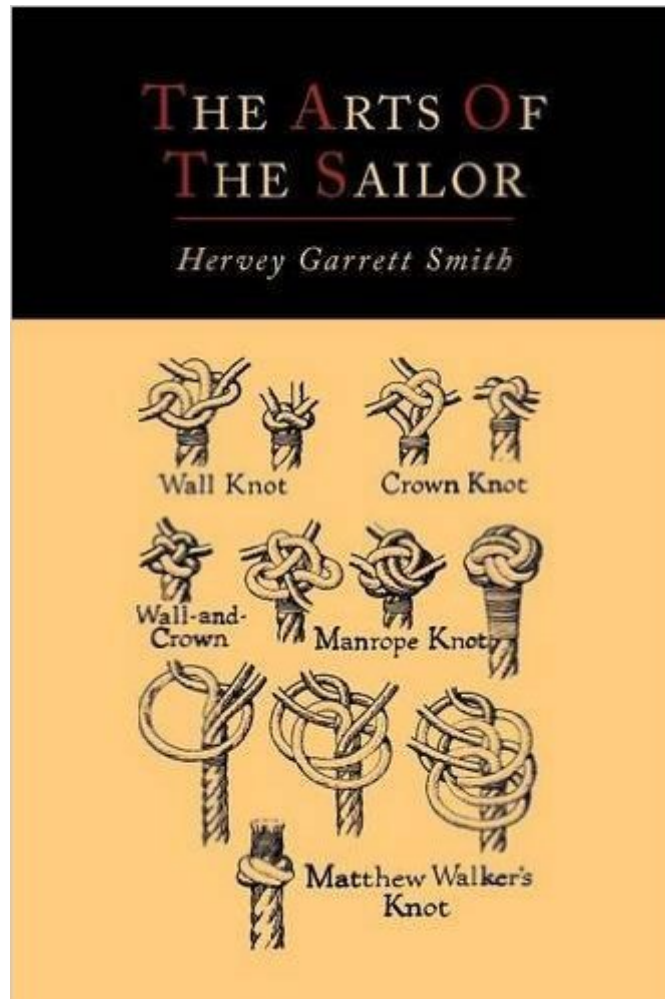


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The Arts Of The Sailor [Illustrated Edition]



Synopsis

2012 Reprint of 1953 Edition. Exact facsimile of the original edition, not reproduced with Optical Recognition Software. Illustrated Edition. A maritime expert offers boating and yachting enthusiasts a complete course in rigging, working, and maintaining a ship. The perfect shipboard reference, this volume is packed with useful "hands-on" information: sailor's tools, basic knots, and useful hitches; hand sewing and canvas work; and dozens of other topics important to safety, economy, and efficiency. Over 100 illustrations. Few twentieth-century writers could equal Hervey Garrett Smith's works on the traditional arts of the sailor; none could surpass them. His descriptions of knotting, splicing, fancy work, canvas work, and the practice of marlinspike seamanship are clear, concise, and evocative. So, too, are his drawings, which are technically accurate, easy to follow, and a joy to behold. The "Arts of the Sailor" is Smith's finest book, a compendium of information that runs the gamut: the anatomy of rope, sailor's tools, knots, hitches, splicing, whipping, wire and rope service, hand sewing, decorative rope work, chafing gear, reefing, towing, cleats, rope-stropped blocks, and making all sorts of gear, including rope mats, a heaving line, a bosun's chair, and a ditty bag.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

There dozens and scores of books that will illustrate how to tie knots and wield the marlinspike in a seamanlike manner, so why read one that was written nearly 60 years ago? The technology of rope has advanced with everything else, so too has the technology of yachting. It would be odd if a guide to nautical ropework wouldn't also need a little updating. Perhaps so, but it is not only for the

techniques that "The Arts of the Sailor" is worth reading, it is for the author. A dab hand aloft and aloft, Hervey Garrett Smith could dab equally well in pen and ink, and his illustrations are marvelous. But so is his narrative. Written in the era before today's political correctness and social taboos, Smith could write, midway through describing the painstaking construction of rope-strapped blocks, "Right about now you should be ready for a drink or a smoke, or both." But then he assures us that after completing the first block the worst is behind us, for, "it is somewhat like having babies, or opening a bottle of olives--after you get the first the rest come easy." Mothers may want to debate this, and I've never cared enough for olives to try more than one, but by today's standards there's something rebellious in this sort of writing, and this adds to its appeal. Smith's bon-mots are scattered throughout the book, and one could easily leave off trying to learn knot-tying and just enjoy reading. Describing his preference for fixed-blade knives over folding blades, for example, Smith notes that the sheath for the knife (and, naturally, its accompanying marlin spike) is worn over the "starboard buttock," where it "at first feels rather awkward, but like the wearing of false teeth, you soon get used to it." Describing the method of sewing a patch into a torn sail, he advises caution as you drape it across your knee, since "there is a tendency to sew the canvas to your trousers." Little of this is roll-on-the-deck hilarious, rather it is quirky and mirthful and makes the reading of it a pleasure rather than something merely to get through. It also recalls, fondly in my view, an era before modern-day nags and do-gooders enacted all these zero-tolerance edicts, an era when men could be men and boys could be Scouts. In his discussion of the variety of rigging knives, he accounts for the popularity of the folding kind by noting that "the average man normally carries his knife in his pocket." Well yes, of course. Don't you? Truth is, knives have been so often banned and made inconvenient that the average man these days rarely carries one. But except when in line at TSA or perhaps in the shower, I have rarely been without a knife in my pocket for most of the last 40 years. As a 6th grader I recall a teacher who was in need of one ask, "Any you Scouts got your knife?" I was proud to produce mine. If such a scene occurred today, both teacher and Scout would be arrested. So Smith evokes the social Miocene of the 1950's, and I kind of like it. For quirky, mirthful (and also instructive) entertainment it's hard to beat the whole chapter given over to "How to Make a Proper Bucket." Smith begins, "If there is one subject on which I am violently opinionated it is the matter of a proper deck bucket...for I have had so much experience with the wrong kind." Most yachtsmen seem to think that a galvanized pail with a rope tied to the bail is a proper bucket, just as I once did. Now I'll admit that a tin pail is a handy though uncomfortable substitute for a marine toilet, but as a deck bucket for a respectable yacht it is a curse and an abomination...." Smith describes his years of putting up with these cursed and abominable things,

