

KNOT



NEWS

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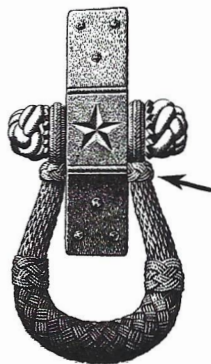
Issue #48

On a Becket Problem

by Pieter van de Griend

Introduction

Making a chest becket I once started the grafting section too far below the eyes. This was done intentionally in order to get a neat and lean becket shape tapering towards the eyes. Unfortunately this setup backfired with a curious problem. How was I to create a covering that started immediately below the eyes, reached far enough over the grafting and which would not allow slippage under operational loading? Furthermore, somewhere there sounded one of those unwritten becket design laws, which states that there must be a bulge slightly below the eyes. Just consider the becketts illustrated by Hervey Smith, or Chas Spencer, where simple Turk's Head Knots are used for this purpose [1, p68], [2]. See Smith's illustration reproduced below.



The solution I worked out consisted of a base knot and an interweave. In this little article I want to present its details hoping it will be of use to other becket makers.

The base knot

The base knot is a so-called Asymmetric Nested Knot. The right-hand side fits onto a grid diagram of a Regular Knot of 13 parts and 12 bights. The coding of this base knot is not plain O1U1. The diagram in Fig.1 shows that the left-hand section is O1U1-coded. However, the right-hand section has an O2U2 sequence. Note that the base knot consists of two components!

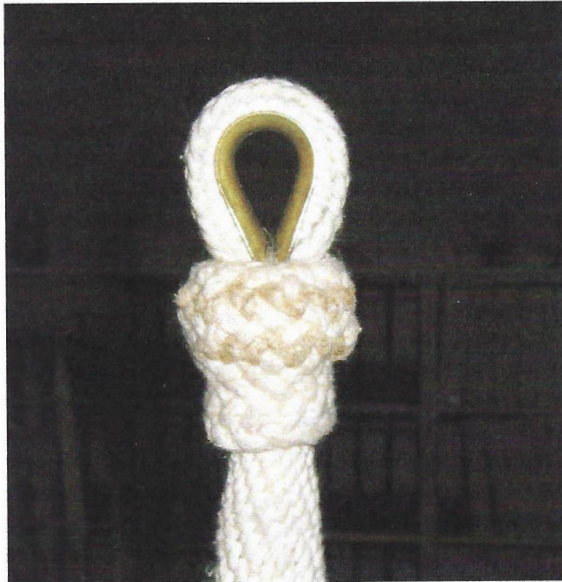
The 5 parts and 12 bights interweave

The image in Fig.2 shows how the 5 stranded interweave is to be implemented in the left-hand section of the knot. Note that the right half of the base knot is column coded, i.e. all columns have the same type of crossing (same crossing parity). The left side of the base knot is O1U1, note that all columns have identical crossing type, but so do all rows. Such coding type is also known as Casa Coding. In fact most Turk's Heads Knots' discussions are about Casa coded Regular Knots, but more on that some other time.

The tying sequence of the interweave is given below. Bold case caps indicate where the working end (wend) encounters its standing end (stend). You can start anywhere along the left-hand side of the interweave.

1 L->R: u-o-u-o-u.
 2 R->L: u-o-u-o-u.
 3 L->R: u-o-u-o-u.
 4 R->L: u-o-u-o-u.
 5 L->R: u-o-u-o-u.
 6 R->L: u-o-O-u-o-u .
 7 L->R: u-o-O-u-o-u.
 8 R->L: u-o-O-u-o-u .
 9 L->R: u-o-O-u-o-u.
 10 R->L: u-o-O-u-o-O-u.
 11 L->R: u-o-O-u-o-O-u.
 12 R->L: u-o-O-u-o-O-u.
 13 L->R: u-o-O-u-o-O-u .
 14 R->L: u-o-O-u-o-O-u.
 15 L->R: u-o-O-u-o-O-u.
 16 R->L: u-U-o-O-u-o-O-u.
 17 L->R: u-U-o-O-u-o-O-u.
 18 R->L: u-U-o-O-u-o-O-u.
 19 L->R: u-U-o-O-u-o-O-u.
 20 R->L: u-U-o-O-u-U-o-O-u.
 21 L->R: u-U-o-O-u-U-o-O-u.
 22 R->L: u-U-o-O-u-U-o-O-u.
 23 L->R: u-U-o-O-u-U-o-O-u.
 24 R->L: u-U-o-O-u-U-o-O-u.

