

Knot



News

International Guild of Knot Tyers – Pacific Americas Branch

June 2014

Joseph Schmidbauer – Editor

ISSN 1554-1843

Issue # 94

A New Look at Hitching

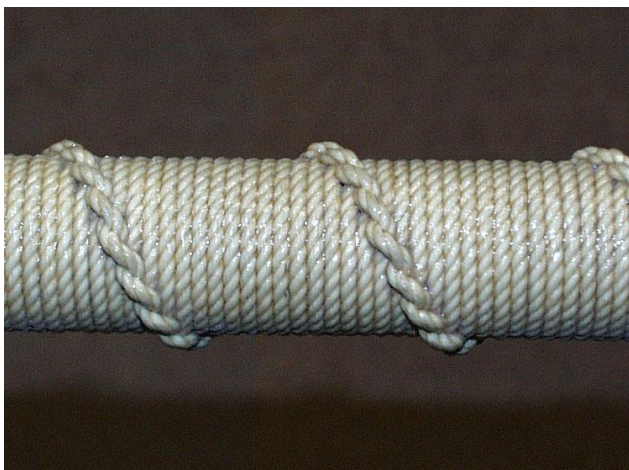
Dennis Armstrong

Spiral French Hitching

No doubt you have seen vessels at wooden boat shows with hitching on the ladders, stanchions and stairway handrails. The most common hitching used is what Hervey Garrett Smith refers to in his book *The Marlinespike Sailor* as *SPIRAL FRENCH HITCHING* (SFH). SFH makes a particularly handsome covering for boat steering wheels and tillers.

How Much Line is Needed?

No matter what style of covering we chose, the first question is how much line is required to complete the project. The obvious answer is just enough with one foot left over. Because we all know that it is better to have too much and have to trim off the excess than to be embarrassed and have to explain why the covering is so short, or cleverly cover the join of the covering material.



To begin we can carefully measure the diameter of the twine then divide that diameter into one inch to get the number of turns that it will take to cover one inch. The next step is to carefully measure the diameter of the object to be covered then add the diameter of the twine to that measurement. We know that the circumference can be calculated by multiplying the corrected diameter times Pi. That calculation should give the length of line to make one turn around the object. Next take the number of turns that we just estimated and multiply the length to make one turn. We should now know how much twine will be needed to cover one inch of the object. Then measure the length to be covered and multiply the length needed to cover one inch. If you don't have a calculator with a Pi function then carefully mark one inch in about the middle of the length to be covered and wrap the twine around the object between the marks. Then measure the length of twine that it took to cover the object for one inch. Then multiply that length times the length to be covered and add one foot, just in case. I always use the later method because I'm not so sure about the science.

Application of Spiral French Hitching

To apply SFH the first step is to determine the length that would be needed the approximate length can be determined from the calculations found above. I used #60 seine twine to make the coverings illustrated in this article. #60 seine twine is about 1/8 inch in diameter. Next seize the twine to the object (say a tiller) being covered. The start is made by leading the twine to the right or left around the tiller then passing the end under itself at the beginning where you started the turn around the tiller. The resulting hitch is then tightened up by hauling back on the line. Be careful to not pull the end of the line away from the seizing. SFH is continued by making half hitches to the right or left and hauling each knot tight as you go. If you start hitching to the right you should continue to the right. As the SFH is tightened,

attempt to keep the spiral created by the knots the same as you proceed up the tiller. An interesting effect can be made in the covering by periodically changing directions of the hitches as you go.

A similar hitching is found in *The Ashley Book of Knots* (ABOK) by Clifford W. Ashley. He refers to it as FRENCH WHIPPING (ABOK # 3450). *The Encyclopedia of Knots and Fancy Rope Work* by Raoul Graumont and John Hensel also refer to the hitching as ONE STRAND FRENCH OR GRAPEVINE HITCHING.

