



FEDERATION OF BRITISH AQUATIC SOCIETIES

BULLETIN

Autumn 2013

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by FISHKEEPERS
for FISHKEEPERS



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Contents

EDITORIAL	4
FLUVAL GOES MARINE	5
A NEW TAKE ON AN OLD SUBJECT	9
BUILDING A POND FOR KOI	12
KNOW WHO YOUR FRIENDS ARE	16
A COLOURFUL PAIR OF <i>Apistogramma?</i>	17
FISH HOUSE DIARIES	19
NEW MAGAZINE	23
SOS – LONDON ZOO AQUARIUM	25
BOB ESSON	26
ASK US	27
A NEW CLUB BECKONS	28
THE GREEN CORNER	29
KNOW YOUR FISH – <i>Vaillantella maassi</i>	30
IF YOU CAN'T STAND THE HEAT	31
OUT & ABOUT: TROPICA	37
EAT IT, OR KEEP IT?	39
SURGEONFISH – LOVED TO DEATH	40
FESTIVAL OF FISHKEEPING	45
SHOWS & EVENTS	49

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

Produced for FBAS website by Dick Mills

Cover Picture: Rainbow Shiner, *Notropis chrosomus*



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EDITORIAL

I trust that you and your fishes survived the very hot weather that we 'enjoyed' since our last issue. Spare a thought for our President, who endured daily temperatures of between 110-120°F in a recent holiday in Arizona! His excuse to escape the heat was to seek sanctuary in a Sea Life centre in downtown Phoenix. It's a tough job, but someone's got to do it.

Whilst I haven't been able to get to many Open Shows this year (including my own Society's!), reports suggest that entries are slightly down overall, but I was very pleased to see that Leicester kicked off with their first Open Show for 20 years with entries topping 350.

This shows that putting a Show on, in the right geographical area (and publicising it on the social networks) does pay dividends. We all have to work as hard as we can, using every facility at our disposal to keep the interest in our hobby alive.

Just look at me – I'm even resorting to 'pen and paper' (well, nearly) to get this message across.

Hope to meet many of you at the Festival of Fishkeeping 'Down on the Farm!'

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FLUVAL GOES MARINE

February marked the launch of a premier new range of aquarium products aimed at novice and serious marine aquarists alike. This remarkably high quality line of merchandise for salt water aquariums was introduced by Rolf C Hagen as an extension of their well established Fluval core aquatic brand and marketed simply as 'Fluval SEA'.

It's a really welcome addition to the Fluval range offering an entirely, newly developed array of aquatic solutions for all marines enthusiasts whilst reflecting the same attention to quality and good design expected from the Fluval brand.

A high quality series of pumps dedicated for marine use and a highly effective protein skimmer are just two examples of what's on offer coupled with consumable items such as a premium mix of pro-formula marine and reef salt and a comprehensive line of marine liquid supplements adding to the mix.

Perhaps the most exciting feature of the Fluval SEA collection is a range of Marine & Reef Performance LED strip lighting incorporating an LED spectral combination which equals a complete multi-spectrum lighting solution for marine and reef aquarists.

There are two main considerations when the spectral quality of the light in a marine aquarium is decided.

The first is to provide the spectral quality that is optimal for life in the aquarium and the second the spectral value that is best for human observation.

The Fluval LED lamps provide a balanced combination of six unique LED band widths including actinic blue wave lengths for full spectrum coverage. This provides key spectral reinforcement to allow a balanced combination for optimal coral photosynthetic activity for growth and for viewing.

Incorporated in each LED lamp are wave bands in the visible spectrum for normal human sight ranging from violet at 400 nm (measured on a nanometer scale) to red at 600 nm. This includes the green - yellow range of 500 - 600 nm where the eye sees the best and brightest colours. Colours appear 'most normal' to us when light is rich with wavelengths within this range. The best wavebands to promote strong coral growth and colour, on the other hand, are linked to the light waves which encourage photosynthesis, the key being the absorption of light by chlorophyll which has strong peaks in the ranges 400 - 450 nm and 600 - 650 nm. These bands are both strongly represented as also are blue - green light band waves in the 400 - 550 nm range which are dominant at depths where corals occur in nature.

The spectral combination available from the Fluval LED lights is therefore ideal and these lamps must rank amongst the best in spectral quality lighting terms for a marine aquarium, available at the present time. For those unfamiliar with LED lighting it's worthwhile taking a closer look at the use of this relatively new introduction for aquarium lighting.

LEDs are tiny light emitting diodes that, unlike other more conventional forms of lighting which emit light from a vacuum or gas, are solid in form.



The Fluval LED lighting strips have 312 LEDs in the smallest units and are rated at 25 watts, measuring 61cm - 85cm (24" - 34"), 504 LEDs in 35 watts rated units measuring 91cm - 115cm (36" - 46") and 692 LEDs in each of the 46 watt units designed for tanks 122cm - 145cm (48" - 57").

These tiny LED diodes are highly resistant to shock and wear, having a life of up to 50,000 hours, equating to around ten years normal use, combined with little significant deterioration in light output and spectral quality. With such an extended life over more conventional lighting it's not surprising that Fluval LED lighting strips offer considerable economies in running costs by comparison with other non LED aquarium lighting systems.



A further welcome consequence of turning to LED lighting are savings in energy terms resulting from increased efficiencies built into the LED technology. Compared to more conventional lighting systems, LEDs deliver a much higher useable and visible output of light per unit of energy consumed. This means that more than 33% more illumination can be provided watt for watt by comparison, for example, with fluorescent light sources.

In looking at savings by comparison with conventional aquarium lighting systems, the benefits from LED lighting being cool running in operation, with minimal heat transfer to the aquarium, should also not be overlooked. Installing LED lighting can overcome the need for fan cooling a marine aquarium on a regular basis for more than half of each year.

Furthermore often, during the summer months, conventional lighting hood cooling fans are not sufficient and a cooler is required. The power uptake on some coolers can be up to 150 watts or more plus a further 40 watts for the circulation pump so choosing LEDs as an alternative can provide a considerable energy saving.

Yet another advantage of Fluval LED lighting system is that installation also could not be cheaper or easier.

A versatile selection of mounting options from simple extendable brackets (included with the light) which attach the strips directly on to the end walls of the tank, to mounting within the aquarium cabinet with clips or on suspension wires using fittings available separately. It takes little effort therefore to install these LED lamps and arrange powerful day and night illumination, there, at the touch of a switch, using the three convenient settings; day, night and off; on each LED strip. Recently I have been putting a set of Fluval SEA LED strips through their paces installed in a metre-long, fully established reef tank which has been used as a test bench for testing marine lighting over an extended period.

