



International Guild of Knot Tyers **TEXAS BRANCH** **NEWSLETTER**

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Frank Charles Brown at work

Our Member Profile for this issue is Mr. Frank Charles Brown of Tasmania, Australia. Wayne Lewis and Sam Lanham met him via e-mail and introduced Frank to Texas Style knot tying and last year he decided to become a member of the Texas Branch. He says it is a real hoot wearing his TxB T-shirt in Tasmania.

Member Profile

“Originating in London, England, I spent my early years dodging the odd bomb, rocket, and shell, and so was not terribly interested in ropes and knots. I learned to tie the bowknot (double slipped reef or granny) with my shoelaces by the time I was 4 as a matter of necessity and the reef knot at 6 by associating with cub scouts. My father was in the Royal Navy but being mainly engine room staff, hardly knew a sheet bend from a shovel (his words—or something like that). We immigrated to Tasmania in 1947, looking for, and finding, a better life.

Somehow I survived the deprivation of the essential skill of knot tying until I got involved with some interesting recreational pursuits including caving and bushwalking.

Cave exploration in the 60’s and 70’s was a golden age in the Tasmania, with hosts of new caves being found and explored. Good rope work was a survival skill as rescue resources were thin on the ground, let alone under it. This was the time when SRT (single rope technique) really got going. Abseiling (Rappelling) down shafts and shinning up the rope usually using Prussik knots gradually replaced the wire ladder as an aid to exploration.

After a couple of traumatic incidents involving good friends, I concentrated more and more on rescue activities. I joined the volunteer (SES) State Emergency Service and trained as a rescue instructor. Although the training was very wide, it was the ropework that had the greatest attraction.

My principal reference initially was Hasluck's Knotting and Splicing – Ropes and Cordage, revised by Eric Franklin. I discovered Ashley and started the book collection, which now tops 100. A couple of seasons of competitive sailing, culminating in the National championships, gave a lot of extra experience in rope handling. However, modern yachting practices tend to reduce the amount of knotting required.

One of the fun aspects of SES work was the annual competition. This involved a lot of rope-work with everything from 5mm to 25mm ropes. I was involved, on different occasions, as competitor and judge, at State and National level. Many of the scenarios staggered the imagination, but were fantastic preparation for reality.

One interesting interlude was when the Royal Commission into Deaths of Aborigines in Custody consulted me. Forensic knot people are scarce, and I was the best they could do at that time.

The opportunity to work on the rigging of a brigantine came about through a chance meeting. The only problem was that the boat, the "Windward Bound" (correct spelling) had to be built before I could start playing with lines, halyards, shrouds etc. Seven years later we launched and I had my little play. Recently I have been "volunteered" into replacing some of the rigging on a 150+ year old trading ketch, the "May Queen"

On retiring a couple of years ago I purchased a computer and launched into a project I had been toying with for years. The idea was to develop a comprehensive knot catalogue. I am still playing with that idea, but have made some progress. If anybody is interested, I could use a partner with computer skills as mine are seriously lacking.

I joined the IGKT in 1986, and had enjoyed irregular correspondence with some members. Being asked to proof read Charles Warner's book was a distinct highlight. Then a couple of years ago I read an article by the redoubtable Wayne Lewis that intrigued me and I sent off the first e-mail. Wayne introduced me to Sam and the rest is history.

At the time of writing, Sam and I are nearing the end of the first phase in the construction of a book of recipes for constructing my string animals. I write up a page, he checks it for clarity, makes helpful suggestions and corrects the grammar. It has been a beautiful partnership. At various times I have corresponded with other TxB guys (good term for rope men that!) and have a small dream of paying a visit."

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The Prez says...

Our last meeting was well attended but we were still missing a few folks. Some prospective members were there and I encourage them to make the leap and join our illustrious group.

Kudos go to Gary Sessions who was recognized with a certificate for contributing to IGKT. The certificate was signed by Brian Field, President of the big IGKT, for his, Gary's, efforts in "furthering the aims and activities of the IGKT". The recognition is well deserved. Congratulations to Gary from the TxB.

