

Christina Evatt reports on a successful, sunny South East Koi Show with an international flavour **on the up...**

The popular seating area provides a focal point to the show



Walkies!

This year the sun shone on the grounds of Parkwood Hall School. I arrived on the Sunday to an already-packed car park, the showground bustling with visitors. Over the past few years a certain Bernie Woollands has set me a rather hard task in writing a show report about the South East Open Koi Show. You see the precedent has been set with his in-depth reporting on almost every aspect of each show, but I guess being the Section's PRO and a Judge to boot gives him a head start! I will, however, do my best.

Billed as the South East International Show it took place on the 26-27 August with an international panel of judges to adjudicate over 313 exhibits displayed in 40 vats. I am told this was the first time in

living memory good weather was experienced throughout both the days. Oddly enough this was a bit of a double-edged sword with some would-be visitors (not having seen the sun all summer) being coerced into visiting seashores. On speaking with Bernie he says the weather doesn't really make much of a difference – only on the bar takings and the car park, which can become interesting in muddy conditions.

On being asked about how he felt the show went Bernie replies: "I see my job as a PRO as an easy job because I promote the hard work of others – this show being a case in point. However, I am lucky as my fellow South East Section members give me a lot to shout about. Show Chairman Terry Wells has once again organised a fantastic event. The catering area also plays a huge part in the success of the show. Not only does it provide an area for people to eat, drink, relax and chat about koi, the bar also raises funds for the show." Apparently we all helped drink the bar to its most takings ever. I'm glad my half a lager went to a good cause! I can also personally vouch for the noodle bar... As always the choice of food was good with the vendors providing quality and variety at a reasonable price.

improved quality

Many visitors and judges commented on the improved quality of the koi onshow, a growing trend the South East members put down to the 'One man – one vat' policy. This opens the show to more exhibitors and makes them consider the quality they bring. The South East Show is renowned for its quality small koi – in fact the Young and Baby Champions at last year's BKKS National Show were beaten at this show. People were also commenting that the koi in the larger sizes were of a higher quality.

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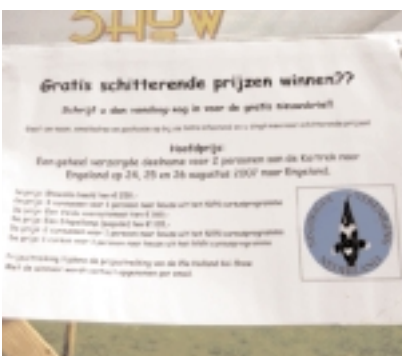
The judges and Dutch trainees

Not only was the quality up, it was also noticeable that the overall size of entries has increased too. This year's Jumbo was an 84cm Kohaku exhibited by its owner Lee Jeffery. A good example of quality and quantity in the one fish.

truly international

Standing up to its name as an international show there were visitors from far and wide: two coach-loads of Dutchmen, a coach from Sweden and two cars full of Belgians and another from Denmark. Winner of last year's National John Hellens also made an appearance and he comes from about as far north you can go in England! The exhibitors also came from far and wide. e.g. Tamworth in Staffordshire, Cambridge, Hampshire, Northampton, Lincolnshire, Wolverhampton, Stockport in Cheshire as well as the local counties Kent, Essex, Sussex, West Sussex, Middlesex, Surrey and London.

I took the opportunity to talk with some international visitors, firstly Jeroen



Such is the esteem in which the Dutch hold this show that tickets on the Koi Trek coach are used as incentives for their raffle

Dragmands, NVN PRO, from Holland. This was Jeroen's third visit to the South East show and he holds the view of many that the great atmosphere at the show is second-to-none. He tells me: "The South East are very proud of their show, and so they should be. It's well-run, easy, relaxed and I always seem to be eating food!" (I assume this is a good thing by the look on his face).

The Dutch Koi Society (NVN) have a close relationship with the South East Section – each year there is an exchange visit known as the 'Koi Trek'. This year's Koi Trek began on 18 August when members of the South East Section visited their Dutch counterpart's ponds and were entertained at their National show in Arcen (18-20 August). The favour was returned with 105 NVN members visiting the South East member's ponds and the show on the second leg of the Koi Trek. Amongst the members were 11 trainee judges who took full advantage of the show to learn their craft. On day two of the show they took over the centre ring for a training session using the previous day's show data for a real practical session.

Jeroen was keen to point out his NVN colleagues are all made to feel welcome by the South East Section members, with Bernie in particular being very instrumental in the reciprocal nature of the two clubs. He says: "The best part of visiting the show is seeing old friends, meeting new ones and of course the koi." He feels the standard of koi at the UK shows is higher than the ones in Europe. When asked why this may be he says: "I think koi hobbyists in the UK are willing to pay more for their



The Grand Champion boards sponsored by Evolution Aqua

koi and are therefore getting better quality fish to enter into competitions."

