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THE No1 BIG-CARP MAGAZINE

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# GOING AGAINST THE GRAIN

Targeting Temple Lake for a rare midweek session, STEVE RENYARD finds that customising his plastic corn hook baits leads to success.





**Angler:** Steve Renyard

**UK PB:** 44lb 8oz

**Sponsors:** Richworth, Shimano and GLT

Steve's been on a roll of late, banking thirty after thirty for the ACF cameras.

Steve has been dabbling on Temple Lake on the Old Bury Hill complex recently. With a busy month ahead, he suggests that I meet him down there for a snatched session of less than 36 hours. It's short notice, but Steve assures me that there is a good chance of bagging a big carp or two.

After spending the best part of five hours battling the traffic from Daventry to Dorking, it is with immense relief that I finally arrive at Old Bury Hill. I am soon pulling up next to Steve's bivvy on the secluded Temple Lake. There are only three other anglers on the lake, which is a change from the usual weekend crowds that we are used to. Steve tells me that they are all off in the morning and there are only two anglers booked on for the following night. He is quick to get the kettle on and tells me about last week's session.

"I came down for an overnighter on a Tuesday and managed to bag five carp to 31lb 14oz,

which was a bit of a result. That was on the trusty XLR8 boilies, after being told that boilies didn't work here, over spod mix, which also apparently doesn't work. Before I put bait out I cast a couple of singles and had a bite within 10 minutes. I always try to be different so I figured that, because it was only an overnighter, I had nothing to lose. I put 20 spods over each rod. I ended up with six bites, landing five and losing a good one right at the net."

He has decided to fish in the same swim, hoping for a repeat performance. The lake has a fantastic stock of big carp, and Steve obviously likes the place.

"Although it is only small, it is a glorious lake. It's not your standard big-fish water, being a purpose-dug lake, but it is certainly prettier than most. It is lined with reeds, with islands separating you from the far bank, and set in the most stunning surroundings, nestled deep in a valley. There are probably, at the right time



The sight of disturbed silt just off one of Temple Lake's islands prompts Steve Renyard to recast in search of another 30-pounder.

of year, 40 30-pounders in here so it is a real big-fish water. They are tricky little devils too. Some anglers seem to really struggle on here, you have to get it right."

Steve has one rod close to an aerator that is spewing bubbles in a gap between two islands directly opposite. He has baited this heavily with Bait-Tech Chilli Hemp and Hinders Salamiz Hemp and A-Mix. The second rod is also on a spodded area further round the left-hand reed-lined island.

"This is a clay pit and the bottom is up and down like you wouldn't believe. A cast next to the reeds looks awesome, but it is only eight inches of water. For me, due to the amount of bird life, it is not the best option, so I have pulled back a bit and found the drop-off. I am fishing the point where the gravel and silt meet because this is an obvious patrol route. I don't think I have seen anyone use a marker rod on here yet. I know it is only a tiny lake but, if anything, that makes finding good spots even more important."

The third rod is cast to open water where he has located a smooth silty area. With all the bases covered, Steve is certainly confident of action, so I set myself up nearby. Having both had a tiring day it isn't long before we are yawning and ready for some sleep.

The alarm clock is set ridiculously early, and I hit the snooze button a couple of times, half expecting the call for camera duty. Alas, there is no rude awakening. Steve is a little puzzled as to why it has been so quiet. Even the liners have been few and far between. Normally, Steve would prefer to sit behind the rods but because



**Above:** A small bag of pellets is attached to ensure good presentation.

the lake is relatively quiet, angler-wise, he reels in and goes looking for a stalking opportunity. He is soon back for his rods.

"From being up here a couple of times previously I know that the top end of the lake usually holds a few resident carp. I have seen a couple of bubblers so I am going to give it a go."

Steve takes off the boilies and opts to fish plastic corn. To be a bit different, he cuts a grain of red corn and one of yellow in half and mounts them together on the hair. This is then dipped in Betalin for added attraction. He hooks on a tiny mesh bag of pellets and gently swings it out, less than five yards from the bank. After a frustrating hour where the bubbling carp

**Below:** Time for a change of hook bait after no action on the boilies.



feed all around his bait, our empty stomachs demand a temporary break and we head to the excellent on-site café for a fried breakfast. Steve then has a work commitment to attend to and leaves me to my own devices for a couple of hours.

I mooch about with a rod, trying some likely looking areas. As I sit in a swim behind the island that Steve is fishing to, several carp show in the area. There are obviously a few fish held up here, so when Steve returns I insist that he gives it a go. Within an hour he is away on his right-hand rod, which he has cast on top of the prominent bar that protrudes from the end of the island opposite. He is on the rod quickly as the bolting carp creates a bow wave in the shallow water. Sickeningly, the carp sheds the hook almost immediately. We both feel the disappointment keenly. Steve attempts to rationalise.

“When I get a take from an area like that I prefer to let it run a little. This just seems to set the hook better once the fish is fighting against the drag. The bobbin wasn’t even half up when I hit it and I think the slack between us could have been what lost me the fish.”

At this point, a large and rather noisy gaggle of the resident Canada geese arrive, landing right in front of us. This puts paid to the stalking efforts and Steve makes a conscious decision to return to his original baited areas. Time is ticking and he is keen to keep up his impeccable Weekender record. Given his previous success using boilies, I am a little surprised when he opts to fish his ‘two tone’ fake corn on all three rods.

“These Temple carp can be moody,” he explains. “When they are hungry you can have a good hit of fish, catching two or three thirties in a session. When they are not having it you need to pull out all the stops.



