

Feeder fishing for Bream and Tench

This article will deal mainly with the open ended feeder since this can be the most productive method during the times when these fish are the most active.

Using the open ended feeder gives you a great deal more variety in introducing different types of bait mix than the closed end feeder:-

- Using pure ground bait
- Using ground bait mixed with small particles such as maggots, hemp etc
- Introducing larger baits such as sweetcorn, meat, pellets by filling the centre of the feeder with the bait and plugging the end of the feeder with ground bait.

Types of open ended feeder

The wire cage feeder (see fig.1)

This type of feeder is more useful for producing a cloud effect in the water where there isn't a great deal of depth.

When fishing for bottom feeding species such as bream or tench this can produce a column of bait in the water as the feeder falls to the bottom of the lake. Since the Warren contains a very large head of small fish this can have the unwelcome effect of attracting large numbers of these fish. It's better to use this type of feeder early in the year when the small fish are not so active. I use this type of feeder when using oily pellets or soft pellet mix. (See article on pellets)

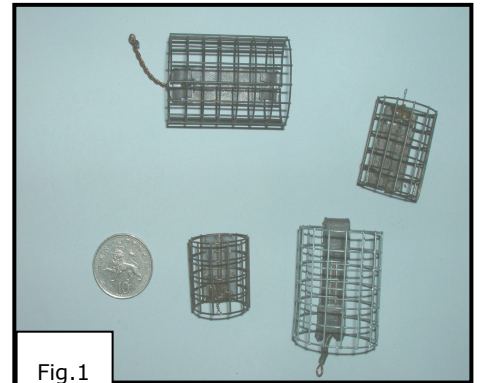


Fig.1

Plastic open ended feeders (fig.2)

This type of feeder provides much less bait spillage in the water and result in a much higher percentage of bait being deposited at the bottom of the lake.

The holes in the feeder can also be taped up to slow down the loss of bait.

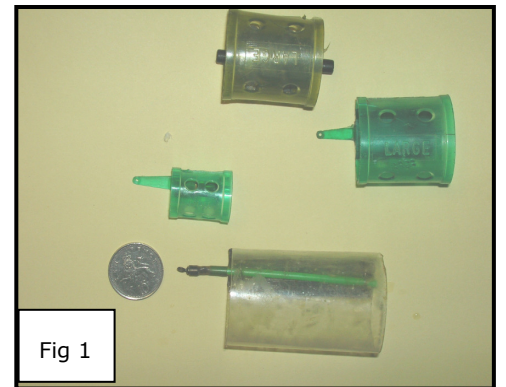


Fig 1

Weed beaters (fig.3)

A very useful feeder I found in Ockendon bait and tackle. Designed for use in Ireland for use in deep water, these feeders have a very light lead loading and are designed to come up in the water very quickly when retrieved. A very useful piece of equipment when fishing on blanket weed. The feeders do not pick up a mass of weed on retrieve.

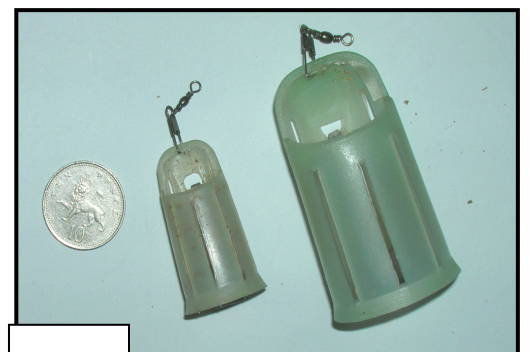


Fig. 3

A basic quick change link ledger

With a link ledger the run ring has a quick change link to which the feeder or weight is attached. This allows feeders to be changed very quickly without having to break the whole rig down. A few common link ledgers are shown opposite. (Fig.4)