Many years ago I was commissioned to put hitching on ladder handrails of a 40 foot Cruise a Home. I started the SFH on the right hand by hitching to the right and it looked quite handsome. I thought that the left hand rail should be hitched to the left. This is when I discovered that the seine twine that I was using would unravel as I worked. As I proceeded to hitch to the left, the hitching became loose and did not have the same incline to the knots that I had achieved on the right side. Somehow I would have to preserve the lay of the twine as the hitching was laid on. I discovered that if I tightened the lay of the seine twine by putting a twist into the line as I made the hitch, I could better control the lay of the twine. Putting in a full twist against the lay of the twine made the line a little tighter and produced a nice tight looking left-hand hitching.

Crowned Whipping

Endeavoring to produce a different looking covering, I came upon ABOK # 3451, which Ashley calls CROWNED WHIPPING. This whipping is started by attaching three to four lines to the object to be covered with constrictor knots. Depending on the number of lines that are going to be used, they should be spaced evenly around the circumference of the object that is being covered. Bill Dengler, a member of the IGKT in Port Townsend, suggested using modern glue to help hold the lines in place while getting the whipping started. I have find this to be a handy suggestion. To determine the length of material needed use one of the methods found above to determine the length needed for the covering then divide that length by the number of lines that you plan to use in your Crowned Whipping.

The whipping is made by crowning three or more lines to the left or right. The crown knot is the same knot used to make square braid sennit. To make the sennit, form a loop with one of the lines then place the running part in front of an adjacent line then lift the adjacent line and place the running part of the line in front of the next line and proceed to the last line, which goes over the first line and through the loop of the first line. Next all lines are hauled tight. Crown Sennit can be found on pages 55 and 56 of Smith's book, *The Marlinespike Sailor*.



When applying this whipping (or hitching) all of the same problems of SFH are incorporated. With the addition of 2 or more lines the idea becomes keeping the spacing between the layers equal so that the whipping will look balanced and equal.

Moku Hitching

Brion Toss introduced MOKU HITCHING in his book *The Rigger's Apprentice* on pages 153 and 154. According to the story he saw the hitching on the gang plank on a Sacramento River sugar hauler. The hitching is applied by attaching two lines to the item to be covered then alternately crowning one line to the right and a second line to the left and so on. Brion goes on to say a person should draw each hitch up equally so that the spirals keep the same slope and that the crossovers occur front and back equally. To aid in keeping the lines the same diameter add a least at half a twist to the left-hand line as the hitches are made.



Doubled Moku Hitching

Endeavoring to continue my quest for a different looking covering, I thought about combining the aspects of the Crowned Whipping and the principals of Moku Hitching, forming a DOUBLED MOKU HITCHING. The pattern changes drastically, it turns into a series of diamonds.

To start this hitching/whipping, I suggest pairing the lines and holding them on opposite sides of the item to be covered. The lines can be held in place with constrictor knots and glue as mentioned above. As in crowned whipping, crown two lines from each pair to the right, then crown the remaining two lines to the left. When drawing up the crown knots that lead to the left, give each line at least a half twist against the lay of the line, so that the line will stand proud. The next step is to go back to the first pair of lines crowned and crown them to the right again, then back to the second pair and crown them to the left again. Keep alternating the paired crown knots to the right and then to the left.



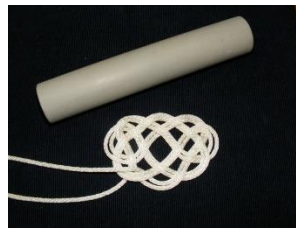
As the hitching/crowning proceeds the number of crossovers has increased by four times that of Moku hitching. Try to keep the crossovers as tight as possible and on opposite sides of the item being covered. The crossovers should occur at the same time on either side of the object. Balancing and keeping the slopes at the same angle is a little more difficult but is manageable.