An initial observation was the significant increase in the light intensity by comparison with the LED lighting system from a major manufacturer which I had previously installed and maintained over the past year. This confirmed that the Fluval strips offer light intensity well in line with the up to 45 lumens per watt advertised and 30% more illumination, for example, than produced by high intensity fluorescent light sources.

The even, uniform light distribution incorporating full spectral coverage and key reinforcement to provide a balanced combination for optimal coral photosynthetic activity appears to be also better achieved with the newly installed Fluval strips. Light sensitive invertebrates including soft and hard corals and various types of colonial anemones reacted very positively with obvious signs of improvement in health and coloration. The signs are that the Fluval SEA Marine and Reef LED strip lights are a sound and superior product and I look forward to continuing this trial.



A complimentary LED lighting system is also available for nano marine systems using the Nano Marine Reef Performance LED lamp. This 14 watt lamp is in tablet form measuring 14cm - 15.5cm (5.5" - 6") and operates using 156 LEDs, again featuring a balanced combination of LEDs including essential actinic wavelengths.

Like larger LED models there are options for day and night illumination and the lamp can be adjusted, front to back by loosening the adjusting screws and sliding, plus the lamp bracket can be swiveled to the side during aquarium maintenance. This lamp is ideal for a nano marine system and meets the optimal photosynthetic requirements for coral supporting growth and colour.

Lighting for marine systems has, up to the present, been something of a thorny problem in making the correct choice for a marine tank or reef system.

The Fluval range of marine and reef performance LED lamps can, however, take away a lot of the guesswork and difficulties marines enthusiasts encounter in choosing a winning lighting combination, and provides an ideal solution.



For many fishkeepers, especially exhibitors, making your own made-to-measure tanks is both desirable and terrifying the same time.

The thought of cutting glass is extremely daunting to those who are mindful of what can go wrong, never mind the apparent years of practice (and confidence) needed to achieve just the right result. Then there's the added problem of obtaining the raw material and transporting it home all in one piece before you actually summon up enough courage to make the first cut!

Once the initial pieces of glass have been cut (are they square and 'safe-edged?') then gluing the panels together is almost child's play thanks to silicone-sealant.

However, I came across something new at this year's Bracknell Open Show and saw new possibilities and hope for the future of d-i-y show tanks.

As you can see from the heading picture, the tank is elegant and light-weight. Probably you've already guessed it's made from perspex, a material which is easily obtained, easily workable and simply glued together.

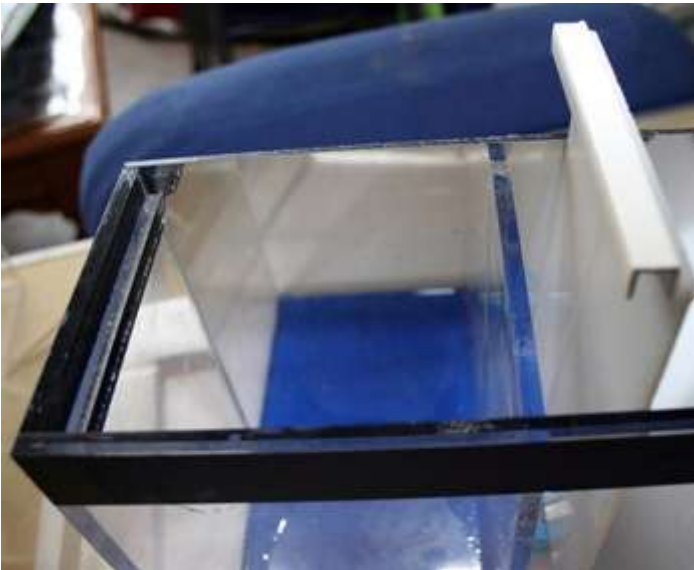
Its maker, Bracknell member Laurence Stevens, is to be congratulated on a fine piece of work, but he admitted that he's in a bit of a privileged position to start with; being employed by a shopfitting company, he has easy access not only to the raw materials (waste 'off-cuts') but also highly-sophisticated machinery that makes high-quality, straight-edge cutting a doddle.

The secret of a good quality finish depends hugely on the quality of the tools used – and on their regular maintenance. The costly perspex-cutting blade on the bench-saw is luckily resharpenable, as it blunts fairly quickly!

One of Laurence's speciality pieces was produced for the Anabantoid Association of Great Britain – who needed show tanks to certain specifications



Not surprisingly, the tank is designed for the multi-presentation of Siamese Fighting Fish and is a masterpiece of design.



Each compartment has a removable blanking panel, to isolate the fish's view of its next door neighbour.

For fishes from the same owner (needing the same water) a tiny gap under each vertical dividing panel

and the tank base can be left during construction to allow a common water circulation.



Another trick of the trade when sticking panels together is to use the minimum amount of adhesive – just try spotting the ‘glue’ in the above picture; a syringe comes in handy, as well as a very steady hand!

The adhesive (actually a solvent, rather than a glue), known as PK 1, is generally available from perspex suppliers. Like aquarium silicone-sealant, care and attention to safety details during use are vital, as eye and skin contact is detrimental as is inhalation in any substantial degree.

You can deduce from all of this that, armed with a medium that is totally manageable, there should be no end to the types of tanks you could make; paradoxically, Laurence says the hardest ones to make are those of small dimensions, particularly when it comes to manipulating the syringe in a small space.

Now, if ever there was a case of ‘Think Big’ being totally justified, this is it!

Thanks to Laurence Stevens, Bracknell A.S. and to the AAGB for permission to use this material.



Koi are large fish, often growing to and even larger. So these fish require plenty of swimming space. So when I was asked to build a pond local to where I live, I thought great. On meeting this fellow who showed me his small pond that already had about half a dozen Koi in it I felt this was going to be easy.

This fellow was big, in fact he was a bouncer by trade who worked most evenings; oh yes, his wife was also a bouncer so everything in their life had to be big also - in fact, the pond had to be close on the size of a small swimming pool! They wanted it to be 5ft deep with 3ft in the ground and 2ft above ground level.

The pond was designed with a top pond for housing marginal plants, the water that was pumped into it and flowed off a slab forming a waterfall into the main pond. No way was I going to be able to dig this out by hand, with a finishing depth of 3ft you needed to remove earth to a least 4ft deep.