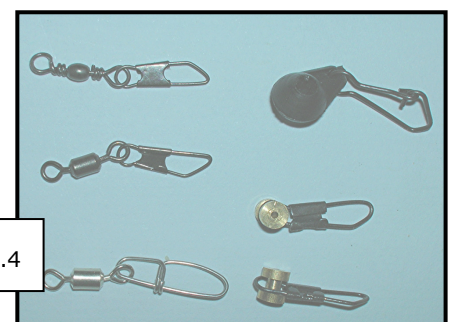


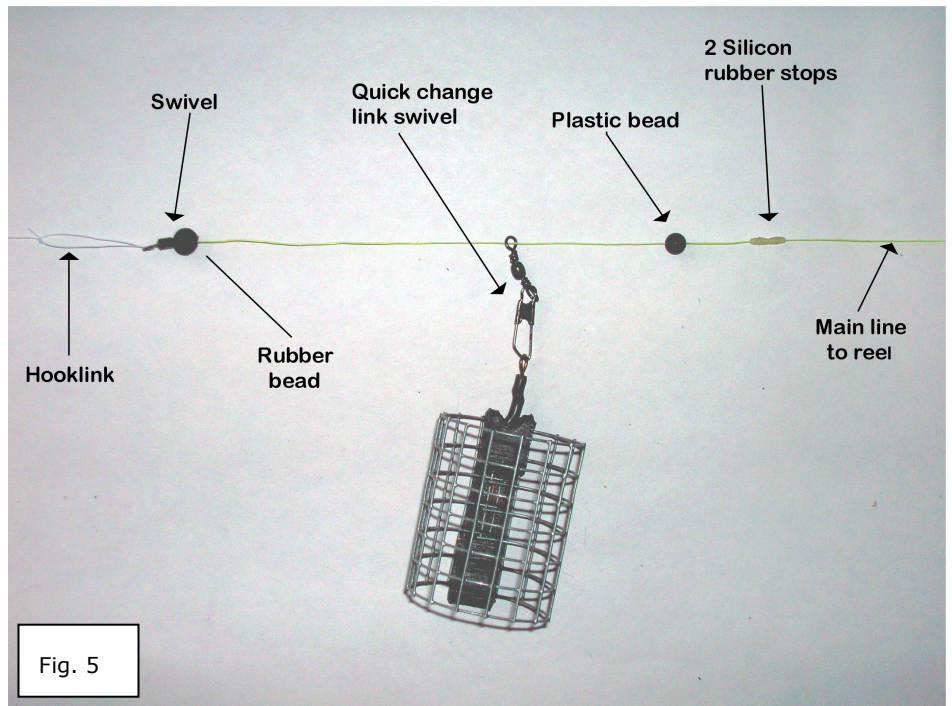
Fig.4

The swivel acts as a stop for the feeder. The rubber bead on the swivel prevents damage to the knot attaching the main line to the swivel during casting and retrieving the rig. The swivel also provides a quick way of changing hook links to vary the size of the hook or the length of the hook link providing the hook link is attached by a loop

The quick change link swivel allows feeders to be changed rapidly.

The two silicon rubber stops and plastic beads are optional. They prevent the feeder sliding right up the line when changing bait. This also has the advantage of converting the rig to a bolt style rig by using a heavier feeder (or lead) by sliding the rubber stops right up to the swivel. This is particularly useful when the fish are just mouthing the bait.

This rig is semi-fixed. If the feeder is snagged by a fish and the line breaks above the knot the rubber stops will just pull off allowing the feeder to fall off. The old style of tying a loop in the line to enclose the feeder and prevent it moving up the line is basically a fixed rig. If the feeder is snagged and the main line breaks above the loop the feeder will not pull free and the fish will be left towing the whole rig.



Another advantage of the rubber bead attached to the swivel is that it acts as a small boom holding the hook length clear of the feeder when preparing to cast (Fig.6). You can add another couple of plastic beads between the link swivel and the rubber bead on the main line, this increases the boom effect and holds the hook link further away from the feeder.

Another major cause of tangles on casting is the link on the link swivel attaching the feeder to the rig. This can be virtually eliminated by using a piece of 2.5mm silicone tubing covering the join between the link and the feeder. This covers the join and stiffens up the rig. The Silicone tube is shown in Fig.6.