Hitching or hitching/crowning should be sealed in some manner. Depending on the application, paint or varnish can be used to seal the covering. Toss has two methods of sealing the coverings. The first is to cover the item with Elmer's Glue, then shellac and paint. The alternative is shellac and varnish. For the aged look, I have been starting out with 2 or 3 coats of Garnett Shellac and then applying coats of varnish until the pores are filled. Straight varnish works well but results in a mild yellow color.

Have fun with the hitching/crowning.

From the Mail Bag

In *Knot News* #92, **Dave Cook**, of , OH showed us how he covered a lamp with knotting. On the top portion of that lamp was an unusual Turk's Head knot – a Napoleon Bend Turk's Head. "I thought you might be interested in seeing how I put together that Napoleon Bend Turk's Head. For the purpose of this I used 1/8 inch solid braid nylon. Once you get the Ocean Plait folded over your round stock, tighten her up. Voila! For the lamp, I worked it up on a separate piece and then slid it off onto the lamp and finished tightening it there."



Making an Ocean Plait Mat



Placing Ocean Plait around dowel



Taking out the slack



All tightened up



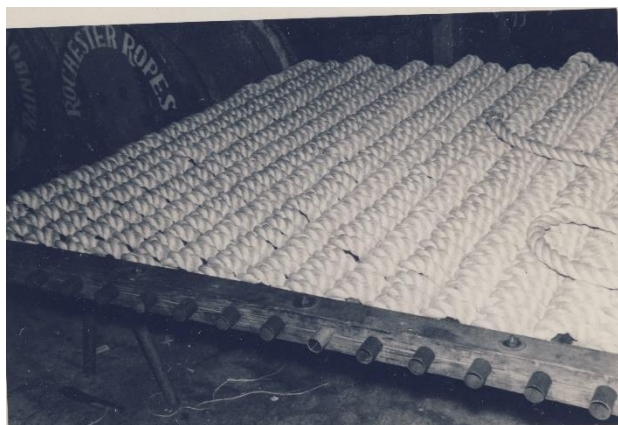
Napoleon Bend Turk's Head



In *Knot News* #91 there was an article by Master Rigger, **Joe Soanes** describing how he developed and made rope blasting mats. I, myself, have only seen the Wee Blasting Mat, scaled down by Jose Hernandez-Juviel to door mat size from Joe Soane's original descriptions. These photos has now come to light and give a much better idea of what these mats looked like to make and when completed.



A completed Blasting Mat



The frame and pipes



Rope being pulled through the mat



Building up the mat and showing its finished size



This is dog collar I was asked to make for a work friend of mine at Boeing. I don't know what kind of dog it is but it does have a 25 inch circumference neck (i.e. 8 inches in diameter) – quite a dramatic size when completed.

The collar is done in what is called a King Cobra Weave – a Square Knot (or macramé) Solomon/Bannister Bar with another bar knotted on top of the first one.

The Forget Me Knot Medallion

Roy Chapman

At the beginning of "Force Five & Knot Art" I

A plowed through my repertoire of knots to bang about what folks might like to buy. That has been an ongoing process. Key fobs, door mats, bracelets, lanyards and leashes seemed obvious. Custom splice work was a shoe-in. Necklaces seemed like a good idea too.

I have always been fond of the Ashley Book of Knot, (ABOK) #2360 as a necklace medallion. It was the first knot I sold as I started this endeavor. When I signed up to sell at the Farmers Market, I was sure to make up a handful of #2360s. I put keys on the key fobs and whistles on the lanyards and made sure the door mat was under foot at the customer side of my table. I hung #2360s on a rack. I wore mine outside my shirt... "See, it is a necklace".

Folks would say, "Gee that's pretty... what is it called?" Well, it is ABOK #2360, so that is what I called it. Only once. I may be slow but not that slow. "Why it is called 'The Forget Me Knot' and it would be a gift from a sailor (about to sail) to his sweetheart." Well, I didn't sell any ABOK #2360s but I sure sold the salt out of "Forget Me Knots".

One day a young woman asked if the one I was wearing was for sale. Is gumbo hot? I explained that it was worn, less pristine and so on but she wanted it and paid the same retail as for any other one so...