Those who know Buckinghamshire earth know it's full of flint, so I hired a small sit-on excavator and the earth was taken away by skips. We also felt two large shelves were required, that would take full-size Lily baskets, wide enough so the Koi would not knock them off.

My bouncer friend went to a local water garden specialist, chatted to the staff and got all the advice he needed and, like so many, he ordered it all off the internet! I sure was not going to tell him that it was not the right thing to do, however with my 10% discount and taking in mind the cost including the liner I would have had a couple of hundred pounds at the start. As you can see by the photos it took about 6 weeks from start to finish and I hope this explains just some of the stages that will take you to get to the finished pond.



1. Excavations complete with wire reinforcements



2. In goes cement, with the help of my "Bouncer Friend"



3. Give plenty of time for concrete to set



4. Building of marginal plant area



5. Breeze blocks in place leaving room to back-fill with cement



6. Cemented shelves for lily baskets to stand on



7. Building up sides by an extra 2ft.



8. Bricklaying the outer wall (note wire ties)



9. Liners in, planting marginal plants. 10. Filter and skimmer in place.



Why put in a liner when you have concreted the pond with the help of breeze blocks etc? Well, you have to be sure its watertight, plus to stop impurities coming out of the new cement you have to use a special sealant, like a clear lacquer, and it would cost a lot of money for this size pond.



11. Inside skimmer (workings).



12. Pumps in place and working.



13. Finished marginal area showing waterfall.



14. Complete view down the pond.



15. This looks like a happy owner showing pump controls.

Although they live a tough life, they were a really nice couple - plenty of cups of tea - and, yes, I did get paid!

They were very pleased with the end result.

FOOTNOTE Although I have never been back to see how the pond is going today, I understand they have since built a giant framework over the entire pond, based on a Japanese-style feature.



**YOU
REALLY
NEED TO
KNOW
WHO YOUR
FRIENDS
ARE!**

There are some sharp wits out there, and none are exercised more so than after judging has finished.



Seen at Bracknell's Open Show this year, this display of Judging Sheets brought the following remark:

“I see they’ve got a Trainee Judge in today!”



A very colourful *Apistogramma* pair – but what exactly had I bought?

It was the evening when Hounslow A.S. along with other Societies were invited to an "open evening" at Wholesale Tropical in Bethnal Green.

I looked at so many tanks, many with fish that I would like to take home, A small tank with some Dwarf Cichlids in caught my eye, they had fantastic colours and so I decided to purchase a pair. I immediately thought they must be some type of Cockatoo Dwarf Cichlid.



Even with the best references in the literature and online, I still had problems pinning down a definite name on them.



Apistogramma cacuatooides (above) is the original 'Cockatoo' but subsequently other equally colourful *Apistogramma* species such as *A. macmasteri* (right) have been associated with the common name.

Eventually, I decided it was a toss-up between *Apistogramma njisseni* or *Apistogramme panduro* (even these were listed as 'pandurini' in some places!



The real clincher came with the female - yellow-bodied, with smudgy, black markings – just like a 'Panda!'

It has a wide range of habitat comprising the upper Amazon drainage, including the Rio Ucayali system in Peru and a number of headwaters up to the Colombian border. This fish was first described in 1951 a time when methods of communication were not as advanced as they are today. So this species was incorrectly named as *Apistogramma borellii*, an error that one still occasionally encounters today.

These fish are found in soft alkaline waters but the pair I have are in tap water and have settled in and look healthy; young fish are often able to adapt better to different water conditions than more adult species.

They spawn in small caves and under rocks amid the leaf litter that forms within the sandy gravel of their natural habitat. So, in your aquarium half terracotta flower pots placed on their sides are ideal, added to this some leaf litter will give a more natural Biotope effect and help your fish feel more at home. When trying to breed these fish you will need the softest of water conditions and very acid.

It was said these fish live in the softest water in the upper Rio Orinoco drainage system that was ever tested. In spite of such extreme water parameters these fish have repeatedly been successfully bred in captivity.

The female deposits the eggs on the underside of your cave (half flower pot) after which they are fertilized by the male. The female alone guards the eggs, while the male is responsible for the defence of the territory.

The eggs hatch into a larvae within about 60 hours, and once the larvae are free from the egg shells the entire brood is transferred into a small pit inside the cave.

At this stage the larvae still have their yolk-sac and only after this form of food is used up do the fry become free-swimming, in all 8 to 9 days after initial spawning.

At this time they are led out of the cave by the female and the young will start feeding on newly-hatched Brine Shrimp. In the first few days it is a good idea to blow quantities of brine shrimp via a pipette directly in front of the fry to make the food more readily accessible.

The Rio Orinoco have not as yet been fully investigated and more surprises are sure to be discovered.

Hans J. Mayland Dieter Bork M.L. Goss
Photos: Malcom. Goss, Dick Mills



THE FISHHOUSE DIARIES

Of course there are things within your normal Fish-house that have to be maintained either on a daily or weekly basis. I have skipped over the normal chores and have highlighted more important changes and items that may interest you.

Dick, Peter and myself went to Brighton one evening (after helping with the stand at London Pet Show) to give a talk (all 3 of us!) on setting up a furnished tank to their more novice members.



A member was wishing to sell a super 4ft aquarium light unit. I knew it would be ideal for the rainforest tank I am setting up.



Remember me collecting snow so the set up would be full of soft water? This is my idea of eliminating those water-level lines of calcium that you get with tap water. Yes this is my on-going project that I seem to be taking ages to achieve.

9th June. At last I have a chance to see if that lighting unit works, a bit late in the day if it doesn't!

It has 5 tubes working off of two 13amp plugs, I put these into two separate sockets. Here we go Great! They all work!



All I have to do is fit them over the tank and run two more sockets to take the plugs, as I disconnected other light sockets to try the unit out.

23rd June. Back to cleaning the fighter tanks by taking them down so I can clean the tanks and their dividing glasses.



I have tried to spawn two female Cambodia's, but they have killed about 4 males already even though they show all the signs of wanting to spawn.

29th June Doing all the usual, water changes, scraping the front glass, lots of algae now at this time of year.

6th July. Weather really getting hot now, temperature in the fish house 32°C even with the outside door open.

Now the garden plants have gone into the garden I have more room,



however I still keep Cucumber and Pepper plants in the fish house plus



one indoor plant with a fascinating flower that has a fantastic perfume in the evening.

