



FEDERATION OF BRITISH AQUATIC SOCIETIES

BULLETIN

Spring 2012

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for FISHKEEPERS



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March 2012

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*Opinions expressed in any article remain those of the author
and are not necessarily endorsed by this publication*



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EDITORIAL

I wonder if anyone out there has spotted the relevance of our cover picture with regard to this magazine?

No? Well, I'll give you a clue – it's like those popular 'Dingbats' puzzles found in some magazines and the answer is often one of my exhortations to readers. Give up? O.K. – it's 'Putting Pencil to Paper'- and I'm pleased to say we have some good examples of this in this issue. (Just in case you're wondering, the fish in question is *Nannostomus espeï*).

Spring being close on hand (we hope!) there are some 'outdoor fishkeeping' items for you although indoor aquarists are not neglected in any way, shape or form.

Already, too, brains are ticking over as to what might be new in attractions at this year's Festival of Fishkeeping and I can reveal that there's a new challenge ahead especially for the ladies – but don't go expecting the Chippendales, girls!

Later this year, we will have all the excitement of the XXXXXX Games and with this in mind, we're toying with an idea for adding a little topical excitement to Societies' Open Shows here, too, if we can get enough interest.

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In order to recognise a poorly fish, we must first know what a fish looks like and how it behaves when healthy. We can only recognise the 'abnormal' when we know what is normal.



For example, a Goldfish keeper may become concerned about the presence of small white spots on the gill covers and pectoral fins of their fish. Further investigation will lead them to discover that these small white spots are not a sign of disease but are actually special spawning pimples that cover certain parts of male Goldfish at spawning time.



A tropical fishkeeper could become concerned that their *Synodontis* catfish are swimming upside down –

this could be a sign of a swim bladder disorder. Again further investigation will lead the fishkeeper to discover that the fish are actually 'upside-down catfish', that swim happily in an inverted position when juvenile, often resorting to a more conventional posture as adult fish.

These two examples highlight the need to know your fish!

Knowing your fish starts before you have even purchased them from your aquatic store. When you read up on the potential size, feeding and water quality requirements of any potential new fish, try to also seek information about the natural appearance of the fish at different stages of their life cycle and their natural 'normal' behaviour. Kribensis cichlids (*Pelvicachromis pulcher*) for example show a markedly red belly at spawning time, this could be mistaken for bacterial erythema. Clown Loaches (*Chromobotia macracanthus*), are notorious for the eccentric behaviours. At the Tetra fishkeeping helpdesk we hear of many who play 'dead' and even of one Clown Loach who destroyed its aquarium by pulling out the silicone that held the glass panels of the tank together!

Upon acquiring your fish, you should familiarise yourself with the individual's natural appearance and its behaviour. In the first few days in the tank, your new fish are likely to be very timid and may decline feeding, however as they settle most common freshwater aquarium inhabitants will venture out into the tank and respond to feeding.

Notice the swimming patterns of your fish, how quickly they eat food and the method of food intake. Feeding time offers an excellent time for a brief visual health check of your fishes.

However, as emphasised above, we must be familiar with 'normal' appearance and behaviour of healthy fish in order to recognise 'abnormal' and thus potential ill health.

Abnormal signs to look out for can be split into behavioural and morphological deviations from the accepted 'normal' state of your fish.

Behavioural indicators of ill health include gasping for air at the water surface, a common sign of gill disease or water quality problems in most fishes – in air breathing fishes such as the Lungfish this is perfectly normal behaviour.

Changes in the swimming activity are a sure sign of potential ill health. If a normally active fish ceases swimming activity, becoming lethargic and swimming only when disturbed, then this is a strong indicator of ill health.

For sedentary carnivorous fishes, this is again a common 'normal' behaviour. Fish infected by skin parasites or irritated by certain water pollutants, will flick and scratch against objects in the aquarium or pond. Erratic darting motion instead of smooth swimming is often seen in small tropical aquarium fishes when they are infected by internal parasites or bacteria. These affect the swimbladder and occasionally the muscular systems, which has an affect on posture and locomotory activity.



Assuming an abnormal posture, such as a lopsided gait or even fully upside-down, is usually a sign of a swim-bladder problem, a common complaint in Fancy Goldfish. The same problems can also cause the fish to loose its normal neutral buoyancy, and they either sink or rise when at rest.

A fish that normally feeds voraciously, refusing food is a sure sign of ill health. As in all fish health problems, the first thing to check is that the water quality is within the preferred limits of the fish.

As can be seen we must carefully observe our fishes when they are healthy in order to recognise behavioural changes shown when they are sick.

The same is true for the external appearance of the fish, familiarise yourself with its colours, body contours and finnage. External signs of disease are all some deviation from the normal condition.

If a fish's skin is irritated either by pollutant in the water such as ammonia, or by infection with a skin parasite, the first response the fish will show, (In addition to the flicking and scratching mentioned above), is overproduction of mucus. The mucus layer is highly protective and the fish increases its production when the skin is irritated. This overproduction of skin mucus makes the fish's colours look duller and it assumes a grey hazy appearance.



Most external parasite infections cause very generalised symptoms, one however, known as white spot, causes a very recognisable condition.

As the name suggests, infection of the skin with the White Spot parasite causes the fish to develop tiny white pimples over its body. The white spots are around 1mm in diameter, they tend to develop on the fins first before progressing over the body as the infection proceeds. Scaleless fishes such as Clown Loach are highly susceptible.

Another very recognisable condition is Finrot, although there are many possible causes. The fins of a healthy fish should be complete, symmetrical and of a uniform consistency. During Finrot the skin between the bony fin rays rots away leaving the fish with decaying tissue where the fins used to be. If the cause of the Finrot is identified and treated, the fins rapidly grow back. Finrot is caused either by water pollution, most commonly extremes of pH or ammonia poisoning. Infection with certain types of bacteria can also cause the problem. The delicate tissue of the mouth is also prone to a similar necrosis.



Bacterial infection can also cause large open sores on the skin of the fish called ulcers. These are very damaging and must be treated early.

Many internal problems can manifest themselves with external symptoms. Damage to the muscle around the spine, or vertebral deformity can lead to spinal bending, here the fish's spine assumes a pronounced curvature and swimming is often affected. There are many causes of spinal damage.

Infection or damage to the delicate tissue behind the eye can lead to swelling which pushes the eye outwards – a condition known as exophthalmia or Pop-Eye. Often in these circumstances the fluid in the eye will turn cloudy also.

Recognition of disease in fish involves knowing what your fish look like, how they swim, feed, interact, and behave. It is only when we truly know our fish can we begin to recognise the early signs of an ill health problem.



Visit Tetra at www.tetra-fish.com



GOING, GOING, GONE!

I hope many of you will have read the article in the December 2009 issue of the Bulletin on the fact that Kodak was stopping the production of their slide film, Kodacolor.

Many hobbyist over the years have taken many aquatic photos in this way and have been the accomplishment for first class talks on fish club evenings.

So it was no surprise that the announcement of Kodak was closing came to those both in the photographic trade and the photographic hobby.

With digital photos taking over film and the fact that Kodak never kept up the pace, unlike Fuji and others, sadly saw the last of Kodak.

For those that still like to take slides my local Boots store had for sale Fujichrome 35mm 100, price £14.29 and those who like something faster 400 at £15.31 all included processing.

ASK US

Q: When doing a partial water change on tropical tank, how do I get the replacement water to correct temperature before adding to the established water already in the aquarium?

A: Whilst most people try to add replacement water at the same temperature of the existing aquarium water, it is not absolutely necessary to do so and many aquarists simply use water straight from the tap- often through a hosepipe.

To digress a little, some tropical fish, *Corydoras* catfish for instance, can be triggered into spawning by adding far cooler water to their tank.

This imitates Nature where melting mountain snow runs down to fill the rivers; where this causes the rivers to overflow, the knock-on effect drowns millions of insects on which any baby fish can then feed. Hence adult fish, upon sensing a cooling down of water temperature, quickly get into breeding mode!

But back to your question. If you only take out a reasonable amount of water from the tank - let's say a large bucketful/ a couple of gallons – just standing the bucket in the same room for an hour or two will warm it up a bit, even more so if you have a space-heated fish room.