The resulting interweave is 2-pass row coded, which shows two parallel wavy lines. The interweave thickens the knot to produce the required bulge. The left-hand side partially closes



the gap around the eye. The right-hand side gives the tubular extension not only covering, but also gripping the grafting.

Epilogue

These are no simple knotties, but they can be put to miscellaneous uses. Before closing off I would like to draw your attention to the resemblance between these griddiagrams and those of the single-stringer pear-shaped knots by Patrick Ducey [3]. More about these things at some later occasion. Until then, Happy Knotting!

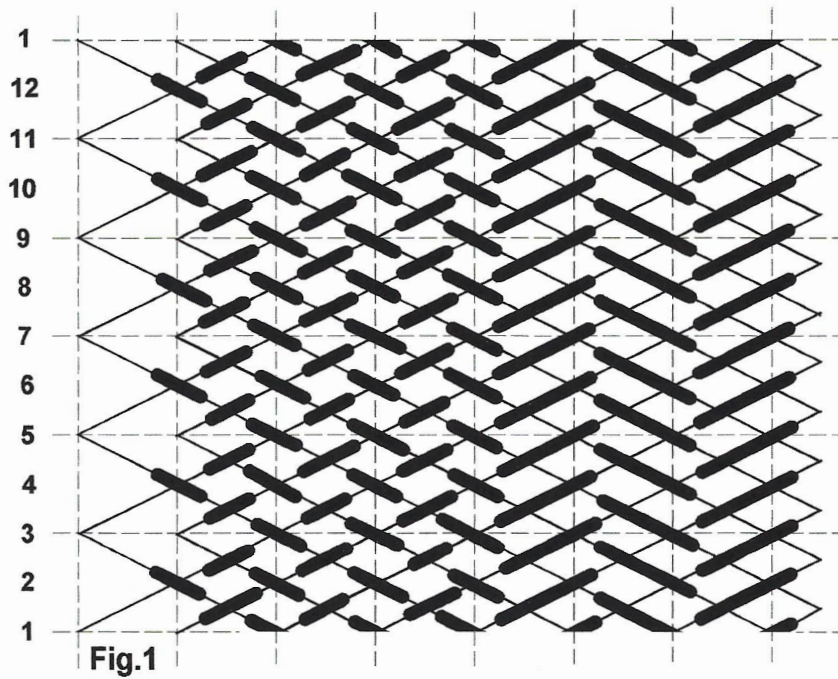
References

- [1] H.G. Smith, *The Marlinspike Sailor*, John de Graff inc, isbn 8286-0044-9, 1981.
- [2] C.L. Spencer, *Knots, splices and fancy work*, Brown, Son and Ferguson, Glasgow 1978, isbn 0-8174-157-6.
- [3] P. Ducey, A Pear Shaped Turk's Head Knot, *Knot News*, No.46, Nov 2004.

