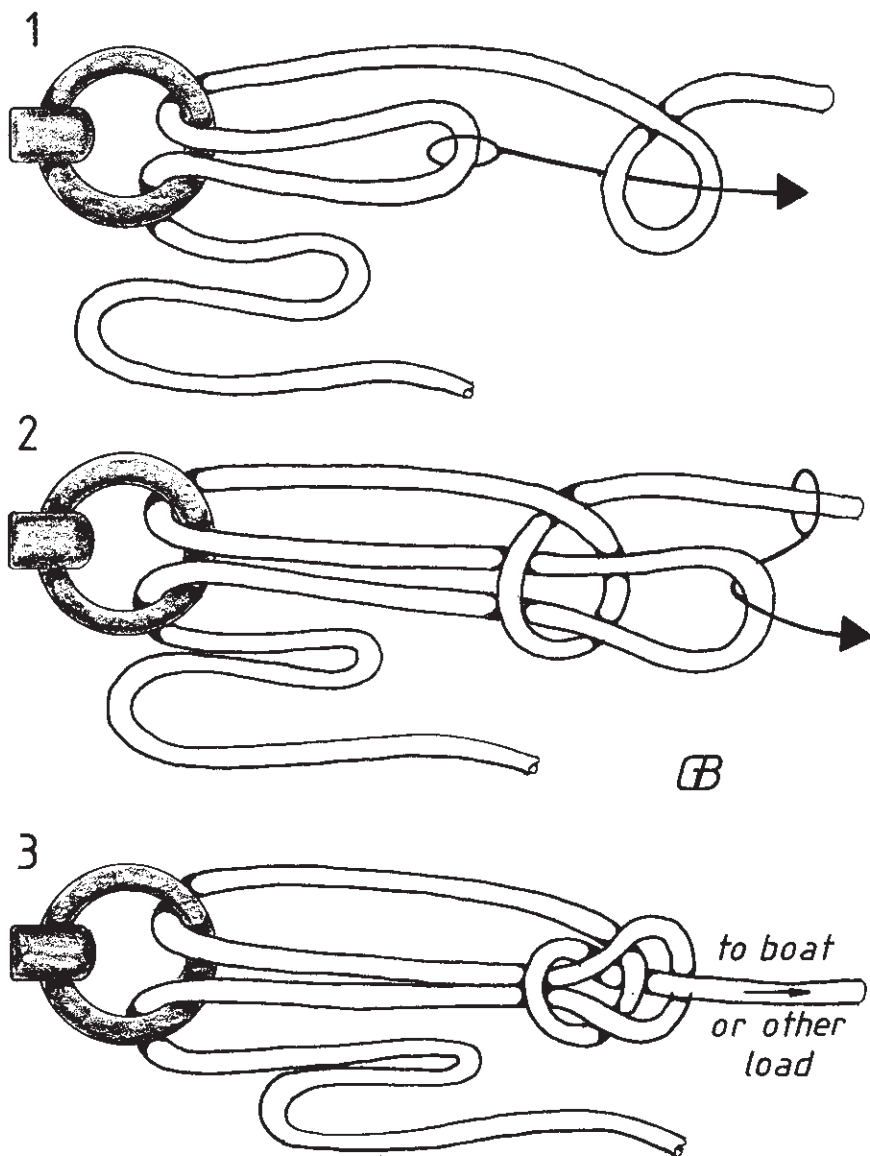
Left-handed bowline

The term 'left-handed', when said about a knot, often implies that it is flawed in some way, but that is merely a matter of opinion in the case of the bowline. Indeed, it has a handy application, which is mooring or otherwise belaying with an over-long length of line.

- * Pull a bight or long loop around a rail, ring or post [fig. 1].
- * Slip it through an underhand loop made in the working end [2].
- * Pull the w'end through the loop to complete the knot [3].

The unused and inactive remainder of the line - no matter how long - can now be coiled, flaked down, or dumped in a careless pile, without affecting the knot itself.

Left-handed bowline



On The Marline Spike in Marlinespike Seamanship

Des Pawson

Terry Ridings is correct that today a marline spike is [but not exclusively] used for splicing wire [KM #96]. But the tool originates in a time long before wire rope was in use. I cannot give him the earliest use of the term marlinespike sailor, there is -

"To put a marlinespike in a man's hand and to set him to work on a piece of rigging is considered a fair trial of his qualities as an able seaman."

R.H.Dana *The Seaman's Friend*, 1845.¹

The marline spike [along with his knife] was the sailor's main tool.

There are various spellings - marline-spike, marling-spike, marlin-spike, with and without the hyphen and as just one word. I will use marline spike, but in any quotation I will use the word used by the particular source. There are various thoughts as to the actual origin of the name, some suggesting its relation to the fine cordage "marline" and others to the act of "marling" [a locked hitch round a rope].

The earliest description of a marline spike can be found in Sir Henry Mainwaring's *The Seaman's Dictionary*, which first appeared in manuscript form about 1620-23. He states - *"a Marling speeke. Is a small Speeke of Iron, made of purpose for the Splising together of small Roapes; and also to open the Bolt roape, when they soaw in the Saile."*²

In modern English - *"Marlin Spike is a small spike of iron made of purpose for splicing together of small ropes and also to open the bolt-rope when they sew in the sail."*³

However, he also gives a similar explanation of a fid - *"Fidd. Is (as it were) an Iron Pin, made Tapering &z. sharpe at the Lower end, Wch is for to open ye Strands of the Roapes when we Splise two Roapes to gether: But when we Splise Cabells, we vse Fidds of Wood, in ye same forme &z. nature, but much bigger, which, if they were made of Iron, would be too heavy to work wthall: The Pin, in the heele of the Top Masts, wch beares vp on the Chestrees, is a Fidd."*⁴

In modern English - *"Fid is as it were, an iron pin made tapering and sharp at the lower end, which is for to open the strands of the ropes when we splice two ropes together; but when we splice cables we use fids of wood in the same form and nature but much bigger, which if they were made of iron would be too heavy to work withal. The pin in the heel of the topmast which bears it upon the chess-trees is a fid."*⁵

For many years this has given rise to confusion between fids and marline spikes and what the difference may be.

This is not the first reference to marline spikes, as they are listed in the 1485 inventory for Henry VII's ship *Mary of the Tower* as 4 merlyng Irems.⁶

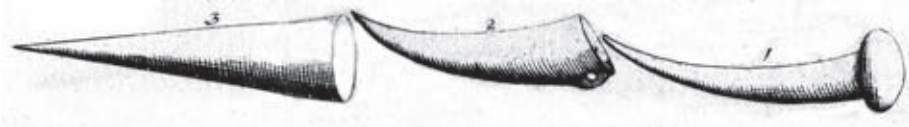


Figure 1 - Rålamb, 1691

As is frequently the case, the Swede, Rålamb, 1691⁷, is the earliest person to show a number of tools for splicing. Number 1 is called splitshorn [splicing horn] number 2 Stort Splitshorn [big splicing horn] and number 3 Splitshorn av trä stort [splicing horn of wood, big].

It could be that the splitshorn is actually a fid made of horn, as it is not unknown for both cows' horns and other animal horns or bones to be used as splicing tools, or it may only refer to the shape of a horn, which is clear in number 1.

This tool is like that shown just over a hundred years later as an iron marling spike in Darcy Lever's *Young Sea Officer's Sheet Anchor*.⁸



Figure 2 - Darcy Lever, 1819

Rålamb's tool number 2 [note the lanyard hole] is just like the various tools shown in the *Álbum del Marqués de la Victoria*, 1719-1756,⁹ calling them each Passador, but again there is no description of the material they are made from.



Figure 3 - Álbum del Marqués de la Victoria, 1719-1756

The French use the word "épissoir", stating it can be either iron or hard wood. The material is specified in their chandlery catalogues, where it can be seen that the metal tool differs a lot from the wooden fid [see illustrations under hammer headed and ball headed marline spikes].

From the entry in J.H Röding's *Allgemeines Wörterbuch de Marine* of 1798 it appears that the Italians [Caviglia per impiombare] Spanish with [pasador] and Portuguese using [passador], certainly in early times, used the same word for marline spike and fid in similar fashion to the French.¹⁰

Blanckley in 1750 confirms that "Marline spikes are made tapering of iron, for splicing together small ropes etc"¹¹ and illustrates a ball headed spike but without any curve [see figure 8].



Figure 4 - Fidd From Blanckley, 1750

Elsewhere in his book he illustrates a curved tool saying, "Splicing Fidds -Are used to splice or fasten Ropes together; and are made tapering at one End; and so are those made of Wood, which are used for splicing Cables;"¹² all slightly confusing

Falconer in 1780,¹³ without an illustration, confirms the large round head, and goes on to state that, "it is used

as a lever, on many occasions, about the rigging, particularly in fixing the seizings upon the shrouds, block-strops, clues of the sails etc.”

Just a little later David Steel confuses things by first illustrating and describing in the ropemaking section the marline-spike as an “iron long piin in the shape of a fid from 8 to 16 inches long”,¹⁴ the first mention of actual size. The fid is of wood.

Secondly, in the sailmaking section he states that the marling-spike is a tapered iron pin fixed in a short wooden handle bent towards the end.¹⁵ This he illustrates, but he also shows what would appear to be an all iron tool of much the same shape as illustrated in the rope making section.

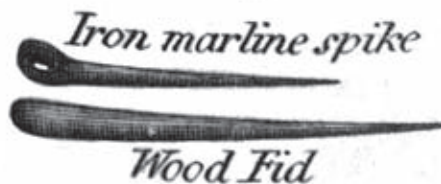


Figure 5 - Steel, 1794

no illustration; “Marling-spike, a tapered iron pin, with a globular head, used to make openings between the strands of ropes for introducing the ends of other through them: it is sometimes used as a lever to strain tight seizings, etc.”²⁰

This is a similar description of a marling-spike as used by Falconer in his 1750’s Dictionary.

