

**I** ALWAYS get excited when visiting smaller waters with larger than average stocked fish and Lechlade falls in this category. My home city, Peterborough, is surrounded by large reservoirs, namely Rutland and Grafham and being a competitor I don't get much chance for a pleasure trip.

Peter Gathercole picks me up early as we head south-west towards Lechlade and he is probably talked to death by me before we get there! The car pulls in and while Pete meets the management, I set the tackle up, itching to start fishing. We greet fishery owner Tim Small and his friendly Labrador, before Tim tells us what patterns are working and that some big browns are showing.

I see Lechlade as a stalking venue where you spot your quarry, carefully creep up on it and make

the perfect cast to intercept it. Lechlade offers a good opportunity for this style of fishing with some steep banks where the fish cruise just a few feet out. It also offers a couple of good 'bowl' areas, which are almost like mini lakes so it offers the best of both worlds.

Ideally we want clear conditions with bright sun to allow us to easily spot cruising fish. A good pair of Polarised glasses are essential. With the right conditions you can see the fish taking the fly and count the spots on their back! But the weather is not on our side today. We trudge around the lake in fairly mild temperatures but it's cloudy overhead.

It's not long before I see a small pod of good fish moving at range in one of the 'bowls' at the top end of the venue. I have trees behind me so I can't do my usual long haul casts as I would do from a drifting boat. I'm fishing with just a 5/6wt rod and 5lb G3 fluorocarbon. This is a leisure day after all and despite unwarranted quotes of just using heavy line and hauling fish in, I enjoy catching doubles on challenging tackle. I'm using one of my Airflo Stream Tech rods. With my 6wt line I'm still able to cast 25 yards in to the path of the cruising fish. It is flat calm so I don't want to be pulling a fly because this will only cause too much disturbance. These fish see a lot of anglers, lines and flies so a little care and thought is always necessary at small waters to enjoy good sport.

I opt for a Chartreuse Hotspot



That magical moment of a netted fish.

*"It's important to not just watch for the Egg disappearing but look for movement of the Egg - which indicates a take on another fly."*



Iain applies plenty of side strain to pull a strong rainbow away from snags.



The Buzzer sits firmly in the scissors.



Keep the rod high on last forward cast.

Egg Fly and a small size 12 Woofa Buzzer.

This is a classic set-up for any style of trout fishing, small water or reservoir. I have an attractor and a natural fly close by - in this case the Buzzer is four foot from the Egg.

I make my first cast and with my Polaroids I can see the fly dropping through the layers. The fluo Egg stands out well in the shadow of the tree that covers my swim. As the fly sinks I notice a swirl about five yards away and I tense up in anticipation. I can still see the Egg - it suddenly disappears and I know a fish has taken it. A sharp lift of the rod and I am into a very big fish! Other fish, which I couldn't see, disperse due to the commotion. I land a cracking rainbow of about 8lb. After a few minutes the water settles and the cruising fish return to the bowl in front of me.

A few casts later I'm again watching the Egg slowly drop. I can see it clearly but obviously can't see the Buzzer at 20-plus yards. However, the Egg suddenly starts to move unnaturally to the right quite abruptly. I lift and a real 'Kuala Lumpa' (a nickname for a very big fish) starts tearing line off my reel.

Pete runs down the bank and starts clicking photographs. However, the fish has other ideas as it heads down the lake and, with my light tackle, there is not much I can do with it other than let it go.

After a 20-minute battle the fish is landed two swims further down from where it was hooked. The size 12 Woofa is firmly set in the scissors of a rainbow estimated at 14lb. It's important to not just watch for the Egg disappearing but look for movement of the Egg - which



Iain's 14lb rainbow fell to a size 12 Woofa Buzzer.