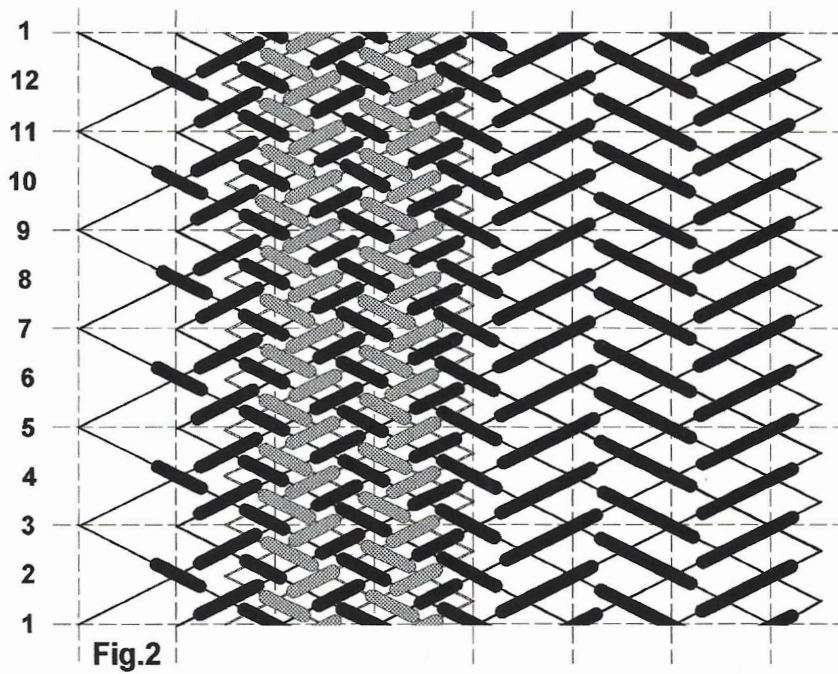
© Pieter van de Griend ☺
Stiphout November 2004.

As to the making of Knots themselves, it should be kept in mind by beginners that all Knots and Fancy Work are made up of a very few simple turns and tucks. I think they could be counted on the fingers. The skill to be attained is that required by a man in handling several strands at once and in recognizing where to make the tuck. The art consists in making the combinations of the simple elements. Incidentally, it may be remarked that the finished work looks far better than any illustration!

Charles L. Spencer
Knots, Splices and Fancy Work



Becket Problem Base Knot and Interweave



(c)Pieter van de Griend
Nov 2004

International Guild of Knot Tyers

Pacific Branch

PAB AGM 2005



July 4th Weekend Seattle, Washington

Please join us at the IGKT-PAB AGM in Seattle on July 2nd, 3rd and 4th. Our AGM Meeting and Dinner will be on Saturday, July 2nd but our show will be at the Seattle Center For Wooden Boats Festival, July 2nd through July 4th. We will set up on Saturday, July 2nd. We will have a covered space for displays and two "demonstration" stages, one indoor and one outdoors. We expect to be able to stay over the night of July 4th, to watch one of the nation's best fireworks displays. Our site is perfect to watch the display. You can unload your stuff and set up on Saturday AM before the public arrives and we are working on a Friday window to unload as well. The same is for the night of the 4th and the morning of the 5th... but if you don't stay for the display you may regret it forever. You will love the boats, which are on display and the folks who cherish them, lots of salty folks all around.

Please get in contact with Dennis Armstrong, our AGM Chairperson, or me, Roy Chapman, to set up for the demonstration / talk you want to give or the space you need to reserve for your display.

Sure this is a "family" weekend to be spent at home. I may ask: what better trip to take your family on than to Seattle, where there is so much to see and do, while the knotters get to hobnob? Seattle is a great town to visit, the Space Needle has the most impressive fireworks in the USA, plus all the charms of "Old Seattle" are available for the family. Visit "Pike's Street Market" and tour the "Sunken City".

So put these dates on your calendar... be there or be square!