Alternatively, you could warm the water up in the bucket by adding a kettle of boiling water or even use a spare aquarium heater to heat up the water to the required temperature.

When using water from the tap, it is advisable to use water-conditioning agents to neutralise heavy metals and/or chloramines present in the water. Notice that the word 'dechlorinator' has passed out of use as old-fashioned chlorine is now no longer in regular use by the water authorities.

In some areas, rain water from the butt may be acidic due to atmospheric pollution or otherwise contaminated from dirty roofs and metallic guttering.

STUCK IN THE MUD

For those who like the thought of building a "Wild Life Pond" and wish to truly make it as close to natural as possible, fibreglass, liners or cement for them are not the real thing. That then leaves us turning to **CLAY**.

This may not seem a job with the winter months here but, except for those hard frosty days, wet conditions are in your favour. The digging of the pond is really hard work and often the deeper you dig the harder it can get.



If you are intending to create a pond that would be over 3 metres wide you may well feel it would be an investment to hire a digger with a bucket with caterpillar tracks so it does not get bogged down. With clay you do not have to conform to any shape, in fact a stream would be easier with clay and you don't have to worry about hiding the left-over liner.

Well you cannot go along to your nearest garden centre or water garden just to purchase clay, it needs to be shopped around for, and this can be done by looking on the internet. It helps not only to find the price but the nearest supplier to you - and that may be some distance away.

It is also not the type of thing where you can just turn up in your car and hope to get it in the boot, no not even a 4 X 4. So ask what the delivery charge is.

If like me, it is likely to come on a long articulated flat-bed lorry, and no way could get down this long drive. You may well order what you think is a small amount but the driver will have half a dozen other deliveries all over the country and will be using a much larger vehicle which has to have access to your site. Clay comes in bags just like cement - in both size and weight! - and also in powder form. If what I have said so far has not put you off, well make a start and best of luck.

Often wildlife ponds do not house any fish so the depth is up to you, but you still need a finishing depth of half a metre and the clay needs to be at least 100mm thick if not a bit more.

The sides need to be a gentle slop, or to step it may be hard for the clay to hold on to the sides. As with all pond excavations, ensure that you have level-cut area excavated into the ground that will be form pond's edging. If the pond is large, so will be the amount you dig out so, if the surplus soil has to be placed some distance away, then you'd better hire a dumper truck while ordering the digger!

Try to get all this work done in the shortest time scale as possible to cut down on the hire cost of your machinery. Clean up the whole area as smooth as you can; by now you could be down to a mixture of both clay and soil. If it rains there will be on harm done, but if your pond contains too much water, more than an inch deep you must let it dry out a bit before you attempt to start claying. Any deeper than that then you can use a pond pump to empty it out.

Once you start emptying your powered clay over a small area, you will be surprised how fast your bags of clay start to go down. Any dampness in your pond will soak through the powder clay, if it's too dry you will have to hose some water on it. Cover the hole of the bottom even if it's not the required thickness you can add more if required, so building the thickness up in layers.



Now with wellies on you can start 'puddling', this means you just keep walking on the clay, stomping is good to remove any air holes or pockets. The sides or areas that you cannot walk or stomp, will have to be patted by hand. Navvies used to puddle with their feet, and Capability Brown used herds of cows. It's a job that requires effort almost beyond the normal call of duty. There is no room for the

notion of "that will do" - you must go all the way, and beyond.

Once the clay is in place I would put down a layer of "pool underlay" or geo-textile to protect the clay from intrusion from plants and other damage and then a small layer of gravel.

Where the clay meets the soil one can get water drainage in the form of capillary seepages. To prevent this, set up a capillary barrier, this can be done at the start by excavating a shallow 15cm deep and 30cm wide gully below water level around the pond and filling it with a kneaded ring of clay. Fill with water or let heavy rain, if you have it, do it for you; if the water goes down don't worry, it often does. Now let it go down as far as you can without drying out the clay.



Often a “whacker-plate” from the hire shop tied to a rope can be let down the pond sides and let it vibrate as long as you can hold on, a strong friend would be of great help to stop it falling in. If you have any nearby building, sheds or greenhouses divert the rain into a run-off to keep the water level topped up.



After all this, you can easily understand why the world and his fish have resorted to the convenience of a pvc liner.

However, as summer gets under way, you can sit and look at what is a dream no more, but the real Wildlife Pond right in front of your eyes.

Mark Goss (*Aqua Services*)

Freshwater-Tropical BARBS & Their Sub-species



Have You Read?

Pete Cottle reviews

Freshwater – Tropical Barbs & their sub-species by Mike Dewar

Mike has written a book of some 150 pages jam-packed with information on the various species of Barbs. In many instances, he gives detailed information on the keeping (or NOT) and breeding of them.

As a reference book it is extremely useful – particularly when it comes to the differences between *P. denisonii* and *P. chalakudiensis* and the 'other' two, *Puntius arulias* and *tambrapareni*. Then, again so many fish keepers still think they have *Puntius tetrazona* in their tanks (the Tiger Barb) but as Mike explains, they really have *Puntius anchisporus*!

The subject of Barbs is a large and complex one and I applaud Mike for his dedication and hard work in producing this book.

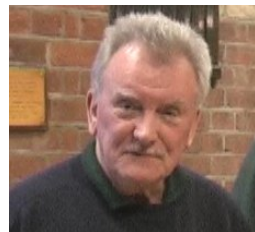
This book at the very modest price of £19.50 post free is well worth purchasing. It can be obtained by an email to Mike at

barbus1@virginmedia.com



CONGRATULATIONS PETE!

For his work over many years as Judge, Speaker and an ambassador to the hobby, Pete Cottle has been made a Vice-President of the FBAS.



Revolution Aquatic Technology Keeping up with the

by Les Holliday

It's frequently said that aquarium keeping is one of those hobbies where there seems to be infinite opportunities to advance from easy up to more challenging levels as experience is gained. Although our hobby is still regarded as an art rather than a science, often a large part of the on-going education in building up this expertise, these days, is mainly related to learning what technologies are available to help

us and how these can be employed. In a nutshell our hobby is becoming more and more technology driven, providing discriminating hobbyists with a whole range of technically advanced high quality aquatic products.

The best example of how rapid these advances have been made in recent years has occurred in aquarium filtration. The demand for more sophisticated methods of filtration has been fuelled not only by the desire by hobbyists to apply the best standards of water quality for their livestock but also to improve on these in order to keep the types of sensitive and demanding subjects at the advanced level of the hobby now becoming available. As a result, aquatic filter manufacturers, in particular, have become masters of innovative technologies in continually developing new products to meet the ever broadening specifications required.

External canister filters have become the most favoured method of filtration chosen by most aquarists and perhaps best illustrate the technically advanced levels that can be achieved.



To illustrate my point, I have recently put the new Hagen Fluval 06 range of this type of filter through its paces.

This current update of the Fluval external canister range incorporates leading edge European design, technology and workmanship that is second to none. The Italian engineers and designers have applied more than three decades of product development to reach the current state of the art designs used in this latest remarkable new series of filters and it's fair to say that the best just got better!

At first glance you might be forgiven for going into raptures similar to those Jeremy Clarkson displays when he finds a newly introduced sports car of his choice.



The sleek black, red and white livery of this new filter range is very sporty looking echoing the masterful approach of the designers and promising further innovative changes which might be found when delving deeper. Comparisons with the previous 05 series obviously are on your mind when you check out these new boys on the block. The most notable updates on looking into specification improvements are the clever mechanical changes which allow the filter to work more efficiently.

The 06 filter motors are more powerful than their predecessors in the 05 series and deliver 15% more power, remarkably, without increasing power usage. This is achieved not only by improvements in motor design but also in efficiency updates elsewhere, such as the completely re-engineered impeller and impeller cover. At contact points between the impeller and cover sit tiny ceramic rings which are virtually friction-free. These allow much smoother operation and reduce vibration and noise to a bare minimum for almost silent running.



