

**Tactical Angler – Shaun Harrison**

# GET KNOTTED

The simple knot is the all-important link between you and your quarry, but how sure are you about yours?

**Shaun Harrison** airs his views.

**D**uring the course of an average week at the tackle shop where I work, I find myself demonstrating many knots for all types of anglers. The three most common requests from carp anglers, however, are for a shockleader knot, a knot for attaching stiff nylon to braid (as in a combi-link set-up) and the knot that I use for attaching dental floss to boilies. I tie so many of these that I thought it about time I put pen to paper.

## **Shaun Harrison- Adapted Ancient Shockleader Knot**

I will start off with my version of the shockleader knot that, as far as I can gather, has no name. I have never seen it described in print before so hopefully this will be a first for you as well.

It is based upon a knot I first used in the late 1970s while fishing for eels. I needed shockleaders and light(ish) line to reach the fish but had problems with blistering-fast takes. These caused the joining knot to jam into the eye of the split ring (used as a run ring before run rings were available), before a strike could be

made. This often resulted in dropped bait.

I actually managed to overcome this problem by using a knot I found described in an old sea fishing book. In recent years I have also seen the same knot referred to by Jim Gibbinson as the Mahin knot (it being named after the successful European carp anglers, the Mahin brothers).

The big advantage of this knot was that both loose ends of line face back towards the angler, thus forming a profiled arrowhead shape.

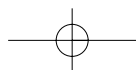
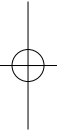
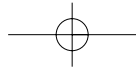
I used this knot for a number of years with no problems, until I eventually had to start using heavier leaders to cope with the casting power of modern rod-building materials combined with heavier test-curve rods than had ever been the norm.



**Used widely in the trout market, this gear makes for an excellent leader material.**



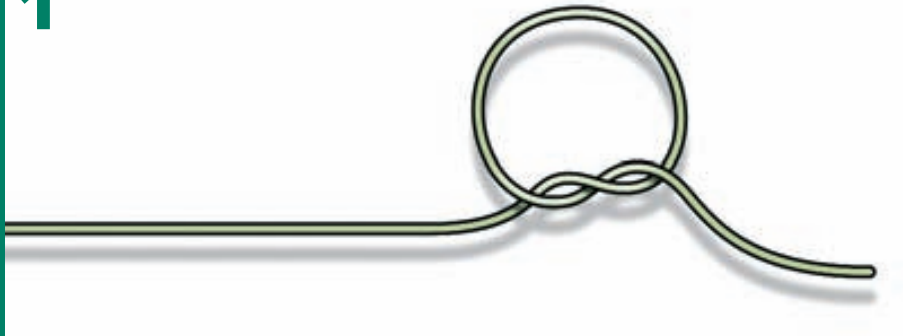






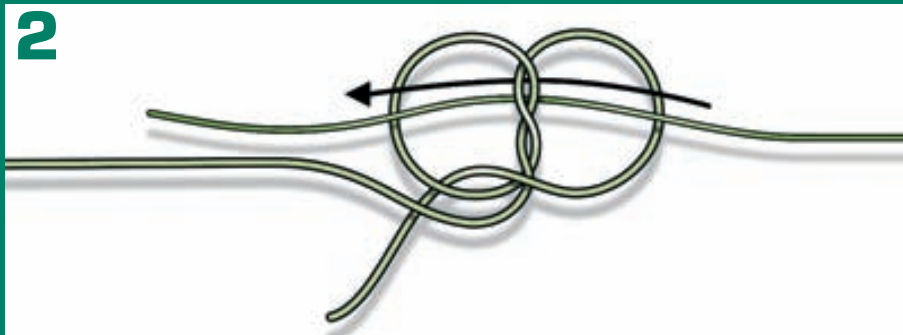
## Ancient Shockleader Knot

1



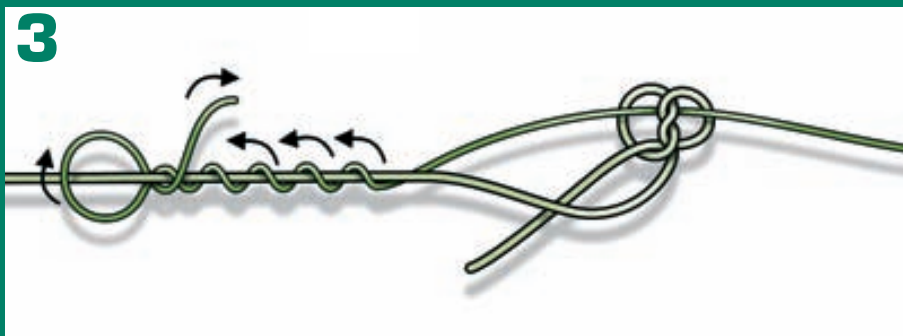
**Step 1** – Take the shockleader line and tie a simple overhand knot without pulling it up tight. The overhand knot is often referred to as a 'granny knot'. Now pass the end of the line through the loop again to form a double-overhand or double-granny knot.