Jeroen was the winner of the prestigious Connoisseur Koi Shield (some may call it a toilet lid!) after partaking in a benching quiz. He proudly tells me: "I won with 33 points with the nearest UK entrant having 21 points." An accolade indeed and it goes to show the light-hearted banter between the two clubs. ➔

the champions

Grand Champion - Size 7 Ogawa Bred Sanke, supplied by Koi Waterlife Centre and exhibited by Lee Jeffery

Mature Champion - Size 6 Hiroshima Sakai Showa, supplied by KWB and exhibited by Frank Collins

Adult Champion - Size 5 Momotaro Sanke, supplied by JustKoi and exhibited by Des Harris

Young Champion - Size 4 Sakuma Showa, supplied by Koi Waterlife Centre and exhibited by Tony Pittas

Baby Champion - Size 2 Miyatora Sanke, supplied by Walcott Koi and exhibited by Matthew Pearson

NB: Best in size 1 was a UK-bred Kohaku (Koi UK) exhibited by Mark Chetter.

Details of all the winners can be found on: www.koiclubs.com/SouthEast/2007Show.htm

A walk round the vats saw that indeed the koi were content and enjoying their holiday in the sunny South East



The vats are constantly maintained during the show

the winning koi

The Grand Champion was brought from Koi Waterlife Centre in 2004 and Lee Jeffrey has grown the fish in excess of 15cm. Lee bought it when it was five years old and it's now eight and is champion standard – this shows the longevity of an Ogawa fish.

On asking Bernie about the choice of Grand Champion he tells me: "After some deliberation I eventually chose the same GC as the judges but I was too preoccupied to pay too much attention to the rest. However, I had the Young Champion marked down for good things as soon as it appeared in the benching bowl."



The judges making their decisions

the view from South Africa

Next I spoke with Mike Harvey, ZNA Chief Judge, from South Africa. Mike, like his other South African colleagues, seems a long way from home but he took the opportunity to visit the NVN's show in Arcen and the South East show in the same visit to Europe. It's his seventh visit to the show, which he hails as "fantastic." He too was impressed by the quality of koi on show, especially in the larger sizes. It was his first time judging the whole show and he was keen to be involved with such a great mix of judges from not only

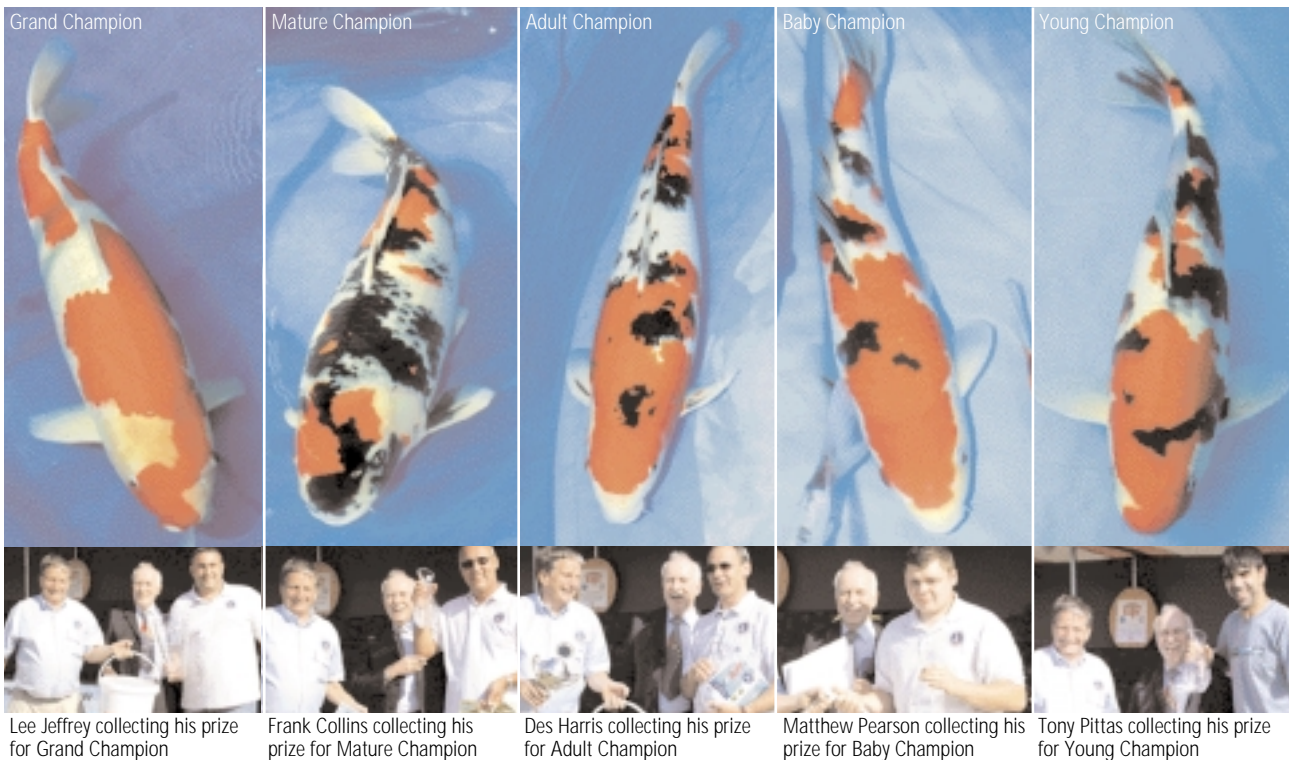
different countries, but different koi societies. He finds the differing methods of judging interesting and says a marrying of the ZNA and BKKS rules can be the best way to go. For example, he feels the ZNA puts too much emphasis on show class Kinginrin, whereas the BKKS see Kinginrin as just as an enhancement to a show class. It all makes for interesting debate.