Similar attention to good design is a key word in describing many of the other components of this state of the art series of filters. The sturdy canister, for example, not only looks good but its fibreglass reinforced construction increases quality and durability as do the chunky almost indestructible lift-lock clamps which fit snugly into the palm of the hand when operating the cam-action technology.

In addition, the squared off design of the design provide more volume than would be possible with round canisters of the same outer dimensions. Increased volume means a greater amount of mass of filter material and a larger filter area.

Fluval filters are first and foremost designed and engineered for dependable performance plus ease of use and this remains a prerequisite of the new 06 range. Features like the click-on-rim connector assemblies for hosing and one-step lift-lock clamps on the canister make setting up and routine maintenance quick and convenient.



Plus easy starting is ensured with the completely re-engineered Instant Primer System. This instant prime function overcomes any need for manual siphoning and filter start up is both simple and quick. A further boon is provided for by the patented Aquastop valve which is an exclusive Fluval design offering unparalleled convenience and ease of use. Attached to the filter lid, where the hoses connect, this cleverly designed valve creates an air and water-tight seal that permits the hosing to be disconnected without breaking the vacuum.

This is a really convenient feature as it means the filter can be started up again without the need for priming.



The measure of any canister filter is its capability and fitness for purpose.

Like earlier models in the Fluval range the 06 series filters employ what is called multistage filtration. This form of filtration utilises the entire canister's volume for radically increased water flow efficiency. Filtration always begins with a mechanical stage of waste particle removal. Twin foam pre-filters accomplish this task and these are mounted vertically to increase flow and reduce maintenance. There then follows, depending on the size of filter, a series of up to four interchangeable media baskets. These are slotted together one above the other, the path taken by the water flowing up between each basket.

Every filter comes complete with a range of media starting with a BioFoam block for the lowest level basket this finer foam material is ideal for removing any small dirt particles that are not retained by the pre-filters and in addition performs well as a large surface to accommodate beneficial bacteria colonies.

Mid level basket(s) are best reserved for the biological reduction process. Biomax is provided for this purpose which has excellent properties providing both mechanical filtration as well as creating an excellent environment for beneficial bacteria to proliferate. Biomax is a powerful filtration material consisting of inert ceramic rings which offer both free flowing characteristics to encourage aerobic bacterial action and a finer restricted flow pore structure which is excellent for anaerobic bacterial activity. This produces ideal conditions for the biological removal of ammonia, nitrite and nitrate concentrations in the aquarium.

The upper level basket receives the water cleansed by the earlier processes and is an ideal place for chemical media. Activated carbon is offered for this purpose as it efficiently removes discoloration, medications and solubilised wastes that the earlier filtration material cannot handle. To enhance this last filtration process it is recommended that a polishing pad (not included) be used just prior to the chemical media. Quite a large variety of different forms of chemical media have been developed for Fluval external filters including as well as carbon, Fluval Ammonia Remover and Fluval Clearmax to trap phosphate, nitrite and nitrate. Years of research and development have resulted also in three of the most powerful professional media Hagen has ever produced. Classed as the Lab Series these include a Fluval Phosphate Remover, a Fluval Nitrate Remover and Fluval OptiCarb a high-capacity research grade carbon blend which eliminates odours, discolorants, dissolved proteins and heavy metals. An area that must not be overlooked also is the opportunity multistage filtration provides in being able to precisely control and fine tune water characteristics. Materials such as peat granules and other water modifying media can also be installed in the upper level basket to allow precise management of the water chemistry.



The Fluval 06 series of multi stage filters includes several state of the art new features to ensure reliable operation and trouble free maintenance. Filters in this series now offer advance pumping technology and a versatile combination of mechanical, biological and chemical filtering capacities. This allows a better opportunity to customise the water characteristics of your

aquarium to meet the specialised needs of your unique collection of fish, invertebrates and aquatic plants and create a health thriving environment.



For further information or to find a local stockist visit www.hagen.com



JOIN IN THE FUN OF DIAMOND JUBILEE YEAR

This year, we thought we could add an extra dimension to Societies' Open Shows by inviting them to nominate a single 'Diamond Class' from amongst their usual Show Class list.

This would be **any 'single fish' Class** of the Society's choosing, the only exception being that it must not be any of the Championship Trophy Classes issued for the Show.

There are no restrictions as to whether Classes are split or not. The Class chosen can be a basic Class or a 'split' Class – that is, for instance, B (Barbs) or Cb (Pencilfish) and so on.

Winners (and runners up) will qualify for a 'Diamond Final Round' at the Festival of Fishkeeping at Sand Bay.

In order to present a reasonable selection of fish on the bench at the end of the year, it would be appreciated if Societies didn't all plump for the same Class. To this end, if Societies would care to advise of their nomination of Diamond Class together with a reserve choice, an updated selection of Classes nominated at Shows can be produced which is fair to all.

With the Show season due to kick off in just over a month's time, everyone will need to get nominations in as soon as possible.

To make things easier, Classes nominated will be shown on the FBAS website and any downloadable Show Schedule will have the relevant Class over-printed on the cover – especially where Show Schedules have already been submitted and uploaded.

To date, nominations received are: Bracknell (J), Corby (E), Portsmouth (Dc), Port Talbot (Db), Mid-Sussex (C), Middlesex (J) and Hounslow (K). Current updates will be posted on the FBAS website as they come in.

Please send your Diamond Class nomination in to the [FBAS webmaster](#) or by post to the address as shown for the P.R.O./Webmaster (select 'Contacts' button on the left of the screen).

Show Secretaries:

A Diamond Class Judging Sheet and a Diamond Class Return Form will be enclosed with your Show Paperwork Pack from the FBAS Trophy Officer or you can download them [HERE](#)

Fill in the appropriate Diamond Class Return Form as soon as possible after your Open Show to qualify, and reserve space, for the Diamond Final Round at Sand Bay later this year.

**THE RETURN FORM SHOULD NOT BE RETURNED TO
THE FBAS TROPHY OFFICER
BUT TO THE ADDRESS AT THE TOP OF THE FORM**



Southend, Leigh & District Aquarist Society

It is with great sadness that we have to report the death of J.H. Preston, Howard to all his many friends and acquaintances in the aquarium hobby world. Howard passed away on the 17th of January 2012 from a stroke.

Howard was probably best known for his interest in the livebearing fishes, their popularisation, the breeding and the dissemination around the UK. Also for his pioneering trips to Mexico in the 1970's to collect wild Swordtails and Platies and numerous other livebearers that had never before been seen in Europe before his and Chris Lyons trip. The first trip involved a flight to New York and then Greyhound buses all the way to Mexico City where they hired a car to search for fishes in earnest. When they arrived back in the UK the late Dave Cheswright received a phone call asking if he had any aquariums free to house some of the various fish collected. Many of the species Howard and Chris collected are still being bred and maintained by aquarists throughout Great Britain.

Apart from the fish collecting trips Howard restarted Southend, Leigh & District's Journal in October 1963 only passing the editors chair on when he travelled to Mexico; the Journal then carried on until 1985.

Howard was not the most organised of individuals as visitors to his house in Braintree will affirm. He will however be remembered for his willingness to help other aquarists whether it was by freely passing on his beloved fishes or for example his willingness to stay overnight at several of Southend's Open Shows guarding the exhibits on a Friday night for the opening on the Saturday.

I am sure everyone will join the writer in expressing thanks to Mr & Mrs Bernhard Meech who looked out for him after he lost his sight.

Peter Capon, Southend, Leigh & District Aquarist Society

**Drat!
Foiled
again!**



Shaun McPherson thinks he has the answer to this perennial problem

When my father-in-law's best Koi was killed we tried to look for solutions online. We couldn't find anything that suited his pond, the solutions out there are either really big and obtrusive, or ugly and unpractical. Being a welder/fabricator, he asked me to fabricate a few different size rings to fix a net to.

While making this, I didn't like the idea of the net so tried to think of something more aesthetic.

I was busy making steel figurines at the time and thought of a spider's web. In my opinion the spider web is one of nature's most amazing structures so what would be better than that?



I made this steel spider web with no intention of it going any further than that. Fortunately for me this was seen by others and I was asked to make another. Then we had a baby and the design ideas started moving towards child protection!