2



**Step 2** – Pull this up slowly and you will find it starts to form a figure of eight. Be careful not to overtighten, as you are going to be passing your main line through these two loops. Take hold of your main line and pass the end from the short tag end of the shockleader through both loops so that the tag end of your main line is now facing up the shockleader.

3



**Step 3** – Hold the main line and shockleader slightly apart, between forefinger and thumb, and start to wind the main line tag end around the shockleader six times. Trap the tag end in place between finger and thumb of your other hand, then start to wind the main line tag end back down towards the figure-of-eight six more times.

4



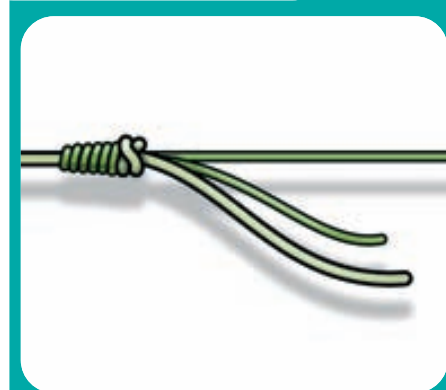
**Step 4** – Pass the tag end through the gap above the figure of eight (in the same way that you would if tying a simple blood knot). This is the gap you first made by keeping the main line and shockleader slightly apart with your forefinger and thumb. Lubricate well with saliva (or lake water) and gently pull it up tight. Don't yank it up quickly. Take your time, making sure it forms neatly.

I soon found that the knot that had been so reliable was now a bit of a liability. It was reducing the breaking strain of the main line by too big a margin, particularly with leaders that were four times stronger than the main line. I had a problem to overcome.

I varied the amount of turns to the knot, which made quite a difference with the various makes of line. Some lines need more turns than others to get the maximum out of them. In actual fact this applies to most knots. If the book says six turns try tying it with five as well as seven. As always in carp fishing, don't take everything you are told as gospel.

The answer to my problem came in a very simple adaptation on the original theme. Yet it took a lot of messing around with various versions to find it. So, being the nice person that I try to be, I will save you valuable time with a simple step-by-step guide.

### tactical tip



I always leave the tag ends on my shockleaders around the length of my spool. I find that by leaving them relatively long, not only do they cast out through the rings smoother but they come back down the rod smoother and don't tend to clog up with so much silkweed.

### Hang-A-Boilie Knot/Slipknot

This is another knot I used for years when I used cork-balled or microwaved pop-ups. I must admit that, since pop-up mixes have improved so much, I tend to simply pierce my baits with a boilie needle and fasten them in the conventional manner these days. But for those who think it essential to keep your hook baits as buoyant as when you first cast them out, or if you use D-type rigs with your bait close to the ring, then this knot is for you."

A simple, quick-to-tie knot that won't undo. If you make your own pop-ups, run them along the back of a knife before cooking. This will leave a little gully around the bait which makes gripping a bait in place so much easier.

Voted Britain's No.1 magazine by [www.fishingwarehouse.co.uk](http://www.fishingwarehouse.co.uk)

## Hang-A-Boilie Knot

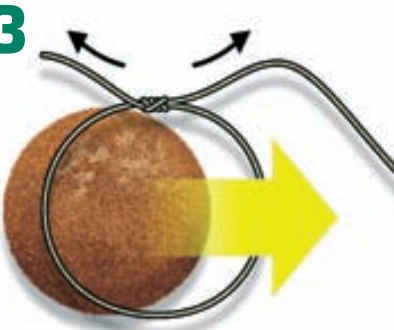
1



2



3



**Step 1** - Make a 'V' sign with the first two fingers of your left hand (if you are right handed) and face them across, but around 12 inches away from, your body. Drape a length of dental floss over both fingers to form an untied loop. Carry on around your fingers with the tag end and wrap it around your top finger, forming one big loop and one smaller loop.

**Step 2** - With your right forefinger and thumb, remove these two loops from your fingers and use your left hand to pass the tag end through the small loop three times, as shown in the diagram above. Gently pull both tag ends and you will find you have formed a slipknot.

**Step 3** - Pass the loop around your pop-up or bottom bait and pull it up so that it grips the bait. Next, tie three simple overhand/granny knots to tie the bait to whatever you are fastening it to.



Long-range tactics with the shockleader knot accounted for this French lump on a recent trip.

## Combi-Link Knot, Or SH-Adapted Albright Knot

This knot has been part of my set-up for several years now. In fact, it is rare that I cast out without it. I use combi-links most of the time with bottom-bait presentations, which is the way I prefer to fish.