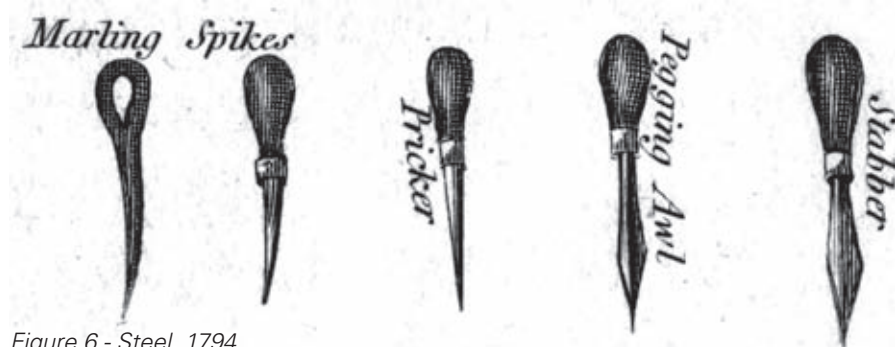


Figure 6 - Steel, 1794

The description of a Pricker is given as “small instrument, like a marline-spike but straight to make holes with”.¹⁶ The Stabber is then described as a similar tool to a pricker, “only being triangular instead of square”,¹⁷ perhaps confusing it with the pegging awl, also described as, “an instrument for making holes with. It has 4 sharp edges towards the point, and is smaller than a stabber.”¹⁸ When he gets to the rigging section he describes fids as, “round tapering pins of various sizes made of iron or hardwood and used for splicing of cordage”¹⁹, yet there is also a description of a marline spike but

The Museum in Docklands in London has a display of marline spikes excavated from the 18th century level of the Thames foreshore at Customs House Quay that give a good idea as to exactly what marline spikes of this period were like. They vary in size from about 8 inches to 10 inches, none have lanyard holes.

In the early days the rope mentioned would have always been a fibre rope, usually hemp, but after about 1870 the marline spike would evolve into the tool of choice for splicing wire rope. Frequently the marline spikes offered by a particular company would specify whether for



Figure 7 - 18th century marline spikes from the Museum In Docklands London

hemp or wire rope. It is possible that those tools for hemp rope may not have been made of the higher grade tool steel needed to survive the working of iron or steel wire rope, which can be seen in the reflection of the price variation of one, almost similar tool, to another offered by the same company. On the occasions where there is no great price difference between tools specified for hemp or wire rope it is possible that it may be the shape of the point that differs, e.g. sharp or chisel end.

For a much fuller picture of the various types of marline spikes, fids and prickers, readers may wish to obtain a copy of my monograph *Marline Spikes, Fids and other related tools* 59 pages with many illustrations, Museum of Knots & Sailors Ropework Monograph #4 £4.50 plus postage from the author Des Pawson. ☼

- ¹ Dana, R.H: *The Seaman's Friend*. First published 1841, 4th edition 1845, facsimile Macdonald and Janes London, 1974, page 160.
- ² Henry Manwayring: *A Briefe Abstract, Exposition, and Demonstration of all Termes, Parts, and Things Belonging to a Shippe, and the Practick of Navigation*, [c1620-1623]. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library. Call Number: MSQ. 387.2 M28B. I am grateful to Lars Bruzelius for this reference
- ³ Mainwaring. G. E. editor: *The Life and Works of Sir Henry Mainwaring* Vol. II includes the *Seaman's Dictionary* First circulated in 1620-23 Navy Records Society, London, 1920, page 185.
- ⁴ Henry Manwayring: *A Briefe Abstract, Exposition, and Demonstration of all Termes, Parts, and Things Belonging to a Shippe, and the Practick of Navigation*, [c1620-1623]. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library. Call Number: MSQ. 387.2 M28B. I am grateful to Lars Bruzelius for this reference
- ⁵ Mainwaring. G. E. editor: *The Life and Works of Sir Henry Mainwaring* Vol. II includes the *Seaman's Dictionary* First circulated in 1620-23 Navy Records Society, London, 1920, page 147.
- ⁶ Oppenheim, M: *Naval Accounts and Inventories of the reign of Henry VII* 1485-8 and 1495-7 Navy Records Society London, 1896, page 56.
- ⁷ Rålamb, Ake Classon: *Skeps Byggerij eller adelig ofnings tionde tom*. 1691, facsimile, Sjöhistoriska Museet, Malmo, 1943, plate M.
- ⁸ Lever, Darcy: *The Young Sea Officer's Sheet Anchor* first published Leeds 1808, John Richardson and others,

- London, 1819, Page 3.
- ⁹ Marqués de la Victoria: *Diccionario demonstrativo con la configuracion o anothomia de toda la arquitectura naval moderna*; Cadiz 1719-56, Facsimile Lunwerg Editores, Madrid, 1995, plate 65.
- ¹⁰ Röding, Johann Hinrich: *Allgemeines Wörterbuch der Marine*, volumes 1-4 inc plates first published 1794-1798 reprint Graphic Publisher Amsterdam 1969 Volume 2 pages 151, 665
- ¹¹ Blanckley, T .R: *A Naval Expositor* 1750, facsimile, with Forward, by David Roberts. Jean Boudriot Publications, Rotherfield, East Sussex, 1988, page 103.
- ¹² Blanckley, T .R: *A Naval Expositor* 1750, facsimile, with Forward, by David Roberts. Jean Boudriot Publications, Rotherfield, East Sussex, 1988, page 55.
- ¹³ Falconer, William: *An Universal Dictionary of the Marine*. First published 1769 this reprint of 1780 edition David & Charles Newton Abbot, 1970, page 188.
- ¹⁴ Steel, David: *The Elements and Practice of Rigging and Seamanship*. 2 Volumes; David Steel, London 1794, Vol. 1, page 55
- ¹⁵ Steel, David: *The Elements and Practice of Rigging and Seamanship*. 2 Volumes; David Steel, London 1794, Vol. 1, page 88
- ¹⁶ Steel, David: *The Elements and Practice of Rigging and Seamanship*. 2 Volumes; David Steel, London, 1794, Vol.1, page 88
- ¹⁷ Steel, David: *The Elements and Practice of Rigging and Seamanship*. 2 Volumes; David Steel, London, 1794, Vol.1, page 89
- ¹⁸ Steel, David: *The Elements and Practice of Rigging and Seamanship*. 2 Volumes; David Steel, London, 1794, Vol. 1, page 88
- ¹⁹ Steel, David: *The Elements and Practice of Rigging and Seamanship*. 2 Volumes; David Steel, London, 1794, Vol 1, page 166
- ²⁰ Steel, David: *The Elements and Practice of Rigging and Seamanship*. 2 Volumes; David Steel, London, 1794, Vol 1, page 170



Rope Ends

'I am not good at knots ... I taught myself to tie a bowline ... and that's it - you can do most things with that knot ... So I made myself a jug, literally a piss-pot, from a two-litre milk bottle and, after its first outing, carefully took it to the cockpit to empty ... To prevent its accidental loss, I had tied a length of cord to it with one of my well-practised bowlines. I poured the contents over the side, then dunked the bottle in the water to rinse it, only to watch my invincible knot untie itself as if it was no knot at all.'

(British broadcaster and yachtsman Paul Heiney,
Last Man across the Atlantic, 2005)

[He should have read the article 'Never Lost a Bottle' by Eric Franklin that appeared on page 7 of KM#2 in January 1983 - Ed.]

The Song of The PAB Tenth Anniversary

**"Come and listen to a story about a group named PAB
A small group of knotters in the City of San P,
They wuz out one day, knottin' up a storm,
And out of it all, a new Branch was born.**

Knotters that is, California gold, mixed with British tea.

*(with apologies to Paul Henning, song-writer and Flatt & Scruggs,
singers of the theme song to the Beverly Hillbillies TV show)*

Well, some of you will be aware of the story of the rags to riches family that suddenly found themselves rich beyond their wildest dreams, finding oil in their own back yard - oil that is, Black Gold, Texas tea!!! This is a slightly different story, about seventeen people who got together in March of 1997 and said, "Let's make a Branch!" and who now have a million friends around the world - well, quite a lot, anyway. Our small start to better than seventy story came true in July of that year when we had our first anniversary meeting on the grassy knoll outside the Los Angeles Maritime Museum in San Pedro, California. Then we were loaned some tables and some canopies to keep us out of the midday sun in SoCal and we played and plied our truth in the front of some very interested (and interesting!) folks who came to stare, to wonder and to marvel at all that you had provided to us in our founding year.

Since that fateful time, ten short years ago we have gone from strength to strength with the support and encouragement of our members and members worldwide of the IGKT, to become a strong Branch, active in knotting and who have now published our Issue #64 of our inimitable newsletter, *Knot News*, sent to each of our members about once a month for ten months of the year.

We saw a revival and a true story of how we all came together at our tenth anniversary reunion in July 2007. This is the story of the tens thousands of wonderful folks who came to share with us through the years, and whom we can never thank enough for the sacrifices and joy that they brought to our golden shores with their contributions and their questions (just what IS baggywrinkle?). Most of all though, we thank our indefatigable volunteers who made this anniversary so very special - THANK YOU!!!!