A year or so later she emailed to ask if pine tar were toxic. Her baby had decided that it was the perfect teething chew. I suggested that since the horse had already left the barn that it would probably be okay. A couple years passed. She emailed to ask over Christmas if I could find time to teach her how to tie the "Forget Me Knot". I said of course although I don't like to rush and can't predict what may be a good day for me. She was coming home to visit her ailing Dad and wanted to make him a "Forget Me Knot". I agreed to do this tutorial. A few days before our appointment she phoned to ask if I could tie one right now. You know how you can hear the "words not spoken"? I tied the knot and she came to pick it up. I said, "He couldn't wait could he?" For I knew he must have passed and this was for the funeral.

A few days later we completed the tutorial, she was leaving with one completed knot and knowledge of how to make more. When her ride came to pick her up I realized that the driver was her sister, who was a former recipient of my tutorial on net making. They flew back to her respective teaching jobs far away. Teaching overseas is a family tradition. They also

have a new "family tradition", they all have Forget Me Knots. It is nice to be the family "knot guy", not only do they pay me, but they bring cookies!



The Forget Me Knot ABOK #2360

I also tied a set of boutonnieres for a wedding party. The groomsmen wore these instead of red carnations. These were tied in #120 4-strand cotton cord, double dyed with "Rite" home grade dye. The bride wore a smaller one as a necklace. She wore red satin trimmed with black lace and it was a spectacular alternative to traditional white. In the wedding photos (which I do not have) the boutonnieres would easily pass for flowers.



Grommet Knot Tutorial

Erik Hess

From this tutorial you can make a rope Christmas Wreath. I will use string here because it will be easier to follow than rope.

For the core of a large wreath, use a large wreath ring found at the craft store and build it up with cordage to the desired thickness. On my large wreath I used four wraps. Secure the core with constrictor knots.

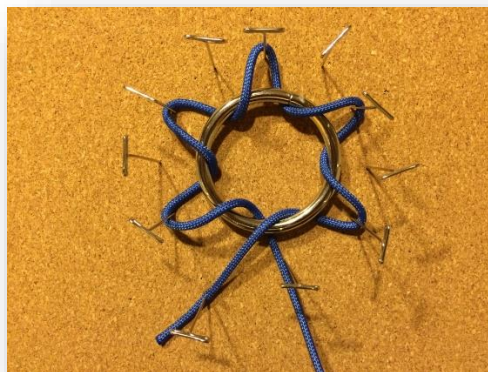
When making a wreath, start in the middle of your 30 to 40 foot piece of rope for your standing part. This will prevent you from having to pull all the rope through as you proceed.



Start with an odd number of pins.
I have done 5, 7 or 9 starting pins.



Make one pass with the working end going over than under.



Place more pins between the existing pins.
The standing end will become a loop.



Weave the working end through the pins in the same over, under, over and under passes until you reach your standing end and create a loop as in the picture.



Next take a separate strand and pick a random loop.
Go under, over, under and over...



The working end goes over, under, over, under, etc.
As you work the strand through the knot, if you are going correctly, the strand will come up through every other loop.



The doubling complete.



Complete the first pass and then go around till you meet the standing part.



Now double the first strand. When following the lead to double make sure to pay attention to go on the correct side. It is easy to cross the strand being doubled.



Now follow the strand to double it.



Now triple both leads, tighten and dress the knot. Done!



The Knot-Tyer's Cat

by

Martyn J. Clark

The knot-tyer's cat is often seen with a monkey's fist at the neck
Neither mouse nor rat has ever been, by these fancy knots held in check

"It slows her down," said the rat to the mouse, "so we have nothing to fear,
But watch out for the marble inside and be careful not to get near"

"My grandfather, Jim," to the mouse said the rat, "got hit on the head with the 'fist'.
He suffered a terrible pain, my friend, and eventually ceased to exist."