

Knot



News

International Guild of Knot Tyers – Pacific Americas Branch

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Joseph Schmidbauer – Editor

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Ten Minute Mandrel *Frank Brown*

I recently was asked to make up a couple of Turk's Head bracelets for my granddaughters. With a three year difference in age, there is a small but significant difference in the size of their respective wrists. I had no mandrels of suitable sizes in my possession so had to build two from available materials. In my collection of canvas pieces I had a small sheet of heavy duty clear plastic, about 1mm thick, that I had liberated from the scrap bin of our local version of Omar the tent maker. From this I cut two pieces 75mm wide. The length of each piece was determined by the circumference of each girl's wrist plus about 25mm to enable them to actually get them on and off.



Suitable plastic

I rolled the plastic into cylinder and applied some good quality insulation tape to hold the created cylinder, I stuffed the cavity with suitable, available material and finished off the construction with more tape to hold the packing in place. This all took about 10 minutes.



The Mandrel with tape applied



Mandrel with stuffed cavity

The mandrels worked so well, I made a range of sizes in anticipation of future orders.

The packing used was initially some wadding nicked from my wife's store of handicraft materials, but I found plastic shopping bags worked well and less likely to cause matrimonial tension. The mandrels tend to distort from circular to square, but this causes no problems.



The completed Mandrel



Mandrels in use – making various sized Turk's Heads



From the Mail Bag

I have received a couple of comments back from members about the article "A New Look at Hitching" by Dennis Armstrong in *Knot News* #94.

Louie Bartos of Alaska wrote these kind words:

Had a hard time finding these photos, but after reading *Knot News* #94 and the article on hitching, I wasn't giving up.

The photos were taken about ten years ago up in Homer, Alaska. I did this for the owner of *Captain's Coffee* in his little "maritime" coffee shop. My son was friends with the owner and he told me I could make that post "nautical".

It is hitched with three strand 3/8" manila. One way to get free coffee.

Anyway, it was good for a laugh."



Louie Bartos, Sailmaker and Rigger



Tig Dupre of

Washington sent this in:

My first experience with French Hitching was to cover several helm wheels on the training sloops at the US Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. My father was stationed there, and I liked to hang out in the knot sheds, helping the Middies learn to tie knots during the summer sessions. I was 11 years old, had lots of time on my hands (after chores, of course) and had practically unlimited run of the academy grounds.

One day, the "Knot Master" had the Middies clambering all over one of the training sloops, replacing, splicing and refitting the lines. To keep me out of the way (I suppose), he handed me a hank of small stuff, showed me how to do French Whip (i.e. French Hitching) and turned me loose on the helm. I was in heaven!

Over the summer I did, I think five helm wheels, and a bit of other fancy stuff. Had a great time!

Thanks for the nostalgic issue!"

Odds and Ends

Readers of our *Knot News* newsletter have been kind enough to send in pictures of projects they have been working. Let me share these now and maybe they will inspire you to grab some cordage and create your own knotted masterpiece.

Roy Chapman of , Washington sent in a couple of things:

Once again the customer is right. A few years ago I made a lanyard to hang a suet cage for feeding birds. The customer provided strange hemp like garden hose so I made up the lanyard. We have a lot of 50 MPH wind and the cage blows all around under the eyes. She asked if I could make a second and more robust lanyard with stronger cord (never the mind she selected the first batch of cord...). Once again she provided the hardware, so now the poor wee screw eye will be the next weak link and I'll get to make the next generation in a year or two when the screw eye pulls out of the eye. I wonder if the birds can see the reflective stripe in the paracord? This is a repeat customer so she gets the Good Old Boy discount. She also gets to pay a fellow to hang out the second floor window to hang this off the fascia.

Funny about customers. A few years back a fellow bought me some really robust double braid and hardware to make up an emergency tow line for his boat. Customer is always right so I made it up per

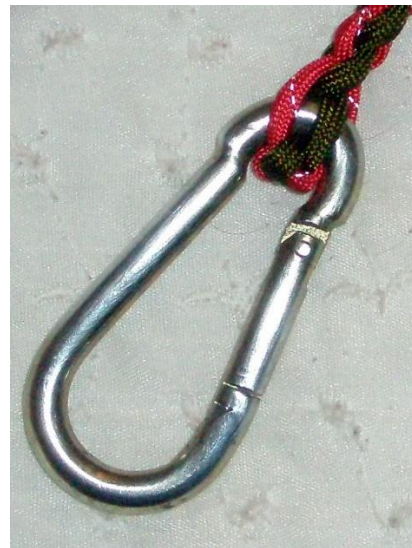
request with the cautionary note that if he ever used it and the attachment to the boat failed that the hardware might achieve orbital velocity. He called me a few weeks ago to tell me how he used the line in a heavy seaway in Seattle and how glad he was to have it and so forth. Go figure. Thank my stars that bird feeders (even full of suet) are mostly safe."



Becket Splice for 4-strand Square Sennit



Bird Feeder Lanyard



4-strand Crown as Becket Splice

Here is what was up this week. Howard found me at Farmer's Market. He is building a temple bell, cut from a scuba tank. The belfry will be cedar post and beam, for an oriental style garden. When he is finished he promises photos. I thought you would enjoy the knotty part of the project.

