



Knot News

International Guild of Knot Tyers
Pacific Americas Branch

September 1997

Issue #4

Ashley Retrospective & IGKT Meeting in New Bedford August 7th thru 9th

The show in New Bedford was a great success! I had never before been in such an intense knotting atmosphere, with so many world class knotters in the same place. Once everyone started arriving and introducing themselves around; the knotting began in earnest. You knew who the knotters were by the string dangling from their pockets. People knotted at the breakfast table before their first coffee. Knot talk went on in the hallway and down into the lobby. People did it in the privacy of their own rooms and in public displays.

Thursday evening started off the events with a lecture by Elton Hall, art historian and Ashley biographer. He really gave an added dimension about Ashley's life. His growing up in New Bedford and the scope of the art training he underwent. He explored the events leading up to his (now famous) voyage on the *Sunbeam*, to write and draw about the whaling life. Ashley's *Book of Knots* is full of little jokes and images from his life. Mr. Hall told of the gravestone portrayed in his introduction (pg. 8) which states: 'HERE LIES YE BODY OF CAPT. GEO. WAYLAND Who was lost at Sea and

never recovered' It turns out that Mr. George Wayland was a friend of Ashley's whose nickname was 'Rabbit'; which explains the curious bunny staring out at the bottom of the drawing.

Jane Ashley's talk on Friday continued to unlock the ABOK. The little hut made of half of an upended surf boat (pg. 319) with a girl raising a flag on, was a drawing of an actual playhouse Ashley made for his three daughters. It was not on a beach as portrayed but was up against a garden wall in the backyard of the Ashley household. The sea chest carried by two sailors (pg. 155) has Phoebe Ashley's initials written on its side. The play set described under 'Swings and Swinging' (pg. 76) was a real playset he built for them to play upon. She mentioned a few others but they've slipped from my memory. There is something, though, that I shall not soon forget. After the *Ashley Book of Knots* was published, Clifford Ashley suffered a series of crippling strokes. Just before he died, Phoebe was sitting on the sun porch with her father quietly practicing some knotting, when he looked down at his hands and said, "They just don't work anymore!"

This is the one memory I will always have when I think of the New Bedford gathering.

Jane Ashley followed with a fine slide presentation of the different art work done by her artist father. She described much of the personal touches he made to his farm in Westport as well as his professional work.

A number of fine lectures rounded out the rest of the day. Brian Field gave a knoter's view of Ashley's as an aid to knotters worldwide as an aid in classification. With his discovery of the ABOK, Brian was able to stop being a 'closet knoter' and hold himself respect and pride. This book proved that knotting had depth and history; it was not just a piddling waste of time.

The knot lectures by Messrs. Vaughan Jones, Rob Scharein and Greg Buck were well received but (I admit) a bit much for me to absorb. Rob's 'Knot Plot' program was a good help in displaying the theory in graphic form and he made the nice gesture of offering it free to all Conference attendees.

Pieter van de Griend gave a very interesting talk on a history of knotting from around the world. He had an interesting slide presentation of some of the earliest examples of knots from the archeological record. His depth and grasp of the subject was very evident and he was able to present some interesting moments.

Rob Wolfe ended the lectures with a discussion of Ashley's Bend #1452 and the different ways he explored trying to find the easiest way to tie it. Unluckily, from where I sat, his back was to me during much of the talk and I missed the tying part of his knotting explanations.

The knotting show and demonstration in the Lagoda Room of the New Bedford Whaling Museum was when the knotters really got to get down to business. Louis Richardi of Holbrook stole the show with his excellent knot board and knot picture frame. Karl Bareuther displayed his sea chest beackets and blackjacks; Pieter van de Griend showed how to make his Little Light House Knot. Des Pawson and David Bowie

worked on a rope mat most of the day. Brian Field wowed the kids with his magic knot tricks and lively banter. Bruce Turley was there with his 'impossible rope' as well as a piece of rope made from toilet paper! Some of the other demonstrators were Al Trout, Ken Yalden, Gorden Perry, Gary Sessions, Dean Westervelt and Daniel Machowski. It was hard to see and absorb everything that was going on, with everyone roaming around the many tables to comparing notes and see the different work displayed.

It was quite an experience, one that I will always treasure. Another Meeting is planned in 1999 and we all look forward to see all our friends again in New Bedford.

If any other Branch member has their own story about the Ashley Retrospective they would like to tell, just send it in to me and we'll publish it here in a future *Knot News*.

Tall Ships Festival **Dana Point Harbor** **September 6th & 7th**

Darrell McNurlan arranged for the Branch to show the flag at the annual Tall Ships Festival at the Orange County Marine Institute at Dana Point Harbor. We were positioned right across the dock from the *Pilgrim*; as the crowds came in from the parking lot, they filed right past our displays. Joe Schmidbauer helped Darrell set up the tables and begin working the crowd. The traveling knot board caught the eye of a good many people; our display of the different fancy work from the Branch stopped them in their tracks. The response from the many passers-by was a bit over whelming sometimes. The kids were especially fascinated; they wanted to explore, touch and pick up everything.