Ed Baker had the program and we viewed a Brian Toss tape on different staff decorations patterns. These are called "ring bolt hitching" or "cocks combing". He also gave individual instruction to one of our visitors.

Ed and Gary deserve much extra credit for furthering the interest of the TxB by going to a Girl Scout Leader training meeting and teaching knots. It was so successful that one of the leaders came to our meeting. The real scoop is that it was not the knotting knowledge that kept the Girl Scout leaders thrilled, but the massive good looks of the "Phlamingo Kid", aka Eddie J. Baker.

Thanks goes out to both Gary and Ed for taking the extra time for that demonstration as well as the next week their trip to the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Rob Higgins presented a good treasurer's report and the TxB is solvent. Dues for the upcoming year are due and if you have not paid up you may expect a bill. Guido may also be calling.

The next meeting is April 7th. Please bring a friend. Program suggestions are always welcome along with your comments.

Charles Holmes

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February meeting

President Holmes called the meeting to order at 1:10 P.M., on Sunday, February, 2002. Rob Higgins, Branch Secretary, reported that the Branch coffers now contained \$237.00. He also told the members present that he would be accepting Branch Membership fees for the year 2002. The Secretary reported that, yes indeed, we did have a meeting on December 2, 2001 and that Dee presented her halter. We gotta replace that Secretary if he don't do better at note taking!!!

Charlie then read a note he had received from Brian Field.

Eventually there were 13 knot tyers at the meeting and in no particular order they were:

Chas Holmes	Tony Barrick	Rob Higgins
Ken Miller	David Hudgins	Bonnie Hart
Tim Knust	Ed Baker	Jack Keene
Phil Lipoma	Harry Yankuner	Ray Stell
Gary Sessions		

Charles Holmes showed the excellent Brion Toss video concerning covering knots, specifically the ringbolt Hitch and the St Mary's Hitch. A sample of the 3 strand ringbolt hitch, the 5 strand ringbolt hitch, the St. Mary's hitch, and the Moku Hitch were passed around and Ken Miller displayed his well done Coachwhipped covered walking stave for everyone to admire. There were several walking staves with other coverings available to be seen.

After the formal presentation the meeting broke up into smaller groups to teach and learn some of the knots presented earlier. It was a very productive meeting that, alas, broke up early so everybody could rush home and watch the Super Bowl.

Bonnie Hart and Tim Knust drove from Ft Worth to visit our meeting and we hope they return in April. Bonnie learned of the TxB when Ed Baker and Gary Sessions took their "Rope and Knot" show to a Circle T Girl Scout Council training meeting.

April meeting

Well your Editor did it again. I missed an issue of the newsletter so this is another double issue.

The April meeting was devoted mainly to TxB business and several things were discussed. The TxB Bylaws states that our Branch will elect Board Officers every two years and the Board has called for elections to be held at the June meeting. The June meeting will be held on 9 June, which is the second Sunday of the month, and will be held at a location to be announced. Plans are for a member and spouse get together and picnic/eat at a restaurant or something.

Nominations for the Board positions will be accepted through 15 May. Nominations may be placed with Phil Lipoma at his e-mail address, phil @lipoma.com. Phil and Charles will then

devise an absentee voting plan and communicate that to you. We are hoping for a good turnout for that meeting but I know that there are some who will not be able to attend.

Gary Sessions made the request for 6 TxB t-shirts to be distributed at the upcoming IGKT 2K2 Birthday Celebration in Fareham, England. The request was approved so it is expected that there will be some surprised people "over there".

We all want our Branch to grow and prosper. Prez Chas Holmes suggested that we try to make connections with several of the Sailing Clubs in the Metroplex. No specifics at this time but it looks and sounds like a good idea. We are not talking square rigged ships so the emphasis of this sort of arrangement would probably to teach more decorative type knots but who knows. Details will be forthcoming.

Some knot tying also took place although there was no official program.

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Letters to the Editor



“O.K., I’ve got the Standing Part, now where is that Working End?”

