

Club Meeting Report - March 1991

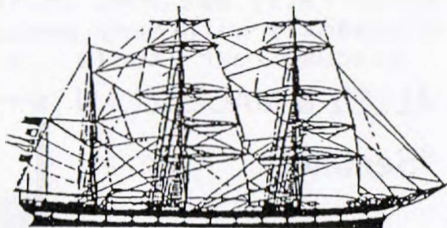
This meeting was held at the Polly Woodside Centre in South Melbourne. About 18 members attended with Scott and Lydia Little visiting us from Canberra.

The meeting was characterised by the usual fellowship and exchange of information between members. A short meeting section highlighted the latest club information and meeting dates. A calendar of events and meetings was distributed to those present.

Following the formal meeting we were entertained by Graeme Hussey-Smith who spoke to us and demonstrated knot-tying. Due to his zest for travel which accompanies his interest in knots, Graeme has earned the nickname "The Gypsy". He is probably one of a very few people skilful in the tying of knots as were sailors in the day of sailing ships. Knot tying is clearly both an ancient and dying art, and any sailor without skill in this area clearly would have had difficulty holding a job. Graeme explained that some knots were working knots whilst others were decorative. He described an "overhand" knot as the basic ones, this being the knot used as the wool mark logo, as well as being the basis of other knots. Graeme said most people can do 35 knots (can you?) whilst he can do 150. Knots are still being invented, there being about 1000 working knots and 29,000 knots known in total. Graeme demonstrated one of his animal knots by tying a "dog" which he presented to one of our visitors.

In sailing, knots are used for bends and hitches as well as for splicing rope. Some of the basic tools and equipment used included wax, a sailor's palin, needles, marlin spikes, knives and fids. Fids came as hand fids but also as set or standing fids up to 3'6" in height and similar in nature (although not of the same material) as the wheelwright's mandrel.

Nigel Lampert



In general knots and bends are used to join ropes semi-permanently, whereas hitches are only used to join ropes very temporarily and in such a way that they may be quickly cast off.

A seaman should be able to make all the common bends and hitches with his eyes shut, because these may have to be made or cast off under water or in the dark.

A reef knot is a method of tying together two ropes of equal size so that the knot will hold firmly and yet be undone easily. It is therefore used by seamen as a common tie.

The ropes are first crossed against the lay, and then with the lay (see Fig. 31).

Unless the ends are crossed opposite ways the result will be a 'granny' which will slip or jam.

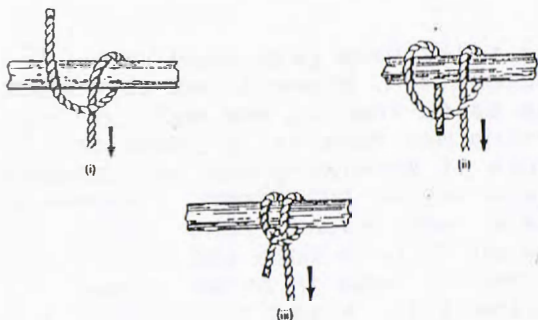


FIG. 38. Clove hitch on the end of a rope.

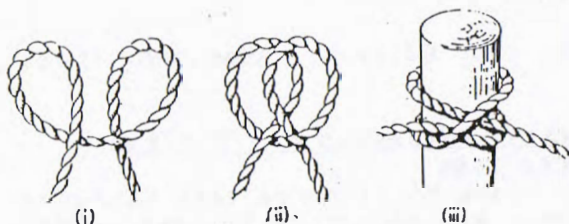
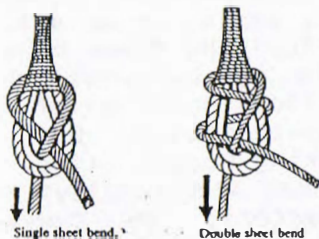


FIG. 39. Clove hitch on the bight of a rope.



Single sheet bend.

Double sheet bend

FIG. 32.

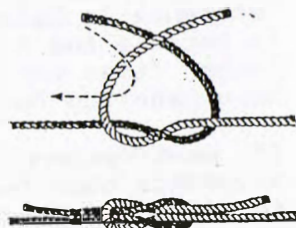


FIG. 31. Reef knot.



FIG. 33. A round turn and two half hitches: making fast to a large ring.

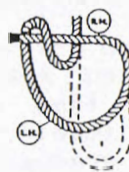


FIG. 34.