The hanger is 4-strand round sennit in 8mm long line cord, creosote treated. The top is a 4-strand crown through a huge stainless steel half eye. The bell end is a crown and back splice in 4 strands. The pictures aren't much but just a bit to remember it by.

The Turk's Head is a 7 lead by 3 bight in two ply paracord."



Before Turk's Head



Turk's Head at Backsplice



Howard Bell Hanger

Bob Solon of , Ohio has been up to his usual shenanigans:

These are four pictures of a project that came to *Knot and Rope Supply* last week. The rope with worming comes from the UK. It is a four strand, cable laid line with a diameter of about 1.3 inches and is made of hemp. This stuff is a joy to work, smooth, supple and stable. The Turk's head is made of the same stuff as the worming.

Haven't heard if the customer likes it or not."



Splice 1



Splice 2

Splicing Hard Laid Rope

Frank Brown

I do not claim to be an expert when it comes to splicing laid rope although I have managed to do the odd bit of splicing in the last 50 years with some degree of competence. I find a Back Splice easy and a Short Splice easy to do but a bit tricky to get nice and snug, a Long Splice moderately easy but difficult to get finished nice and smoothly and an Eye Splice always tricky to start. Even if I was totally competent, I know that any splice in any hard laid rope is never easy for my puny muscles.

About 25 years ago I attended a class on net making and repairing run by a very competent guy employed by one of the salmon farms. I have a clear memory of his fid cum marlin spike, a slightly modified knife sharpening steel. I don't know if he actually used it for wire splicing, but he certainly did use it for fiber ropes. Some of the ropes used in the salmon farming operations are the exceptionally hard laid synthetic fiber type. My tutor demonstrated a technique for making eye splices in this recalcitrant material. I initially expected him to open the strands with his unique fid, but he didn't. Instead he un-laid the strands back to where he wanted to begin his splice. He then re-laid the strands but skipped a turn. I have never needed to employ this technique and the memory is incomplete, a common problem with my generation. The result of the manipulation was to create an opening in the rope that facilitated tucking the three strands. I have endeavored to replicate the procedure and my efforts are depicted in the accompanying photographs. I would be grateful to any member who can demonstrate the method more clearly.



Whip ends of strands.

Not absolutely necessary, but usually helps to get tidy finish.



Un-lay strands to splice tuck point.



Lay-up first strand, skipping one turn.

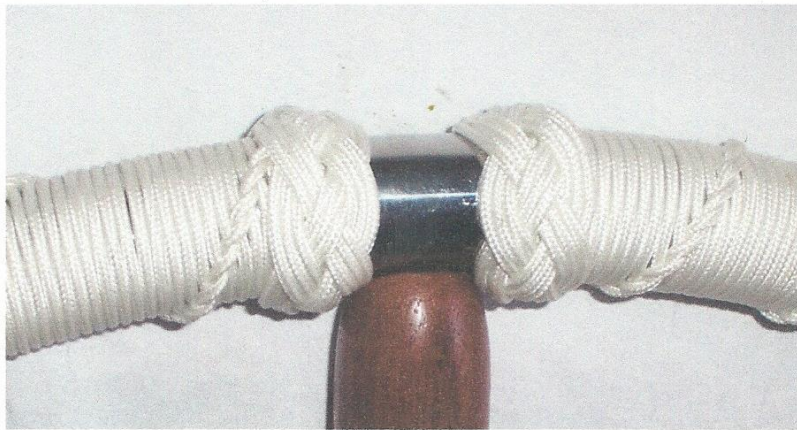


Lay-up next strand leaving room to tuck. Re-lay all strands as far as required.



Place first tuck in "relaxed area".
Continue in usual fashion to complete splice.

Returning to French Hitching and before I put the thing to rest, I must share with you a hitching job I did a number of years ago. This was a commission by a paying customer – a very rare thing for me!





I did a second wheel for the same customer in brown after I completed this one. I had to send away to England for some good fancywork cordage (KJK Ropeworks in Devon) because, at the time, it was hard to get the proper stuff for the job. The local hardware store or chandlery wasn't much help. Things have changed quite a bit since then with very nice fancywork cordage now available in many places.

Knot books have also become more readily available, with more being published every day. Many of them are quite good, while the others maybe not so much. I can remember when my knot library consisted of my *Ashley's*, *Creative Ropecraft* by Stuart Grainger and *The Art of Knotting and Splicing* by Dr. Cyrus Day. Imagine, then, my joy and surprise when I discovered the *Encyclopedia of Knots and Fancy Rope Work* by Raoul Graumont & John Hensel. Not as much fun or as warm as *Ashley's*, but it sure was an eye opener and a great learning experience. My collection now consists of some 280 knot books, pamphlets and videos. Lots of information from many different perspectives, but I still seem to prefer my original favorites – especially my well-thumbed and bookmarked *Ashley's*. When I am at shows or giving a knotting demonstration and I am asked for a good “simple” beginner's reference, I always suggest *Knots Useful and Ornamental* by Ron Edwards. Great drawings, clear explanations and it even gives you a project to get started knotting. At least that is what I think

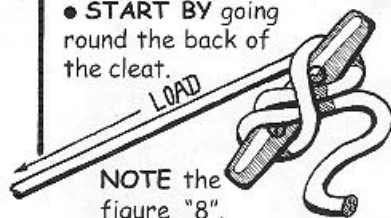
A SAILORS QUICK GUIDE TO KNOTS

A Professional's Choice Of The World's Best (& Easiest)

Don't waste your next plane, train, bus or boat trip -
Take a meter of line & PRACTISE YOUR KNOTS - You may need one soon.