I took my idea to the Prince's Trust and was given a small grant to test market the idea. It went very well and I started meeting people who were passionate about protecting their fish but did not want to ruin the look and hard work they put into their ponds.

I had to find out more about Herons and see how they act. These birds are extremely clever and tenacious and do not give up without a fight! I have watched many YouTube videos of Herons trying to work their way through deterrents and have spoken to many people who have unbelievable stories of these birds eating/killing their fish.

I believe my designs work because these animal are so clever and they can sense the danger of trying to walk on the bars and sticking their heads through the gaps would be an unnecessary risk. These are only my opinions but I am very confident in the patterns and designs I have come up with, I also believe that the bars flowing in different directions and different angles could possibly confuse the bird. My in-laws often see the Heron sitting on the roof or walking up to the pond but it then just flies away.



I have a cover design for almost all types of ponds and the ideas keep growing. I recently signed a job in Bournemouth for a cover to protect Koi from Otters.

Shaun McPherson, Elite Pond Covers

<http://www.elitepondcovers.com>

KNOW YOUR FISH



HONG KONG PLEC (*Gastromyzon punctulatus*)

This small flat fish is often named as the Hillstream Loach, of the Family Balitoridae, not only differs from, but is nothing like any of the other Loaches within this Family.

Though these fish bear a superficial resemblance to the South American Loricariidae catfish, they do not appear in the order of Siluriformes but to the nearest I can find, being the Suborder Cyprinoidei, Homatopteridae which live in the hill streams of India, Southern China, Malaya and Indonesia.

Except for the tail, the underside of an Homatopterid is flat and smooth, much of this surface, forms a sucker that is provided by the lateral extensions of the paired fins.



The forward pectoral rays and most of the pelvic rays are thick and flat so they are fashioned below into adhesive pads. Using the sucker to cling and creep in fast flowing waters, they move slowly over the surfaces of rounded boulders and stones whilst grazing on algae covering them, almost becoming a fishy form of limpet.



An observation of *Gastromyzon* in the wild was carried out by R.F. Inger and C.H.Konk in 1961. One can find Borneo Cyprinoids Fishes of the genus *Gastromyzon* within Copeid No 2 pp 166/176.

These small flat fishes can be found in swift, clear water, with colours of either greenish to blackish; ranging between 50 and up to 100mm in length they are not easy to see as they dart from rock to rock, or over rounded boulders grazing on algae. A giveaway of their presence is small naked trails from which they have scrapped the algae bare.

In the aquarium they require clean well-oxygenated water with a good flow around the tank and power heads are excellent for this purpose. Temperatures should be on the cool side, not exceeding 75°F with a pH 7.5/8.00. Regular water changes are recommended to keep them in good condition.

Feed as you would *Loricariids*, plenty of greens plus tableted foods and fine *Daphnia* are their favourites.

Although this is not a catfish, although the common name does imply this, it would do well with small catfish that require the same living conditions.

J.T. Morris N.A.G. (Catfish)



The Interview

Peter Anderson,

**Chairman, Hounslow & District A.S.,
FBAS Council Member**



Q. How long is it since you started keeping fish?

A. I have kept fish for over 30 years, since midway through the 1970's

Q. What made you start?

A. I have always had an interest in keeping fish, as my Dad kept fish in two Iron-framed tanks on a stand. Both my son and daughter won Goldfish at a Fair in Amersham, and the rest is history.

Q. What gave you the idea to join an Aquatic Society?

A. I heard of an aquatic club in Amersham, about six miles from where I live. I liked the friendly atmosphere and members willing to exchange their experiences with me.

Q. What do you think has made the biggest impact and helped the advancement of our hobby?

A. Well, so much information is now available on the internet, whether aquatic technology or just fish keeping inquiries; for me it's made our hobby so much easier to understand.

Q. Why did you join Hounslow Aquarists Society, bearing in mind it's some 25 miles from where you live?

A. As I have said, I first of all joined a Club that met in Amersham, but although I was a member for several years it closed down through a lack of members so I had to find another Club to join.

Q. Do you feel even after travelling to a Club after all these years still does something for you as a fishkeeper?

A. Definitely, I am still learning, meeting and helping new members, going to Fish Shows, listening to a variety of Speakers on Club nights. There is always something new, or different methods, that can be picked up from other members.

Q. What is your favourite aquatic book ?

A. The Baensch Aquatic Atlas, good pictures and excellent details on keeping and breeding many species.

Q. Has the FBAS done anything to help promote your Club in any way?

A. As the nearest Club to where the FBAS Assembly Meetings are held we get the opportunity to get very involved with FBAS activities.

Too many in fact to tell you about them all, however many of our members are also FBAS Council members and as a Club we help out with the FBAS Middlesex Show, London Pet Show at Earls Court and the Aquatic Live Show at Olympia. If that's not enough, many of us take part in the FBAS Festival of Fishkeeping - a three-day event at Weston Super Mare.

Q. As an FBAS Council member, what do you think it can do to help the aquatic hobby?

A. We run an excellent website that is full of information, and that is always updated on a regular basis, plus the Bulletin that you are reading now. We supply affiliated Clubs with free-hire videos to show their members on their own Club nights. I would advise anyone who has an interest in keeping fish whether you have one aquarium (or a dozen) to get on to our website and join a Club - I tell you, it's great.

Q. Well Peter, thank you for answering my questions, you certainly seem a very happy fishkeeper. Lastly looking back over the time that you have been in the hobby, what would you say has been the biggest highlight of the years you have been in the hobby?.

A. For me, although it may seem strange, being Chairman of my Club is a real pleasure. We live in a world where hobbies are under so much pressure, where work ethic is totally changed over the years. How many employees can guarantee they can go to a Club every fortnight at 8pm escaping from TV, Internet, pressure of work plus financial restrictions all competing with ones out of hours free time? There is a lot to be said for those who go out in either the cold or wet to meet others with similar interests.

Peter, I could not add anymore, but to say thank you. *Editor*



Jelly Bean Tetra - *Ladigesia roloffi*

This fabulous little Characin being only 30mm (1.2") SL originating from the Ivory Coast / Sierra Leone in Africa makes the ideal fish for those having small all-glass aquaria that seem to be so popular with aquarists that prefer a feature item in their home as opposed to a standard aquarium. A fish that likes soft water that has a tanned look created by some peat within the filter system.

In these small aquaria, plant such species as *Cryptocoryne nevillei* or *Sagittaria subulata* often called Dwarf Sagittaria. If none of these are available you can use a floating plant like *Riccia fluitans* that would give shade that this little fish likes.

Equally, when breeding this species only a small aquaria is required, say 30cm x 10cm furnished with a dark colour gravel, even black, add plenty of plant plus some wool mops for your fish to lay their eggs in. You can even cover the gravel with some dark green mesh so the eggs fall through out of the way of the adult fish who would love to gobble them up! The water should be soft (try filtered rain water at a temperature of 80°-84°F). A small air-powered sponge filter bubbling away will be great to maintain a small turnover of water.

You need to feed the adults well ahead of spawning on crushed flake, Brine Shrimp, sifted *Daphnia* and Whiteworm. Their size makes them hard to sex although females do get plumper prior to spawning, so I would recommend you place at least half a dozen adults in the breeding tank to be sure, plus they also like to spawn in groups. During spawning you can now notice the males by their higher density of colour. The eggs will hatch within 24/36 hours and the fry will be free swimming in 3/4 days.

Of course, due to the small size of the adult fish the fry are really tiny, yes I mean *really* tiny. This means you will have to feed them on infusoria for at least a couple of weeks until they are able to except Microworm and newly-hatched Brine Shrimp. These small fish seem to produce only about 20 to 30 youngsters at any one spawning, possible due to the small size of the adult fish.

Is There **CROCODILE** in your front garden?



Not many of us would think of keeping a crocodile, let alone having one in your front garden. However I caught this crocodile, not only in someone's front garden, but in a street right in the heart of London's West End - in fact in Duke Street, a turning off of Oxford Street.