Dennis Armstrong (425) 885-2457 knots@drizzle.com

Roy Chapman (360) 873-4003 Chapman.Roy@att.net

Turk's Head Wine Glass

by Pat Ducey

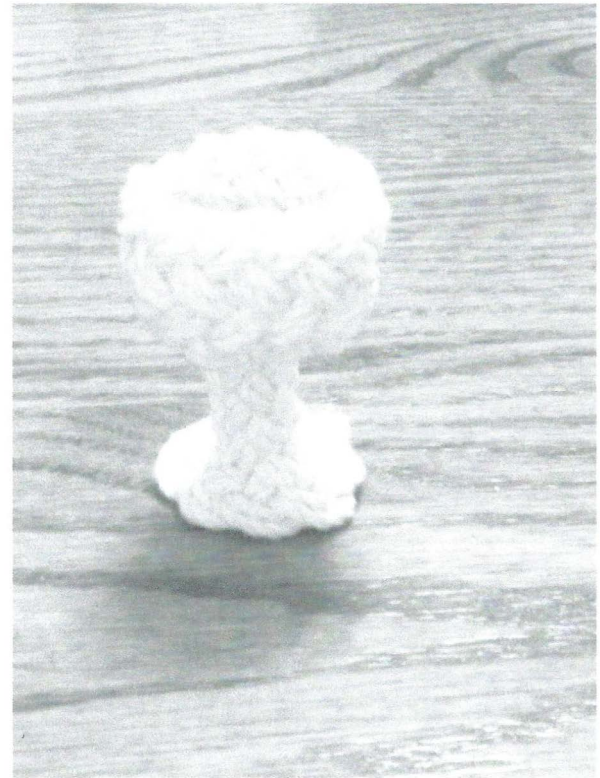
In this newsletter I have asked Joe to enclose a template for a Turk's Head Wine Glass. In a previous edition of *Knot News*, I sent out a Pear Shaped Turk's Head, which was a combination of two Turk's Heads. The Wine Glass is a combination of three Turk's heads. A 3Lx8B Turk's Head for a base, an 8Lx8B Turk's Head for the stem and a 7Lx12B Turk's Head for the cup. There are many possible combinations of Turk's Heads. Any cylindrical object can be duplicated in Turk's Heads tied with a single piece of string.

This template is designed to wrap around an 8" length of schedule 40 PVC pipe. This will require a few more tools than the previous templates that wrapped around toilet paper tubes. If you do not have a drill with a bit the size of the nails you will be using, you can use a toilet paper tube but it will leave a small gap in the template. This will not affect the outcome of the knot, but I fear that with so many holes in the cardboard that the structural integrity of the tube may be compromised.

You will also notice that in the cup portion of the knot, the string goes over two, under two. I did this because I think it looks better in this size knot. If you want to make a different crossing pattern, change the over/under notation with a good marker. Feel free to experiment by adding leads and placing the nails higher on the tube. As I stated, there are many combinations of Turk's Heads that can be tied, this is just one of them.

