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LOTS OF CARP CAN BE YOURS - using just a bit of bait!

Cover star Colin Davidson explains... and hauls

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Colin Davidson's CARP WORLD

Learn loads about the big carp scene by following our carp star, Colin Davidson, in his thought-provoking column. **THIS WEEK:** Davo puts in some time on a popular day commercial fishery.

20:20 Vision at Temple

Another one bites the dust - I love the battle of wits on Temple Lake at Old Bury Hill.

A VARIETY of challenges keeps carp angling interesting.

You can sit it out for odd fish in huge, unmanaged and inhospitable gravel pits or you can go commercial where the ticket price ensures improved facilities, parking, toilets and plenty of fish in front of you. Or like me, you can enjoy the different problems presented by both and do a bit of everything.

After bagging a couple of fish during a spur of the moment trip a couple of weeks earlier I treated myself to three nights on Temple Lake at Old Bury Hill near Dorking, Surrey – my longest UK session for years.

Temple was designed from scratch as a commercial venue. It's small at four acres with depths to 11 feet, with commonsense touches like vehicle access, central islands to keep anglers from disputing swim boundaries, large gravelled swims to take two man shelters, aerators to safeguard the stocks against extreme weather and lots of interesting fishy features deliberately sculpted out on the lake bed in front of each swim.

With about 100 carp and all but a handful over 20 lb the rewards can also be spectacular, and since it was dug in the winter of 2003-04 the fishery has matured tremendously.

Temple is expected to produce its first '40' this winter or next spring, and 30-pounders are common. All are true Brit carp, with Leneys stocked from Claremont landscape gardens – the same fish that went to Savay and made 40-pounders – plus distinctive Thames Water fish from the mighty King George Reservoir and Leney fish grown on from the Old Lake at Bury Hill.

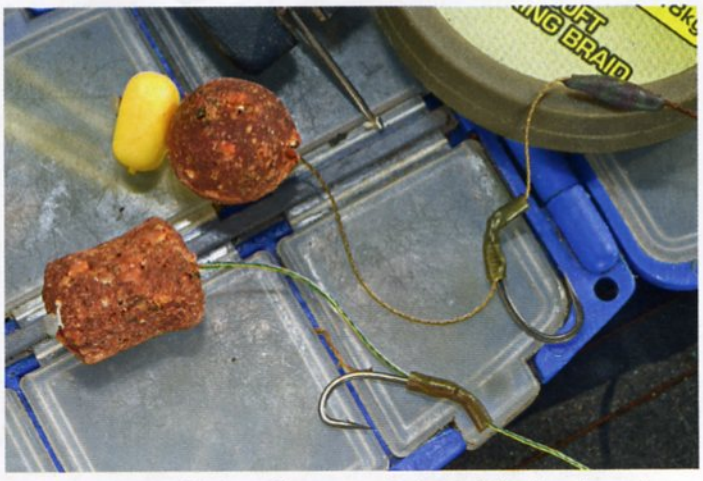
With great facilities, lots of big carp, plenty of peace and quiet and a lovely backdrop over the Surrey hills it's a nice setting to spend time behind rods. I love the battle of wits on Temple, and enjoy knowing that carp are always having a look at you, picking hook baits up and taking you on with a cool confidence.

Because you know the carp are always behaving like naughty kids it's a huge incentive to be on the ball and try and trip them up.

1 Sunday morning and the lake is busy with seven anglers on including me, but the weather was spot on with drizzle, dark cloud and low pressure when I arrived Saturday evening with two fish caught while I was setting up. When small lakes like Temple are busy you have to fit in where you can, but carp were showing over my swim from the start. The first fish was an early hours 23-pounder, followed by a deep round two tone mirror of 27 lb 12 oz then a belting 26 lb 14 oz fish mid-morning. The carp are really up for it, it's been a busy start!

2 Cautious baiting has paid off. Bait boats are widely used, which is daft given that Temple is so small. A tightly dropped handful or two of bait is old news, so I've opted for light, loose baiting. Ten or a dozen 8 mm marine pellets and the same number of boilies are spread widely around the hook baits in an area the size of a couple of bivvies. It's enough to encourage a carp to prod about but sufficiently subtle not to alarm them.

3 One rod fished over a quantity of hemp, corn and boilies has produced nothing but with conditions so good I've gambled on piling in 3-4 kg of boilies in a different area for one rod. Typically it's the scattered feed tactics that continue to score with Sunday afternoon mirrors of 23 and 24 lb making five 20s in 24 hours. The second night is quiet until dawn when the left rod rips off with a huge framed, heavily scaled 26 lb mirror – again on one of the lightly baited rods.