The addition of a small shot a few inches from the hook also helps prevent tangles, particularly in adverse wind conditions. A no 4-8 shot usually works well depending on the wind.



The Paternoster Rig

The paternoster rig generally produces more positive bites than the running ledger rig on still waters, particularly with bream. The rig consists of a link of about 6 inches joined to the main line by a 4 turn water knot to which a feeder is attached by a quick change link. (Fig.7)

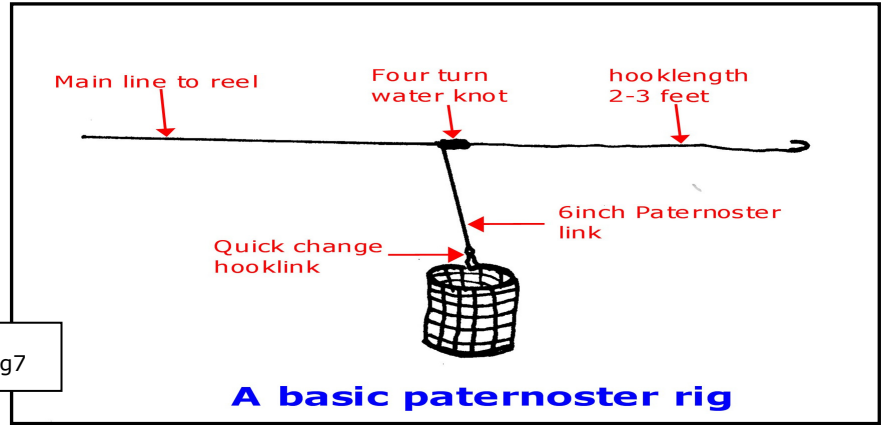


fig7

The 4 turn water knot paternoster

By following the diagrams you should form the 4 turn water knot without any problems.

a) Overlap a piece of (line with the main line on the reel.

(b) Form a circle in the line and tie a loose overhand knot.

