



Sunshine, deep water and lots of doubles. Perfect.

a floating line and I decide to mix up the retrieve, a fast figure-of-eight followed by a steady strip. Hopefully this will keep my fly in the top five feet of the water. Suddenly, halfway through the retrieve everything goes tight, my rod arches over and the line is pulled from my hands. The fish is soon on the backing and showing no signs of slowing down - who says these large stillwater rainbows don't fight!

The fish takes a full fly-line and 30 yards of backing on its first run. Luckily this time the fish is in deep open water with no obstructions. I know that the only snags are close to the bank and since this is the trout's best chance of snapping my leader, I am quite content to play it at range in the open water.

A steady fight with long runs followed by a slow dogged resistance becomes the norm and after 15 minutes I assume complete control and the fish is beaten. I guide it into the margins and the safety of the net. Again another huge rainbow and it tips the scales at an impressive 13lb 4oz.

A smaller fish quickly follows (a mere 8lb) and I am a little

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disappointed! On reflection I feel that it's quite sad, an 8lb fish is really special and had it been caught at any other water I would have been overjoyed. But here it's just the average size!

It's now well past 3pm and the sun and temperature are dropping fast. At Lechlade the fish usually come on the feed in the last hour and I'm determined not to miss out. I decide to work my way around the lake in an attempt to find feeding fish.

Five casts in each spot (fan cast the water) then move. I want to cover as much water as fast as possible and figure that, if the fish are there, then in the clear water I will get an almost instant reaction. I work my way around the bottom end of the lake by the platforms that are adjacent to the island. On my second cast I get a follow, then a slight take. I know there are some fish here and on my fifth cast everything goes solid again.

After another testing fight I eventually net the fish - another double in the form of a 10lb 8oz rainbow. I finish the day with three doubles, all rainbows of 13lb 4oz, 12lb 10oz and 10lb 8oz. My smallest rainbow is just over 8lb - a remarkable and thoroughly enjoyable day's fishing.

Walking back towards the lodge there's a buzz around the fishery. A huge brown has been caught by the infamous Roger Woodhams weighing in at 18lb 12oz. It's a personal best and I'm taken on a White Humungus under the overhanging trees.

Peter Galercole is on hand to capture the epic fight and photograph the fish. I am simply stunned, especially when told there are much bigger fish in the water. 🐟



#### Lechlade factfile

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