4 Consider rigs carefully for small water carp. For bottom baits all my rigs use long hairs - at least an inch between hook and bait. The more you separate the hook and bait the more you catch. Short Fox Reflex braid links with Arma Point LS hooks or Coretex combi-links with Arma Point SSCs are fished with 1.75 oz running leads without tubing, leaders or lead core. A small shrink tube extension is added to both patterns and hook holds are really solid.

5 I left the baited area nine hours through the afternoon until dusk before positioning a rig to allow carp to visit it, feed and build confidence, topping up again early evening. Keeping rigs out the water can help catch more than fishing non stop. But it takes until mid-morning Monday for a carp to slip up. Temple is open to lots of sunshine and wind, exactly the sort of venue that almost always fishes best by day. Almost all of my Temple carp have been caught in daylight.

6 The culprit is this randomly scaled 21 lb mirror which leaves remains of my red boilies on the mat. Numbers of fish have no doubt been pigging on it and he's been the one to get unlucky. I've baited the base of a shelf in seven feet of water where I saw some bubbling on Sunday morning, mixing 12 and 15 mm boilies and plenty of chops. Different sizes and weights of feed make it harder for the carp to move more between mouthfuls.

7 With the constant threat of carp theft and the huge investment made in pedigree English carp for Temple all the fish have been tagged with tiny microchips to give them a unique six digit code. It's the same technology used for tagging dogs, cats, horses and other valuable animals. Using the on-site hand held scanner any fish can be identified in seconds, most tags found around the dorsal fin. It helps owner David de Vere keep an eye on growth rates too, ensuring effective fishery management.

8 With the cool and wet spring and early summer, spawning has been drawn out on many venues. The two biggest fish from the Sunday were previously caught at over 30 lb, and most of the fish feel empty. Odd small knocks and scrapes from the exertions of spawning are treated with Orabase protective paste. It's sold over the counter at pharmacies for treating mouth ulcers in people. The fishery provides a tube in with the scanner in case anglers don't have their own.

9 All Temple carp are hand picked and of pedigree English background. Sourcing the right stock with unquestionable credentials was one of the biggest headaches. The venue record stands at 37 lb 12 oz, with commons also present to mid 30s. At peak weights there are an amazing 20-25 different 30s. Last year the average weight was 27 lb 2 oz. After finally getting action over the baited area I'm hoping for lots more. You shouldn't ever catch solitary carp over big beds of boilies.

10 Bait choice is Atlantic Heat from Bristol based Baitworks (Tel: 07723 060849). Spicy, hot red fishmeal baits I'm sure the Temple fish are really switched on by them and the quality of the bait is having a lot to do with the number of takes. I've also got balls of paste for wrapping around hook baits, it's a great dodge. I've included their number because I'm not sure how available the bait is, although I notice it's sold on the Aqua Products website. I'm ordering more!

11 With the incessant rain keeping me largely bivvy bound for the best part of two days it's a relief to be able to wind in, nip down to the Boathouse and enjoy a hot shower and some hot food in the café. There are clean and well maintained mens and ladies' toilets at Bury Hill which makes a big difference for session comfort. The on-site tackle shop has also recently been extended, stocking most major brands, and is particularly well kitted out with carp tackle.

12 Temple is narrow, and split down the middle by a series of islands with cut throughs. The island margins are hammered so part of my tactics was to ignore them. You see fish showing around the island margins but they are shallow, shelve quickly, bird life batters baited areas, line lay is poor and carp see hook baits tight up to the islands almost every time they swim around them. I kept rods as close as possible, most fish were caught at underarm range.

13 Lines like cheesewires aren't hard for carp to twig. Sinking Fox Illusion fluorocarbon main line hugs the bottom. Flying back leads are fashionable but I'm sure three slugs of putty at two foot intervals behind the lead pins the line down more effectively over any change of topography. Small back leads keep lines sitting down when fishing short range over deep margins. I've started moulding tungsten putty around large Drennan Grippa float stops to prevent losing it during a scrap.

DAVO'S WEEK AHEAD

"I'm waiting for a delivery of my favourite Dynamite Frenzied Hemp, including the new garlic and chilli variants, plus a selection of different marine pellets and floating trout pellets to keep me going through the summer..."

14 A gap in the rain brings another afternoon take. It looks a cracker all the way to the net and is another spotless 27-pounder. The big baited area chips in another mirror of 23 lb early evening and with pictures complete it's time to swap the reel handles over to let my good lady fish the last night and day. And guess what? She goes and bags Temple's big ghost at a cracking 30 lb 8 oz! Most fish have come over a tiny handful of feed but the biggest came over the baited area. Final tally is ten fish in three days, nine of them 20s topped by Nessie's 30-pounder.

TICKET INFORMATION

TEMPLE is subject to an annual membership fee of £50. A small number of memberships are still available. A 24-hour session then costs £30 for two rods, reducing for longer stays. More details on 01306 883621 or at www.buryhillfisheries.com