

A BRIGHT IDEA

Mark Ripley discovers there's life in the old lamp yet, or at least there is in the latest generation LED gun light he's been putting through its paces on the local foxes

I've always enjoyed lamping. Despite all the advancements in night vision technology, it's still nice to be able to use your day scope at night. Being able to clearly see your target and have the confidence you've gained from hundreds of shots with your day scope is always good.

Using a lamp also allows you to more easily judge distance at night compared with night vision or thermal scopes, unless they are fitted with rangefinding capabilities.

Despite being a night vision user for several years now, I've always stuck to using a lamp for rabbiting as I find that when using a .22 rimfire, with its more pronounced trajectory using

subsonic ammunition, it is easier using a lamp at unknown distances to estimate the range, rather than using night vision.

Long gone are the days of lugging car or motorcycle batteries around. These were replaced with increasingly smaller and lighter battery packs worn on a belt, but they still trailed wires that would either come unplugged as you leant forward to take a shot, or suddenly develop a bad connection leaving you jiggling connectors and swearing in the dark while the fox wandered off, puzzled by the strange commotion down the field.

The breakthrough in lamping equipment really came with the

super-bright LED pills housed in compact torches that could be easily mounted to a rifle and required no extra battery packs or trailing wires, with perhaps the exception of a stock-mounted remote switch.

After a few years, it appeared that, by and large, these units had reached a pinnacle in development that could really go no further.

I was recently sent a new torch for review made by Wicked Lights, and initially I wasn't overly excited – after all, it's just a torch, right? Well, yes it is, but there are several things about this torch that make it rather unique.

The first is that it has the option to switch between three colours – red, green and white light – at the touch of a switch, with another model available with red and IR for use with NV.



BELOW AND LEFT: Even out at 250 yards, the fox was clearly visible through the scope





ABOVE: The three colours can be accessed by a simple dial on the top of the torch

These units run on a single rechargeable Lithium-ion battery with a second battery supplied so you can always have a spare in reserve.

Also supplied is a rubber sleeve for the lens to reduce beam scatter and help direct the light onto the target in a tight beam. You can also quickly adjust it to a wider flood option by twisting the lens.

Brightness can be adjusted using the on/off switch with two tail switches supplied – one with a simple sturdy dimmer switch on the rear of the tube, and the other on a short curled lead so it can be attached to the fore-end of the rifle with an elasticated strap or Velcro pad. These are supplied in the torch's flat-pack case along with the battery charger.

Another thing that I really like about this kit is that it comes with a fully

adjustable quick-release scope-mounting system. This comprises a small clamp, similar to a scope ring mount, with a Picatinny-style top and a quick-release mount on the torch that locks securely onto the clamp by means of a neat locking lever.

Adjustments can be made quickly to the direction of the beam by means of two thumb wheels on the mount to adjust the height of the beam, which can be useful when shooting between longer and shorter ranges.

Once the scope has been centred over the barrel, there's no need to alter the left and right adjustment on the mount – it locks straight back into position each time the torch is mounted back on the scope.

I found the vertical adjustment was only really needed when shooting at more extreme distances, so it's pretty much a case of fitting it and centering the beam for, say, 150 yards, and you're good to go for general lamping.

The three colours are changed simply by turning a small dial on the top of the torch, which cleverly turns three LEDs housed on an axis within the torch, each being perfectly centred at the three points.

Now we come to the really important bit: the beam. This is the brightest

hand-held or rifle-mounted torch I have ever used. Even brighter than the popular Coyote light. I can honestly say, I was extremely impressed with the power and intensity of this lamp.

As soon as I got hold of it, the first thing I did was take it up on the hill to see what sort of potential it had for long-range spotting and shooting. I immediately illuminated some sheep on the other side of the valley, which I could clearly see at 460 yards (not just eye shine!), so obviously this lamp will cover you for any ranges you will encounter when lamping!

Keen to test the lamp out, I got Gary out for a bit of foxing and, since I wanted to record some footage of the lamp in use, I reluctantly left the rifle at home and left the shooting to Gary.

We headed down to a small farm we hadn't been to for a while, and after doing the initial set-up of the lamp on Gary's .243, headed out to the first field.

We cheated a little here as we were both using thermal spotters to search for foxes, which is very effective, and attracts less attention to our activities from nearby roads and houses.

We didn't have to look any further than into the next field to find our first fox. Out at about 250 yards, Gary could see him clear as day in the scope, but unfortunately my

PRICE
£249.99

CONTACT
www.scottcountry.co.uk

BELOW: The kit comes with an adjustable quick-release mounting system



**GIVEN
THE GREEN LIGHT**

Green lights are becoming more popular as they have little effect on your own eyes' night vision and show obstacles in greater contrast on certain backgrounds.



“WE NOTICED THAT, OF THE THREE COLOURS, RED SEEMED THE BRIGHTEST – AND THE BEST FOR HUNTING FOXES”

camera couldn't pick it up in the dark so, with the lamp off, we squeaked him in towards us. As soon as he came through the hedge into our field, Gary flicked the light on him, using the red beam on about half power, and he took little notice until a 105gr bullet thumped into him, putting our first fox in the bag.

A little more squeaking brought a second one in from our right, from the corner of the field, and this time we lit it up using the green light as it came bounding confidently in. Again, the fox didn't seem overly bothered about the lamp, and within 100 yards on half power Gary had no trouble putting a bullet on target.

We quickly bumped another fox on the edge of the next field as we went to pick up the first victim, and shot this one off the sticks using the green light. We had shot three in a short space of time – although the last one had dropped on the other side of an overgrown wet ditch, meaning a lengthy walk around!

We wandered around to it for the retrieve, expecting to find another fox on the way, but all was quiet until we started heading back to the farm, where, in the last field, we spotted a decent-sized dog fox heading down the bank away from us.

Flicking the lamp on, using the white beam this time, the fox stopped and stood looking back, offering Gary a perfect broadside shot, which he took without hesitation, dropping the old boy where he stood.

"Can you order me one of them?" asked Gary, as I prized his fingers off the torch to put back in my truck. We were both so impressed with these lamps that we each got one to add to our ever-expanding array of foxing equipment and general night-time gear.

Interestingly, we both noticed that, of the three colours, the red seemed slightly brighter, or better for foxing, than the other two colours. This suited us, and no doubt the vast majority of fox shooters out there who use a red or amber light will agree, as



ABOVE: The stock-mounted dimmer switch

red seems to be the best colour for foxing or rabbiting.

These American-designed torches have been made purely with predator control in mind, and built using high-quality components that are sure to withstand the use and abuse they are likely to get in the field.

For just under £250 for the complete kit, these lamps are competitively priced and are sure to be popular with anyone shooting at night. 

BELOW: Mark's shooting pal, Gary, uses the car bonnet as a solid base

"OUT AT ABOUT 250 YARDS, GARY COULD SEE THE FOX AS CLEAR AS DAY IN THE SCOPE"