10th August I am off to visit my son in Denmark for a week, so carrying out water changes and checking the filters is a whole weekend's job before I go!.



As you can see my electric blue Jack Dempsey's are still growing, maybe I will be able to show them next season?

9th August With going to visit my son in Denmark for 8 days it has taken me two days to clean all the filters and do water changes. Although I have no-one to check or feed the fish I DO NOT FEED ANY EXTRA JUST BECAUSE I AM AWAY FROM HOME.

21st August. Now back home and my first chance to see how the fish are. What a plonker! I had left the lights on three of the tanks, 24 hours for eight days - no wonder they are swimming with sunglasses on!



NEW MAGAZINE ON THE BLOCK

It's not every day a new aquatic magazine appears, and as the demise of several of our favourite titles have left a bit of a void in recent years, it's good to be able to report that a new title has emerged to take its place on newsagents' shelves.

Edited by David Alderton, author of the Encyclopedia of Aquarium & Pond Fish, this new publication will appear every other month and is aimed at beginners to the hobby.

First impressions are of a vibrantly-produced, visually-attractive style, with information clearly packaged with an easy-to-read approach.

A broad spectrum of interests has been chosen and includes introductions to some popular fish species on one hand, whilst branching out to the keeping of aquatic reptiles, shrimps and even painting portraits of your aquarium on the other. There is one caveat – the editor explains that this is a magazine of freshwater-related animals, so those expecting marine species will be advised to look elsewhere.

Keen to develop the human side of fishkeeping, reporter Caroline Impey has been entrusted with the task of uncovering *your* reasons for taking up the hobby, especially where it is used as a therapy for the disabled, the house-bound or other disadvantaged people. Her plea for your fish stories is published below.

With its fresh look, almost non-technical language, this new venture should break through the mystique that established fishkeepers seem to have erected around themselves, and do much to attract much-needed newcomers into this wonderful hobby.

Popular Fish Keeping is published bi-monthly by:

Kelsy Publishing Group, Cudham Tithe Barn,
Berry's Hill, Cudham, Kent TN16 3AG

Tel: 01959 541444

Editor's email: pf.ed@kelsy.co.uk

Would you like to be in *Popular Fish Keeping* magazine?

I'm a writer for *Popular Fish Keeping* magazine and I write the column called Me and My Fish.

Each issue the column will feature a different fish-keeper and their thoughts about their hobby: Why they choose to keep fish, what their fish mean to them, what they have learned, what they enjoy, the problems they face and any tips they think would help others.

Perhaps looking after your aquarium helps you deal with stress. Perhaps you live in a flat or you are allergic to furry pets. Maybe you've made new friends through your hobby.

Maybe you have a disability. Perhaps your children have recently left home. Or maybe you took up fish-keeping following a bereavement.

Perhaps you show your fish. Perhaps you have just two goldfish which bring you joy. Or maybe your aquarium is now the biggest thing in your lounge.

Whatever your story and whether you're experienced or just starting out, I'd love to hear from you. We can of course promote an association/club/event/charity/cause or business if we feature your story.

You can email me on carolineimpey@hotmail.com or call me on 07965 812 291.

SOS !

FROM LONDON ZOO AQUARIUM

Aquarists at ZSL London Zoo are launching an urgent worldwide appeal to find a female mate for the last remaining males of a critically endangered fish species.



The Mangarahara Cichlid (*Ptychochromis insolitus*) is believed to be extinct in the wild, due to the introduction of dams drying up its habitat of the Mangarahara River in Madagascar. The two last known individuals residing in ZSL London Zoo's Aquarium are unfortunately both males.

The Curator of the Aquarium at ZSL London Zoo, Brian Zimmerman, along with Zurich Zoo in Switzerland, set about trying to find other Mangaraharan cichlids in zoos around the world, using international zoo and aquarium associations, but had no luck finding surviving females.

The team at ZSL London Zoo are now launching a desperate appeal for private aquarium owners, fish collectors, and hobbyists to come forward if they have, or know of, any females in existence, so that a vital conservation breeding programme can be started for the species.

Launching the appeal, Zimmennan said "The Mangarahara cichlid is shockingly and devastatingly facing extinction; its wild habitat no longer exists and as far as we can tell, only three males remain of this entire species."

"It might be too late for their wild counterparts, but if we can find a female, it's not too late for the species. Here at ZSL London Zoo we have two healthy males, as well as the facilities and expertise to make a real difference."

"We are urgently appealing to anyone who owns or knows someone who may own these critically endangered fish, which are silver in colour with an orange-tipped tail, so that we can start a breeding programme to bring them back from the brink of extinction."

ZSL London Zoo is asking anyone with information about the cichlids to email the team at fishappeal@zsl.org

Taken from a recent 'Something Fishy' Newsletter of Ilford & D & P S
www.ilfordaquarists.co.uk

Bob Esson

It was in 1964 that I meet Bob Esson when I joined Riverside A.S. that met at Blythe Hall in Hammersmith W.6 London.

In those early years I did not always see eye to eye with Bob as he always had strong ideas. I admired his talks on Furnish Aquaria and many of his tips on how to put together a winning aquaria that I still use today.

His other pet subject was Genetics and his talks on this subject I feel cannot be surpassed by any aquarist today. At the height of our organised hobby, Bob was the Federation's Chairman and his strong personality was needed at a time when so many other personalities also had their own strong ideas.

For me the work that Bob put into the writing of the Federations Booklet 11 on Aquatic Plants (National Standards & Technical Information 3rd edition), is a fitting tribute to him.

In recent years Bob and I become good friends and we shared the interest we both had in plants and Goldfish. Like so many of us Bob was a big part of our aquatic life, for me he will never be forgotten.

Malcolm Goss

The Federation thanks all those who sent in tributes to Bob



Ask Us

Q: Whilst I am not personally active in exhibiting my fish (I like what I like, and I'm generally satisfied with my progress as a fishkeeper) I do take an interest in seeing fish at Shows and learning how the results are arrived at. Can you explain the practical differences in judging aquarium fish and, say, Koi?

A: All 'aquarium fish' - tropical or coldwater, freshwater or marine – are judged similarly with only some slight variations in the Pointing Rules depending on which governing body is organising the event.

Fishes are benched in suitably-sized tanks and are visible sideways-on, through the front glass, giving the Judge an overall viewpoint of the fish, its appearance, condition and behaviour, according to species.