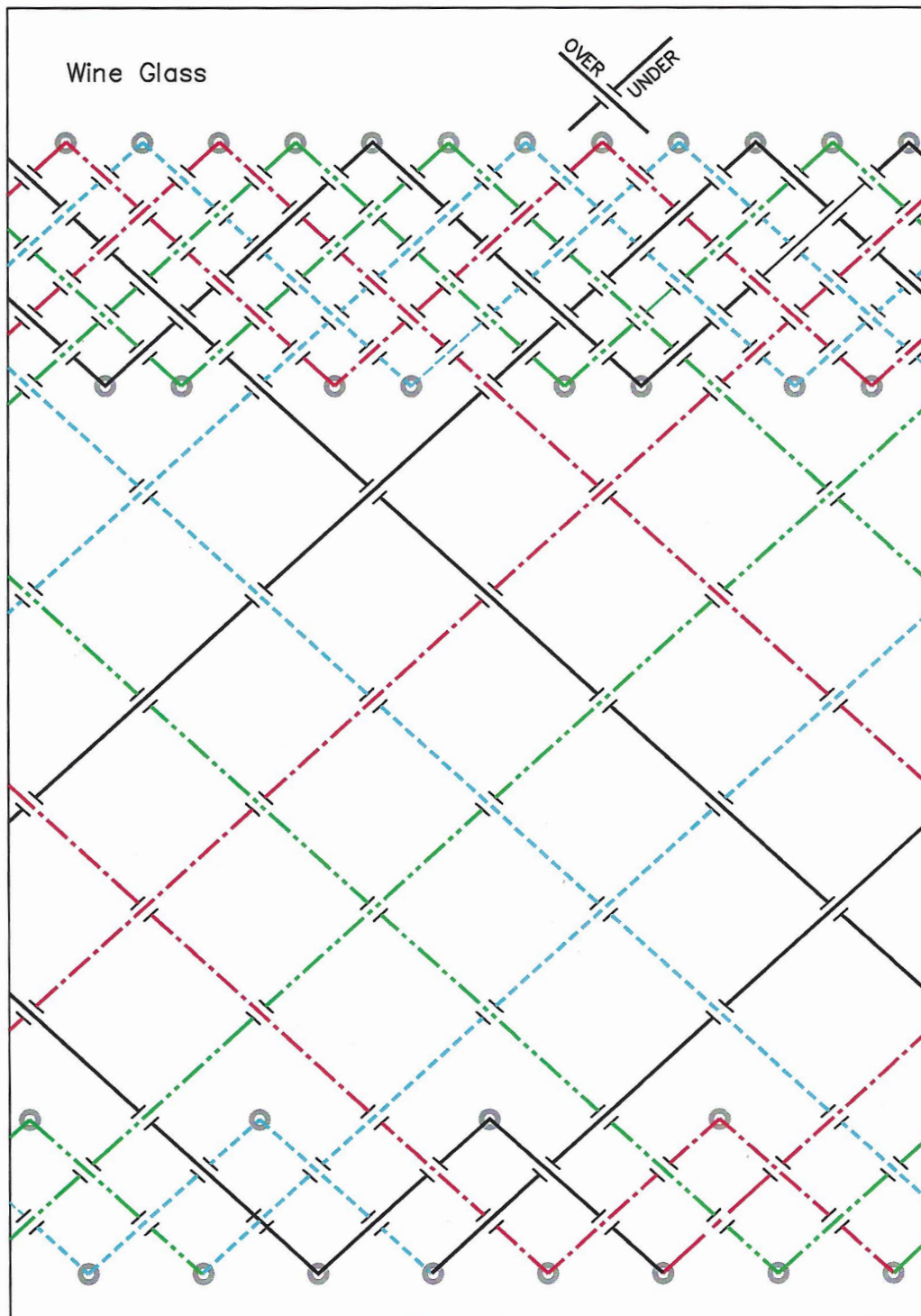
PVC is easy to work. It cuts with all manner of saws and, even with many more holes than what this knot requires, it will retain its strength. When you go to the hardware store to get your 1 1/4" PVC pipe, you might want to pick up a stick of 1" and 1/2" schedule 40 PVC pipe for the upcoming

project in the next issue of *Knot News*: The Turk's Head Cross. If you have questions about this, or any other templates I have sent out, I moderate a forum at the Knot Heads World Wide website (www.khww.net). Feel free to post questions there and I will get back to you.



From the Mailbag

Karl Bareuther of Germany sent in these comments in reply to the question Roy Chapman posed in KN #47 about marked marlinespikes. **F**irst of all, I would like to say hello to you and all the friends of the PAB. In Knot News 47, Roy Chapman has some questions on, maybe, marked marlinespikes. Being a sailor's tools collector for over forty years, I recently sold my collection to an old squarerigger berthed in the port of Hamburg, Germany. Beside the many marlinespikes that went with my collection, there are still about thirty spikes remaining



in my locker. I checked them and found just three with marks on them as follows:

1. "C.Drew&Co", 14 inches, American.
2. "1943 C.T.C", 11 inches, English, RN.
3. "910-5447 SFT 1980", 17.5 inches, English, RN.