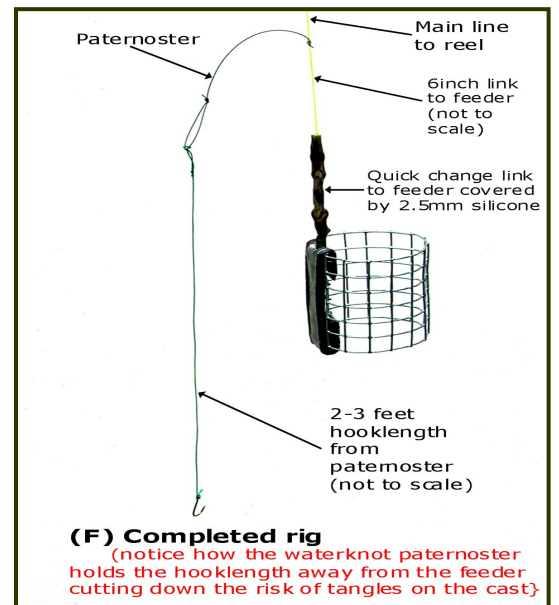
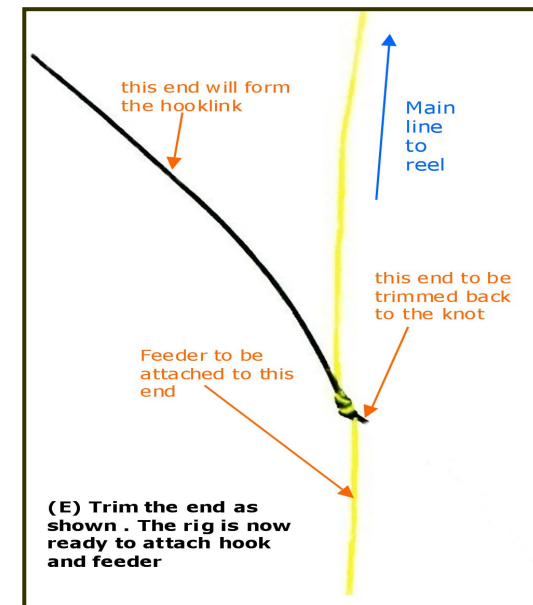
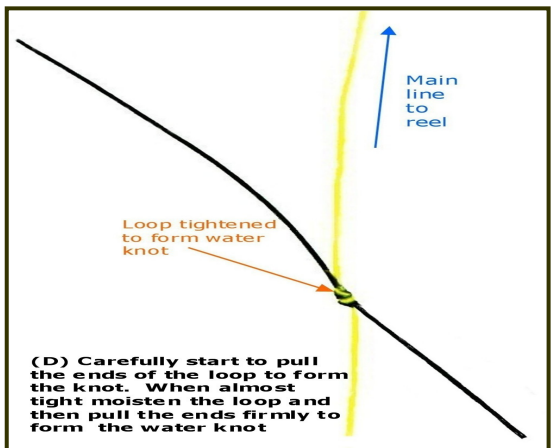
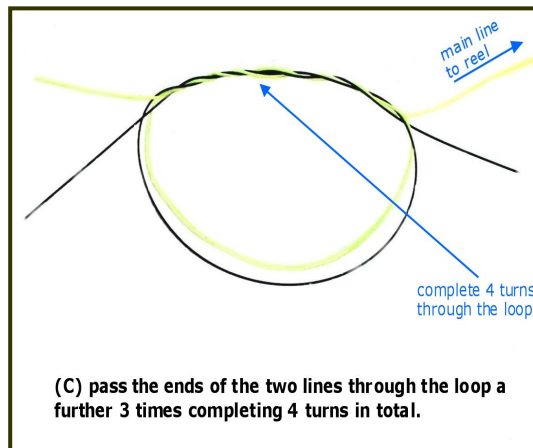
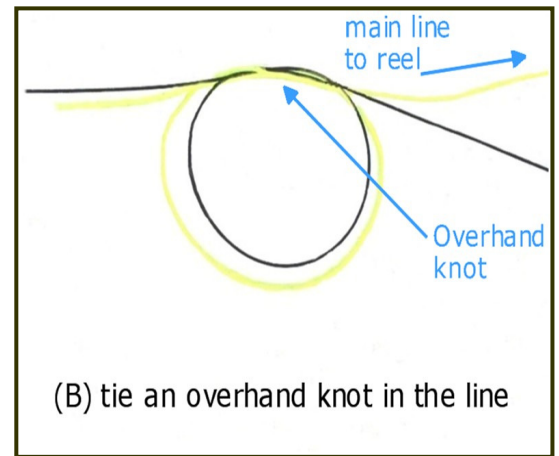
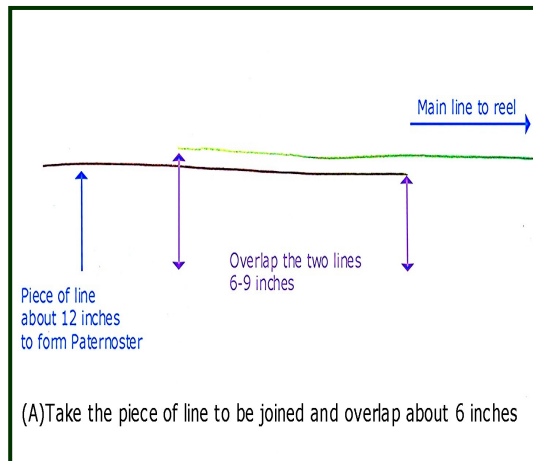
(c) Loop the 2 ends through the knot a further 3 times to produce a 4 turn overhand knot.

(d) Carefully pull the ends of the loop to tighten the knot. When the knot is almost formed moisten to lubricate the knot and pull firmly to form the water knot.

(e) The extra piece of line joined with the main line forms 2 tags.

Leave the tag pointing up towards the reel, this will form the paternoster. Trim the other tag close to the knot. By leaving the upper tag to form the paternoster, when the hook link is added it will hang away from the main line reducing the possibilities of tangles on the cast.