**Above:** Although the carp are not hungry, the geese are troughing!

I know from the lack of action and liners from the baited areas that the carp are not feeding heavily. I want to fish a hook bait that the carp might just pick up, so I am going completely against what I would do normally. By using the two different colours I am hoping that it is something that they might not have seen before. I have to be off early in the morning so I only have 12 hours left to catch a carp.

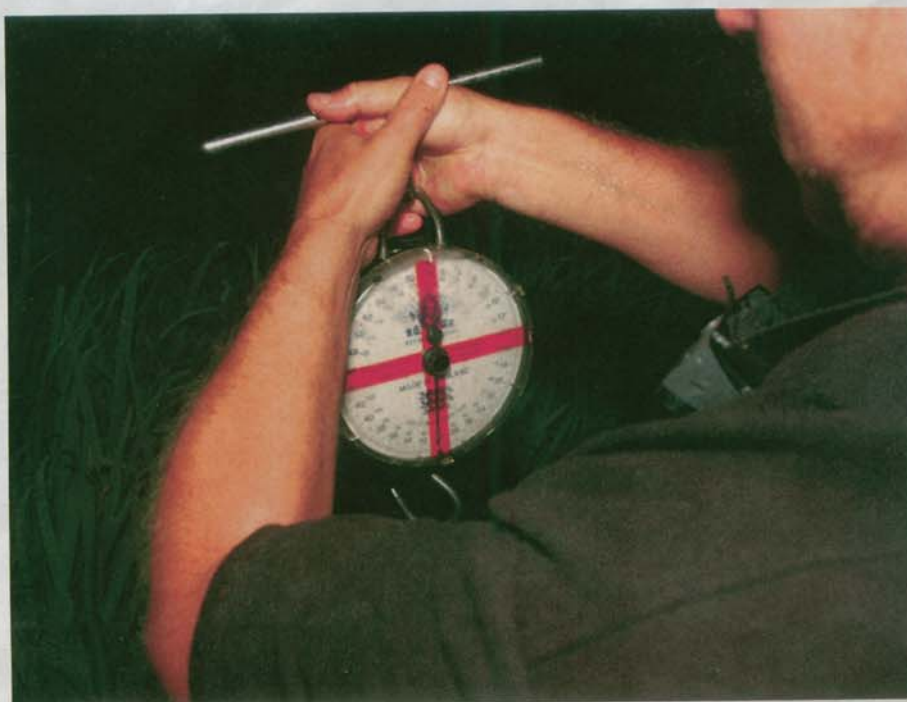
“Because this is predominantly a daylight water I am a bit worried that time is ticking away. To catch five thirties from five different waters on successive features would be amazing, I don’t think it has ever been done before.”

Steve is obviously feeling the pressure of setting himself such an ambitious target and seriously considers moving round a swim. From there, he can still fish his baited areas but he can also put a rod on the area that produced the bite earlier and get a better angle to an area where the odd fish has rolled during the course of the day. It is a classic blackjack scenario, Steve must decide whether to stick or twist. There is a bout of frantic activity, with some tackle being moved next door, before he decides to stick to his guns.

“I’ve put out the spod, it worked for me before, why wouldn’t it work again? The carp have had all day to feed out there without my lines in the water, so I am going to gamble that they will be feeding on it tonight.”

Steve leaves nothing to chance and marks up his spots and walks them out, checking them against the pegs he has stuck in the ground behind his swim to ensure that he is bang on the money. One rod goes back on the aerator spot, with another on the

**Below:** The needle flies past the magical 30lb mark yet again.



drop-off area that he fished the previous night. Following thorough marker work, the third rod is cast down to the bar on the corner of the island. As the remaining daylight slips away the carp begin to show, with several sticking their heads out over Steve's middle rod. If carp had tongues I am sure that they would be sticking them out at us.

It is barely light when I am woken by a savage liner. I am just drifting off again when I hear a shout from Steve. Jumping up, I grab the camera and run next door. He is bent into a good fish, but unfortunately it is still too dark to get any playing shots. Thankfully, the hook stays in and Steve soon has it over the net cord. Just as he is lifting the net the water erupts as the carp launches itself back out in a last-gasp bid for freedom. A tense 30 seconds later and the carp kisses the spreader block for the second time. On this occasion there is no escape and as we both peer in there is a tantalising glimpse of

scales. Before we deal with the carp in the net Steve relives the night's action.

"At 2.30am I had an absolute screamer on the right-hand rod, struck into it and briefly felt a good fish on the end before the hook pulled. I thought that after two losses this really wasn't my lucky day, this is where my roll comes to an end. I pulled myself together and walked the rod back out to the pegs to make sure it was inch-perfect, attached a little bag of pellets and got it back out. It was the same rod that melted off again."

We decide to weigh the fish but wait for the sun to come up before doing the photos. It is a long mirror, nearly a linear, with glorious, big, apple-slice scales. I estimate it to be an upper twenty but the needle on the scales swings round further than both of us expect; all the way to 30lb 14oz, in fact. What an amazing result. Steve has rescued the session, and his fantastic run of big carp, right at the last gasp.

## STEVE'S VERDICT

Well, the verdict is that I am a very happy carp angler. Although it is not my usual cup of tea, Temple Lake has really grown on me. This is carp angling as it should be, with big carp in beautiful, peaceful surroundings. It has been an absolute pleasure to fish.



Steve makes it five thirty-plusses in a row with this fantastic 30lb 14oz Temple Lake mirror.