The anniversary bash started off with a wonderful display of fireworks on the Fourth of July, Independence Day in the USA. Oohs and Aahs abounded as we prepared for a terrific day on Thursday. Thursday the Fifth saw us gathering on the steps outside the Los Angeles Maritime Museum to get our group together for the short walk (OK - a drive for some) down to Ports o' Call in San Pedro, where the brigantine *Irving Johnson* lay waiting, bobbing at the dock, eager to take us on the three-hour sailing tour of the Los Angeles Harbor and out on to the Pacific Ocean, under the guidance and direction of our Captain Pat Cassidy and his able crew. Some faces turned green eventually, but most were smiling through the whole experience, unable to get that thought of that wonderful sail out of their heads - twelve gusting to fifteen-knot winds, five-foot swells and all sails a-flying to bring us into the San Pedro Channel under the Palos Verdes headlands, around Los Angeles Light, treading the same waters trodden by

Lorikeet at the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach



millions of ships before us and millions more to come. What a sail and what a treat - thank you to our friends at the Los Angeles Maritime Institute, a non-profit organization, dedicated to bringing the world to underprivileged young people with love and affection, rather than a whole set of rules and regulations.

Friday brought us into contact less formally still, with first a trip to the Aquarium of the Pacific, led by my wonderful and ever-forebearing wife Kim (thanks - you are an absolute treasure!) who told us all the names of the fish and showed us the shark tank, the lorikeet enclosure and the guillemots and auks of the north-west Pacific Ocean.

Later that day, in a hotel room specially provided for us, tea, coffee and sodas were at the ready for a session or two of lots of string on the tables, and



Counterclockwise from the right: Kay Burke (NAB), Linda & Bruce Turley (UK), Jimmy Ray Williams (PAB), Mr Machado and Maggie Machado and Vicki Paul (all PAB) all enjoying a sit-down to a spaghetti meal!

a slew of slides to view from our very knowledgeable Gordon Perry about the making of rope. We ate candies (M & M's to Americans, Smarties to Brits, each inscribed with Happy Tenth and IGKTPAB) drank coffee and just wished it would not ever end. Lily made short work of handing out complimentary handbooks and complimentary "goodie" bags and we were off again.

A short business meeting at the restaurant just up the street, Ante's, a Dalmatian-Croatian establishment with a penchant for wonderfully entertaining food and a great atmosphere. We dined on sausage, sauerkraut, chicken and mostaccioli, with a wonderful cake to top it all off. We also enjoyed a glass of 2004 Shiraz, a red wine with the label "Red Knot" all the way from Australia, just to show exactly how well-rounded we are. Yours truly and Joe Schmidbauer (who unfortunately could not join us) were each awarded a fine trophy of a carved and turned fid in purpleheart set



Charlie Bells' frames

in a walnut stand, in recognition of our ten years of service - we could not have done it without you guys! Thank you all so much! Later, a fine establishment just around the corner entertained us to some more simple fare from England (would you believe sticky toffee pudding and sherry trifle?), including a pint or two of Guinness and a game of darts - what a day!

Saturday was the first day of our "show and tell" as we call it. While some members went for a brief and very informative tour of the Point Fermin Lighthouse, now celebrating their 133rd year of light, the rest of our crew set to work. Our canopies were set up, the porta-potties were in place and all our tables and chairs were set out, just like we meant for people to come take a look



Gordon Perry enjoying some fender-making.



*Above - a small view of
Bud Brewer's samples*

*Right - Maggie Machado
with split-ply braiding*

*Below - Linda Turley at
the miniatures table*



at what we do. We had advertising in the local paper, word of mouth and word of web, and a location where we could expect strollers to come by and take a look at our members doing their thing. Sometimes the best-laid plans of mice and men aft gang agley! Nevertheless, Jose worked



his magic with a very fine demonstration of worming, parceling and serving, Joe Soanes had a splendid active display of wire-rope splicing, with Tom Mortell and Darrell Ausherman ably assisting, Charlie Bell had knotted frames that were to die for, Barry Brown from UK (now also a member of the PAB - welcome Barry!) variously stood or sat showing how to make a wonderful cast net, right alongside Lily Morales who was an active student and all weekend long. Gordon Perry showed off his great knotting and judging skills, Bud Brewer came all the way from Colorado in his truck (over



Jose's own portable rigging vice

a thousand miles by road - that's really some dedication!) and gave us some VERY fine mementoes, John and Kay Burke visited us from Michigan (NAB) - (good to see you both!) and Bruce and Linda Turley came from UK, complete with miniatures, and had a (sometimes too) memorable trip - thank you both - and the whole Bosch family of members came from Northern California, armed with enough water to start up our own delivery service. Each bottle has a special label, printed exclusively for our tenth



Charles Rigden from Alaska

Some of the table at Friday's dinner



anniversary - thank you all so much! We also enjoyed the company of one of our latest members, the very special Susan Patron, author of *The Higher Power of Lucky* - we are indeed grateful and indebted to her for having made the trip to our special weekend together. Last, but by no means least, Charlie Rigden and his lovely wife came from Alaska, both avid pilots, Maggie Machado and her husband joined us from the Pacific northwest in Oregon and Vicki Paul who made our weekend so warm and delightful with her lovely voice and her treasures galore. What a wonderful group! Thank you all so much for coming and enjoying the California sunshine with us.

To round out our Saturday, we invited all these wonderful folks who gave up

their weekend and many, many miles of frequent-flyers or their very precious hard-earned cash to join us. We held a soiree at our house, with a tour of the garden (a California-friendly front yard, given to encouraging birds, bees and lots of other insects, rather than an annoying series of whining and noisy leaf-blowers and the whirling blades of a rotary lawnmower and an equally noisy and far more dangerous edge trimmer), the library and Lindsey's fid collection, not to mention the library (did I do that already - tsk, tsk!). The food for our evening was provided by a master chef-in-training, a friend of our sons, who was also kind enough to have provided us with themed food to our own liking, rather than a set menu. Together, we held the friendship rope made and

*The Friendship rope from East Anglia in Lindsey's back yard
(L to R) Charlie Rigden (AKB), Darrell Ausherman (PAB), yours truly, Charlie Bell,
Jimmy Ray, Maggie Machado, Lily Morales, Barry Brown and Bob Bosch - thanks one
and all!*



sent to us by the wonderful folks at the East Anglia Branch - thank you all so very much!

Sunday came all too soon for a fabulous end to a fabulous weekend - we shall never forget all the wonderful gifts given so freely, the time taken to bring such care and thoughtfulness and the very generous hearts of a great group of people. The public were not there in droves, but those that came were as always surprised and delighted to see such crafts - we had a surprise visitor who had sent us a photograph of a fantastic tree decoration made with a black line that, although it was not what we normally see as Christmas tree decoration, nevertheless made a standout display!

*Well now its time to say adieu to
all the PAB kin.*

*And they would like to thank
you folks fer kindly droppin in.*

*You're all invited back again to
this locality*

*To have a heapin helpin of their
hospitality*

Surfer dudes that is. Set a spell.

*Take your shoes off. Y'all come
back now, y'hear?*

Your intrepid reporter and Branch President for yet another spell-binding year of fun in the sun,

Lindsey Philpott

IGKTPAB and IGKT Council Member

How lucky can one man be? ☼



The surprise decorated tree (?)

Tuffy Turner's Idiot's Guide for Tying Single-Cord (Running) Turk's Heads


Rule 1 - The number of leads and bights cannot be the same, and the number of bights cannot be a multiple or factor of the number of leads.

Rule 2 - Subject to Rule 1, the number of leads and bights can both be odd, but cannot both be even.

Using "Disc Method" of drawing starters

- 1) Draw concentric circles at equal differences apart in radius - one fewer than the number of leads, leaving enough space outside the outer circle to draw the bights - see 3 below.
- 2) Divide the concentric circles into twice the number of sectors as bights.
- 3) From a point outside the outer circle, join all the intersections diagonally with one continuous line, but miss out the end of one radius with each of the turns (bights) inside the inner and outside the outer circle.
- 4) Starting in the middle of any bight outside the outer circle, draw a single broken line with a different colour or thickness of pen or pencil over and under the intersections alternately for the whole number of leads back to the starting point.
- 5) Put diagram on cork mat or suchlike, and stick in a pin or peg at each intersection.

Using "Cylinder Method" of drawing starters

- 1) Cut out or paste up a suitably sized piece of paper or cardboard and draw equidistant vertical parallel lines for twice the number of bights plus one (the left and right-hand-side edges will become one vertical line when the cylinder is 'joined up'). Make the distance from the left-hand-side to the right-hand-side line equal to the circumference of the cylinder to be used as a former.
- 2) Intersect the vertical lines with equidistant horizontal parallel lines for the number of leads minus one, leaving enough space above and below the top and bottom lines to draw the bights - see 3 below.
- 3) Starting at the bottom left-hand corner, and the third, fifth, etc horizontal intersections with the left-hand-side vertical line, join the intersections diagonally upwards, and then diagonally downwards. Join all the intersections diagonally with a single continuous line, missing out the end of one vertical line with each of the turns (bights) over and under both top and bottom horizontal lines.
- 4) Starting in the middle of any of the bights, draw what will be a single broken line with a different colour or thickness of pen or pencil to show over and under the intersections alternately for the whole number of leads back to the starting point.
- 5) Tie or stick the diagram to the cylindrical former, and stick on a pin or peg at each intersection. 



Tying the Gripper Hitch aka the "Death Grip Hitch"

Warren Messer

After a while I get tired of designing, building, and writing about boats and need to take a break from it all. A normal day is a four mile walk, watch the birds at my numerous feeders, BS with other retiree's at the local woodworkers store over free coffee, cruise the Internet at the library (free high speed), listen to audio books on my mp3 player, and try to keep up on what's happening in the world of circumnavigating cruisers. *Cruising Magazine* is one of my monthly reads at the library, and if you take out all the items about the "exciting" new boats (that can seat ten for dinner, but with only room for one arm in the engine compartment) I don't want or can't afford; there's not too much left to read but the stories from the world cruisers actually out there living the life.