(f) Tie a loop in the end of the paternoster using a double overhand knot. Join the hook link to the paternoster using the double loop method. Tie a link ledger to the tag end of the main line and attach the feeder



The main advantage of the paternoster rig in bite detection

Fig.8 shows the rig setup after casting the line tightened up to the rod. In this position the paternoster link is pulled tight and is pointing towards the rod and away from the baited hook.

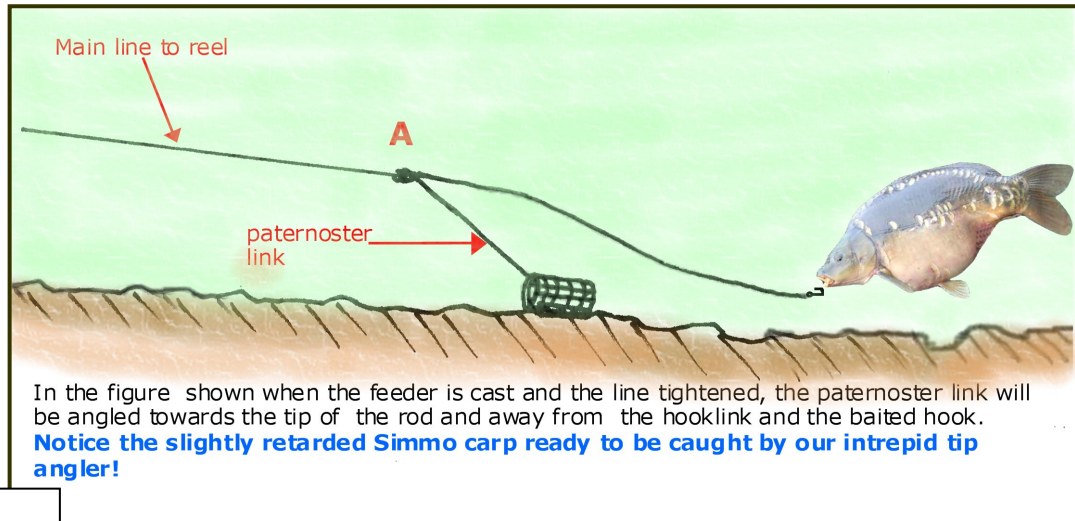


Fig. 8

Fig.9 shows what happens when the fish picks up the bait and moves away from the rod. Whatever the direction away from the rod the paternoster will move towards the feeder and the link will slacken. This means that the fish does not feel the weight of the feeder resulting in long confident pulls on the tip or other bite detector used.

This does not happen with the running ledger. If the fish runs off at an angle away from the rod there will be friction against the run ring as the line pulls through resulting in the fish feeling the weight of the feeder much earlier. This usually results in a series of taps on the tip and a higher percentage of missed bites.

If the fish moves towards the rod after taking the bait the feeder will be dislodged causing the line between the feeder and the bite indicator to go loose (a slack line bite). It is important in this type of fishing to have some tension in the bite indicator to record these bites, when a slack line bite will cause the quiver tip to straighten or a monkey climber to move downwards.

The majority of feeders sold in shops have far too heavy weights attached to the feeders. When a slack line bite occurs this give cause extra resistance to the fish when the feeder is moved, resulting in a higher percentage of lost bites. It is very rare to cast huge distances to contact the fish at the Warren. A light feeder filled with bait should provide more than enough weight to achieve the desired distances.

