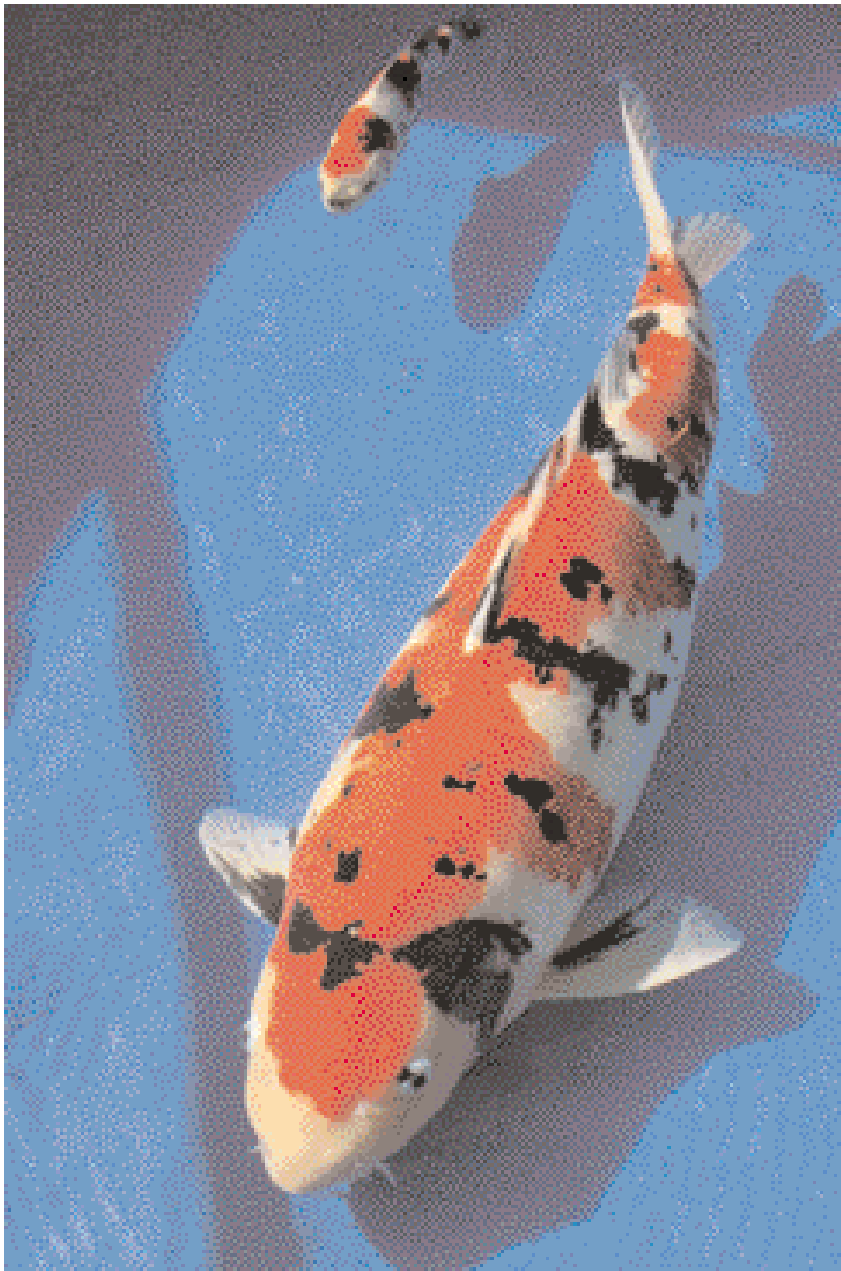


Bernie Woollands has been a fishkeeper all his life, and bought his first koi in 1969. He's an active member of the South East Section BKKS, a koi Judge and believer in the world-wide fellowship of koi-keepers.



As they celebrate their 21st show anniversary, Bernie Woollands takes a trip down memory lane at the past South East Grand Champion winners...

## we are the champions!



Grand Champion 2005

**A** 21st anniversary is something to celebrate in any culture so why should the koi scene be any different? For the South East Section BKKS the anniversary comes on August Bank Holiday when it celebrates its 21st Open Show – not bad for a club that has only just celebrated its 25th year in existence.

The South East Section came into being in 1981 and was recognised by the BKKS in 1982 when it became its 22nd Section. Sadly, a lot of those Sections that preceded are either no longer with the Society or even in existence today, but thankfully the South East still soldiers on and I am of the belief that part of the reason for the longevity is the influence of its koi show.