One of the stories that interested me (forgot what issue) was submitted by

Beth Leonard and Evans Starzinger, (www.bethandevans.com) about using drogues in heavy weather. The story went into the different types of drogues and the rope bridals used to centre and adjust them to keep the boat in the correct position in relation to the direction of the seas. It was a good story and added to the information that I already had in their use and deployment. The story also had a photo of the hitch they used to bind a second large line to the one that the drogue was attached at the end of. They had used an "Icicle hitch" to attach this second line to the main line. That way they could use their two big primary winches to adjust the orientation of the hull to the following seas by taking in or letting out each line.

I love to play around with plain and fancy knots, and always like to learn how to tie new ones. As I sat on my couch with a couple of lines and the magazine

photo as a guide, I tried to figure out how the “hitch” was made. I tried to match the loops and twists shown in the photo, but something was not right with the hitch I made, and it didn’t have the holding (no sliding) power that was highly claimed in the story. Something important in tying the hitch was hiding on the opposite side, and out of view in the photo.

The “boat show, the boat show, the BIG Seattle boat show” (the jingle is forever burnt in my memory) was coming to the exhibition hall in the Seattle Sea Hawks stadium in a couple of weeks, and I could always ask Brion Toss (www.briontoss.com) what I was doing wrong. Brion is an institution in the Pacific Northwest and beyond, on all aspects of rigging and other salty things, and the author of *Knots for Boaters*, and *The Complete Riggers Apprentice*. If anyone could show me how to correctly tie the icicle hitch, it would be him.

I waited until he was finished with what must be his millionth demonstration on how to make an eye splice; to button hole him on tying the icicle hitch. I told him about the article in *Cruising World Magazine* by Beth Leonard and Evans Starzinger on the use of the icicle hitch, but that the secret was hidden in the photo. He knew Beth and Evans, and was glad that such a story had been written, and yes, he could show me how to tie the hitch. I told him that my efforts never produced a hitch that didn’t slide along the other line. He assured me that the icicle grips on anything and tied the hitch on a piece of chromed pipe. It slipped. He retied the hitch, and it slipped again. Brion finally gutted the inner weave of a double braided line and used the flattened outer sheath to make the hitch and it held. I learned how to do the icicle, but was still not that impressed with it.

A few days later, I tried tying the hitch again, and promptly realized I had

forgotten how. Mind like a sieve. I went to the library and checked out a book on tying knots. The book, *The Complete Book of Knots* by Geoffrey Budworth, had lots of knots I knew and a lot more I didn’t. It had a multi drawing breakdown of tying the icicle hitch and I relearned what to do. I was using some high quality ¼” double braid on my handy chunk of painted broom handle to test my abilities with the hitch. It always slipped when pulled hard. Some hitch I thought.

Time for a side bar here. There was a story on the history of the icicle hitch in the book of knots that I was reading. If I remember the story correctly, the International Guild of Knot Tyers (English origins) was having one of their meetings when the members entered one of the training rooms. There in front of them was a man hanging (by his hands) on the end of a line that was “attached” to a marlinspike (point down) fixed to the ceiling by the large end. Alas the name of the hitch.

The more I tied the hitch, the more I thought that the emperor had no clothes. Oh well, there were lots more knots in the book to study and learn. One of the hitches was called the Klemheist hitch. Something that was developed long ago, and used by mountain climbers in the alps; to tie on to a main line, to hang things on, or us as an ascender knot. It’s basically a loop with the ends done in a figure eight knot; and then the looped end is wrapped around another line. The knotted end is then pulled through it’s own loop and tightened. I tried it on my painted broom handle and it never slipped no matter how hard I pulled. The broom handle slipped out of my hand a couple of times and whacked me up side the head as I was pulling the working end. Hummmmm?

I went back and forth between the icicle and Klemheist hitches on my painted broom handle. The icicle always

slipped and the Klemheist always tried to break my eyeglasses if the broom handle slipped in my hand. More Hummmmm?

Was there a way to tie the Klemheist hitch by just weaving one end of the line down and back up the main working line? It could be done, but there was no “usable” long end to work with that could be taken back and used to tie off on a cleat or winch; so you could adjust the working length of it. Hummmmm?

What was I trying to accomplish with the hitch I wanted to create? One, it could not slip. Two, one end of the line had to have an adjustable (long) working length. Three, it had to be able to be tied anywhere, and tied in both directions to work with a strain from astern, on the port or starboard sides of the boat. Also being simple enough that it could be tied with your eyes closed would be a plus. With that in mind, I started wrapping my length of $\frac{1}{4}$ ” line around the broomstick every moment I wasn’t busy with something else.

After dinner one night, I was sitting on my couch playing with the line and broom handle stick, when something formed in my hands. Hummm, what is this? It was a simple wrap, but it seemed to work! What did I do? After a good hard look up and down, and all around to see what I had done, I crossed my fingers and took it apart. I wrapped the line around the broom handle again, and it was back. Point number two was satisfied; it would have an adjustable working end. It looked like point number three was satisfied also, but I didn’t want to try to figure out the new hitch in the reverse direction yet. Will this satisfy item one; will not slip? Taking my glasses off, (mom didn’t raise a complete fool) I pulled on the working end of the line as I gripped the broom handle. NO SLIP! Around the forth or fifth hard test pull, the broom handle slipped out of my hand and I whacked my

head again, but I was smiling.

I had the hitch and I could retie it at will. Now I needed to figure out how to finish off the “tying end” of the line so it wouldn’t come undone and let the hitch unravel. Which was a possibility with the icicle hitch; that I had found from repeated tensioning and slacking of it’s working part. After trying a couple of different methods, I settled on the way shown in the photos with this story. It makes a snug and clean finish to the hitch; and unless the hitch completely abrades away rubbing on something, will hold tight until untied.

I then went about using the hitch on different sizes of line on line, and line on chain. Using the hitch on chain reduces it’s chance of slipping to nil, as the coils of the hitch rest in the low spots of the alternating links and resist riding over them. Should work great with line used as a “Snubber” on anchor chain. I then tried the hitch with two pieces of $\frac{1}{2}$ ” three strand nylon line, which was pretty stiff and a little harder to wrap around itself, but still worked as expected.

Note: With heavier and stiffer line, you have to work the hitch coils around the main line with your hands a bit to chase the slack to the two ends before pulling the hitch tight.

One end of the “main” line was attached to a 24” fir tree, and the working end of the hitch to a 5:1 block and tackle attached to another 24” fir tree. I pulled and pulled on the block’s working line and the hitch never slipped. I was worried that the compression from the tension on the hitch would bind it up and make it impossible to undo. After slacking off the block and tackle, the hitch was still very tight around the other line, but I only had to pull on the part of the “working line” as it crosses over the top of the coils from the start to the “reverse back loop”. I was then able to uncoil the hitch from

the slack. With much higher loads, a marlinspike inserted in the same spot as the metal rod in the photo, will produce enough slack to undo the hitch.



Now that I had my hitch and was satisfied that it would work as I had outlined, it was time to see if this was something new, or something forgotten. I went back to the library and googled the International Guild of Knot Tyers listed in *The Complete Book of Knots*, to see if it was still in existence, or if the book gave me out of date information. They were still there and had a website at www.igkt.net. I emailed them to ask what I had to do to see if this was something new or knot. After a few, hello is anyone there e-mails, I got a response (my inquiry had been forwarded to someone else, and they were away on holiday). I sent them some information and photos on the new hitch and they said they would get back to me. Visiting the Guild's website again, I found a North American branch at www.igktnab.org; and Brion Toss was listed as a member. Great, I would send him some photos and a description of how to tie the hitch. It was spring/summer here and the riggers were busy scampering up, down, around, and hanging on masts and such. A couple of e-mails and a phone call didn't get me much either. I thought I would see him at the Port Townsend Wooden Boat Festival in the fall of 2006, but I had a boat show close to home that I

had promised to bring my new design, the 9.5ft Laura Bay to.

Time and life have a way of cooling off hot irons, so the hitch on a stick was left sitting on my kitchen counter until it got in the way, and then I set it in the other chair I have at the kitchen counter. Since I am not a big socializer, there was never a need to move it from under the pile of cardboard prototype models I am always working on. Which later become the down loadable (paste, cut out, and tape back together) cardboard PDF models of my stitch and glue small boat designs you see at *Duckworks Magazine*, (www.duckworksmagazine.com).

So it sat out of site and out of mind. Then the TV and radio started up again with "the boat show, the boat show, the big Seattle boat show". Time to go see Brion Toss again, and wait for him to finish his by then, two millionth eye splice demonstration so I could talk to him. He takes a well-deserved breather and lets me show him my "Gripper hitch". I tell him I wanted to call it the "Death Grip hitch", because that's what it does, but have settled on just the plain version. He watches me do the wraps down and back up again, and the final tie off. I give him the finished hitch to study what I have just done. He smiles and turns it around in his hands, as he looks it over from all sides. I know that this must be something that he has never seen before by the way he acts and the questions he has. He had to go back to boat show mode to answer some rigging questions from some potential customers. But before he does, he cuts off all the excess from the two lines used to make the finished gripper hitch. He wants to take the finished hitch and study it later at his leisure. He said he wanted to have the hitch tested in a stress machine that continually tensions and relaxes the knot and line for strength and wear from chafe. His wife looked on in wonder and

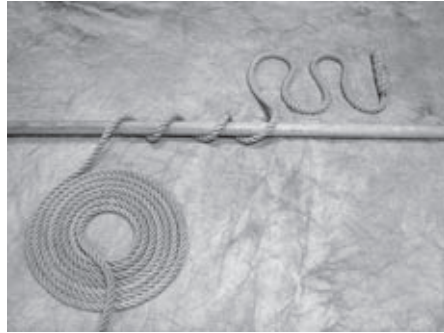
tells me she has never seen him do that before. I too was amazed while standing there watching him cut off the excess, and at how much good line was turned into short pieces in the process.