Koi, being bigger fish for a start, are exhibited in large semi-filled vats and are viewed from the top rather than from the side. Koi rely on their bright colours and recognisable patterns to identify them against the dark bottom of the pond from a viewpoint on the pond's bank. Hence most Koi patterning has been developed to appear in the upper and dorsal parts of the body. Of course, Judges need to see the complete fish, to check its fins and body condition, and they often inspect Koi by enclosing them temporarily in a floating open crate in the vat; this is particularly when Koi have to be physically measured to ensure they are exhibited in the correct Class for their size.

Another aspect that is most revealing is to see how fishes are transported to and from exhibitions. The care with which they are handled by their owners is a real education: heat-insulated boxes, double-bagging and even what position they are put into in the car can make all the difference between winning and losing.

A NEW CLUB BECKONS!

We are extremely pleased to bring you news of a new Society in the making.

SOUTHAMPTON & EASTLEIGH AQUARIST SOCIETY

held their inaugural meeting on Monday 10th June at

**The Good Companions Public House,
119 Leigh Road,
Eastleigh SO50 9DS**

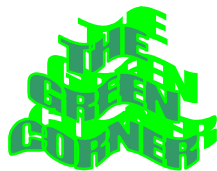
This will be the Society's regular meeting place and meetings will be on the **FIRST** and **THIRD WEDNESDAYS** of each month.

Anyone interested in fishkeeping in the area is welcome to come along and get acquainted with the founder members and help build up an active Society.

Alan Stevens, Council Member of the Federation of British Aquatic Societies, will be overseeing the proceedings, but it's YOUR VIEWS and ENTHUSIASM which will make this new venture a success.

How long will it take for S & E A.S. to make its mark on the fishkeeping scene? Look out for its members at Shows!

The area for aquatic plant-lovers



*A Rose Lily by
any other name*

It is not surprising that the two flowers shown above often get confused with each other, with their waxy, upturned trumpet like structure.

The plant on the right, *Zantedeschia aethiopica*, is regularly found in waterside locations and is popular as a marginal plant in ponds. The petals are an attractive heli-pad landing site for Damselflies. The common name for this plant is Arum Lily, with this variety 'Crowborough.'

The plant on the left is another moisture-loving, bog plant, *Calla palustris*, rejoicing in the common name 'Bog Arum. This is often seen in garden Centres as a decorative indoor plant rather than a pondside accessory.



KNOW YOUR FISH

Vaillantella maassi

Scientific name: *Vaillantella maassi*

Common name: Fork-Tail Loach, Spiny Eel Loach, Giant Scissortail Loach

Synonyms: *Vaillantella flavofasciata*

Distribution: Malaysia, Borneo and Brunei.

Maximum size: 6 inches (15cm).

Seen at the Hounslow Open Show this year, this Loach attracted a lot of attention both for its form and its outstanding colour – especially in late afternoon when it was bathed in sunshine.

Like any other bottom dweller it enjoys an ‘interesting’ substrate – leaf litter and maybe sand coupled with adjacent roots in which it can feel secure. Larger aquariums are preferable (so they can set up individual territories) and a good flow of well-filtered water suits them just fine.

Treat them similarly to any other physically-similar Loaches (Kuhlis, for instance) and supply a good diet of bloodworms and the usual fast-sinking granules or pellets so that they don’t miss out on the food.

In the absence of any breeding reports, we probably have to fall back on the usual guesswork of ‘fatter body = female’ and ‘brighter colours = male’ to determine the individual genders.



So there you are, stuck in an unfamiliar town with temperatures up around 120°F and you'd do almost anything to get some relief from the heat.



Fortunately, I came across the ideal solution in downtown Phoenix, Arizona recently.

Incorporated into one of the ubiquitous shopping malls – Arizona Mills, to be exact – a Sea Life Centre.

I lost no time in going in!



Whilst the first display features native local freshwater fishes (Sunfishes), this is the only acknowledgement to freshwater species in the Centre – after all, it is a *Sealife* Centre!

The rest of the displays concentrate on all things not only 'salty' but also artificial in the respect that, apart from one aquarium, all the decorative artifacts are man-made, is all the 'corals,' rocks etc.

Having said that, it was extremely pleasing to find that in this one "natural aquarium" a natural spawning of Banggai Cardinals had occurred but you had to look very hard to spot the youngsters swimming in the corals near to the water surface.



Many of the exhibits were displayed in large diorama-backed situations, although I'm not sure how many tropical marine lagoons were backed up by nearby cacti groves.



LOTS OF
COLOURFUL
FISHES TO
SEE



For the visiting aquarist these was plenty of things to see, the Jellyfish display featured several large cylindrical acrylic tanks each with housing numerous species, all kept moving by the circulating water currents and accompanied by popular rock music and ever-changing coloured lighting!

However fascinating the actual aquarium was, there was an added attraction of being able to take a guided tour 'behind the scenes' and gain an insight into what's involved in keeping a public aquarium up and running, 24 hours a day. Feeding such a diverse collection of species must surely present its own set of practical problems?



Brine Shrimp is a great food for young fish (we all know that), but there is a production line of hatchers to provide different sizes of brine Shrimp – newly-hatched, right up to adult – to suit all sizes of fish. Again, not all fish are piscivores or carnivorous so for these a diet of seaweed is on hand.

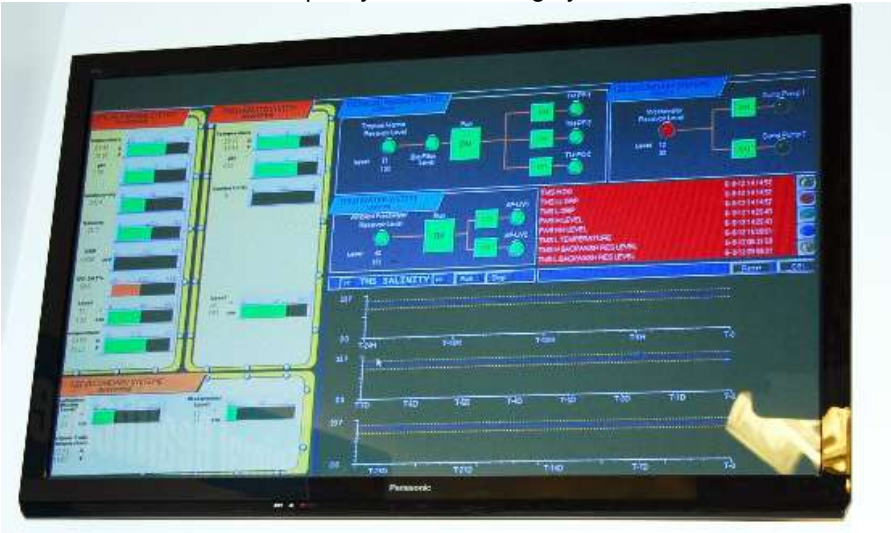


Then for the bigger fishes, portions or whole white fish are the order of the day.