Koi shows were high on the agenda of the South East's founders and almost immediately the Section began to hold Closed Shows where skills were honed and tricks of the trade learned. In those days Open Shows were the prerogative of the BKKS National and a few brave Northern Sections. In 1984 the South East decided to challenge them and held the first Southern Open Show at the then headquarters, Bruce's Cafe in Badgers Mount. This show preceded the foundation of the BKKS JSC by a year, although the Society did have judges. But prior to the formation of the JSC there were no rules, guidelines and standards available as the list of show classes and awards (see boxout) demonstrates. The Grand Champion at our inaugural show was a Kohaku exhibited by Alan Rogers, a member of our neighbouring Essex Section. Alan went on to become a BKKS Judge, the Chairman of the JSC and also the Society for a time. This show attracted 155 entries and the guest of honour was the Mayor of Sevenoaks. 📍

Koi shows were high on the agenda of the South East's founders and almost immediately the Section began to hold Closed Shows

**1984 show classes (17)**

Kohaku, Sanke, Showa, Tancho, Utsuri, Bekko, Ogon, Ginrin, Koromo, Kujaku, Hikari-Showa, Hikarimono, Harriwake, Asagi, Shusui, Kawarimono & Matsuba – and just three sizes too

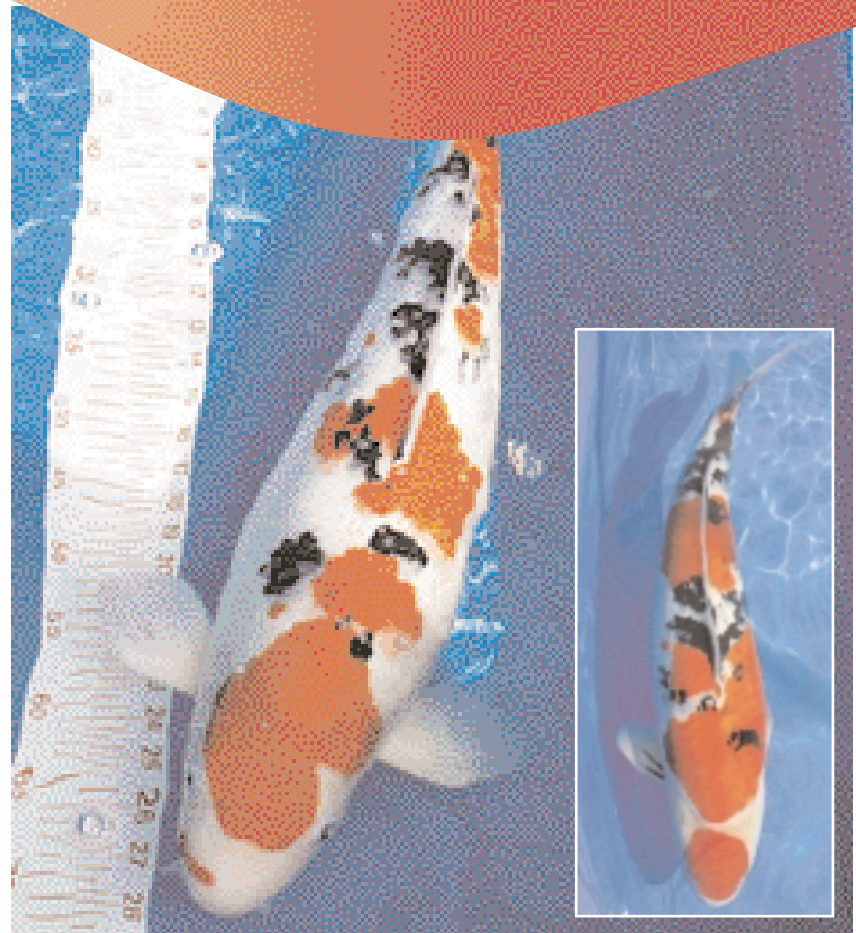
**why the wait?**

Even though several of the members who put on the 1984 show are still active in the club, not one can explain why we waited another four years before another Open Show was staged. Doug (Dob) Holder, the first Show Chairman, recalls: "There was a lot of messing about at the BKKS during this time and therefore the club reverted to Closed Shows to keep their hand in. This was until 1988 when we held our second show at the Polehill Garden Centre - a location shared by one of the major koi dealers of the day – the Kent Koi Company. If we could travel back in time this show would not look out of place amongst those of today. The ubiquitous blue vats were the standard means of display, the awards were in line with those of today, and the shows were now governed by the BKKS JSC Show Rules and Guidelines. This show attracted 244 exhibits, and the Grand Champion was a 26in Kohaku exhibited by non other than Pete Waterman, the pop impresario who discovered and produced Kylie Minogue. The Jumbo award went to a 29.5in Sanke exhibited by Show Chairman Dob Holder."

