

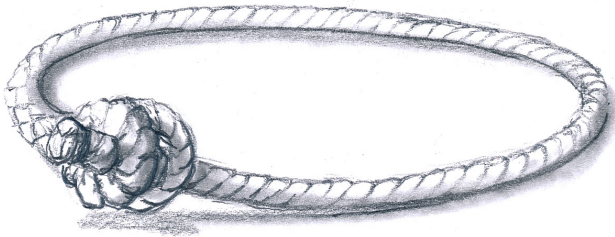
Marlinspike Seamanship

By Ted Walsh

Toggles and rope becketts

Rope becketts are a technology leftover from another time, a time before Velcro and, dare I say it, duct tape. Still, the rope becket with an eye splice on one end and a toggle or stopper knot on the other is a simple piece of gear, easily made, and with a myriad of uses.

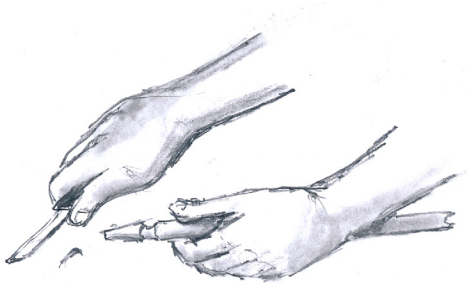
We use a becket to contain the sail of our sailing launch when it has been brailled up, another to lock the centerboard in the up position when beaching or loading and unloading the boat from her trailer.



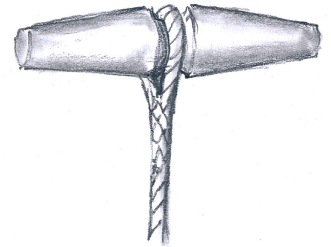
Stopper knots were covered several issues back, so let's look at toggles.

A toggle can be made using sophisticated tools like drill press and lathe,

but you can just as easily whip one out with a pocketknife and hand drill.



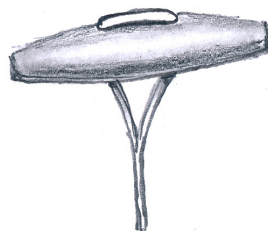
There are two ways to attach the toggle to the becket or line. The first involves a second eye splice tied tightly around the groove in the toggle. This looks nice and works if what you are making is a short becket to slip around a dock line, for example, in order to make it easier to stow.



The second method is faster and would be more appropriate where you might have to periodically remove the toggle, for example to run the becket through a fairlead or block. We use this method on our flag halyards, which have a toggle on one end and eye-splice on the other and have to be un-rove through masthead blocks each fall and re-rove each spring. A hole is drilled in the center of the toggle and the bitter end of the line passes through the hole with a simple overhand knot to finish.



There is a third method to secure a toggle involving two holes in the toggle, but its more of a decorative touch and weakens the toggle significantly since there are two holes in line with the grain of the wood.



If you need a quick review of the eyesplice, check out the last issue of the newsletter on line.