When I called Brion recently for an update on this story, he hadn't sent the hitch information to any of the major rope company's yet, but said he would and to one of the big three; Samson, New England, or Yale for the testing work. He did say that the hitch worked as advertised, and that made my day. I have also heard from Evans Starzinger (now cruising in Chile) and he said he would give the hitch a test. He was especially interested in whether or not it would work with slippery Spectra line. He was going to get back to me on that.

Now it's time for gripper hitch tying. Choose the lines, or line and broom handle of your choice. I'm left handed, so I tend to go left to right. If you are right handed, just reverse the direction of the starting coils after you have learned the hitch, and go from right to left.

1. We will make one the "main line" (wooden rod), which is the line the drogue is attached to. In the photos, the drogue is attached to the end of this line (wooden rod) on your left, and the other end is wrapped around one of the primary winches to your right.
2. The other line is the "hitch line". The main part of the hitch line; the part that goes to the other primary winch, is laying at your feet (coiled in the photos). Using say 1/4" line for this demonstration, take about two feet (length will vary with the size of the line you are using) of the short, or "tying end", and loop it over the top of the "main line" and away from you. Starting from left to right. Pull the end back to you from underneath

and over the top of the "main line" again. Do this four times.



3. Before making a coil for the fifth time over the top; take the longer part of the "winch line end" (the coiled end) laying at your feet or on your lap and move it to the right side of the hitch as shown in the photos.



4. Now make the fifth coil over the top, but this time bring the "tying end" up and between the "main drogue line" and the "winch line end" that you have just moved to the right. The "tying end" acts like a fox, and jumps over the top of the last (fifth) coil and back down on "your" side, between the moved "winch line end" and the "main drogue line". This is the trick of the hitch and you have to get this part right.



6. Keep coiling the “tying end” between the left to right coils, until you have to go under the “winch line” on the left side of the hitch. Go under the “winch line” and around two more times to the left of the first coil of the “winch line”. At the top of the second wrap, run the “tying end” under the last two coils you made, AND the first loop of the “winch line”.

5. Now take the “tying end” and coil it around the “main drogue line” in the reverse direction. The end now comes to you over the top from behind, down between the “winch and main lines” and away from you again. The “tying end” lays in between the coils you made from left to right as you reverse the coils now from right to left.



7. Work out any slack in the coils in both directions and snug tight. You are done. After some practice tying the knot this way; try starting the coils in the opposite direction, (from right to left) to learn that the hitch can be reversed. The following photo shows the gripper hitch tied in both directions; and the hitch on the left with extra coils, to show that it can be expanded or contracted to suit the needed gripping power for your application.

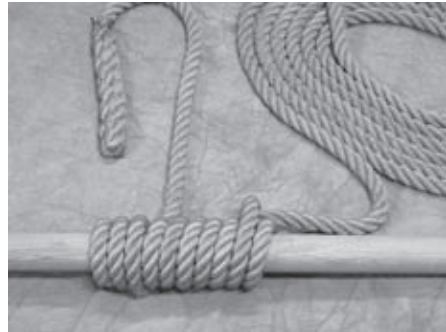


8. The finished hitch will not slip when loaded up after putting tension on the “winch line end”, but can be moved (unloaded) on the “main line” by pushing in that direction at either end coil of the hitch. It will act like an ascender knot. If used as a snubber on an anchor rode, the gripper hitch (with no tension on the “winch line”)



can be slid in either direction if the anchor rode needs to be let out or taken in because of chafe. Tension reapplied to the “winch line” will reset the death grip on the anchor/drogue line. On chain, the hitch will have to be loosened up a bit to ride over the links.

9. I have added the next two photos so you can see the lay of the coils on the side and back of the hitch.



10. The next photos are what the gripper hitch looks like with line on line in the bridal “Y”, with the main and gripper hitch lines going to the port and starboard primary winches on the right. Also a photo of the back side.



11. Give the gripper hitch a good pull to test it. If you practice tying the hitch using a line on a broomstick, take off your glasses if you wear them, and put on a helmet. I don’t want anyone to repeat my mistakes. ;)



I hope you have found this story interesting and will try out the gripper hitch in real world situations. If you would like to call it the death grip hitch; please do, because that’s what it does. Thanks again for taking the time to read this story. 🍷

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Santa Clause at work in Sweden

IGKT member Jonny Ekdahl is busy wrapping knotted Christmas gifts for students of the World Maritime University in Malmo. Since he started about 40 years ago, Jonny has made around 10,000 items for the students, also seaman’s missions, museums and even the King and Queen of Sweden

A Simple Heaver

Frank Brown

Browsing through *Des Pawson's Knot Craft*, I spotted a description of a metal heaver that looked easy to make. I had some need for such a device when working on the restoration of the *S V May Queen*. There was a lot of serving, seizing and whipping involved in getting the rigging sorted, and getting sufficient tension tended to play havoc with soft hands. After a bit of thought I opted to make a preliminary model from wood. In my hoard of scraps I found a short length of 25 mm (1 inch) pine dowel that looked suitable. I cut a V shaped notch about 50 mm deep in each end and drilled a couple of 10 mm holes through for leverage with a small marlin spike. The first use of the device was whipping some mooring rope ends. I found that I could exert sufficient torque by hand alone and had no need to utilise a spike. In fact the whipping twine gouged grooves into the pine.

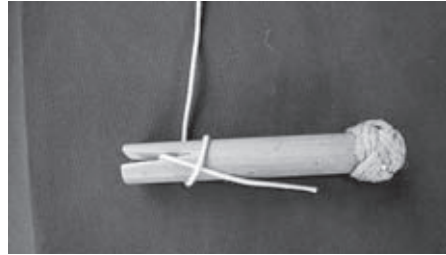
The tool was used on several occasions and demonstrated one significant fault. Being cylindrical, it would roll across the deck and over the side with consummate ease. Fortunately it floated, but it was a feature that needed some attention.

Mark 2 heaver was made from similar material to the original but was only about 130 mm long and had only one end slotted. A Turk's head was added more to prevent rolling than for decoration. This proved moderately successful but the tool could still roll a considerable distance, albeit on an elliptical or cycloidic path. Adding a short lanyard just about prevents any escape on a sloping surface.

Fig 1 shows the tool prior to adding the lanyard. The brass tack through the TH was necessary, as the knot did not have sufficient grip to stay put under working conditions.



Fig 2 shows the method of engaging the twine. The line is inserted and the working end held close to the shaft. Rotating the tool brings the standing part across the working end, creating a hitch.



Force may be exerted by merely grasping the tool and hauling once the hitch has been made tight. Alternately the tool is rotated to produce considerable tension if desired.

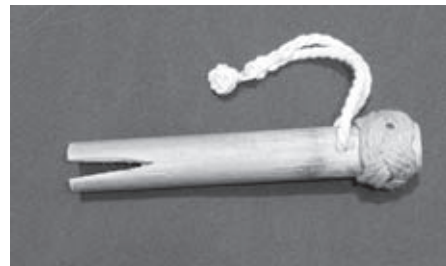


Fig 3 shows the tool complete with lanyard. The "secured" TH has been found to assist somewhat in applying torque, particularly useful for soft handed, arthritic, weak wristed, would-be riggers. ☼

Bowline or Loop - Working End or Standing Part?

Owen K Nuttall

What constitutes a bowline from a loop? My theory is that if it resembles the standard bowline and is relatively easy to untie it can be classed a bowline. On the other hand if it does not resemble a bowline and is harder to untie, that to me is a loop.

To tie the water bowline (clove hitch bowline) on a bight, "Linfat Way" after Fig. 1 take the single loop back to its original place and pull in opposing directions.

Water Bowline Doubled on a Bight - Linfat Way

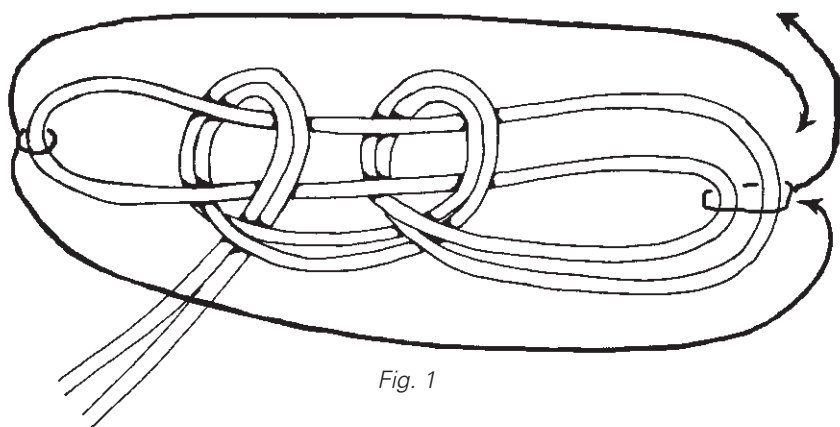
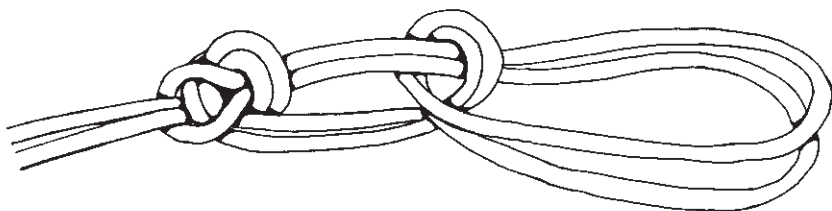
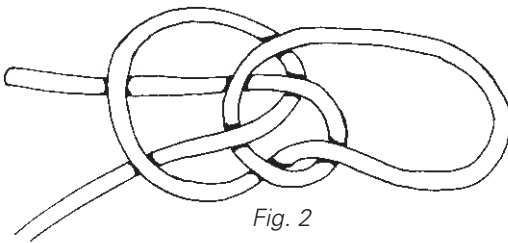
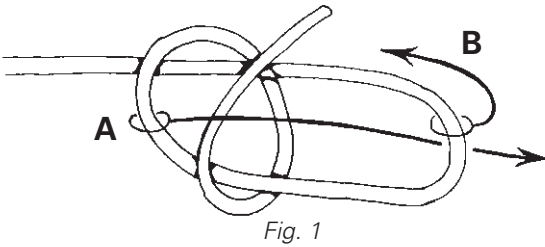