**the show timeline**

1989 set the scene for future South East shows in that it was a slight improvement on the previous year – a detail that thanks to the continuity within the show team in the Section has allowed us to make progress every year. This year there were 318 exhibits and the Grand Champion was a size 6 Kohaku exhibited by Albert Hutton a stalwart of the MSB Section that were soon to dominate the early shows. 1989 was also a milestone due to the co-operation of Bernie Brewster Bsc, FLS, MIFM, CBIol, MIBiol who began her 11 year reign as water monitor and instigator or our water-management practises that continue to this very day. Sadly no photo of this year's Grand Champion was ever found.

1990 Albert Hutton returned, this time with a size 5 Showa, and took the Grand Champion prize again. The show totalled 408 exhibits. Having successfully trialed



Main pic: Grand Champion 1998  
Inset pic: Grand Champion 2006

them at our Closed Show in the earlier part of the year, our now instantly recognisable in-vat Zeolite filters were deployed for the first time.

1991 set a new record of 533 exhibits and yet another MSB member took the Grand Champion award. This time it was Graham Stevenson who today runs Maple Koi. Graham's size 5 Sanke would still be able to compete today. This show also saw another professional engage in the running of the show. Keith Phipps, ex Brit Koi, Koi Water Barn & Nishikigoi Centre took over the physical benching of the fish and in the process trained many of the section who undertake these tasks today. Keith remained as bencher and mentor for another 14 years. It was also at this show that the idea of automating the benching administrations was formed.

1992 set our current record of 535 exhibits and this year the GC was a Sanke with a history exhibited by Ken Wint of the South Kent Section. This koi was a popular choice amongst the centre ring staff and even gets a mention in Peter Waddington's

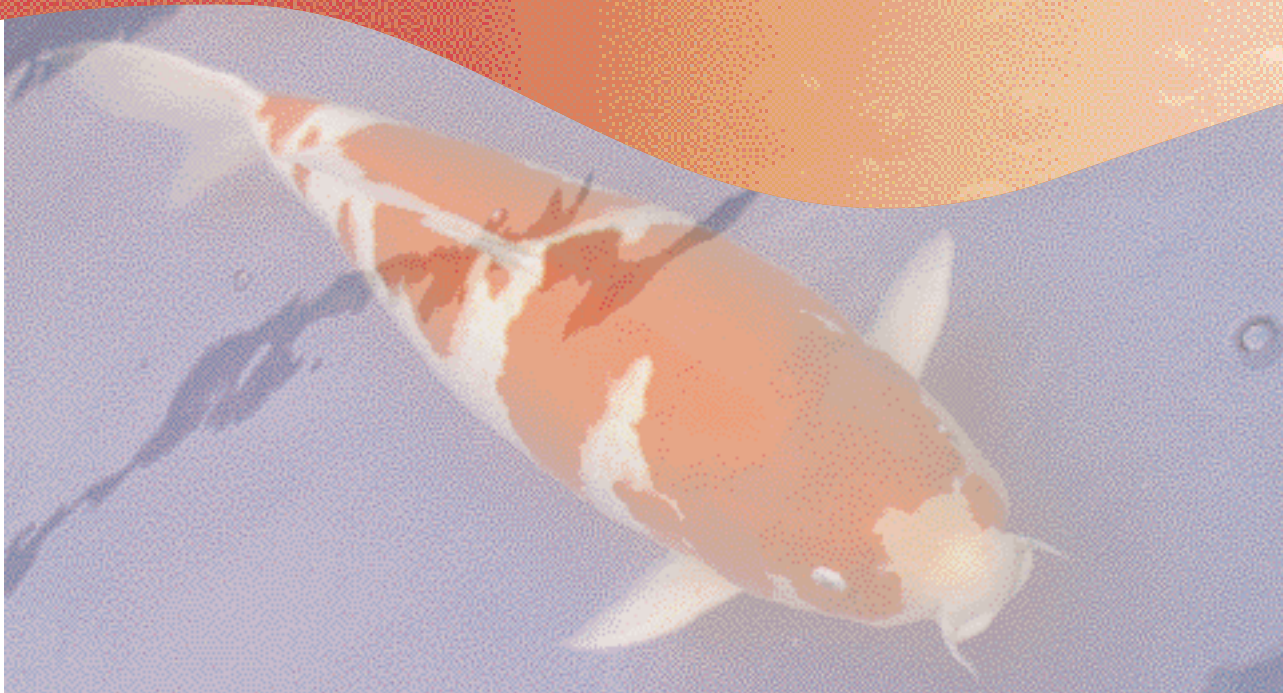
book *KoiKichi*.

