

"I thought he was going to nail it," I reply.

Another change of fly: this time to a Pulling Mill Black Lead Bug. We wait a few minutes and, sure enough, the fish has been on its rounds and returns, heading towards our stakeout. Malcolm releases the fly with a bow-and-arrow cast and it sails through the air and makes a distinct 'plop' a couple of feet in front of the target. This time there's a more positive reaction. The fly disappears after a flash of white from the trout's open mouth. Malcolm strikes and all hell breaks loose as line tears out of the tip ring. Following a lengthy tussle the fight is over and the net is slipped under the massive fish—all 11 lb of it—and it's job done as far as I'm concerned.

#### Bigger And Better

Malc wants something bigger.



Malcolm ponders fly choices. He's spotted a fish on a patrol route and needs to get it right first time!

however, so we proceed around the lake in search of another lunger. Conditions deteriorate throughout the day and rain is now setting in. The water clarity's getting worse, due to the flooding, but, unbelievably, Malcolm is even more determined to improve on his previous accomplishment.

he has miraculously blended in with and is hanging on to a tree trunk over the water while casting a WAFF just short of the ripple. Trout after trout charge the fly but Malc purposely pulls it away before they can engulf it: it's the bigger one he wants.

I move away to get a better shot of the situation and turn to see Malcolm playing something that is now moving towards the island at an alarming rate.

"It's the big one!" he yells. Twice it makes a charge for a submerged tree. I was sure that the 8lb Sub Surface would part company as it is bullied by Malc. Some 10 minutes later and a colossal 14lb 8oz rainbow trout lays on the bank.

"Can we go to Bushy now please?" I ask, as he looks up at me, again with that wry grin.

"Yep! My job here is done!"

Then it happens. Standing on one of the wooden seats he spots a small pod of fish about 20 feet from the bank, patrolling the ripple, which is making seeing them even harder.

"There's a big fish among them."

I hear Malc's voice coming from a tree and realise that

Even on Bushies Malcolm manages to stalk a giant trout of 14lb 8oz! Good skills given the flooded conditions.



Into the biggest fish of the day, Malcolm holds on tight as he reaches the big rainbow for the net.

Here's 14lb 8oz of Lechlade rainbow, reeled on Malc's favourite WAFF - tiny fly, huge fish!



#### Bushleaze In The Afternoon

We jump in the car after a brief discussion with Rob as to where our quarry will likely be at Bushleaze. We are really up against it because it is now 2.30pm, two hours past our planned start time.

This is my first visit to this amazing fishery and I'm stunned by the beauty as we drive up to the lodge. One of the first things I notice is an angler who seems to be standing on water, almost 45 yards out.

Malcolm laughs. "He's standing on a submerged platform." It informs me. With all the rain and the flooding, the water level has risen and covered the structure.

It's clear from the faces of some anglers leaving the fishery that it has been a difficult day, which is

confirmed after a cheerful conversation with them over a cup of coffee.

Malc soon takes up his position out on the submerged platform, this time opting to fish a Flashy Blue Damsel.

Within 15 minutes of starting fishing he shouts over to me: "I can see a really good one coming in from the left and heading towards me."

Three casts later he hooks it and before long he's walking on water back towards us with something pretty sizeable in the net!

He's done it, successfully stalking a jumbo fish at Bushy too, this time a 9lb 8oz rainbow.

As we leave to head back to the car, in the dark, we reflect on the day. He's caught two doubles from Lechlade and six fish from 2lb to 9lb 8oz from Bushleaze; each has been targeted, cast to and caught. ■