TYING OFF A CLEAT

- START BY going round the back of the cleat.

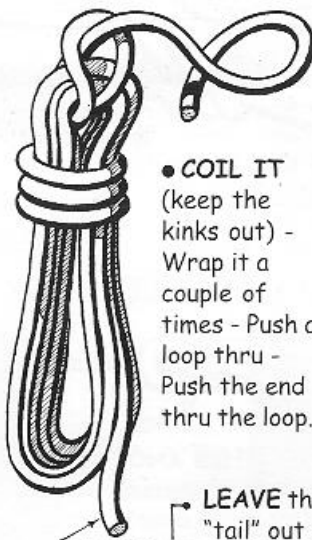


NOTE the figure "8".

DRESS TIE KNOT



A COIL OF LINE



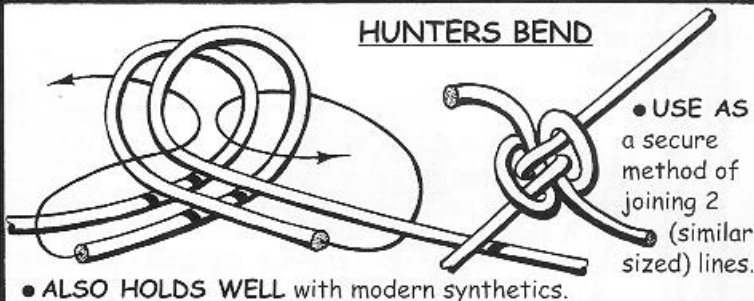
- COIL IT (keep the kinks out) - Wrap it a couple of times - Push a loop thru - Push the end thru the loop.

MAKING UP A COIL ON A CLEAT



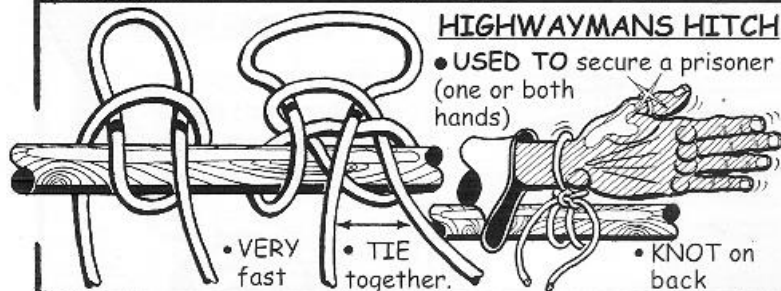
- TIE OFF the cleat (as top left) - Then coil the "fall" - Reach thru & twist a loop next to the cleat - Pull it thru the coil & hook it back on the cleat.

HUNTERS BEND



- ALSO HOLDS WELL with modern synthetics.

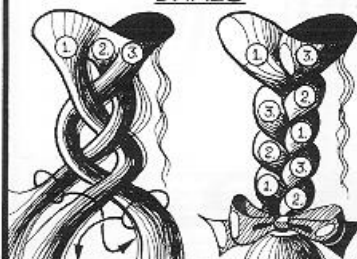
HIGHWAYMANS HITCH



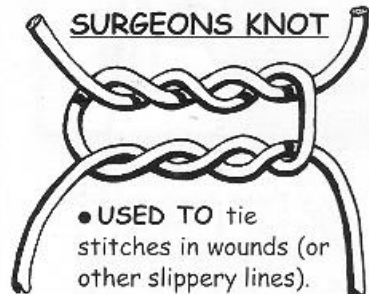
- USED TO secure a prisoner (one or both hands)

- VERY fast
- TIE together.

BRAID

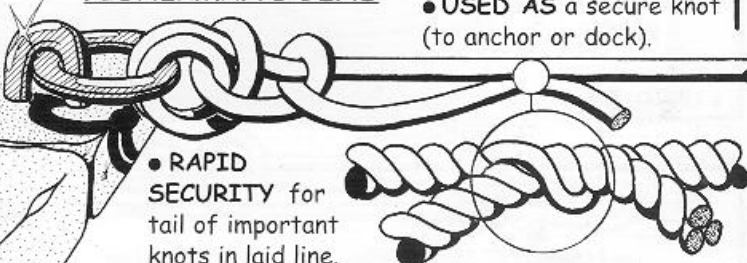


SURGEONS KNOT



- USED TO tie stitches in wounds (or other slippery lines).

FISHERMAN'S BEND



- RAPID SECURITY for tail of important knots in laid line.