It was at this show the South East's own benching software was launched – the first section to do so – it was later used at several other sections as well as the BKKS National until replaced by the late Andrew McGill's edition in 1998.

1993 The exhibits dropped to 434 after we put a cap of 50 on the number of vats in the centre ring to allow us to fully anticipate the demand for water, unlike previous years where we just matched the demand come what may. Our GC this year was a local superstar having previously taken the GC at the Crouch Valley shows. The GC was a size 6 Kohaku owned by Keith O'Reilly. 1993 also saw a common myth 'the judges always chose the bigger fish' exploded when a size 3 Kohaku took the Adult Champion. This fish was exhibited by the Zimbabwean golfer Mark McNulty.

1994 Our Grand Champion for this year nearly didn't make it to the show. Its owner's booking, relayed by word of mouth, was almost forgotten and only by a

Over the years the fortunes of the South East Show has waxed and waned but the standard of the Grand Champions has remained a constant



Grand Champion 2004

Eminent Japanese breeders have also judged at the South East show



bit of luck came to light in time. The owner and now the senior denizen of the JSC, Walter Reed entered a size 6 Hoshkin Kohaku that was the second largest fish in the show. The largest, the Jumbo award went to a 31in KigoI of massive volume. However, 1994 was the end of an era. Up until this time the Go-Sanke varieties had taken all the major awards at every show. That was about to change.

1995 was a year to celebrate. Eight Open Shows and not one of our members in the frame for the GC award, but that was about to change. Our GC was entered

by Tony Hussey, our first home-grown GC winner, and furthermore, it wasn't with a Go-Sanke. Our 1995 GC was a Yamamatsu Shiro Utsuri bought for just £25 as a 5in tosai some five years earlier. Inside the centre ring another development underwent its inauguration. An innovation in waste water removal via an inner ring main was introduced speeding up water changes and making for easier disinfecting of the associated equipment.

1996 was another milestone year where our show was honoured by the presence of three Japanese breeders - Yagenji, Kosugi

and Nagashima and a Japanese dealer – Ito. Our GC was a size 5 Dianichi Kohaku owned by another South East member Tony Whiting. This was the first time I heard the word 'kiwa' and looking at the GC it was easy to see why it is so important in koi appreciation.

1997 saw the show ring altered again, this time to its current configuration of 40 vats, although they were all 1.8m vats at this time. 352 koi were entered and our GC was another Shiro Utsuri. This too was bred by Yamamatsu (the elder Matsunosuke brother) but cost considerably more than our 1995 Champion having been previously entered in the 96 Wakagoi Show and appearing in the Shinkokai magazine. When the owner, Carol Checkley (incidentally our first lady GC owner) sold up this koi was purchased by the comedian Jim Davidson. Whilst on the celebrity theme, wildlife artist Paul Apps also exhibited koi at this show and picked up second in size two overall, with a Yagenji Kohaku.

1998 – another first – our first and only Ginrin Grand Champion to date, a superb size 6 Gin Rin Sanke bred by Yagenji and exhibited by our 96 winner Tony Whiting. There were 303 entries.

1999 We dedicated this show to the memory of John Pitham, a former pioneering member of the club and the founder of the Koi Water Barn who had sadly passed away earlier that year. On a brighter note, this was the year that we

As much as this article focuses on our Grand Champions, one can never forget the 300 or so other koi that make up each show



forged our friendship with the Nishikigoi Vereniging Nederland (NVN). Our GC was a size 6 Sanke exhibited by MSB member Mario CavoZZi.