I used to mess around attaching my lines to small

Drennan rings, but this caused problems because I like to keep the soft part of my combi-links to a minimum. I found I couldn't tie them quite as short as I wanted when incorporating a ring.

I can't remember if it was Neil Smith or Kryston's Pete Hodgkinson that first showed me how to tie the Albright knot. This was the

**I prefer mono for the stiffer section and will happily use Maxima, usually in a 25lb breaking strain.**



**Have faith in your knots... I do, as this 30lb common bears testament to.**





## CARP Tactical Angler – Shaun Harrison

My combi-link knot was the winning formula for this awesome Mangrove mirror, caught in July.

**I USE 20LB BRAID BECAUSE THE THOUGHT OF ANYTHING LESS CUTTING INTO THE CARP'S LIPS, WHEN HOOKED DEEP, SCARES ME TO DEATH.**



knot they were using for their combi-links at the time. Now there is a twist in the tale here. For the past six years I have presumed that I have been using the Albright knot but I have been wrong. Somewhere along the way I have misinterpreted what I was shown and have actually been tying a different knot. It is a knot, like my variation of the shockleader knot, that I can find no reference to in any book. So, inadvertently I seem to have discovered my own.



Dave Chilton at Kryston suggests I should call it the 'forget-me-knot' as I forgot how to tie the Albright. I thought perhaps the 'even-brighter-knot!' Then again it is merely my adaptation of the Albright, a knot that has been used by big-game anglers for years.

Whoever it was that showed me the Albright, I will remain eternally grateful, for I have now caught so many carp with it that I continue to use it to this day – even if

**Nash Bait Floss is my choice when tying down pop-ups to a rig ring.**

I don't tie it correctly.

As with most good things in life, it is so simple, it is untrue.

You do lose a percentage of breaking strain, so you will have to do your own test to find out what breaking strain you actually have in the finished link.

For my combi-links I favour 20lb to 30lb softish nylon, copolymer or fluorocarbon and soft braid of around 20lb. I find that mine break at around the 17lb mark, so the breaking strain loss isn't a great deal to worry about.

It may surprise a few people to hear that I prefer a softish mono for the stiff part. I personally think that soft 20lb to 30lb monos are plenty stiff enough to cut out tangles, yet present themselves in a slightly more natural way on the lake bed.

I use 20lb braid because the thought of

## Combi-Link Knot

1



**Step 1** – Form a loop in the mono and hold between finger and thumb, exposing what looks like the eye of a needle. Pass the tag end of the braid (with hook and hair already tied in place) through the eye and wrap the tag end around the loop of mono five times.

2



**Step 2** – Trap the top turn between your finger and thumb and then wrap the tag end back down the previous turns another five times.

3



**Step 3** – Pass the tag end through the eye, making sure it passes out in the same direction as it entered. This is important as the knot breaks easily if you go out in the opposite direction.

4



**Step 4** – Lubricate with saliva and pull up slowly. Result? One very neat, very secure combi-link knot.

anything less cutting into the carp's lips, when hooked deep, scares me to death.

Braids have become a lot finer than we need. The only advantage I see with light braids is for natural bait movement on the

hair. I use knotless knots but trap a much finer hair in place rather than use the tag end of the hook-link braid. This makes a significant difference to hook holds.

Anyway, I'll let you get on with tying knots.

I hope my views have been, and will continue to be, of some use to you in your carp angling. Happy tying.

Best fishes,  
Shaun Harrison.



*Totally private complex in an outstanding and peaceful setting*

# PARADISE LAKES

The Ultimate in Carp and Cat Fishing in France  
EST. 8 YRS



**WE DON'T JUST SELL FISHING HOLIDAYS – WE OFFER DREAMS!!**

Every visitor to date has caught at least one 20lb ● 65% to date have caught a 30lb ● 5% to date have caught a 50lb!!  
● Based on stock levels there is a 2% chance of catching a 60lb to 70lb fish!

A combination of huge stocks of fish and our professionalism gives us the confidence to boast these figures. Carp caught in 2003 averaged a weight of 27lb (approx. carp stock: 50 doubles, 125 twenties, 75 thirties, 45 forties, 20 fifties, 5 sixties, 2 seventies! What more could you ask for!).

*Purpose-built swims, with easy access. Parking for up to 10 vehicles, 10 mins from motorway, easy to find, 6 hours from Calais, 15 mins from airport.*

*Licensed bar, fresh home cooking, snacks, Sky TV, shower & toilets, mains electricity & water*

*Up-to-date info on our website, colour brochure  
E-mail us at: [info@paradiselakes.co.uk](mailto:info@paradiselakes.co.uk) or  
phone us on: 0207 407 4550*

*Extensive range of end tackle*

## www.paradiselakes.co.uk

*Unlimited supply of our own top-quality bait (you won't buy better)*