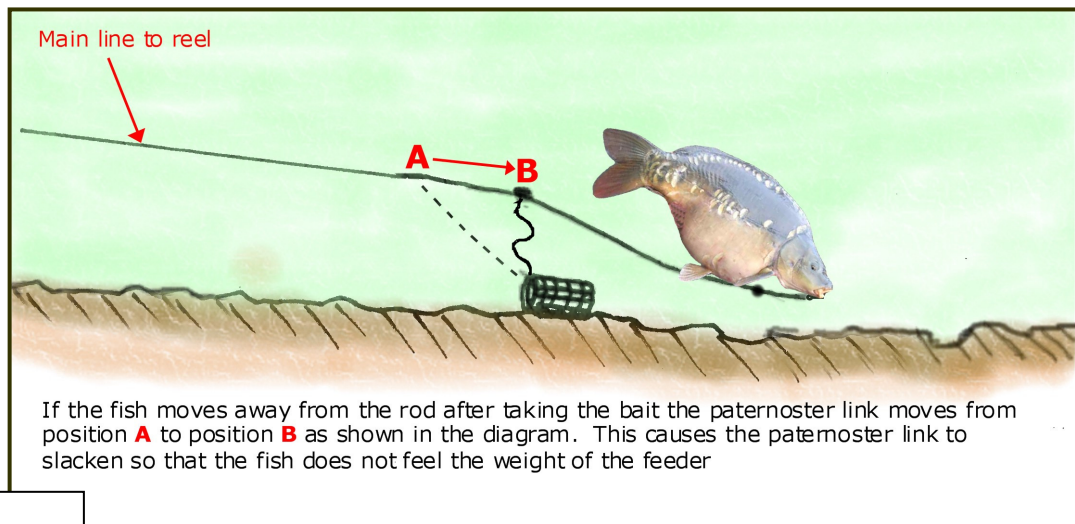


Fig. 9

Suitable plastic feeders

1. The weed beater (see Fig.3) obtainable from Ockendon Bait and tackle.
2. Browning micro porous feeders (should be obtainable from most tackle shops).

Suitable cage feeders

The cage feeders I use almost exclusively for short to medium range fishing over the Warren come from a seller on Ebay

Gary Goes under the name of **GAZSTELLA** on Ebay and is found in the fishing section. His feeders are homemade and use a piece of lead strip instead of the heavier leads on commercial feeders. You can adjust the feeder weight very easily by trimming a bit off the lead strip if it's too heavy.

He will make any size feeder in any quantity and the prices are a lot cheaper than shop bought ones. Do a search on Ebay for his name and send him an Email. You will find him very accommodating.

General tips on feeder fishing in the Warren

1. Avoid using groundbait in any quantity when the weather is warm, you will attract the small silver fish. The only time I use ground bait is during the winter and early spring when the water is cold and I am using maggots as a hookbait. When the water begins to warm up I generally switch to pellets/corn and use softened micropellets as groundbait for the feeder. (See article on pellets).
2. When fishing for tench there is no need to cast right out into the lake. When fishing the beach area last May I was casting the feeder out underarm to a maximum of about 10 metres and my 3 week haul included 7 tench over 8lb and 1 over 9lb. The biggest tench from that area last year was 12lb 2oz taken on a pole, fished at around 10 metres. Good bags of tench were taken by pole fishermen at ranges of 6-10 metres. An advantage of fishing short distances is that you can loose feed occasionally over the top when the fish are really having it and you don't want to spook them by continually splashing a feeder into the baited area. It sometimes pays to change the feeder for a small bomb and loose feed a small quantity every 15-20 minutes once a carpet of bait has been laid down with the feeder.
3. When starting to fish the chosen swim don't leave the feeder in too long, a maximum of about 3 minutes should be sufficient. This means that in the first hour you will lay down an ample bed of feed for the fish to browse on once they find it. An alternative way is to use a large feeder and cast out (without any bait on the hook) and when the feeder hits the bed of the lake do a false strike. This will deposit the bait from the feeder onto the lake bed. Repeat this 6-10 times to deposit a bed of feed.
4. When casting medium distances with a feeder accuracy becomes a problem. Unless you are placing your feeder into a fairly tight spot your bait will be dispersed over a large area significantly reducing the number of bites.
 - (a) For direction choose a mark on the opposite bank (a tree, a swim etc.) and cast to that.
 - (b) For distance Use a line clip.

Cast at a mark on the opposite bank and place the line in the line clip on the reel. Now when you cast the line will stop coming off the reel when it reaches the line stop allowing you to cast the same distance each time (Fig.10).