A bowline.

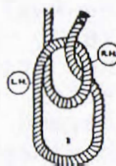


FIG. 35.

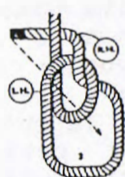


FIG. 36.

A running bowline.

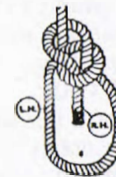


FIG. 37.

Reference:

A Seaman's Pocketbook,
Her Majesty's Stationery Office,
London, 1952.

A bowline is a quick method of putting a temporary eye the end of a rope, such as a hawser, or a line passed round man working over the side. Two hands are required.

Tiling - Nigel Lampert

Tiles have been used for a great variety of architectural purposes such as covering roofs, floors and walls. They have been made of many different materials. Whilst today we are still familiar with all these uses, tiling is most historic, but like many art forms has succumbed to the mass production of the twentieth century. In looking for material for this article I was amazed to find no reference in Salaman's Dictionary of Tools. Perhaps this is because the focus has been on the product of the tiler rather than the process of tiling itself which seems to have required few tools.

In most western countries tiles have been used more for pavements than for wall decoration. Floor tiles date back to Greek and Roman times as do roofing and wall tiles. Coloured tessellated paving was especially popular in Victorian times when the use of machinery was undoubtedly an advantage. Terraces and public buildings frequently featured foyers, verandahs and even front paths of colourful mosaic patterns which were both attractive and functional. Tiles were mostly made in those times of clay, but marble tiles, especially alternating black and white ones, were used in better class work. Being a labour intensive process this form of tiling has disappeared although renovation of Victorian buildings has revived interest in this art form.

Encyclopaedia Britannica, 9th Edition, Adam and Chas. Black, Edinburgh, 1898

The Australian Mosaic Tile Works, Melbourne

Cawkwell, H.A, Malvern, came to Victoria 14th February 1853, and worked at various avocations until 1851, when he started making agricultural and garden pipes, and after a time added brickmaking, employing no labour beyond himself. In 1871 he employed two hands, but business gradually increasing, the premises were added to from time to time, and now the works employ on an average twenty-five hands, and make geometrical and Roman mosaics and encaustic tile pavements, also agricultural drain pipes, gutter bricks and tiles, flooring tiles of all kinds, and terra cotta of every description, but the business is chiefly confined to making Mosaic tiles. A number of public and large buildings in the city have been fitted with tiles from this factory. Mr Cawkwell was for seven years a member of the Malvern council. His works are known as the Australian Mosaic Tile Works, and are in High Street, Malvern.

Victorian Railways Newsletter, January 1973. V.R. Printing Works, North Melbourne 1973.

Victoria and its Metropolis, Volume 2, McCarron Bird

A MASTER'S ART

The Victorian Railways massive head office building, in Spencer Street, features an excellent example of 19th century mosaic tiling at the old centre entrance.

The V.R.'s head office was opened in 1893—the height of the land boom—and its neo-classic architecture reflects that period.

Marble and mosaic floors were always popular for public buildings and the railways chose to have a coloured mosaic floor at their main entrance.

At the time, there were, reputedly, only two top class tiling suppliers—Walker's and Cawkwell's. The latter got the contract.

A grandson of the founder of that firm, Henry Cawkwell, worked with the V.R. from 1925-71, and has recently pieced together details of the business that bore his name. He is the only remaining Cawkwell, as the last three generations have been graced with only daughters, and, before the name passes, he wished to record some of his grandfather's achievements.

1856

Mr. Cawkwell arrived in Australia in 1856 and promptly used his savings to buy some promising land in the then outer suburb of Malvern. Here the clay was ideal for tile making, and he established a large works.

Having learnt the trade in England, he made a success of the venture, and many rival brickworks dotted the nearby suburbs.

By 1865, the spectre of pollution was being raised in official circles and Malvern council was told that one of its very own members, Mr. Cawkwell, was a major contributor to the smoke nuisance over the district. This, of course, was in addition to the night soil used on the market gardens and the nearby slaughterhouse.

Cawkwell's tile works went from strength to strength and were honoured by having their craftsmanship displayed to all visitors at the 1880-81 International Exhibition.

As well, one of the streets adjoining Cawkwell's works was named Cawkwell Street—it still carries this name today.