FISH ORDER BOARD		Species	Quantity	Date	Time	Location	Notes
1	BRINE SHRIMP						
2	BRINE SHRIMP						
3	BRINE SHRIMP						
4	BRINE SHRIMP						
5	BRINE SHRIMP						
6	BRINE SHRIMP						
7	BRINE SHRIMP						
8	BRINE SHRIMP						
9	BRINE SHRIMP						
10	BRINE SHRIMP						
11	BRINE SHRIMP						
12	BRINE SHRIMP						
13	BRINE SHRIMP						
14	BRINE SHRIMP						
15	BRINE SHRIMP						
16	BRINE SHRIMP						
17	BRINE SHRIMP						
18	BRINE SHRIMP						
19	BRINE SHRIMP						
20	BRINE SHRIMP						

Keeping track on all the various menus demanded by the species held in the aquarium is organised by referring to this wall-chart, although I couldn't see any 'Specials Board!'

When it comes to water-quality, then it's a highly technical matter.



This large, constantly-updating read-out display gives information on every conceivable water condition you could imagine and, automatically alerts staff (wherever they may be – on-site or at home, 24 hours a day) as to what is exactly wrong and where.

Did you know that if sharks are exposed to too much oxygen in the water they roll back their eyes in the sockets and are very likely to vomit the whole contents of their stomachs?



It probably goes without saying that there is also a comprehensive health treatment area, loaded with microscopes and test equipment, where any ailing fish can get the very best of attention..

Not all problems can be attributed to ill-health; behavioural problems also occur of which the staff may not have met up with before, or perhaps something that has cropped up due to the animals being in captivity.

Special isolation quarters are set up to handle both the largest and the smallest 'trouble-makers.'



A typical case involved a Wobbegong, a species of Shark that looked peaceful enough as it lounged on the bottom of the display tank, apparently asleep. Unfortunately, other fish in the display seemed so fascinated by its 'whiskers' that they nibbled at them which, not surprisingly, made the Wobbegong a very anti-social species indeed leading to its incarceration in 'solitary' until other accommodation could be found for it.

A fascinating look at sealife, and I could have spent longer there, and not just because I couldn't face those outside temperatures.



BE WARNED!

'THE BROWNS' ARE ON THE MARCH.

APRIL (CENTRE) WITH BROTHERS PETER AND LUKE CELEBRATE THEIR SUCCESSES AT THE RECENT LEICESTER OPEN SHOW



The first time I came into contact with Tropica was at the Trade Show GLEE, held at the NEC, Birmingham. Their high-quality plants attracted me first and, by coincidence, was that they are based in Denmark, where my youngest son lives. The fellow on the stand was very knowledgeable about aquatic plants and when I told him my son lived in Denmark he invited me to call in on them when I was in Denmark next time.

Tropica is to the north of Denmark and can be very cold during the winter months, not the place you would expect to find an established tropical set up bearing in mind that our own Anglo Aquarium Plant Company in Enfield had to close their tropical plant houses down due to the high running cost in keeping the temperatures up to the required level.



Tropica is a paradise for plant lovers, however most of its visitors are trade retailers with their mind on retailing. The site consists of 11 large plant houses, most being 60 metres by 15. These cover a large area of 10,000 sq metres.



Holger Windelov is the owner who had the idea of a tropical plant reproduction business and is pleased when his customers recognise the effort put into producing the best plants for our aquariums.

There are over 150 species of plant available at any one time with 15 species of *Cryptocoryne* and countless quantities of *Echinodorus*. In many countries Holger says that many species of *Echinodorus* have disappeared and they are sending plants to these areas to be re-introduced.

One sees entire plant houses full of various species of *Anubias*, plants all varying in size and shape.



One plant house was completely darkened with sheeting. Here the long northern light of the summer is shortened to prevent *Samolus valerandi* from flowering prematurely.

When one sees these plants growing under these conditions you must face the fact that nine out of ten aquarium plants live both in and out of water (marsh conditions).

Within their natural habitat plants face a dry season when water levels of both streams and rivers fall. Plants are left standing in a damp bog and here, because of the better light - as opposed to being underwater - are supported by a rich soil built up during the floods that previously deposited river mud. The plants have no choice but to switch from submerge to emerge. When the rains come again, water levels in the streams and rivers rise, often by several metres within a few hours. The plants again have to adjust themselves to a lengthy period of submerged life.



Plants here are grown in similar simulated conditions and acquire the ability to re-adjust to life under water. In their natural habitat they use the hoarded food reserves during the transitional stages that help them form new leaf growth.



Tropica take on all these varying conditions so making the plants they grow to adjust to your aquarium conditions naturally.

Holger Windelov. DK 8530 Hjortshoj. Denmark

All photos by Michael Prasuhn

The Bulletin thanks Tropica for providing the information for this article.

For further information regarding Tropica and their products, please visit:

www.tropica.com/dk

EAT IT – OR KEEP IT?

It was some time ago that the Bulletin had published an article on *Pangasius*, a catfish found in Asia. How is it that a fish to eat is a catfish sold in the supermarkets of Denmark, and other European countries?



Pangasius catfish have white flesh, so fits in easy on the fish counters alongside Cod, Haddock or Pollack that are very much more expensive. So popular is this catfish they are bred in sprawling aquatic farms in Vietnam and Thailand where they grow to a metre in length developing into 40 kilogram beasts.

DNA tests have found a high percentage of *Pangasius* flesh mixed with Langoustine (Prawn) in Scampi. Breaded Scampi also known as Dublin Bay Prawns is expensive so when you order your next Scampi and Chips down the local pub, will it be the real thing ?

Tom Rawstone Daily Mail
Photo by P. Loïselle



SURGEONFISH – LOVED TO DEATH

by Ina Fischer

I love Surgeonfish. They are incredible beautiful, proud, nevertheless caring and curious fish.