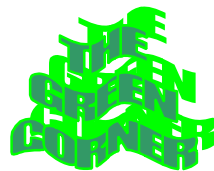
Well, thank goodness it was tied up with a chain and padlock, even better that it was a replica, a very good one at that, made out of concrete.

It sure looked impressive, complete with splashing water and a warning notice for those who may just have thought it to be a live specimen.

Good job it was behind iron railings for those who stopped to admire such an undertaking and for the safety of the crocodile!

If you have seen some odd garden images please send them to the Editor

The area for aquatic plant-lovers



Spring is the right time for Pond-Side planting

Within the next two or three weeks, marginal plants will appear in your local garden centre or aquatic outlet. If your plants look a bit over-grown, or you have gaps that when filled would improve the look of your pond, now is the time to purchase some new plants before the summer months.



Those with natural ponds made of clay often find that water permeating the surrounding areas after heavy rain creates ideal conditions for moisture loving plants. With this area looking quite open, due to any original marginal plants dying back through the winter months it will give you the chance to replant these areas and beyond, expanding the palette of your planting.



Shady pond side areas require the use of lush foliage plants, such as *Rheum*'s, Ferns, *Hostas* and *Ligularias* whilst sunnier spaces would suit *Lysimachia*, *Eupatoriums* (below), Rushes as well as shrubs like many of the *Cornus*.

The feathery *Arunculus* both complements, and sets off, the lower planting at the water's edge. You will find the long-flowering burgundy *Lysimachia atropurpurea* starts to flower from May, having grey/green foliage growing to a height of 60cm with a spread of up to 50cm.



But a plant for the back of your pond, possible against a wall is *Darmera peltata* growing up to two metres tall and having rounded heads of pinky white flowers that appear before the foliage in late Spring, these being large leaves growing up to 45cm across, which turn to a striking deep red in autumn. If you cannot find this plant, try the large-leaved *Hosta* "Big Daddy" or "Krossa Regal."



For those that like the foliage of the "Bullrush" (left) - which are such ferocious growers and whose roots can penetrate a liner - then try the miniature less-invasive species *Typha minima* (right) grown in a block reaching a height of only 30/40cm.





In areas close to, but not in, the pond you can dig out channels of up to 30cm wide and nearly the same depth then place more liner or even "bin bags" so they hold water (but not completely water-tight) and refill with well- rotted compost with enriched soil like a loam that will hold water and stay moist.

These areas can contain many plants that add to look of your pond without needing to have their roots submerged and so encroach into the valuable water space. Plants like *Iris*, *Hostas*, *Butomus umbellatus*, *Zantedeschia aethiopica* and *Houttuynia*.



Inside the pond edge more fully aquatics can be placed in baskets such as *Aponogeton distachyos* with long elongated green floating leaves and white waxy, vanilla-scented flowers. But also it's time to cut back any that has over-grown the water surface, remove it from its container cut back the root system by using a sharp spade if necessary and replant in

fresh aquatic soil, obtainable from aquatic centres along with some clay made into small balls and placed around the roots.

Now dust off your best garden chair and watch all the wonderful things that happen in and around your pond.

Article by Mark Goss inspired by Joe Swift (*Gardeners World April 2011*)

Congo Tetra *Phenacogrammus bleheri*

Just the name of a fish having the common name Congo Tetra fills an aquarist with excitement before one even sees this wonderful Characin. With the majority of Characins originating from South America, a Characin coming from Africa fills one with excitement. If you have not seen this fish in real life when you do you will not be disappointed. These fish can be seen in most aquatic retail outlets, so for a relatively common fish in our shops they still demand a high price.



The metallic scales comprising of blue and yellow hues with sunlight on them is a sight to behold. With a handful of species that can be called Congo Tetras *Phenacogrammus interruptus* (Boulenger 1899) is the most common.



Sexing is quite easy in adults specimens, males being larger in size (60cm) than females with fin extensions often looking ragged, but this is their natural appearance. Females are smaller and slightly less intense in colour having natural looking finage without extensions.

Congos. as the name suggests. are found in the Equator Province of Zaire.



Other species known to science are, *P. altus* (Boulenger 1899), easy separated from *P. interruptus* by a black spot on the caudal peduncle, although having similar body colour but has red dorsal, adipose and caudal finnage.

Poll revised the family *Phenacogrammus* along with other African *Alestinae* in 1967. Heiko Bleher collected fish from the poorly know regions of Northern Zaire collecting from Lake Fwe in the Kassi Province and the Basin of Oubangui in 1986.

Whilst collecting *P. interruptus* along with *P. ansorgii* Heiko also discovered a new beauty, a totally metallic blue Congo Tetra.



This new species was appropriately named *Phenacogrammus bleheri* n sp.

It has the same body shape and finage as *P. interruptus*, but its blue/purple iridescent colour sure has the “wow” factor.

The holotype being a male 63mm SL collected from a small tributary of the Bari river in Zaire on 11th September 1986. Three females were also collected at the same time ranging in size from 47mm to 60mm SL.

The photograph taken by Heiko Bleher at the moment of collection shows its outstanding colour of bluish/violet iridescent sheen over the whole body. *P. bleheri* belongs to the Hilgendorfi group of the former genus *Alestopetersius*, still of uncertain taxonomic level. Poll (1967) recognised 6 species from the Zaire Basin and one being *Phenacogrammus smykalai* found in the region of the Lower Niger.

Original manuscript : J. Gery Chemin du Plantier, 24200 sarlat, France.
First published : **aqua** Journal of Ichthyology and Aquatic Biology Vol (4)

Pictures: Blue Congo *Phenacogrammus bleheri* n sp. Photo: H. Bleher
Red Finned Congo *P. altus*:

Top adult male; below female collected by H. Bleher.
Photo: B. Kahl.

Congo Tetra *P. interruptus*: male and female Photos: Dick Mills



Fish suitable for the tropical aquarium all come from freshwaters between the two tropics of Cancer and Capricorn situated in South America, India, South-east Asia and Africa, right? This not need be the general rule, as many species from more temperate zones fare equally well in your tank.

As you pass by on your way to Disney World Florida, or through any of the near-south States of the United States, it's easy to forget, even if you are a fishkeeper, that there's a wealth of fishes living locally that could grace your tank back at home – mind you, a visit to one of the excellent public aquariums along the way will soon put you right.

Whilst Mexico is well-known as home to several live-bearing species, the southern eastern States of America (from almost New Jersey downwards) provide egg-laying species worthy of tank-space.



For starters, what could be more appropriate than the American Flag Fish, *Jordanella floridae*? Although quite dissimilar in build, the Flag Fish is closely-related to Killifishes. It's a stocky fish, reaching about 60mm, with a greenish body covered horizontally with several rows of small red dots. Both sexes have a dark blotch midway along the flanks

and the female has another dark blotch at the rear end of the dorsal fin. The male, whose colours intensify during spawning, can be further recognised by the covering of red dots in the dorsal fin.

Some report it to be a little pugnacious but generally it is a good community fish. Water conditions are not particularly critical and some algae in the tank may be appreciated.

Although often described as laying its eggs in a pit in the substrate, it also spawns amongst plants where the sticky eggs soon get attached to the leaves of any feathery-leaved plant such as Java Moss, *Vesicularia dubyana*, or *Myriophyllum*. The eggs take around a week to ten days to hatch (time varies with temperature) and the parents guard the brood to some extent. Raise the fry with the usual micro-foods and newly-hatched Brine Shrimp at first before gradually increasing the food particle size.



A more recognisable Killifish is the Bluefin, *Lucania goodei*. Reaching 60mm, this fish is also a native to Florida and neighbouring Georgia. The male has an orange-based bright blue dorsal fin and red caudal fin. The female has plain fins but both fish show a dark zig-zagging dark line along the flanks, that of the male is more accentuated.

This is another plant spawner but is said to be a trifle delicate and not like being moved around too much, nor to have too warm a temperature.



Just as decorative is the Red Shiner, *Cyprinella lutrensis*. It reaches 80mm and has stunning colouration especially when breeding. The male is violet with bright red fins and develops breeding tubercles on the head and pelvic fins when in season.

Again, this is a cooler water fish. This species is widely distributed on the central plains area of Northern America, from Illinois down to Texas.



