

# The Humble Bowsie

by Roger Stollery

Up to the introduction of DYNEEMA, polyester line was used for running rigging and this had a relatively coarse texture and so did not slip through bowsies like the typical plastic ones shown in the diagram. Also polyester was relatively easy to thread, by creating a point on the end, after melting with a cigarette lighter. This is the traditional form of line adjuster as used for decades on models, tent lines etc.

When superpolyethylene came along, as DYNEEMA or SPECTRA, it was immediately favoured because for the same breaking strain it was a lot thinner and was very soft, smooth and silky, so reducing windage and going through fairleads with less friction. However this gave some problems: it slipped through traditional bowsies and cigarette lighter 'blobs' could not be sharpened to go through small holes. So something new was required to solve these problems. Also continuing the objective to reduce windage for jib halyards etc, I wanted something more aerodynamic with less drag. The result is the design shown to scale, compared to the traditional form shown below.

My solution was to reject plastic, even when fibre filled, because once the bowsie wears or slips, it has a reduced load capacity. The Stollery bowsie uses fishermen's knotting experience of achieving friction by going round something rather than through it. The bent wire bowsie is quick and easy to make and thread. The 'blobbed' Dyneema goes through the 'big' wire eyes easily and the line cannot wear away the bowsie. It can be made with round nosed pliers or better round the jig shown on the 'jig diagram', which is also very easy to make; just 2 stainless steel pins bonded with epoxy into a metal plate, close to its edge. A 5mm diameter plastic ball allows fingers to grip the bowsie, but not the line! The design was developed in the late 90s for the BOTTLE boat using 0.8 mm stainless steel rigging wire. This technology is now used for general applications on both bigger and smaller boats.

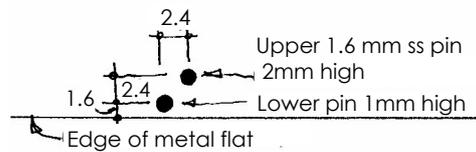
Gripping the bowsie is achieved without the ball, by the projecting ends of the eyes at right angles forming the contact with the fingers. It has great flexibility by using different wire diameters to suit the load and it can be threaded with extra turns round the wire to suit lines which need to be adjustable, but which are not continuously loaded. You can adjust the number of turns so that the line can flap around and yet not loosen.

## Low drag wire bowsie

Thread bowsies carefully, always going in or coming out of the 'eyes' in the same way. Finish by tying just single half hitch and pull up against the 'blob'; no need for glue

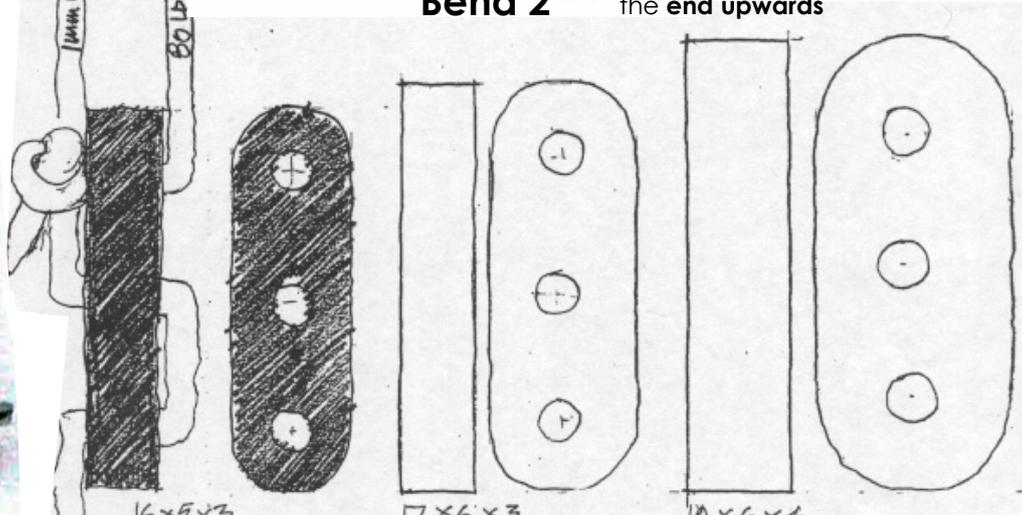
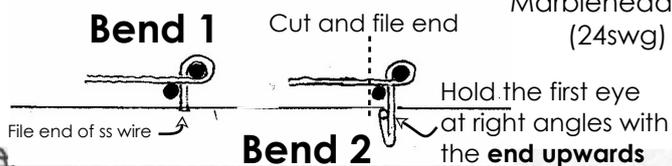


**BOTTLE boat bowsie**  
with fishing ball as the 'grip'



## Wire bowsie jig

0.8mm (21swg) stainless steel wire for most models, even for high loads on Marbleheads. Use 0.56mm (24swg) for Footys etc



## Typical plastic bowsies suitable for polyester line

Shown here is Ron Thompson's 'Dyna Cable'

0.38mm 36.3kg 80lbs Dyneema fishing line. There is a good range of breaking strains: the 6kg line is incredibly fine.

'Blob' formed by melting with a cigarette lighter