In my opinion, just some makers have marked their production tools. I have never found a marlinespike with a users name on it. Number 2 and 3 spikes are Royal Navy tools, which carry the naval supply number, the year when the tool was made and a stamped in arrow.

Over the years my research has found that most of the marlinespikes were either homemade or were made by toolmakers in shipyards. Sometimes they carried a logo and sometimes they did not.

And just for curiosity's sake, I have one *lignum vitae* fid with two names on it and twenty-five fids without any names at all. The story behind this special fid is this: the owner of the fid was born in 1878 and sailed only in the great squareriggers. He was *Seadevil's* (*Graf Luckner*) bosun during the Great War. Allan Villiers wrote a story on "Charlie Mueller", this bosun's name, in his famous book *The Way of a Ship*. And Charlie had a fast friend who was a "doctor" (i.e. a ship's cook). The saying was that Charlie and his friend always joined the same ship and so always sailed together. Both names are engraved on Charlie's great *lignum vitae* fid: "Karl Müller" and "Greiner", the cooks name. Charlie died in 1973 in a home for old shellbacks in the city of Hamburg. He is buried in a grave for poor people but is still famous and remembered."

Des Pawson of Suffolk also sent in these comments: **Let us honour the makers of marline-spikes [or if you like marlinespikes, marlinspikes, marline spikes, marlin spikes or even marlingspikes]**

Roy Chapman's comments about

maker's names on marline-spikes,

complete with the tease of not giving the name, prompts me to the following.

Many of us have the privilege of owning one, possibly two, marline-spikes that "sing and dance" for us, maybe the spike has already been owned by someone else who may have tweaked it a little, fettling it to his feel of perfection. Perhaps the tool itself carries an inherited memory of the skill and knowledge of its previous owner, sweated into it through years of use. It is true to say that a tool that works for one may not work for another.

Someone had to make the spike in the first instance. This work of art is the result of a maker's hand and eye working hot metal so that it finishes up a joy to hold and helps the splicer. Some spikes were made by a ship's engineer, other by a ship's smith, either on board or ashore; others were made by a small tool producer who specialized in the tools for maritime trades.

Some of those tools have a name stamped on them by their makers, others are anonymous, but even makers who "name stamped" were not consistent in doing so, for example I have had spikes from the Drew works with and without names [it is usually the larger size with the name].

Here are the names on spikes in my collection:

DREW Possibly the very peak of the marlin or marline-spike maker's art. Originally made by C Drew & Co of Kingston, Mass., this company was founded by Christopher Drew in 1837. Christopher Drew came from a long line of metal workers and ship builders. C Drew and Co were bought in the 1970s by The Kingston Tool Company, who suffered a devastating fire in the late 1980s, sold the remaining assets to Universal Products Inc., who took over the original Drew marline-spike dies, finally going bust in 1997/8. In 1994 I had the privilege to visit the works and see these legendary spikes being made, a story for

another day perhaps. The works at Rockfall are now a parking lot.

BICKNELL MFG CO. From Rockland, Maine. Founded as the Livingston manufacturing Company and became The Bicknell Manufacturing Company in 1930. They also made stone working tools. They probably stopped making marline-spikes in the 1970s or 80s, the Rockland plant closing in 1996.

CS OSBORNE & CO. Founded in 1776 and still making today.

**KATCO
HUDSON**

CLIFFORD and CLIFFORD WOOD. These two may be the same.

I have been told of the **MEPHISTO** brand, the maker of which may have gone bust in 1981, and of the **STRATSBURG TOOL CO.** of New York State who made ice cutting equipment, but also made marline-spikes for the US Navy and who closed down probably towards the end of the 1980s.

I also have a number of anonymous tools.

All these spikes were of the general form exemplified by the **DREW** spikes, a long tapered spike with a mushroom head, illustrated so well in Brion Toss' books.

WIRE ROPE MARLIN SPIKES.

Tool Steel. Polished.



These were designated as Wire Rope Marlin Spikes in early Ships Chandlers Catalogues, as opposed to the spike without any head, which was just called a Marlin Spike.