Other favourite Cyprinids include the Red-belly Dace, *Phoxinus erythrogaster* (above, left) and the Fathead Minnow, *Pimephales promelas* (above, right). The former species is found in the very central States – Pennsylvania, Michigan, Minnesota, Alabama and Mississippi. The Fathead Minnow, the yellow form is most popular, ranges from Quebec to Alberta in Canada and down through Central America to Mexico.



Particularly colourful are Darters. Bottom-dwelling, and Goby-like in their appearance and movements, they make short darting, 'stop-start' movements using their caudal and pectoral fins. The genus *Etheostoma* has over 90 species with the Rainbow Darter, *E. caeruleum* being a typically popular example.



The Pirate Perch, *Aphredoderus sayanus*, is a monotypic genus having but one species. It does exhibit a remarkable physical characteristic as it matures: its vent, initially situated ahead of the anal fin, moves further forward along the body to a position just ahead of the pelvic girdle. This is another wide-ranging species from Long Island in the north right down to Southern Florida. It tends to hide up during the day amongst debris and litter on the substrate, becoming more active at night.

Sunfishes are popular with anglers as well as with aquarium owners. These fish range in size from 40-250mm.



The smallest of the Sunfishes, Pygmy Sunfish, *Elasmoma evergladei*, at 40mm, is best suited to a species tank due to its diminutive size. The male darkens intensively when breeding. These fish are said not to eat their own eggs during spawning.



The Black-banded Sunfish, *Enneacanthus chaetodon*, is a small, deep-bodied fish which again has excellent colouration when in breeding condition.

The male has four black bands crossing the bodily vertically; the first rays of the dorsal and pelvic fins of the male are bright orange.



The much larger Pumpkinseed, *Lepomis gibbosus*, could be kept in the pond during summer months. Sunfishes build nests on the substrate in which eggs are deposited.

There is an ear-like extension to the rear of the gill cover which may appear more reddish in the male fish but otherwise sex differentiation can be difficult.

Note: Due to legislation, licences are necessary to stock and/or keep certain (if not all) of the native American Fishes.



BREEDING GOLDFISH

Whilst many of us possibly kept Goldfish in our infant days of keeping fish, to successfully breed Goldfish is a specialist subject.

Many Goldfish we keep are in our garden ponds, and you may well say they breed all the time, more so as the warm weather settles in. However breeding Goldfish to a Showing standard requires a lot of work.

The first necessity is to obtain good stock. This can be done by joining a specialist society, for example, the Goldfish Society of Great Britain, and then attending their annual Show. The FBAS Festival of Fishkeeping held annually has part of its Show devoted to Goldfish of all shapes and sizes, this part of the event is run by the Goldfish Society of Great Britain and many of its members are on hand to give you advice and help. Start off by looking at the Classes and deciding which species that takes your eye, possibly some you have never seen before.

Goldfish like space, so give them as much tank space as you can arrange. A good start would be at least four tanks being 3ft long, plus two more tanks 4ft in length and up to 18 inches wide to grow fry in.

If you are making these yourself the fry tanks only need to be some 10 inches deep. Keep your adult stock to no more than three fish to each of the 3ft tanks. Leave the tanks bare with no plants and no gravel, as much as you may not approve, but it makes siphoning water off each day more easy and this needs to be two gallons each time (into a 2 gallon bucket). If you use a large internal filter in each of the adult-keeping tanks, your set up will remain clear and clean.

In late autumn, say November and December, start feeding your adult fish. Although I feed my fish as well as I can all year round and I do have heaters in my tanks with the thermostats turned right down. They run at around 60°F during those cold winter days.

I use foods such as chopped up garden worms or whole smaller ones, plus Whiteworm and *Daphnia* if you can get them. I put a flat bottom container on my pathway next to my lawn and the worms collect under it without me having to dig any up. With this heavy feeding you can see why it is necessary to carry out water changes every day.

As the weather gets warmer and the weather improves, around now to early April, your adults should be ready for breeding. Place a pair in a tank that receives a lot of light. Use a spawning medium such as wool mops, plus plants like Willowmoss, Hornwort etc.



The water temperature should now be near 65°F. Once the pair have spawned with eggs being seen in the plants and/or wool mops, remove the adults into a separate tank to recover.

Raise the temperature in the spawning tank to 70°F and once the fry are free-swimming feed them on Brine Shrimp. As the fry grow, sort them out for any mis-shaped ones (and any 'single-tails' in fish that should be twin-tailed) and cull. Often your local shop will be pleased to take them off your hands.

Feeding should continue with small-sized *Daphnia* or chopped Whiteworm, plus same small amounts of dry food. Allow about thirty fry to be reared in a 3ft tank, and as the fry grow reduce this number. Most importantly, do not raise any more fish than you can house in the tanks and space available.

DON'T JUST CONGREGATE – COMMUNICATE!



Throughout the year, hundreds of fishkeepers transport thousands of fishes to a variety of venues in search of those elusive, exclusive Trophies, whose ownership proclaims their fishkeeping prowess to the world.

You can not but praise the dedication of the competing fraternity as they constantly strive for perfection with their exhibits; it is this keenness to present the best - and often the newest - fishes that perpetuates the interest amongst other hobbyists too, as they are able to see virtually the whole range of available species in tip-top condition.

However, there seems to be a different 'atmosphere' depending on what type of Show you are attending. Take, for instance, 'specialist' Shows where the subject of interest has been perhaps only one family of fish rather than a cross section of the whole range of fishes within a discipline. Get amongst such people - whether they be Discus, Goldfish, Koi, Cichlid, Killifish or Catfish fanciers (apologies to any left out) - and there's a constant buzz of conversation on all aspects of keeping and breeding.

At the general tropical Shows, the only time you get to see people is at benching ("don't talk to me, I've got 30 fish to bench!") and de-benching ("don't talk to me, I've got 30 fish to de-bench!"). In between, the competitors are off away from the Show Hall to local retail aquatic outlets, the pub, shopping malls or whatever. Striking up a conversation with the owner of a fish you'd like to know more about is becoming a lost art. Consequently, the ideal opportunity for the exchange of any practical information between fishkeepers is, apparently, being ignored. Gone are the days when successful breeders liked to keep their 'secrets' so why isn't there more knowledge to be learned at Shows?

Surely fishkeepers have nothing to impart to each other; are they all gleaning their information off the Internet in darkened rooms late at night?

Come on, take a leaf out of the specialists' books and 'talk fish' rather than just moan that 'old so and so's won again'!

Website copy

BOOKING FORM

Festival of Fishkeeping & Water Gardening Weekend

26th, 27th, & 28th October 2012

Sand Bay Leisure Resort, 67 Beach Road, Kewstoke, Weston Super Mare,
North Somerset BS22 9UR

Number of people between the following ages. (Age at date of weekend)												
Under 2	2 - 4	5-9	10 - 15	16 - 17	18 - 25	26 - 44	45 - 59	60+	Total Persons	Total Rooms Chalets	Please Tick if Disabled	Please tick if Wheelchair Ramp is needed
Name of Society if any		I / We would prefer bed type		Single	Twin	Double	Accommodation		Please Circle		Please Circle	
		Noted but not Guaranteed					If accommodation type is fully booked, I Will accept the nearest alternative		Yes	No	Bath	Shower
Mr Mrs Miss	First Name of Person Responsible		Surname			Address Mobile/Telephone Number:		Child sharing your room, Some two room chalets available with 3 single beds		Ground Floor Room		
Tariff	Please indicate the number of nights →					Three Nights		Two Nights				
Adults 16+	Children 10 - 15 Years		Children 5-9 Years		Children 2 - 4 Years		Infants Under 2 Years					
Two Night Weekend	Two Night Weekend		Two Night Weekend		Two Night Weekend		Two Night Weekend					
£110.00 pp	£60.00 pp		£40.00 pp		£20.00 pp		Free					
Three Night Weekend	Three Night Weekend		Three Night Weekend		Three Night Weekend		Three Night Weekend					
£130.00 pp	£80.00 pp		£50.00 pp		£25.00 pp		Free					

Deposit & Insurance Premiums
 I ENCLOSE THE REQUIRED DEPOSIT £.....IN TOTAL AT £20 PER PERSON
 BALANCE IN FULL TO BE PAID BY **1st SEPTEMBER 2012**
 PLEASE MAKE ALL CHEQUES PAYABLE TO **FBAS** THANK YOU
 INSURANCE TO COVER SICKNESS ONLY WITH A DOCTORS CERTIFICATE
 PREMIUM £..... IN TOTAL AT £4.50 PER PERSON
 FOR ALL PERSONS OVER 16 YEARS OLD.
 INSURANCE PREMIUMS MUST BE PAID AT THE TIME OF BOOKING
 REQUIRED / NOT REQUIRED
 SIGNATURE:.....Date:.....