The Festival itself was a perfect place for us what with the Institute's replica of Dana's *Pilgrim*, plus the *Pilgrim of Newport*, the *Witch of the Wood* and the *Californian*. Lindsey Philpott arrived later

in the day on the *Swift of Ipswich*, on which he had sailed from San Pedro. And that was just Saturday! Darrell and Lindsey did it again on Sunday with the crowds being even more energetic and enthusiastic. In fact, they tell me the crowds never did thin out till the end of the day. The ships ended it all by having an evening gun duel off the point.

There was a lot of other things to see and do at the Festival. Lots of local artists set up booths and were selling paintings, leather work, pottery and jewelry. There were pirate costumes for sale and some wonderful custom beach chairs in your choice of colors. Vendors also sold lots of food and drink.

We're looking forward to many years of working with the OCMI to promote the art and craft of knotting. We netted a few dollars for the Guild but, more importantly, we became known through that old question "The guild of WHAT!?" Over all there was a good response to our presence. Over thirty people asked for further information and looking for possible membership.

Monthly Meeting at the Museum **September 16th**

The regular monthly meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM in the Los Angeles Maritime Museum. In attendance were Lindsey Philpott, Darrell McNurlan, Joe Schmidbauer, Mike Bowman, Mark Sherman, Tom Gergen, Tim Howard, Mike mclaughlin, Sean Vattuone, Ron Haralson and new members Larry Tannenbaum and Mike Waring.

Web Site

Lindsey has been investigating getting the Branch our own Web Site. Two good local companies are Flashnet and Pacific Net. After some discussion of the cost and what we want our site to represent, the Branch voted to allow Lindsey to spend up to \$250 for the first years costs. Lindsey and his wife, Kim, will do much

of the work themselves setting up the page.

Lists

The Secretary is still looking to create a master list of all members knotting books. All you need to do is scribble your list on a napkin and send it on in. He'll take care of the rest.

No one has sent in any information on sources of rope and cordage. We need to help each other with this. This knowledge will help each member find just the right line he or she needs for their latest project. Can you help?

Scout Out Reach

A number of Scout Troops leaders were at Dana Point and immediately wanted the Guild to come and do a demonstration at their troop meetings. Rather than go in different directions, it was agreed to get more information from the troops themselves on what they expect and their meeting times.

Knot Board

Lindsey is eager to get started on planning out a new knot board for the Museum. It will cover a 5' by 5' space and the theme will be Knot Usage Today. Mike McLaughlin suggested making it a '3-D' board being at least 6" deep. Sean envisioned a working display on the back deck of the museum showing how the different kind of tackles worked. A 'Hands On' board was also brought up. Joe volunteered to draw up the different ideas for action at the next meeting.

Shirts

We still have a number of shirts for sale. These are good quality polo style shirts and t-shirts. They are navy blue with the Guild logo in white on the left breast. Tho polo are \$18.00; the t-shirts are \$10.00. Available in all sizes.

Arts of the Bos'n

Lindsey will be starting up a class on the 'Arts of the Bos'n'. The class will make a ditty bag from canvas with a fancywork rope handle. It will be on Thursday evenings starting on October 16th at the Museum or the Ed Center.

Let's Make It a Date

The next Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 14th in the classroom at the Museum.

Subject for discussion: "Enlargement and Evolution of the Turk's Head".

Branch Library

The Library continues to grow with more donations from around the Branch
Key Fob of braided leather, four strand round sennit ending in a pineapple knot, finished off with a shank of horse's hair.

Donated by Michael Storch, 1997.

Chinese Knot Necklace *Cross Knot-"Ten"*

in Chinese is represented by a simple cross. The Japanese call this knot the 'Success Knot', the cross and the square forming the word 'kanau' meaning 'the wish realized'. *Pan Chang*-The cyclical nature of all existence is graphically represented in the Pan Chang knot. Life seems to twist and turn around itself in an endless pattern. *Amethyst*-Balances our intellectual/emotional/physical bodies
Stability, strength and peace. Calming,

protective. Enhances psychic abilities. Excellent for meditation, calms the mind. Healing, divine love, inspiration, intuition.

Donated by Maggie Machado

Preventive Conservation: A Manual by Maggie Graham-Bell

Flat Storage for Textiles by Canadian Conservation Institute

Museum Collection Storage by E. Verner Johnson and Joanne C. Horgan

Donated by Terry Ridings, 1997.

Knots by Peter Owen. Charwell Books, 1996.

Donated by Lindsey Philpott

Het Knoope Knauwertje Dutch Knotting Newsletter by Pieter van de Griend.

Aug 96; Oct 96; Dec 96; Feb 97; Apr 97; Jun 97

Donated by Mark Sherman

If you have a favorite tome that you would like to donate to our archives, please let us know and we'll let you know if it already is on our list of books and artifacts.

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