It is not a good idea to leave the line clipped up after casting out (particularly in the main lake) unless you are a dab hand at unclipping the line quickly when a big fish takes the bait. It is far better to unclip the line immediately after casting. To make sure you can clip up again at the same place tie a sliding stop knot onto the main line and slide it next to the line clip (Fig.11).

Before you wind in to re-bait your rig simply put the line back in the clip. If a fish is hooked and takes line, after landing the fish recast the empty feeder out and carefully wind back until you feel or see the stop knot. You can clip up, refill your feeder and cast to the same spot.

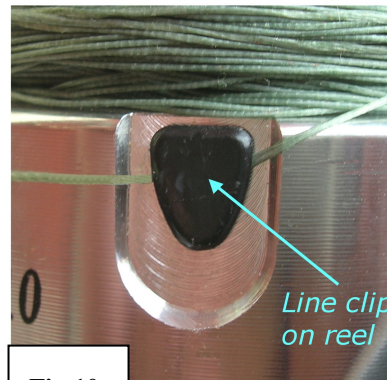


Fig.10

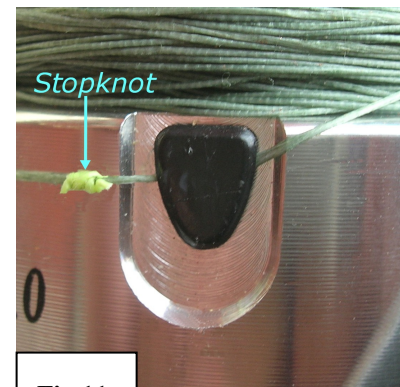


Fig.11

Casting with a line clip

One of the hazards when casting using a line clip is that if the feeder is still flying through the air when the line is stopped at the clip the feeder will jerk to a stop and bounce back towards the bank. This can lead to loss of bait from the feeder and the feeder landing well short of the intended baiting area.

Lob the feeder out as smoothly as possible. Immediately after casting hold the rod almost vertical. Watch the feeder. When the feeder starts to fall towards the surface of the lake lower the rod so that it's pointing down towards the lake. This action cushions the feeder when the line clip takes effect. Place the rod in the rest, unclip the line and tighten up to give a slight curve in the tip.

The most popular position for the feeder in the rest is such that an angle of about 90 degrees is formed between the rod and the line to give the maximum movement of the tip when a bite develops (see Fig.12 (A)). When using a line clip using this position will result in the feeder being pulled out of position by several feet as the rod is moved from the casting position into the rest, resulting in the feed in the feeder being scattered over a large area as the feeder is pulled through the water.

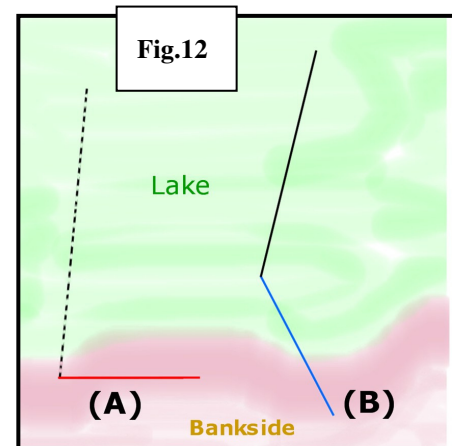


Fig.12

(A)

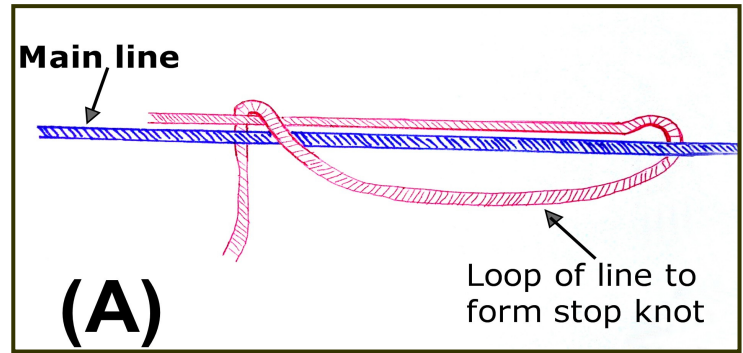
(B)