Fig. 1

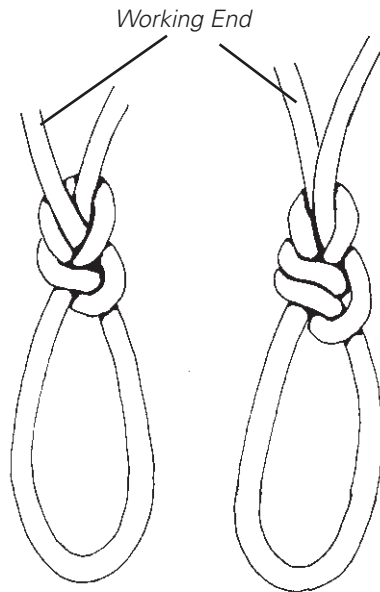
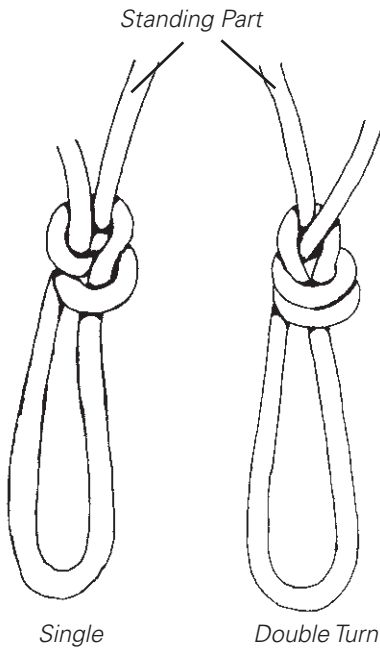


Luddite Bowlines and Loops



The Luddite bowlines, after Fig. 2 pull the standing part to complete the knot. On the double Luddite bowline, after Fig. 1, make another turn with the working end, and then pull the standing part as in Fig. 2 to complete.

The Luddite loops are tied the same way as the previous two. The difference now that the working end becomes the standing part on tightening.



Luddite Bowlines

Luddite Loops

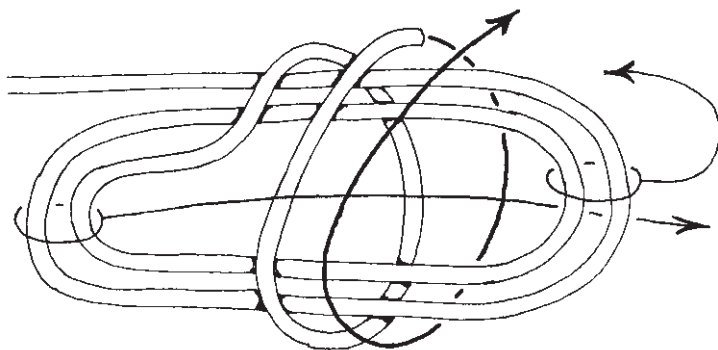
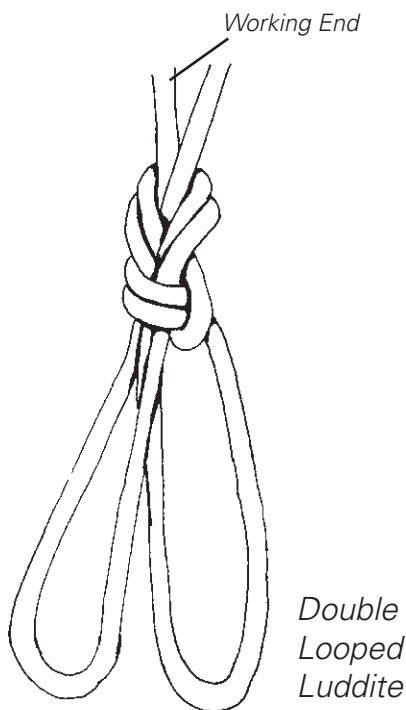
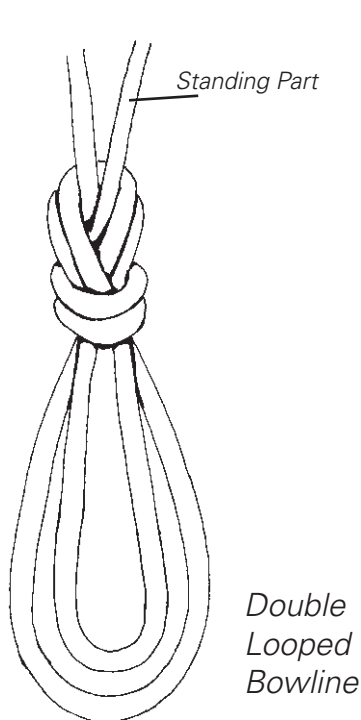
Double Looped Luddites

Fig. 3

On the double looped bowline and loops, follow Fig. 3 and make two turns around the doubled loop (one turn does not work correctly) then proceed as in Figs. 1 and 2 to make a double Luddite bowline and a double looped Luddite loop.

These knots are a variation on knot tying that would have amused Desmond Mandeville with his Trambles. So bowlines or loops it is up to the tyer which they prefer. Have fun tying them. ☼



Tie a Spanish Ring Knot with 'John Shaw'

'The Gaucho pattern is very common in flat braids ... where there is a "V" pattern in the weave that has the "V's" "pointing around the knot. The most common knot with a Gaucho weave pattern ... is the Ring knot or Spanish Ring knot ... a Gaucho pattern that is formed from only one "V".

(Tom Hall^{IGKT}, Introduction to Turk's-head Knots, 1996)


Devotees of Turks' heads in cord once upon a time reproduced only those portrayed in seamanship manuals and tied by sailors. Now an increasing number are having a go at intricate knots which originated with rawhide and leather braiding, in the bush, or on pampas and prairie, because these knots work well in round stuff too.

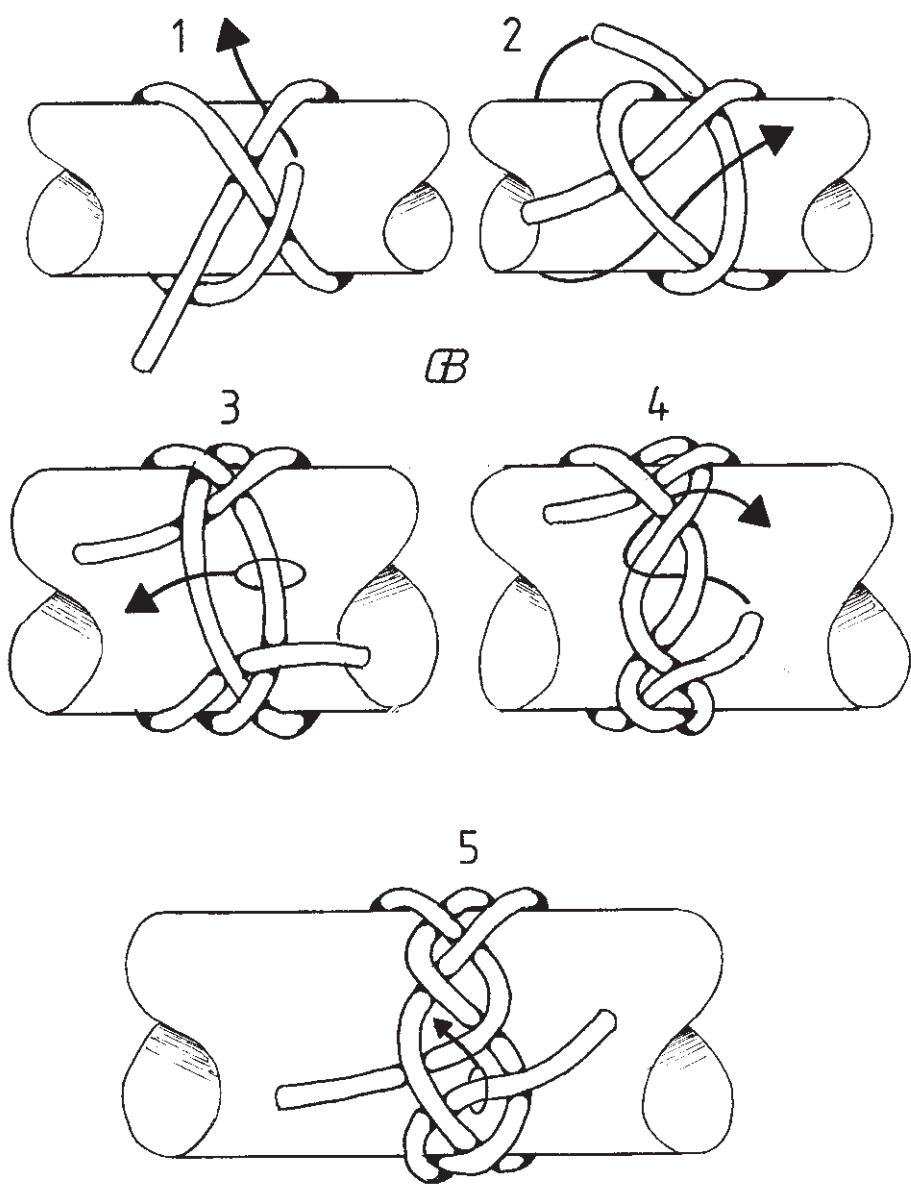
For a start, try the Spanish ring knot, No tiresome and off-putting preparation is needed - no pins projecting from a cardboard tube; no mandrel with numbered facets; no wrap-around chart drawn on sacrificial graph paper. Tie it either directly onto the fingers of one hand or around an actual object. About 1.5 metres of 5 mm diameter cord (less, if thinner) is more than enough to complete the wraps and tucks before removing the slack to tighten them.