which are difficult to stow, become fouled in everything, and above all make a constant irritating clatter when you're underway. There follow detailed, illustrated instructions in making a proper canvas bucket. "After stenciling the name of your ship on the side you'll be anxious to try it out. Toss it over the side to fill it and notice that it hits the water with a respectable thump instead of a clang. Haul off and slosh a bucketful along the deck and observe how the rope grommet at the bottom provides a perfect handhold. ... Then when you're through using it throw it nonchalantly into the cockpit--it can't hurt a thing. Now jump on it a smack it flat--it's only 3 inches high now and no problem to stow. But above all else, praise God, you'll never hear a sound out of it!" Well, of course nowadays you can go to any store and come away with a plastic pail that will be just as quiet and will cost you far less time. And it'll look right at home on your modern yacht, too, since the whole damn ship is made of plastic. But you'll miss the pride of making it yourself. And you'll lose the nautical authenticity embodied in a "proper" canvas bucket. And you'll be poorer the craftsmanship gained in constructing it. I am an authentic salty sort of fellow myself, so just this morning I began work on my own proper canvas bucket. And I'll post some photos just as soon as I unstitch it from my trousers.

This is another excellent piece by the late Hervey Garrett Smith. It's sort of a companion to "The Marlinspike Sailor" (ibid), though it is somewhat more expansive on many fundamental topics like knots, bends, whippings and seizings. There is a good bit of overlap between the two books, although this one is both more comprehensive and a smaller physical book (for your small onboard library...) "The Marlinspike Sailor" is more project oriented - and has excellent plans and diagrams for practical onboard ropework and sewing projects - while this book is focussed on the elements that go into such projects (without the actual examples). It's very traditional - as with all of Smith's period writing - with little or no reference to modern materials, but it's a posthumous reprint, so don't expect much updating... but the style is both informative and interesting without being dry or obtuse. "The Marlinspike Sailor" might actually be a better starting point for a true beginner (and it does contain a short update to 'modern' braided rope in the back), but I have them both and don't regret it.

This book is a great introduction to all the arts and projects of seamen around the world. The author provides history as well as directions for each of the projects he presents. Topics included in this book are knotting and rope-work (everything from functional to decorative); seamanship (for garments as well as heavier items like sails); leather working; and many others. This book is a must

for anyone bound on a sailing journey or for those just interested in the crafts practiced to fill time aboard ship.

First off let me say, I've had this awhile, so I've had time to thoroughly read it, use it and enjoy it. I first had Mr. Hervey Garrett-Smith's other book the Marlinspike Sailor which is larger but thinner and has some similar things, and some different things, so it really it a good idea to get both. I wrote a review on the Marlinspike Sailor and then realized I had not told about my experience with this one (though I doubt I can outdo some of the highest rated reviews.) Well this book, though chock full of great illustrations, has a lot of text too. Whereas Marlinspike Sailor is more like individual specific projects, this book is like that but in overall context sometimes and he will put in where he thinks something fits. It is a good read and very insightful. Whimsical yet practical writing, a great and interesting mix that works, because sailing and marlinspike craft are practical and fun. Before long you'll be searching for projects to tie knots on, and doing the sailors' crafts from the book, collecting the tools outlined in the first part, if you don't have them yet. Since reading his books I have gotten piecemeal a lot. I started with practical knots, then decorative, then more marlinspike focused craft. Before long I had sail needles (type he mentions in book which are excellent), canvas, a left-handed sewing palm, and I've made several ditty bags out of the books to hold the supplies or give away to family and friends. I've made rope ladders, swings, hammocks, nets, rope boat fenders. The things you can make from rope are amazing and you'll find very entertaining if you are at all into it. This one has a lot more stuff specific to sailing like reefing sails, towing boats, and some that apply to sailing and life on land, but there is no shortage of things that are not usual if you do not own a sailboat of yore. From sennits to coachwhipping and various braids and chains, to proper knots and their uses, and the rich descriptions and illustrations, this book is always worth it. I'm preparing and learning from books all the time like this what I don't have access to regularly which is a seasoned mariner, but he did and was and can pass it on to you through this book. It's about like having one in your back pocket--Or ditty bag!

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