No surprise, so many hobbyists would love to keep them in their tanks. But Surgeonfish are also often diseased, emaciated, unhappy and thus aggressive creatures. Fortunately more and more people recognize the special needs of this family. With this article I want to contribute to an ever-growing number of happy and relaxed Surgeons in our tanks.

Three Surgeonfish live in my tank with a size of 2m x 0,65m x 0,60m – one *Zebrasoma flavescens*, one *Zebrasoma scopas* and one *Acanthurus japonicus*. They share their home with one *Siganus vulpinus* and several Damselfish like *Pseudochromis fridmani*, *Dascyllus melanurus* and *Chrysiptera parasema*.

Both *Zebrasomas* are with me since 2.5 years. My *A. japonicus* moved in 1.5 years ago.

Since I started as marine hobbyist, I always wanted to keep Surgeonfish. In order to offer an optimal habitat to them, I've put a lot of thinking into set up and decoration of the tank and did some research on the species' demands before purchasing any doctor fish. I'm sharing these thoughts here in the hope to inspire and encourage more aquarists to make up their minds before they decide for a specimen of this family.

Tank size

A Surgeonfish need space. Plenty of space. Space to move around, space to rest and space to avoid others when not in the mood for company. It needs quite a tank to satisfy these needs. It is difficult to over-simplify advice on the size of the tank, but in my view a *Zebrasoma flavescens* needs at least 500l (ca. 132 gallons) to thrive.



Also a *Paracanthurus hepatus* will not be a happy creature over the long term in a 400l (ca. 106 gallons) tank.

It also seems irresponsible to purchase fish with the knowledge that they will outgrow their tank, but in the hope somebody else with more space will accommodate them.

How many hobbyists with the capacity and, more importantly, the will to host the throwouts are there? Size of the tank is not the only factor to consider. An aquarium of sufficient dimensions still needs the right decoration to offer plenty of swimming space.



Space is very important, also when considering that Surgeonfish need company. For my stocking of Surgeons plus the Foxface I see the size of my tank as the absolute minimum limit, although I don't keep any other larger species, but only territorial Damsels. For the *A. japonicus* especially important is the tank length.

A cube with same space doesn't offer this species the needed length to do laps. This open space needs to be supported by well-placed decoration to make an aquarium a good home for Surgeons.

Decoration



Decoration of a tank to host Surgeonfish needs careful planning. Clearly too many rocks and/or coral will restrict swimming space. However, fish need hiding grounds to rest at night too. In the dark, no fish should be seen swimming restlessly through the tank.

My fish rest at night - an often underestimated, nevertheless important consideration in order to keep their stress level low and contribute to their health. As such the right structures, offering shelter, are mandatory.

Surgeonfish also love variation. Swimming along the quay wall bores them over time. Optimal structures offer cavities and overhanging rocks they can swim through. The opportunity to hide from watchers, e.g. at the backend of the aquarium, is a welcome refuge. Although my Surgeonfish love to roam around together, each of them retreats from time to time over the day. The opportunity to separate from others is important to offer. In my opinion the ideal decoration is hard to build with live rock only. Artificial decoration with its often more delicate features is a good addition.

Nutrition

Surgeonfish need to be well fed to tolerate competitors. Starving fish become aggressive towards anything that potentially takes feed away from them. Moreover emaciated fish are a pitiable sight. Good nutrition includes variety.



Discussions over adequate diet of Surgeonfish often lead to the conclusion that only algae should be fed. I don't agree.

Certainly I feed algae to my Surgeonfish, but not exclusively. I also feed different salads, dandelion, courgette, cucumber, etc.

The Surgeons and also the Foxface love these additions and each of them has its personal preferences among them. I feed vegetables every day, not only to ensure they are well fed, but also to keep them entertained.

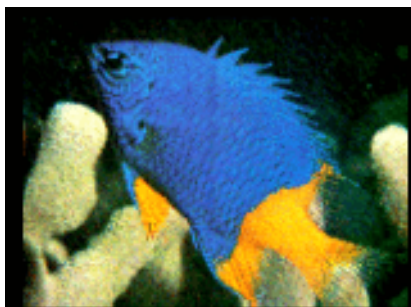
Additionally I supplement the vegetarian offers with frozen food, flakes and granulates. Even in their natural habitat Surgeonfish take up animal protein when grazing algae via microorganisms, living on such plants.

We also have to be aware that we cannot offer the same variety of algae as the ocean does; I see the increase of variety by my additions as beneficial to the health of my Surgeonfish. Their condition proves me right.

Socialization

Beside a balanced nutrition and a suitable tank design, company is another important factor to successful keeping of Surgeonfish. Best is intraspecific socialization, but also congeneric company will be accepted under optimal conditions. When I observe my 3 Surgeonfish swimming together with the Foxface, it needs quite a tank to satisfy these needs. It is difficult to oversimplify advice on the size of the tank, but in my view a *Zebrasoma flavescens* needs at least 500l (ca. 132 gallons) to thrive. I feel how important socialization for them is. They don't fight, but rather really enjoy each other. As a matter of fact they spend most of the time together. They feed and swim through the tank like their own little school of Surgeons. Just at night time each of them has its own preferred hiding space to rest.

I cannot even say who dominates this group. I thought it would be the *Z. flavescens* as he was the one introduced first to the tank. However, usually the *A. japonicus* wants to play the boss but, as hostility and aggressions among them are lacking, it is hard to tell. In general I'd like to remark that socialization of *Zebrasoma* species with an *A. japonicus* is relatively fuzz-free. But I wouldn't add another *A. japonicus* into a tank of a size like mine. I'd guess that complications start then.



The other, significantly smaller fish contribute to the well-being of the Surgeonfish. They know there is no danger around when Damsels and other smaller fish carry on in their daily activities. As the Damsels only have a relatively small home-range, enough room is left for the surgeons.

Some food for thought

I often hear/read that certain Surgeonfish can only be kept in the long term when using UV- light to clean the water.

One certainly hears that in relation to *A. japonicus*, but also Powderblue Tangs and other *Acanthurus* species (*A. nigricans* and *A. Achilles*). I think this is only partly true.

My Japonicus Surgeonfish has never had a *Cryptocaryon* infection nor any other disease. He is of best health. I emphasize again that if Surgeonfish are kept considering the above described parameters, they can live a healthy and long life in our tanks (given they arrive in reasonable condition). Even the most healthy fish will not thrive when being kept in a too small tank, where decoration and corals leave no swimming space for them, or when nutrition is not sufficient or simply not of enough variety. And it doesn't work out either when fish are constantly stressed by competitors or have no social environment at all. We can also assume that introducing a Surgeonfish to a tank just set up 3-4 weeks ago, doesn't contribute to its well-being, and frequently fluctuating water parameters do neither.