- First make a 3-lead x 5-bight Turk's head, placing the working end alongside the standing end as if to follow it around to create a two-ply knot, but then lifting it OVER to lie *in front* of the original lead.
- From now on, the w'end will travel to the left of the strand it is tracking (as it traverses the knot from left-to-right) - going over where it goes over, or under where it goes under - and on the right of it (each time it returns from right to left). This creates a trio of unstable crossing points, indicated by asterisks [fig's 6 and 7], so take care not to drag the w'end onto the wrong side of its companion strand.
- The next three steps in the tying process [fig's 8, 9 and 10] involve tucking the w'end under TWO strands and up between two parallel knot parts so as to split and separate them. Each of these tucks secures one of the three unstable crossing points made earlier. You can begin to relax.

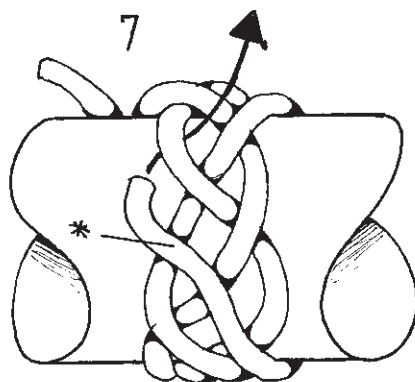
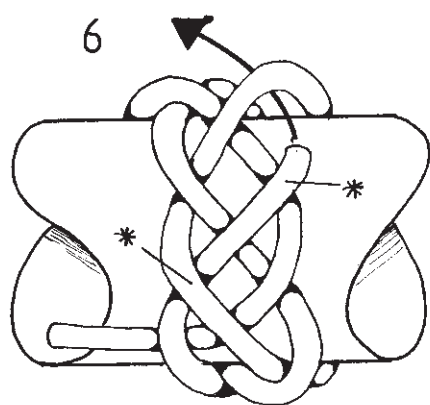
When the w'end meets the st'end again, the knot is complete [11]. See how the original 3L x 5B TH has evolved into a 5L x 8B Spanish ring knot with an O2, U2 Gaucho weave. Remove unwanted slack, tightening the knot, then hide the ends.

This knot is easy to learn. It is a neat party-piece to demonstrate one's finger-fiddling fluency, as well as a versatile embellishment for all sorts of ornamental knot work, and it can stand alone as a personal bracelet, finger ring or woggle.

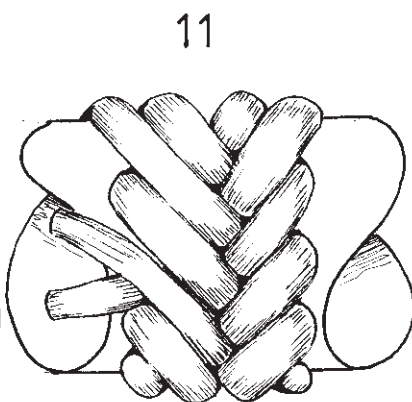
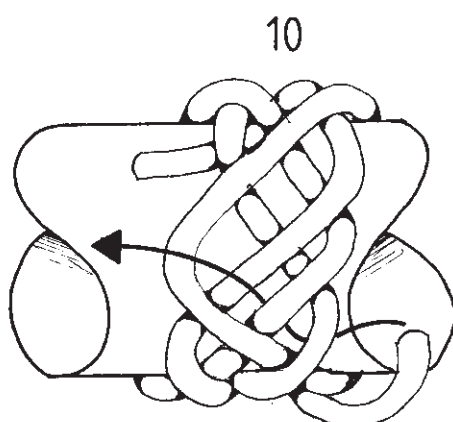
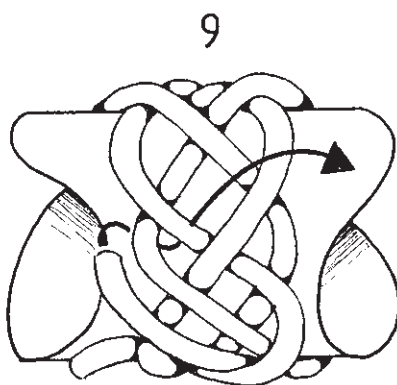
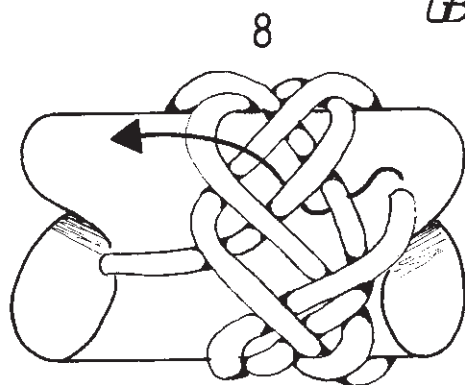
[Repeat the process illustrated by steps 5 to 10 with sufficient commitment, concentration and cord to produce an even more solid 7L x 11B (O3, U3) version of the Spanish ring knot.] 



3-lead x 5-bight Turk's head



\mathcal{B}



5-lead x 8-bight Spanish ring knot

Branch Lines

West Country Knotters

On Saturday, 4th August 2007 - a welcome sunny day after a rain-soaked couple of months - at Wincanton, in the UK county of Somerset, a trio of our members represented the IGKT at the first ever 'Discworld Jamboree', an international convention for devotees of the fantasy novels by the phenomenal author Terry Pratchett.

The initial commitment for this enjoyably bizarre event was made a year in advance by Geoffrey Budworth through Discworld's merchandise master-craftsman, Bernard ('the Cunning Artificer') Pearson, but Richard Hopkins and Europa Chang then undertook all of the preparation, planning and performance.

On the day more than 1,000 Pratchett fans had congregated from around Britain and as far away as Australia, Singapore and the USA, most attired in fantastical costumes representing their favourite Discworld characters. To link

with the centenary of Scouting, the 1st Ankh Assassin Scout Group led the competition for multifarious badges and certificates, awarded when requisite activities were successfully completed ... including knotting.

This kept our team busy non-stop for eight hours. Richard, as well as producing an imaginative display of knotted (and other) artefacts relating to Discworld, also taught and timed the endless queue in front of his six-knot challenge with unfailing patience and stamina; while Europa explained and coached 'the refined Agatean art of Samurai Braiding and knotting' to a succession of individuals on a one-to-one basis. Geoffrey, resplendent in a wizard's pointy hat and gown embellished with macramé regalia, entertained, chatted and lent a hand whenever and wherever required.

To link up with Discworld on round-world (i.e. planet Earth), visit www.discworldemporium.com
West Country Stringer

East Anglian Branch

Sixteen members and friends met at Stowmarket on Saturday, 15th September, 2007. We were pleased to welcome back Sylvia and Nigel Harding, who are re-establishing themselves in East Anglia.

Des Pawson reported that he had sent the decorated ropes we made at our April meeting to the Pacific America and Sweden Branches.

Ken Higgs showed us and explained "weaving with sticks", which means (home-made) wooden needles are used to pull the warp through the weft as it is wound round the "sticks". Ken then told and showed us some more about French knitting with reels with wooden pegs, and making laces and lanyards with them and with lucets. He said the Vikings made laces that way.

I talked about how I had felt driven by lack of success with traditional methods to work out my Idiot's Guide for Tying Single-Cord (Running) Turk's Heads - see p28. I showed examples of various stages of starter patterns, more recently drawn directly on to wooden dowels or foam pipe-lagging. The latter can be put on the object to be decorated if the

ends are closed off. Des Pawson and Terry Watson then showed me why I need to work from an idiot's guide, while they can do it much more simply and directly!

At the request of Duncan Bolt, who had sent apologies for absence, the meeting decided that next year's Summer Gathering of the East Anglian Branch and guests will be held at Duncan's home at Thornham, Norfolk on Saturday, 28th June, 2008. The theme will be Macramé, Square-Knotting and Clothing Accessories. We are all urged to take examples of our recent work and work in progress.

The next regular meeting of the East Anglian Branch will be at the Education Centre of the Museum of East Anglian Life at Stowmarket on Saturday, 12th April 2008. The theme will be Walking Sticks and Lanyards.

'Tuffy' Turner

West Yorkshire Branch

This was our second year at the revived Dewsbury Canal Festival and with the success that they had it will certainly

keep going. Dewsbury is only a small town but we could not have had a bigger welcome. There were eight of us to man the stand and we were able to cover most aspects of knotting, anything from teaching children to tie "Solomons" and dragonflys to decorative knots, macramé and how to moor a canal boat. The weather could not have been better and we had a great day out. The West Yorkshire Branch could not continue to do these events without the help of members from other branches and we are grateful that they come along and we are always delighted to see them.