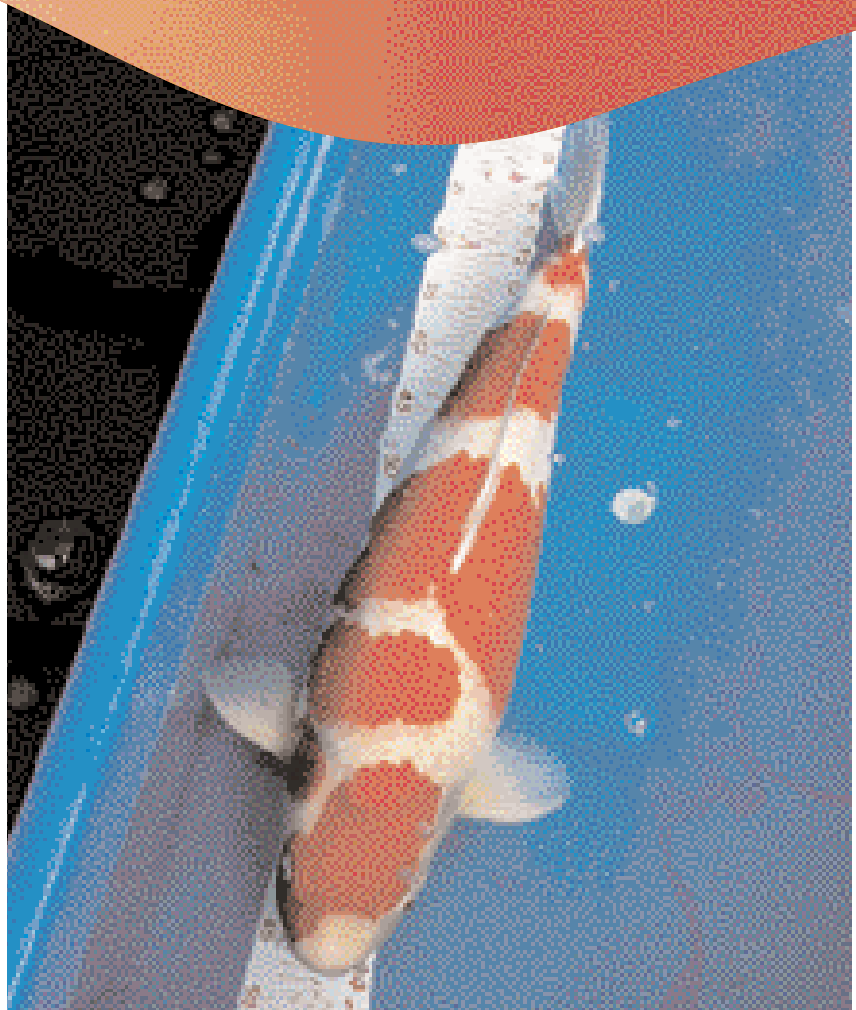
2000 Our Millennium show was the first of our International shows, with visitors from Belgium, Germany, Holland and Japan. Segiyoshi Tanaka, heir apparent to the Marujyu Yorijo in Mushigame village presented the prizes and our GC was a size 6 Maruyama Sanke exhibited by Geoff Wilson who came from Lowestoft, which although a good few miles away was not the furthest travelled entrant.

2001 Geoff's Sanke returned to take the GC again - the first time our GC award has ever been taken twice by the same fish. This was also our smallest show in terms of entries, only 238.

2002 was time for a major rethink about the way our show was going. The previous year's low entries had been a disappointment and our Show Chairman was looking for ways of improving. We brought in a prize of our own for Best Doitsu and used it to test our administration processes to see if we could handle additional awards that might encourage exhibitors to bring other varieties. Our GC this year was size 6 Ogawa Sanke exhibited by Darren Metalli (a pond builder) and our entries totalled 252, and improvement but still below our 300 target. The winner of our Doitsu Award was 1995 GC owner Tony Hussey with an Aoki Kikisui.

2003 and a highly advertised campaign to introduce the Selected Variety Award (Yamabuki) brought the number back to a respectable 312 and saw the Hikarimuji class elevated from tenth position to fourth. Our list of foreign hobbyists expanded to include South Africa and we forged a link with the Kwa-Zulu Natal chapter of the South African Koi Keepers' Society (SAKKS). Our GC for this year was another Shiro Utsuri exhibited by our Show Chairman Terry Wells and bred by the more renowned Shiro breeder Omosako.