Water quality, same as tank size, is not only expressed in certain values of single water parameters, but rather by keeping a stable environment the organisms can live with. A good quarantine of the tank itself upon set up and whenever a fish is introduced, is the best one can do to keep newcomers and existing tank mates healthy and happy. Stress through constant handling should be avoided as far as possible.

It confirms again that it is important to consider the needs of those fish and organisms in focus before making a purchase decision. Some things simply cannot be combined. If one wants to keep sensitive stony corals mainly, Surgeonfish shouldn't be added to the tank to starve in the long term for the sake of water parameters suitable for the corals.

When planning a tank, I'd recommend to make up your mind about your future focus and if it is on corals or rather fish. Once your decision is made, it is easier to decorate and set up your tank accordingly.

I wish my thoughts will more people to weigh the pros and cons before purchasing Surgeonfish. There are so many great alternatives.



Sustainable Aquarium Industry Association

The above article first appeared on the SAIA website

Please visit : <http://www.saia-online.eu/>



Festival of Fishkeeping 7- 8th September 2013

**Hounslow Urban Farm, Faggs Road,
Feltham, Middlesex TW14 OLZ
(www.hounslowurbanfarm.co.uk)**



As you read this, the canvas marquees are being erected to house this year's Festival.

Any uncertainty about the weather can be dispelled, as most events will be under cover and on level concrete flooring.

PARKING Please use the large car park, on the right-hand side immediately after entering the Hounslow Urban Farm site, opposite the ticket office entrance. It is vital for safety purposes that the entrance area is kept clear at all times.

NOTICE TO EXHIBITORS



You will have your own dedicated entrance to the site, so there will be no need for you to enter through the usual public ticket office entrance. Your entrance will be through a separate gate (to the right, past the ticket office) and it will lead into the secure area where your fishes can be stored.

COLLECT YOUR PASSES FROM THE SHOW SECRETARIES

ADMISSION CHARGES

Exhibitors who have qualifying fish for the following Competitions:

BRITISH OPEN, PAIRS, BREEDERS, DIAMOND FINALS and SUPREME CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL

will be issued with a free Admission Pass (see above).

Exhibitors pre-booking more than 5 entries into the **FESTIVAL OPEN SHOW** (Sunday) will be issued with a free Admission Pass (see above). Pre-booked entries must be registered with the Show Secretary (see Show Schedule for address) by **9pm, 4th September 2013**.

FREE ADMISSION PASSES ARE VALID FOR THE INDIVIDUALLY-NAMED EXHIBITOR ONLY AND NOT TRANSFERABLE FROM DAY TO DAY AND NOR TO MEMBERS OF THE SAME FAMILY

The normal daily Admission Charges to the Urban Farm (including access to all areas at the Festival) will apply to all other visitors.

£6.00 per Adult

£4.50 per Child (2yrs and over)

£5.25 for students and OAPs (recycled teenagers)

£19 per Family (2 Adults and up to 2 Children)

This is a full day ticket you can come in and out all day and Children under 2 years enter for free.

SOCIETY INFORMATION STANDS & HOME-BRED FISH SALES

Societies are encouraged to put on information Display Stands. These will be grouped together in one 'Aquatic Village' area.

Home-bred fish sales will be accommodated in one area and, in the interest of security, it will be the responsibility of the owner of the fish (or someone from the same Society or nominated by him) to attend the Sales Stand at all times.

FURNISHED AQUARIUMS



The Furnished Aquarium Competitions will be simplified into two simple groups – '60 litre' size Furnished Aquariums and Nano Aquariums.



Please let Peter Anderson know if you are interested in entering.

Tel: 01753 882873 or email: peter.anderson@uwclub.net

ATTRACTIONS We are very grateful to all our sponsors because without them there would be no Festival.

We are pleased to welcome Rolf C Hagen, Exo-Terra, Fluval, Mars Fish Care (Aquarian), Practical Fishkeeping, API, FishScience, Anglo-Aquarium Plant Co., Amwell Aquatics and many others.

Get Help and Advice from the FBAS Information Stand, see the Koi Display by Middlesex and Surrey Borders BKKS section, and see a huge collection of Discus featured by the UK Discus Association.

There will be Aquarian /API Kids' Zone for children of all ages, from Face Painting, Bouncy Castles, Find the Fish Hunt, Colouring Competitions with prizes for 1st 2nd and 3rd place winners. There will be goodie bags for the children and lots more.

COME AND SPEND THE WHOLE DAY WITH ALL THE FAMILY.

For more information, please contact

Joe Nethersell, Festival Organiser on 020 8847 3586
or email joenethersell@gmail.com

SATURDAY EVENING



In keeping with previous Festivals, there will be entertainment, food and refreshments on the Saturday evening at the Urban Farm.

Admission to the Saturday evening (7pm – 11pm) is £5.00 per head and will include a Raffle ticket and a complementary snack.

EVENTS DIARY 2013/2014

(full details can be found on FBAS website www.fbas.co.uk)

FESTIVAL OF FISHKEEPING NEW VENUE

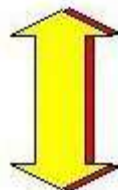
F.S.A.S. Auction	7-8/09/13
RYEDALE A.S. 'Fun Day' Mini-Open Show	8/9/13
FAIR CITY A.S. Open Show & Auction	8/9//13
Gt MANCHESTER CICHLID GROUP Auction	29/9/13
PRESTON & D.A.S. Auction	29/9/13
TTAA Open Show & THREE RIVERS CHAMPIONSHIP	6/10/13
KIRKALDY A.S. Auction only	6/10/13
SCOTTISH AQUARIST FESTIVAL	13/10/13
STAMPS Auction (details to follow)	20/10/13
BIRTLEY AS Auction (details to follow)	27/10/13
N.W.CICHLID GROUP Auction	3/11/13
CASTLEFORD A.S. Auction	3/11/13
CASTLEFORD A.S. Auction	20/11/13
FBAS ASSEMBLY 2pm (tel: 01424 431016)	7/12/13

2014

SOUTHEND, LEIGH & D.A.S. Open Show	24/5/14
LEICESTER A.S.	3/8/14



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