

# Chods away!

**It's nearly over; winter, that is! The evenings are already starting to push on with darkness here in Cornwall falling around 6pm. Surely we have seen the worst of it now? (he asks, looking at the sleet on the window...).**

**S**oon, Mother Nature will put that lovely smell of spring in the air and confidence will flow in us all again! As winter/spring rigs go, one of the best to have a dabble with is the chod rig; certainly when using high flavour and bright coloured singles. Just as the lake and its inhabitants are waking up, those high-viz singles have bite written all over them.

*Four rods, four different hookbaits – which one will it be today?*



**New Choddy hooks coming this spring from Gardner – matt coloured and razor sharp**



The chod rig has been much publicised and talked about over the last few years. It all stemmed from the pop-up-off-the-lead rig years back, and has since been refined and repeatedly renamed by the angling fraternity. In the late eighties I was fishing College Reservoir where most of us were using the same bait. I popped down to do some photos for a mate one morning in a swim named the Swamp (and believe me

at certain times of the year it was!). My mate explained that he had put his baits out the previous evening along with a quantity of free offerings, and he had caught three fish during the night. In the morning, however, he noticed all his free offerings were floating. On checking his baited rig in the edge, what he'd believed to be a bottom bait was indeed popped right up off the lead. So, he had caught those three carp on single pop-up-off-the-lead hookbaits! On inspection of the bait it seemed to us that the company which had supplied the base mix had accidentally overloaded it with shrimp meal, causing the lot to float. I was also on the same base mix and mine was also buoyant. We sent the rest of the base mix back to the company concerned.

Although we'd found out by accident, a new and highly valuable lesson was learned, and we put it to good effect. The only problem we had back then was making our own pop-ups, which was a proper nightmare! No pop-up mixes existed then – it was all frying pan and microwave!

This short story simply illustrates that chod/zig set-ups have been around and working for a long time (whether by design or not), but both set-ups are extremely under used these days. The normal lead clip/

inline lead and eight-inch hooklink with a bottom bait must be seen on most venues 24/7 – chods and zigs are definitely in the minority, but why? I can understand that zig rigs are definitely more of a right time and place on a particular day tactic, but the chod rig can be used all the time and over any type of bottom. The chod never tangles and, because of the mechanics, the pick-up to hooking ratio is massively improved. Long-range fishing is made so much easier, and of course fishing over weed, even deep weed, is done with confidence. So, the question still stands!

### Practise

I have used the chod rig almost exclusively over the last few years, and the photo sequences show the kit I use and how I put it together. Over the last month or so I've shown several mates how I tie up the hooklink. They had a go themselves but got into all sorts of bother with the swivel end knot and attempting to get the curve right! It's not the easiest rig to tie but a bit of practice makes perfect! Follow my step-by-step sequence of how to put the rig together and how to tie the hooklink.

Just before you tie on a bait and whack it out, rub the hooklink several times to warm it then use your thumb to really work the curve into the hooklink. This bit takes a



Four chod rigs ready to go with four different hookbaits

little patience, but the curve will come in the end.

I love going fishing with a load of different home-made hookbaits. I think that on some days the carp will definitely prefer one over another, so it pays to have options. Above all, though, the hookbait you choose must be buoyant enough to hold up the rig and not sink after taking on water several hours down the line. I use home-made pop-ups, as it's more fun to make them and more satisfying when you catch one on a bait you have rolled yourself. I always go for Mainline Polaris Mix in conjunction with cork dust. I've had baits which have been out over 24 hours and on winding in they were still popped up with the rig working efficiently. Mainline does all the kit required for perfect pop-ups. My favourites are pineapple in yellow or blackcurrant in

### Hooklink set-up



1 Tie an overhand loop in a length of 15lb Gardner Tripwire



2 Cut off around six inches and thread the end through the front of the hook



3 Fold the hooklink back on itself forming a small loop then wrap around several times toward the eye



4 Pass the tag end back down through the small loop



5 Carefully tease the knot into place, keeping it moist



6 Place a Rig Ring on the tag end then pass it back through the eye and blob the end to create your D rig



## Leadcore set-up



**1**  
*Splice a three-foot length of Plummet 45lb leadcore with a large loop at one end to attach the lead*



**2**  
*Slide a Buffer Bead on to the leader and over the lead*



**3**  
*Side mount a Safety Bead on the leadcore using a baiting needle...*



**4**  
*...then slide on a Kwik Loc Swivel...*



**5**  
*... followed by another side-mounted Safety Bead*



**6**  
*Attach the hooklink to the Kwik Loc Swivel and use a trimmed down Anti-Tangle Sleeve to secure it – you now have a quick-change chod rig*

white, either fished over Cell boilies or as singles. More recently I've had a look at Kent Particles Ultra-Buoyant Pop-Up Mix, which also performs well.

### Confidence

As I touched on earlier, the chod rig has lots of advantages which give me so much confidence. The rig will work perfectly over a silty, weedy or gravel bottom, the depth can be set by adjusting the second bead when fishing over deeper weed so the hooklink slides near to the top of the leadcore leader – as the lead plummets down through the weed to the bottom the hookbait nestles nicely on top.

One thing to mention when fishing over weed is to keep the main line slack at all times. This will avoid pulling the rig down and into the weed when straightening up the line... easier said than done in a side wind! For absolutely total confidence in weed the hook can be masked with a PVA nugget. Nothing could go wrong, could it? Basically, all the variables with rigs are taken away with the chod rig: no tangles, it sits right on all bottoms, and with the spin and curve factor hooking potential is maximised.

It's perfect either fished on its own or over a scattering of boilies. I would not use it over small, tight beds of particles where the idea is to get the fish feeding hard on the bottom and not moving off the spot. Saying that, though, I've done well with just a small handful of hemp right over the hookbait when placing rigs in the margin.

Lots of anglers I talk to don't use a chod rig because they can't see how the mechanics of the rig work with such a short hooklink popped-up directly off the leader – even though the catch reports in *Carp-Talk* are clear for everyone to see! I think that when the latest version of the chod rig came about a few years ago it was looked upon as a rig to be used only when fishing weedy conditions, a sort of back-up when all else fails and the only rig that can be fished in the weed with confidence unless you try 20-inch hooklinks. If anglers were



**Quality kit for tying up chod rigs**

fishing cleaner ground the chod rig would come off to be replaced by a normal lead clip or inline set-up, through fear that the chod would be too blatant on the cleaner stuff. The fact is it just works – full

stop. If you have not yet used a chod rig, give it a go from now to mid-spring. You may be surprised – to the point that you may well struggle to use an 'ordinary' rig again!

## Chod alternatives



**1**  
*If you prefer, an extra-small Speed Link can be used to attach the lead rather than the large loop*



**2**  
*The soon-to-be-released Gardner Long Buffer Beads*



**3**  
*Rather than side mounting the Safety Bead, you can use a folded piece of 0.5mm silicone tube to act as a safety stopper*



**4**  
*If you prefer a more conventional set-up, size 12 Gardner Flexi Ring Swivels and a three-turn blood knot do the job nicely*

## Make the most of the chod rig

1. Use a small hook with a very buoyant bait.
2. Tie some rigs up at home – practice makes perfect.
3. Try and keep the hooklink 1½-2 inches long.
4. Make sure you know the venue rules with regard to leadcore and leaders – lots have banned them.