Cawkwell's supplied tiles to many major buildings until the land boom collapsed disastrously in 1893—bringing many businesses down with it, including the Cawkwell empire. Its owner died a heart-broken man the

Fate

Cawkwell's tile works remained idle for years, eventually becoming a shell housing the district derelicts. It was later sold to a former apprentice but he was unable to make a success of the venture and he, too, went bankrupt.

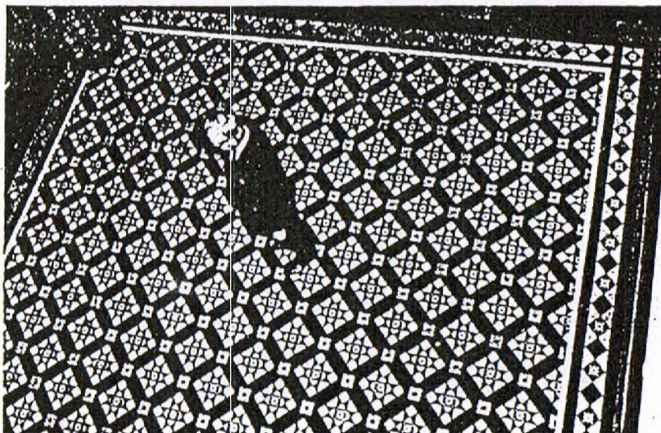
The building survived until demolished in the 1920's, and Cawkwell Street is now the only reminder of former times.

Examples of Cawkwell's work can be found in many churches throughout the city, Parliament House, Stonnington in Malvern (the Governor's residence), many other notable buildings in Malvern plus the V.R. administrative offices and Maryborough station.

Of those available to the public, the example in head office is probably the best surviving. It was saved much wear and tear when the old centre entrance was closed off in 1958.



Mr. Henry Cawkwell inspects the name plate provided by the tiler—his grandfather. This nameplate is at the foot of the centre stairs.



The extensive mosaic pattern laid by his grandfather's firm for the V.R. in head office is the best remaining example of Cawkwell's workmanship.

Editor's Note

Mr Cawkwell was contacted regarding this article and indicated that the floor illustrated was covered with carpet about eight years ago. The building has also now been sold by the government. Mr Cawkwell indicated that the family held no record

PAVING TILES

Paving Tiles or Quarries.—Paving tiles are made in a variety of plain colours and geometrical shapes and in several qualities. The commonest, called Staffordshire quarries, are coarse in texture and are made only in red, blue, and buff colours. Superior paving tiles or quarries are dense, semi-vitrified, and more carefully shaped and finished. They are obtainable in a greater variety of shapes, thicknesses, and colours, and are usually unglazed. Staffordshire quarries are made in the following sizes and thicknesses: 12 in. \times 12 in. \times $1\frac{1}{2}$ in., 9 in. \times 9 in. \times $1\frac{1}{2}$ in., $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. \times $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. \times $1\frac{1}{8}$ in., and 6 in. \times 6 in. \times 1 in. Plain geometrical floor tiles are obtainable usually in the following stock sizes: 6 in. \times 6 in., $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. \times $4\frac{1}{2}$ in., 3 in. \times 3 in., $2\frac{3}{8}$ in. \times $2\frac{3}{8}$ in., $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. \times $1\frac{1}{2}$ in., $1\frac{1}{16}$ in. \times $1\frac{1}{16}$ in., and in diagonal halves of the same sizes; also in octagons, hexagons, diamond shapes, etc. Rectangular tiles, and strips for bordering, are made 6 in. \times 4 in., 6 in. \times 3 in., 6 in. \times 2 in., 6 in. \times $1\frac{1}{2}$ in., 6 in. \times 1 in., and 6 in. \times $\frac{3}{4}$ in. The thickness of all the foregoing is

usually $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. These tiles are of one colour throughout the mass, and are burnt until sufficiently impervious to resist permanent discoloration in ordinary use.