Bankside

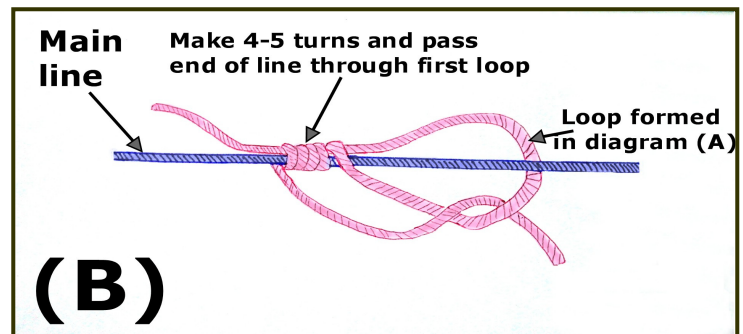
The best position for the rod in the rest is that shown in Fig.12 (B). There is minimal movement of the rod between casting and placing in the rest. There is still a sufficient angle between the rod and the line to show very positive pulls or drop back bites.

Tying the sliding stop knot when using a line clip

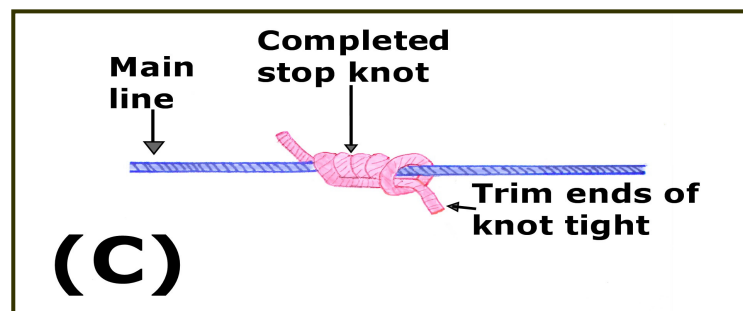
Take a piece of line 6-9 inches long, form into a U shape and lay next to the main line. Pull one end over to form a loop (diagram (A)).



Continue winding the line over the main line for 4-5 turns and pass through the loop formed by the line (diagram (B)).



Carefully pull the two ends of the knot until the loop has almost closed. Lubricate the line with plenty of spit and pull very tight. Trim the ends of the line close to the knot (diagram (C)).



If this knot is tied close to the reel after clipping up the line by holding the reel line tight the knot can be slid close up to the line clip.

If you want to make changes to the distance you are casting (you may want to cast slightly beyond the edge of your baited area to see if any bigger fish are lurking there) all you need do is move the stop knot the required distance and the clip up to the knot.

General

- Always check that the line is not wrapped around the tip before casting, this is a common occurrence when first using a tip rod and the most common reason for breaking the tip.
- Always use the lightest tip practical with the weather conditions. It's a common mistake to think that the bigger the weight being cast the heavier the tip you need. If you have a quiver tip rod with a set of different tips, the tips are there to cope with different weather conditions. With a light tip in windy conditions you will get a lot of movement on the tip, making bite detection difficult and necessary to change to a heavier tip.
- Make sure the reel spool is filled almost to the lip with line to ensure reasonable casting. A half filled spool will seriously cut down the distance you are able to cast.
- When the water warms up and you change to larger baits such as pellet or paste use a minimum 6lb mainline and a minimum 5lb hook length. The tench and bream run big in the Warren, in the square and main lake there is a more than reasonable chance of laying into a big carp. Sid Hammond landed Dodgy Tail at 29lb while quivertipping for tench last summer on a 6lb hook length!
- I use 8-14 eyed hooks when fishing with larger baits in the summer. Kamasan B980, B981 and B982 are useful hooks to use.
- Try using fluorocarbon hook lengths of a suitable breaking strain with a small shot a few inches from the hook. Fluorocarbon is stiffer than ordinary monofilament and there is less chance of your hook length collapsing in a heap near the feeder after casting out, leading to more positive pulls from the fish.