DECLARATION

I HAVE READ THE CONDITIONS SET OUT ON THIS FORM AND AGREE ON BEHALF OF ALL PERSONS NAMED ABOVE TO ABIDE BY THESE CONDITIONS. I ACCEPT THE CHARGES FOR THE ACCOMMODATION AND AGREE TO PAY THE BALANCE BY THE 1ST SEPTEMBER 2012
 SIGNATURE.....

Please return the completed form with your deposit or full amount whichever is applicable to:
 Grace Nethersell, 8 Acacia Avenue, Brentford, Middlesex, TW8 8NR.
 Telephone: 020 8847 3586

Festival of Fishkeeping

supported by



Sand Bay, Weston-super-Mare 26-28th October 2012

To some, it must have felt that the ending of the Festival of Fishkeeping at Sand Bay last year never happened for immediately afterwards planning swung into action for this year's event.

Obviously, with 2011 being our first time back at Sand Bay after an interval of several years, we needed to re-acquaint ourselves with the location and take into account any changes that had been made in our absence. As those who attended the event will have discovered, things went extremely smoothly and the re-arrangement of the marquee-covered exhibition areas from their previous design resulted in a much more intimate atmosphere for the many aquatics attractions on display.

We can report that, as you can see from the heading on this page, we have been very fortunate in attracting good encouragement from our friends in the Trade and the number of supporting Companies has risen, with the notable inclusion of Watermarque from Taunton. Visitors will remember the excellent selection of fish that they brought along and will be on the lookout for more of the same later this year.

Always one to play it cool, the event's Organiser, Joe Nethersell, says that there are other innovations in the pipeline one of which will hopefully include a 'hands on' Competition with a difference.

With the rising popularity of 'nano' tanks we are planning to stage a Furnished Nano Aquarium feature that will be open to 'Ladies Only' – let's see if they can beat the men at their own game! Watch this space, and the FBAS website, for developing news on this topic.

Also, just for this year, we are building up the excitement to stage the 'Final Round' of the Olympic Classes from Societies' Open Shows (see elsewhere in this issue).

All in all, things look good for the Festival, so don't miss out on reserving your accommodation by the end of March, when the accommodation options held by previous residents expire. With the weekend being shared by our Coach-driving friends, you will need to make sure of your place at the Festival without delay

You can download a Booking form from the FBAS website and Grace Nethersell will be delighted to process your bookings just as soon as you can get them to her!

Full details of the Festival and accommodation reservations from:

Grace Nethersell on 020 8847 3586 or gracenethersell@gmail.com



www.martynleisurebreaks.co.uk



FROM THE 2012 CHAIRMAN OF THE J & S

Hello all, I'm Keith !!! ...

As some of you probably know by now I have been asked to Chair, and form, the Judges & Standards Committee for 2012.

It's a great honour to be asked and one that I have accepted.

I would like to thank Peter Cottle who has held the position for a number of years and done an excellent job with his vast experience and knowledge ..thanks Pete. Also I would like to thank all his Committee for the positions they held, and for the work they have done.

The Judges that I have asked to join me on my Committee are all well known to all: Colin Pannell, Paul Corbett, Alan Stevens, Les Pearce all past members of the J & S. There is a new member in Dave Nice and I have asked Bob Esson to take on the post of Secretary again.

Myself, I have been a Federation A Class Judge since June 1980, where have the last 32 years gone? I live in Ipswich, and was involved for many years with the now defunct Suffolk Aquarists and Pondkeepers Association. I am now the Secretary of Norwich AS and also their FBAS Delegate.

Over the years I have made many friends in the aquatic hobby and would like to thank them for the support that was shown over my car accident way back last August. I am still having treatment and still not driving, it's a good job I am old enough to have a bus pass!!

I hope that support for the Open Shows continue to increase, and that the new Olympic Classes get well supported.

Good luck and best wishes to you all for a great 2012.

Keith Cocker, Chairman J & S

New to You?

The nexx Step in Filtration

No, not a 'typo' in the heading, but actually the name of a new filtration system from the Aquarium Pharmaceuticals-Aquarian-Rena group.

Described as an 'Evolution in Filtration' this new external filtration system certainly attracts attention both from its visual impact and from its possibilities as an extendable system.

Intriguingly, servicing and adding/removing additional sections can be made without interrupting the action of the filter. This is made possible by clever 'pipework' connections and not having any motor within the filter body itself.



This is the basic module, containing two filter media-equipped canisters.

The input and output connectors can be seen as yellow plugs at the base. The yellow handle at the top serves to lock the lids to the removable filter sections.



Water is pumped from the aquarium through hoses from what can be best described as a mini-pond pump sitting in the main tank.

Here's how the system gets extended. You simply plug consecutive units together!

Each unit's base acts as a connecting cradle and the water flows to and from each unit in a parallel fashion. Each unit can be 'unplugged' from its cradle whilst still in use with no spillage of water occurring. Should the units become clogged a bypass allows water to continue back to the main tank



This is a view of an actual set-up *in situ* beneath a large aquarium.

Water is fed down from the tank and back up to it by unobtrusive pipework from the rear of the cabinet.

In the foreground, a new pair of filter inserts can be seen. The handle has been rotated by 90° to facilitate removal of each unit.

Within each section there is a custom-designed clip-on 'basket that contains the filter media module of your choice.

Obviously with this extendable flexibility, you can use quite a varied range of filter media all at the same time.



For full details of the nexx Filter, please visit:
<http://aquariumpharm.com>



Kevin's Kapers or Man on a Mission

by Kevin King,
Hounslow & D.A.S.

At present, there appears to be a considerable number of nano tanks flooding the aquatic market, the Fluval 'Edge' springs to mind.

I love the idea of these tiny biotopes especially with space and affordability at such a premium these days.



Just before Christmas, whilst passing my local florist, I noticed some really unique lantern candle holders. They were pagoda style, well-decorated in natural wood with oriental fretwork trellis top and bottom along all four sides. Even unpainted, the lanterns looked a bit special and I saw immediately the fishy potential and a smart project in the making,

There were two different designs on display, the taller one tapered towards the top, which was a bit of a shame it didn't allow the potential of installing a tank within, the smaller design, however, would prove ideal as it was square with a suitable hinged lid. I paid rather begrudgingly £35 quid for the lantern and struggled home with it dangling from the handlebars of my mountain bike - thankfully the journey was short and without incident

Later at home I removed the spiked candle-holder from the base and slid out the plastic sides and set about how to enhance the exterior.

Not wishing to digress from the Chinese theme, I opted for primary colours, red, black and gold with a hint of gold for luxury, this should work well.



A quick scour of the shed revealed that I already had these colours in gloss so all I needed to buy was the gold! The first pot I purchased did not have the desired effect being too 'coppery' so I later changed it for a brighter type in the Revel range. My son Morgan enjoyed helping me paint the exterior and despite a few spillages, between us we managed to accomplish a satisfactory finish!

I happened to have a tube light fitting and lamp that I had previously purchased; the tube light needed re-wiring in order for it to be fitted into the underside of the hood but the task did not prove too technical.

The (cabinet) hood had four bored-out holes in the roof which bled out light as mini-spotlights so to remedy this I simply painted red gloss onto some A4 paper, laminated it and cut into strips and glued them over the holes in the roof; being behind the fretwork, it also gave things a nice warm glow.