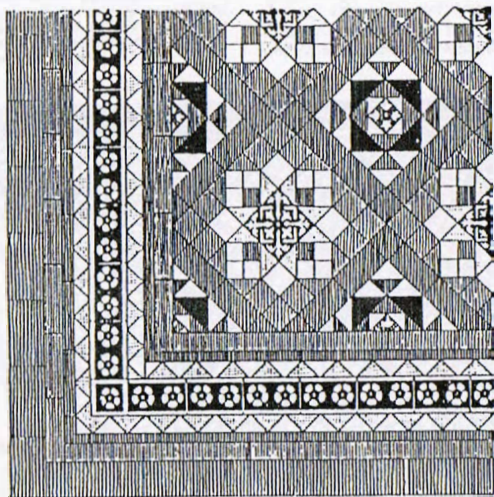


FIG. 22

Tessellated Tile Pavings.—Tile pavings formed of the superior paving tiles laid in geometrical patterns are called tessellated tile pavings. An immense variety of designs can

be evolved from the stock shapes, sizes, and colours which are

available. The prices of such pavings vary with the colours utilized in forming the design, the cheapest being those in which buff, salmon, red, chocolate, grey, and black predominate. White, blue, and green are from twice to three times as expensive, and are seldom made larger than 3 inches. Fig. 22 is an example of a portion of a tessellated pavement.

Encaustic Tiles.—Encaustic tiles are those in which a pattern of one coloured clay is inlaid in the surface of a tile body of a different colour, when in the clay state, and is burnt in as part of the tile itself. The surface of the tile is level, and the pattern or design is generally complete on a single encaustic tile, but may extend over a series, a large number of varied designs being thus produced. Encaustic tiles are made either by the plastic or dust processes; in the former, a die or plaster relief is made of the desired pattern and placed at the bottom of a box mould, due allowance being made for shrinkage. Successive layers of clay are then pressed on the mould and compressed, the relief in the mould producing a sunk pattern on the tile, which is then dried and removed from the mould. Coloured clay in a semi-liquid state is then poured into the hollows formed by the die, and the tile is again dried, levelled, and fired. Dust encaustics are made by the process described for applied faience, perforated metal pattern plates and dies being used for forming the design and tile body. A class of floor tiling of somewhat limited application, which has features resembling the foregoing, may be classed as incised tiling; these tiles are made with sunk lines or patterns, which, in common with the joints between the tiles, are fitted with cement when the tiling is laid.

Ceramic Mosaic.—Mosaic paving, in which the small elements or tesserae composing the design are made of clay, is distinguished from marble mosaic, in which the tesserae are of marble, and vitreous mosaic, in which the material is of glass, by the title ceramic mosaic. Ceramic mosaic, like the other varieties to which reference has been made, is laid in corresponding forms of Roman, or cube, mosaic and Venetian mosaic, or terrazzo. In Roman ceramic mosaic, Fig. 23, the tesserae are small tiles in $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cubes, made either by the dust or plastic processes and laid in

ordinary succession or in a series of concentric arcs, both of which are illustrated in the design in Fig. 23. Two methods are adopted in laying ceramic mosaic, the first of which consists in placing the tesserae one by one in position on a prepared bed of cement, and subsequently levelling the pavement before the cement has set ; but by far the more usual procedure is to affix the tesserae at the manufacturer's works, face downwards, with gum on a full-size drawing of the proposed design. This is divided into convenient sections, which are taken to their intended situation at

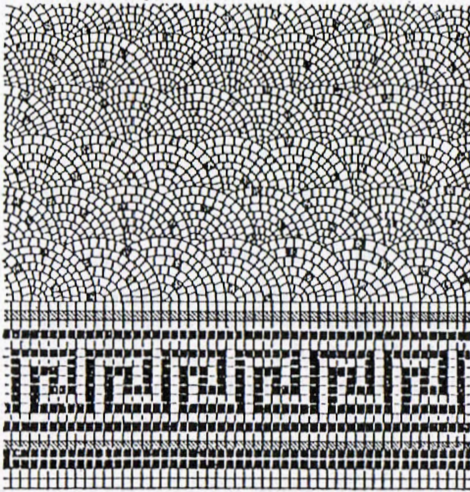
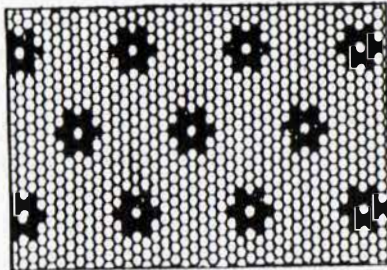


FIG. 23

the building ; the fragments of mosaic with the paper upwards are there placed in position on a prepared bed of cement, and carefully levelled, the paper being soaked with water, and removed. Ceramic Venetian, or terrazzo, mosaic is made from irregular fragments of paving tiles, those which are imperfect as whole tiles being frequently set aside and broken for the purpose of being utilized in this manner. This form of mosaic is not laid by the paper method, but is applied directly to the cement bed and carefully levelled.



Peppermint