David Pearson

Midlands Branch

There was again a good gathering of members at the October meeting of the Midlands Branch, once again hosted by Tim Newey at Ma Pardoe's in Netherton.

First business of the evening was to arrange our 2008 programme. At a previous meeting, we had brainstormed a number of ideas and the best liked were selected to fulfil next years dates.

Then it was on to the main agenda of the evening, the knotting. Our dozen of jig makers

Bill Newey had created a number of pieces of apparatus to create Ashley's #2222 based on the article by Thomas Simpson (KM96). Dispensing with the elastic bands, Bill's jig used pins, and it was not long before we were all carefully following his instructions. Everybody achieved success - now we just need something to cover with it!

At our first meeting in the New Year, we shall be bringing some of our tools and work to show and talk about. Any members in the Midlands area are invited; see the Knotting Diary for details.

From our Midland's Stringer



Swifter:

a specially made rope fitted to the ends of the capstan bars to hold them together, to spread the considerable load and to allow purchase for extra hands.

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.

The Red Hat!

To answer everybody's question, here is a photo of Liz and I outside Buckingham Palace on the 23rd of October after I received the MBE from the Queen.

I wore my red hat as usual, but of course top hats, red hats, in fact all men's hats have to come off when you enter the Palace. The Whole day was in a blur and it is most strange I cannot remember exactly

what the Queen said to me but I can assure all our members, that I stressed the importance of knots and rope to the world and mentioned the International Guild of Knot Tyers with its worldwide membership.

Des Pawson MBE
Ipswich, UK

Sister Loops

Sister loops - just in time! The nurses and staff in several local medical homes carry their keys on a lanyard round their waists. For some years I have made these from two different cords, middled over a split ring and 'lariat' plaited to finish in a loop. Keys on the ring, round the waist

and drop them through the loop. Normally ordered at 36" and 48" there are times when one is too short and the other too long, so - "Ken, can you provide an extension please?" Now, thanks to Knotmaster, I have a simpler answer to that which has been used!

Remove the split ring, loop the sister loop extension to the original and replace the ring to it? Thanks Geoff.

Ken Higgs
Felixstowe, UK

A Matter of Attribution

I have - I concede - befuddled the minds of some *Knotting Matters* readers with my frequent use over 25 years of pen-names. This was done, in the early days as *KM* editor, to disguise the fact that I wrote a lot of it myself ... and was continued by later editors at my request to avoid overtly imposing myself on you. Now that I have definitely written my last knot book*, and probably made my final contribution to *KM*,



however, I am keen to sort out past attributions so that any credit (and criticism) can be aimed in the right direction.

In general, I wrote every piece with the pseudonym or by-line 'Cy (and later Knut) Canute', 'Jack Fidspike', 'Knotmaster', 'John Shaw', and 'Jennifer Wren', as well as any letters and reviews from 'KM's Science Correspondent', 'South Coast (or South of England, UK or West Country) Stringer'.

There are also un-attributed fillers submitted, and some of them written by, me - too many to identify and list, except for the piece titled *Memento Mori*, which first appeared in *KM*#50 (October 1995), and has been reprinted once since then, on both occasions wrongly reported to be from the late Frank Harris, when in fact I dreamed it up and wrote it..

Maybe a future editor will want to continue one or more of these long-running by-lines (for instance, Knotmaster) with another regular contributor, and that's OK by me. For now though, I hope, I have set the record straight.

Geoffrey Budworth
Salisbury, UK

* *What Knot? co-written with Richard Hopkins^{IGKT} and published in 2007 by Ermine Street Books, a division of Regency House Publishing Co. Ltd. (ISBN-13: 978-1-85361-553-5 and ISBN-10: 0-85361-553-6)*

Fake - Flake

Graham McLachlan raised an interesting question on the subject of Fake and Flake. He and the members might be interested in this extract from John Harland's *Seamanship in the Age of Sail* 1984.

As it concerns us, the interest lies in determining how a word actually was used, as distinct from how it should have been used. In the first case, it is most useful to find the term used in a narrative, rather than depending on a sterilised dictionary entry. There is honour among lexicographers, and the error of one is very likely to be transcribed unquestioningly by mother. For instance, is 'fake' more correct than 'flake' in the sense of 'a single turn in a

coil of rope', and the verb deriving from this? Almost every dictionary suggests that the answer is in the affirmative. However, F H Burgess, the compiler of the *Penguin Dictionary of Sailing*, told me that although he listed 'fake', he had never heard it during thirty years' service in the Royal Navy, coming across it, 'only in books'. In the *Admiralty Manual of Seamanship* (Volume I, 1951, 255) boat falls are 'flaked down'.

Revision of the same passage, in Volume I :1964, 266), cleans it up, substituting 'fake'. For some reason 'fake' is considered correct, and 'flake' an illiterate variant, yet 'flake' has been in steady use, at least colloquially, since 1600,

Also from the undermentioned authors and authorities I have found.

Fake
Fake Down
Flake
Flake Down
Flemish Fake
Flemish Flake
French Fake
French Flake
Cheese
Cheese Down
Flemish Coil (mat)
Defined thus:
"Coiling a rope in a circular or elliptical form

with each fake (flake etc.) outside the other beginning in the middle.”

Fake (D) Faking

Fake Down

Flake (D)

Flake Down

Flemish Down

French Fake

French Flaked

Defined thus:

“A rope which may have to be payed out quickly Care should be taken that each turn at the end of a flake is laid over that immediately preceding it to be sure that the upper turns are given no opportunity to catch the lower turns as the rope runs out.”

Further several of the authors write, “Flake: see Fake - Jane says Fake - sometimes called a Flake incorrectly)! And also says cheese down also known as Flemish coil (obsolescent).

Finally the word ‘flake’ is not used by any author before 1937.

As to the etymological derivation of the words. Haliwell’s *Dictionary of Archaic Words*, 1850, lists Flaik: A wooden frame for keeping cakes on, and for Flake: A paling or hurdle of any description, a temporary gate or door. Several of the dictionaries list Flake as a stage for working over the ships (oh happy days!) side - all

of those are roughly in the shape of a stretcher. One wonders whether ropes were coiled down on a hurdle or similar to allow for ease of carrying and/or drainage and air circulation, as heavy anchor cables were stowed on gratings in big sailing vessels. Just a thought!

Roger Carter

Paraparaumu, New Zealand

A Greek Camel

I refer to *Knotting Matters* 93 p35, ‘Camel or Cable’.

For members of the Clergy this subject is a very old hat topic and very well discussed. Considering the number of translations leading to numerous editions of the Bible and other publications, I fear, however logical it may seem, the logic finishes with the animal and not the cable.

Matthew and Luke versions, [not Mark, which is probably the original, copied by Matthew and Luke] have a variant reading κάμελον. Thayer-Grimm *NT Greek Dictionary* gives this as a rare word, found only in one or two very late glossaries.

The Vulgate has; ‘Facilium est camelum per foramen acus transpire’ *Cassels Latin Dictionary* has camelum = camel [from Gk. κάμελος]. Hebrew for camel in Deuteronomy and Leviticus, older strands of OT, is Gamal, cognate with Arabic jamal (or in Egyptian, and once upon a time generally) gamal, Assyrian gammalu, Aramaic gamla.

That looks a pretty good pedigree. If κάμελον is any more than a scribal error it can only be because someone wanted to spare the feelings of his rich Parishioners. I hope this will settle the matter.

Robert A Huntington
Wells next the Sea, UK



Knotting Diary

GUILD MEETINGS

AGM & Meeting 2008

10th - 11th May 2008

Weald & Downland Museum

Singleton, Sussex

Contact: Charlie Tyrrell

Tel: (0044) 01798 344258

Half-Yearly Meeting

10th-12th October 2008

High Sea Fishing Museum, Cuxhaven,
Germany

Contact: Dave Walker

Tel: (0044) 01244 682117

Email: dwfenders@yahoo.co.uk

BRANCH MEETINGS

Alaskan

Every Wednesday evening 6.30-8.00

Anchorage Senior Center

1300 East 19th Avenue, Anchorage

Contact: Mike Livingstone

Tel: (001) 907 929 7888

East Anglian Branch

12th April 2008

Museum of East Anglian Life,

Stowmarket, Suffolk

Contact: John Halifax

Tel: (0044) 01502 519123

Email:

john@endeavour-knots.freemove.co.uk

Midlands Branch

10th February 2008

The Old Swan (Ma Pardoe's),

Halesowen Road, Netherton

Contact: Bruce Turley

Tel: (0044) 0121 453 4124

Email: bruce.turley@blueyonder.co.uk

Netherlands

Last Saturday of each month

De Hoop, Nr Rotterdam Maritime

Museum, Rotterdam

Contact: Jan Hoefnagel

Tel: (0031) 078 614 6002

Pacific Americas

2nd Tuesday of each month

Los Angeles Maritime Museum,

San Pedro, California

Contact: Jimmy R Williams

Tel: (001) (310) 679 6864

Email: igktpab@yahoo.com

Solent Branch

12th February 2008

Travellers Rest Inn, Newtown,

Nr Wickham, Hants

Contact: Eddie Bentley

Tel: (0044) 01239 233251

Surrey Branch

4th February 2008

Guildford District Scout Centre,

Nightingale Road, Guildford

Contact: Peter Goldstone

Tel: (0044) 01483 763054

Email: GOLDSTPG@airproducts.com

To place your Branch Meeting or Knotting Event in KM, please send to the editor by post or email. Ensure you allow sufficient time for inclusion.



Happy New
Knotyear
2008