MARLIN SPIKES.

Solid Steel.



In the UK the "Drew style" are known to the British Royal Navy Riggers as "Yankee Spikes", as the British Naval issue are of differing form, usually with what I call a thistle head. There are other styles of marline-spikes with flattened heads, others with hammer heads and others that are cranked or bent. When I have time I will put together a much fuller study and would welcome correspondence from anyone with details of other makers or styles.

Bob Solon of Ohio, to change the subject, has this to add:

I must have been sniffing pine tar when I

wrote to you about plastic needle cases. If you use white shellac to preserve your needle case you will have almost instant gratification but you will NOT have the smell of pine. For that you need boat soup, something with a strong pine tar base.

Congratulations to Paul Nagle-McNaughton. The Coral Sword is beautiful and his pictures really show off his rope work!

From the Editor

We have a problem keeping up with

our member's ever changing email addresses. Mr. Jimmy Williams has been sending out notices of upcoming events as well as links to photos of our past meetings and demonstrations.

If you want to receive these notices and links please send an email to either Jimmy at aknotter@socal.rr.com or to me at Koolkatz@prodigy.net.

Also, if you want to be removed from this list, let us know about that as well.

Remember that we have the upcoming Whale Festival at Dana Point on March 5 & 6 and the EcoFest will be happening in April.

If you know of other events, shows, talks or demonstrations that you need volunteers for, please let us know and we will publish it in future issues.

Knots and Rope Work Zoo

from Geoffrey Budworth

Knot Boards display, more often than not, a selection of nautical knots. Occasionally the theme will be knots used in Scouting. Why not choose another subject such as (say) knots named after... animals? Let's see, there is a camel hitch, the monkey's fist and the sheepshank. That's three. Now see the list of 30-plus below.

<p>Alpine Butterfly Loop (HA) Axolotl (HA) Bull Hitch (GB₁) Bumblebee Knot (ABOK #2314) Butterfly Knot (LC) Calf Knot (ABOK #1206) Camel Hitch (ABOK #1741) Caterpillar Knot (ABOK #2468) Cat's Paw (ABOK #1891) Cock's Combing (see 'Hog Backing') Cow Hitch (ABOK #1184) Crane Knot (LC) Crow's Foot (ABOK #3540) Dog Knotting (CW) Dogshank (see 'Sheepshank') Dolphin (ABOK #3502, 3502) Donkey Hitch (CW) Dragon Knot (LC) Dragonfly Knot (LC) Fish Knot (LC) Fly Knot (CW)</p>	<p>Fox - Ordinary (ABOK #3465) Fox - Spanish (ABOK #3464) Frog Knot - Chinese (ABOK #2267) Frog Knots - Miscellaneous (ABOK #2280-2347) Hog Backing (ABOK #3602) Lark's Head (GB₂) Lizard (BT) Lobster Buoy Hitch (ABOK #1714) Monkey's Fist (ABOK #2200) Monkey's Tail (ABOK #3404) Moth Knot (ABOK #2471) Mouse & Collar (ABOK #2768) Owl Knot (ABOK #2472) Phoenix Knot (LC) Salmon Knot (ABOK #313) Sheepshank (ABOK #1152) Snakehead Splice (ABOK #2687) Whale Knot (ABOK #845) Wild Goose Knot (ABOK #2473) Wolf Knot (CW)</p>
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Tell the Editor of *Knot News* of any I have overlooked.

ABOK *The Ashley Book of Knots* by Clifford W. Ashley

BT *The Rigger's Apprentice* by Brion Toss

CW *A Fresh Approach to Knotting and Ropework* by Charles Warner

GB₁ *The Book of Practical Knots* by Geoffrey Budworth

GB₂ *The Knot Book* by Geoffrey Budworth

HA *A New System of Knotting- Volume 1* by Harry Asher

LC *Chinese Knotting* by Lydia Chen