The size of tank needed to occupy the cabinet was not standard, the cabinet being 26" x 9" requiring the tank to be made to measure. It was time to call on the expert services of Brian Chittenden at Spa Glass - he supplies professionally-built show tanks of all shapes and sizes. I phoned him up with the dimensions and he duly obliged; at the end of January, my long-suffering wife and I travelled up by train from London to Leamington Spa and collected the tank which had been equipped with sliding glass lids and even a hole drilled into one of the ledges to accommodate an air line tube.

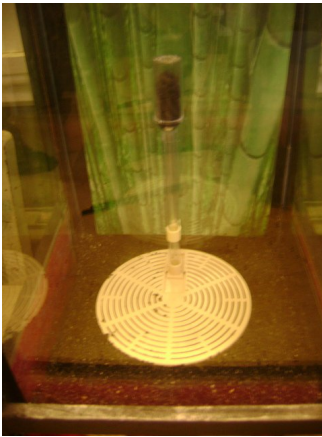
Although I had double-checked the measurements, I was still apprehensive as to whether it would fit in the cabinet - luckily it did and I was soon eagerly contemplating the interior, with 'contemplate' being the operative word as I had already had some strong ideas as regards the décor.

Being fairly new to keeping Shrimp I had learned that the Chinese have recently started to keep, breed and show their native freshwater Shrimps in a manner pretty much similar to the way the Japanese deal with their Koi, and many of the Shows and exhibitions can be viewed on line on YouTube if one knows where to search.



In terms of materials I already had the required resin Buddha which would be my central theme. However, a few test runs proved it to be on too small a scale so I was forced to buy a more suitable-sized one on eBay.

In keeping with the style, I planned to use green bamboo for the backdrop. As we had a pot full of bamboo growing in our front garden a few clippings later supplied just enough!



Not wishing to clutter up the space with an internal power filter, I opted for a simple but effective undergravel Goldfish bowl filter purchased on-line for around £5. The uplift pipe comes equipped with a handy disposable cartridge containing carbon granules which will be handy for maintaining water quality. Placing this on the bare tank bottom, I added some mature filter medium consisting of porous ceramic rings which, according to the advertising, increases the surface area for maximum helpful bacterial colonisation.

On top of this I added 4" of black gravel which I had been given free for helping out at the last Olympia Fish keeping Exhibition. Some tiny clay pots would be home to some Marimo Moss Balls which are native flora to Chinese rivers and bob about in turbulent water – I always adopt the phrase 'A Rolling Moss gathers No Stones' whenever I see these, but in this case some cocktail sticks pushed through helps secure them into their pots making them look like manicured topiary bushes.

The minimal space left dictated that a slow growing hardy plant such as Java Fern should add a little Eastern Promise, so I duly added a couple of rooted sprigs stolen from my wife's 4ft tank These were planted either side of the Buddha in order to hide the view of the filter's uplift pipe.

I then added a couple of Endlers to speed up the maturing process with the view of adding the Shrimps at a later date.



All in all, this has proved a worthwhile project and all that have seen it approve.



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NW CICHLID GROUP Auction	4/3/12
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SHEAF VALLEY A.S. Auction	11/3/12
CATFISH STUDY GROUP Convention	16-18 th /3/12
GOLDFISH SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN AGM	17/3/12
BIRTLEY A.S. Open Show & Auction CANCELLED	18/3/12
BRITISH LIVEBEARER ASSOCIATION Auction	25/3/12
MID-SUSSEX A.S. Open Show	1/4/12
KIRKCALDY A.S. Open Show & Auction	1/4/12
SOLWAY A.S. AUCTION	1/4/12
WEST LONDON KILLIFISH Auction	15/4/12
WASHINGTON A.S.P. Open Show & Auction	15/4/12
GT MANCHESTER CICHLID SOCIETY Auction	15/4/12
CATFISH STUDY GROUP Meeting	15/4/12
CASTLEFORD A.S. Open Show and Auction	22/4/12
HOUNSLOW & D.A.S. Bring 'n Buy	25/4/12
PORTSMOUTH A.S. Open Show	29/4/12
B.C.A. CONVENTION DAY	6/5/12
GOLDFISH SOCIETY GREAT BRITAIN Meeting	12/5/12
LONDON PET SHOW, EARLS COURT TWO	12-13/5/12
CORBY & D.A.S. Open Show	13/5/12
RYEDALE A.S. Fun Day	13/5/12
CATFISH STUDY GROUP Meeting	20/5/12
GLENROTHES A.S. Open Show & Auction	20/5/12
S.T.A.M.P.S. Open Show & Auction	20/5/12
SOUTHEND, L & D.A.S. Open Show	26/5/12
FBAS ASSEMBLY 2pm (tel:01424 431016)	2/6/12
B.K.A. Charity Auction	3/6/12
BRACKNELL A.S. Open Show	10/6/12
DERWENTSIDE A.S. Auction	10/6/12
SHEAF VALLEY A.S. Evening Auction	11/6/12
CATFISH STUDY GROUP Meeting	17/6/12
A.M.G.K. (Goldfish) Open Show & Auction	23/6/12
UNION OF SCOTTISH AQUARISTS Open Show & Auction	24/6/12
FBAS MIDDLESEX Open Show	1/7/12
WEST LOTHIAN A.S. Auction	1/7/12
YAAS OPEN SHOW	1/7/12

N.W.CICHLID GROUP Auction	1/7/12
GOLDFISH SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN Meeting	7/8/12
CATFISH & LOACH Show and Auction	8/7/12
N.E.GOLDFISH SOCIETY Open Show	15/7/12
N.E.Y.G.B.K.A. Killifish Show & Auction	15/7/12
CATFISH STUDY SOCIETY Meeting	15/7/12
SOLWAY A.S. Tri-Specialist Show	15/7/12
S.C.C.R.S. Open Show	15/7/12
PORT TALBOT A.S. Open Show	21/7/12
CLUB 2000 Open Show & Auction	29/7/12
GT MANCHESTER CICHLID SOCIETY Auction	5/8/12
FRIENDS OF YORKSHIRE Open Show & Auction	12/8/12
PERTH A.S. Open Show & Auction	12/8/12
THREE COUNTIES A.S. Open Show	12/8/12
CASTLEFORD AS. Auction 7.30pm	15/8/12
BRISTOL A.S. (GOLDFISH) Open Show	18/8/12
CATFISH STUDY GROUP Meeting	19/8/12
DERWENTSIDE A.S. Open Show	26/8/12
FBAS ASSEMBLY 2pm (tel:01424 431016)	1/9/12
NORTHERN GOLDFISH & P.S. Open Show	8/9/12
FED. SCOTTISH A.S. Auction	9/9/12
RYEDALE A.S. Open Show & Auction	9/9/12
HOUNSLOW & D.A.S. Open Show NEW VENUE	15/9/12
CATFISH STUDY GROUP Open Show & Auction	16/7/12
GOLDFISH SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN Open Show	22/9/12
PRESTON & D.A.S. Convention	23/9/12
BASINGSTOKE A.S. Open Show	23/9/12
FAIR CITY A.S. Open Show & Auction	30/9/12
GT MANCHESTER CICHLID SOCIETY Auction	30/9/12
SHEAF VALLEY A.S. Open Show Auction	30/9/12
BKA CONVENTION	5-7/10/12
SCOTTISH AQUARIST FESTIVAL	7/10/12
BRITISH LIVEBEARERS ASSOCIATION Convention	11-14/10/12
KIRKALDY A.S. Auction	14/10/12
CATFISH STUDY GROUP Meeting	21/10/12
S.T.A.M.P.S. Auction	21/10/12
FESTIVAL OF FISHKEEPING	26-28/10/2012
BIRTLEY A.S. Auction	4/11/12
N.W. CICHLID GROUP	4/11/12
AQUATICS LIVE! Olympia	10-11/11/12
BRADFORD A.S. Open Show & Auction	11/11/12
S.C.C.R.S. Auction	11/11/12

CASTLEFORD A.S. Auction 7.30pm
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CATFISH STUDY GROUP Christmas Party
HOUNSLOW & D.A.S. Christmas Party

21/11/12
1/12/2012
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