2004 set the template for the South East shows of today with its additional awards aimed at promoting other varieties and the introduction of our 'one man – one vat' policy to allow more exhibitors to participate and to drive those that do to think more carefully about what they bring in an effort to improve the quality. Thanks to two last minute cancellations our



Grand Champion 1996

**Champion roll of honour...**

Year	Variety	Owner
1984	Kohaku	Alan Rogers
1988	Kohaku	Pete Waterman
1989	Kohaku	Albert Hutton
1990	Showa	Albert Hutton
1991	Sanke	Graham Stevenson
1992	Sanke	Ken Wint
1993	Kohaku	Keith O'Reilly
1994	Kohaku	Walter Reed
1995	Shiro Utsuri	Tony Hussey
1996	Kohaku	Tony Whiting
1997	Shiro Utsuri	Carol Checkley
1998	Ginrin(Sanke)	Tony Whiting
1999	Sanke	Mario CavoZZi
2000	Sanke	Geoff Wilson
2001	Sanke	Geoff Wilson
2002	Sanke	Darren Metalli
2003	Shiro Utsuri	Terry Wells
2004	Kohaku	John Murrell
2005	Sanke	Terry Wells
2006	Sanke	Alan Archer

While we are happy to see such excellent examples of the Go-Sanke group we never forget the other show classes

numbers fell to 302 and we immediately decided to put in a contingency plan for 2005 to prevent it happening again. Our GC was a size 6 Sakuma Kohaku exhibited by John Murrell a first time exhibitor.

2005 and our 'one man – one vat' contingency plan almost worked, unfortunately we hadn't considered that an exhibitor wouldn't notify us if he couldn't turn up. Nevertheless, the number of exhibits was 324 and the variety (led by the Selected Variety award) and quality had improved. Our GC was another win for our Show Chair Terry but with a different fish. A size 6 Kawakami Sanke that had missed out on previous South East shows through the odd injury, not that that had prevented it from picking up two other GC awards at other shows in the South, making it a triple GC.

2006 One would expect a triple GC winning koi to be the final word in the South East show saga but that record was to remain for only one year. In 2006 there were 315 exhibits and our GC award was taken by a Matsunosuke (Isawa) Sanke exhibited by our own Alan Archer. Like our 2005 winner, this koi had already taken two GC awards and was soon to take another at the Laguna Festival of Fishkeeping Show in October making it a four times GC winner.

#### in summary

Over the years the fortunes of the South East Show has waxed and waned but the standard of the Grand Champions has remained a constant. Regardless of the numbers and the quality exhibited, our GCs have always maintained a high standard and generally reflected the local availability



Grand Champion 2003. Incidentally, the Yamamatsu parent koi were purchased from Hiroshima Sakai and Omosako, and Omosako later took Yamamatsu bred koi back as brood stock

#### open to all...

In an effort to promote the non Go-Sanke varieties the South East have these additional awards presented by various organisations:

Best Doitsu - The Oregon Koi & Watergarden Soceity Award

Best Non Go-Sanke - SAKKS Friendship Award

Most Unique koi - NVN Friendship Award

Best GinRin - ZNA Friendship Award

Best yellow koi - Banana Bar Koi Society Award

+ the South East Special Variety Awards (first, second and third)

and trends in high class koi. Our deviation from the normal Go-Sanke winners coincided with success of Shiro Utsuri in Japanese shows, an event that has occurred now on several occasions which belies any notion that it was a fluke. Since 1996 there has been a regular Japanese presence at the show who have all commented on the standard of the hobby in the UK – a comment endorsed by other international visitors who now make this show a regular event in their koi calendars. However, as much as this article focuses on our Grand Champions, one can never forget the 300 or so other koi that make up each show. While we are happy to see

such excellent examples of the Go-Sanke group we never forget the other show classes and every year select on for special treatment. This year we have chosen the Goshiki. So, as we prepare for our 21st Open Show anniversary we can only speculate what the 2007 show will bring. But if the trends are anything to go by, it can only get better. 鯉

#### make it a date

The South East BKKS 21st Open Show takes place on 26-27 August at Parkwood Hall School, Beechenlea Lane, Swanley, Kent.

Our GCs have always maintained a high standard and generally reflected the local availability and trends in high class koi