The lady in the photo is Frank Charles Brown’s wife, Lynn. And Frank assures me that this is not a form of Tasmanian spousal abuse. As Frank explains it, “The rope has a steel wire core, so there is little chance of breaking, just a high likelihood of some kiddie dropping through the gaps from a fair height. Oh well, you can’t keep the little buggers in cotton wool. I taught my son to climb properly when he was five, and his son is shaping up as a climber too at 18 months.”

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Projects by members

As the Editor of your newsletter I am always looking for something to print that would be of interest to our members. To that end I would like to establish a new section of the newsletter which will feature some knotting project that you have done. This would give us an opportunity to display our work to those who don’t or can’t make our meetings and possibly to share ideas and ask questions. If you think this might work let me know. And if you think this is another of my incredibly stupid ideas, then let me know that also.

From the Ditty Bag

International Guild of Knot Tyers 2K2 Event

I would like to promote the upcoming IGKT 2K2 Conference scheduled to be held in Fareham, England in May of this year. The Guild is celebrating its 20 years of existence with a weeklong celebration and exhibition in the Fernham Hall in Fareham from May 20 to May 25. It will be a great opportunity to meet some of the knot tyers that you might have exchanged letters or e-mail messages with, perhaps Nigel Harding or Des Pawson. I will guarantee that there will be some of the best knot work you will ever see, and better yet, perhaps the opportunity to receive some instruction from some of the Big Guys on that obscure knot you have not been able to complete. On Wednesday, May 22, there is a Knotting Academy Day scheduled. If Barbara and I get to go I plan to request some becket lessons from Karl Bareuther, whose beautiful beckets I saw in New Bedford in 1997.

Ed. note. Barbara and I are going to the IGKT 2K2 Birthday Celebration! We leave on 14 May and plan to spend a couple of days in Scotland before the IGKT meeting starts on 20 May. We also plan to visit Des Pawson. Eat your hearts out!

Training Girl Scout Leaders

On 12 Jan 2002, Ed Baker and your Editor loaded up Ed's pickup and traveled to far West Texas, out around Azle, just north of Fort Worth, to conduct a rope and knot presentation for some Girl Scout Leaders of the Circle T Girl Scout Council. Ed's rope machine was the hit of the show, mainly because Ed and I lost control as soon as the rope started to form on the machine. We had a finely tuned program developed to present but they wanted to go immediately from making rope into tying Monkey's Fists and Turk's heads. We were outnumbered and outgunned – we never had a chance. So for the next hour or so we worked to instruct as many as possible on how to make Monkey's fists and the 3L x 5B Turk's head. We left them with very specific instructions that they were to practice, practice, practice until they got it right and then go forth and teach others. The group must have enjoyed the presentation because we were invited to return. But then you know how charming Ed can be!

Daughters of the American Revolution

On 4 Feb 2002, Ed Baker and your Editor again loaded up Ed's pickup and, this time, traveled to South Texas, near Columbus, to conduct a rope and knot presentation to the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Chapter of Columbus. As usual, Ed and his rope machine stole the show! One of the ladies present and her husband own and operate a hardware store in Columbus and she was really impressed that the rope from Ed's machine looked exactly like the rope they sell in their hardware store. Several of the ladies had been Girl Scout Leaders and could still tie the basic Girl Scout knots. I don't think we picked up any new members from this visit but I think the ladies enjoyed the presentation. I wonder if Ed and I could make money at this?

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Book Report

Des Pawson has written a new book, *Pocket Guide to Knots and Splices*, that is well worth adding to your knot book library. The book is well planned and executed, with a logical organization and very well done photographs that graphically illustrate the steps being described in the text. Des' covers most, if not all, of the knots from his first book and then goes beyond that. In the introduction to his book he does a masterful job of describing the history of the manufacture of rope and the origins of knotting. When Ed Baker and I made our presentation the Girl Scout Leaders they were all very impressed with the book and many planned to buy it. I think the color photographs would go far to help teach kids but there is something in this book for everyone.

I purchased my book from Des and the total for the book and airmail shipping was \$15.00. And if you order from Des and request it, Des will inscribe it for you. And that is a bargain if ever there was one.

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Editorial

Some important topics were on the agenda at the April TxB meeting. Your editor hopes that each and everyone of you will participate in the election of Branch Officers.

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