I quizzed Mike about what it takes to become a ZNA judge and I won't go into specifics, but suffice to say, it's not for the

the showground

Built in 1892 as a convalescent hospital before becoming a training college for the London Fire Brigade during World War 2, it is now (since 1970) a special needs school for both residential and day-care pupils.

The showground is set on the foot of a hill surrounded by trees, which not only blocks out the view but also the noise of the two motorways that make access to this venue so convenient. The hill also provides a great natural slide for resourceful kids!



Grand Champion

Mature Champion

Adult Champion

Baby Champion

Young Champion

Lee Jeffrey collecting his prize for Grand Champion

Frank Collins collecting his prize for Mature Champion

Des Harris collecting his prize for Adult Champion

Matthew Pearson collecting his prize for Baby Champion

Tony Pittas collecting his prize for Young Champion

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the Koi Carp Sout East experience

The *Koi Carp* girls, namely myself, Tamsin and Debbie had a great time meeting and greeting both the koi hobbyists and dealers attending the show.

We took a record number of subscriptions so thanks to all our supporters who offered gifts as give-aways.

The South East members were as always very welcoming and for the first time I stayed into the evening for the barbecue – it was great to have some good old koi banter. Over the weekend we accosted some people at our stand and around the showground and asked them to say a few words about the show.

Here's a few of the comments:



The lovely ladies Tamsin and Debbie on the *Koi Carp* stand



Kim
Here to support the South East Section and my better half!



Alan Coogan
I'm here for the fish, the fun and the folk.



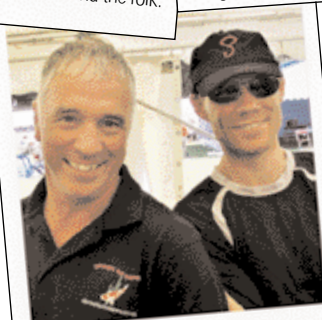
Gary Tagg, Dean, Lewis & Luke Weller
It's a great show and we also visit to get the great *Koi Carp* subscription deals!



John Hellens
It's always nice to come and meet up with some familiar faces.



Chas Tully
I've come to renew my *Koi Carp* subscription as I love the subscription gifts at shows, this one in particular.



Trevor Childs & Paul
We're here to show some fish. And Trevor won a prize!



Denise
I have the nice job of tempting new South East members with wine...



Tomy 2 Ponds
I like to come because it's one of the best koi shows - it compares well to the National. You get to see some good quality dealers too. It's also cost me a special anniversary present for my better half!

fainthearted! Years of serious commitment, study and travel – you have to respect any koi judge's dedication. However, what can be more rewarding than mixing a hobby you're passionate about with travel and camaraderie? Mike says: "The South East is a great show, made all the more special because of close friendships."

bio-security

Under the expert guidance of Bernice

Brewster the show was again a success in terms of bio-security and koi health. Since 1988 and the first reported cases of SVC the 'English Style' of koi show has been a means of preventing the spread of disease. Often seen as just a means of display, the strict hygiene procedures intrinsic to it are often overlooked. As good as they have been, they can always be improved upon, and the South East has never been slow to adopt or adapt to any means of

safeguarding koi at their shows.

Their bio-security procedures now include:

- The use of Virkon as the disinfectant for all benching equipment and the foot bath at the entrance/exit of the show ring.
- Splash Screens between each of the show vats.
- Bioguard and Virasure hand washes used by the centre ring staff before and after contact with any fish. ▶

The South East is a great show, made all the more special because of close friendships

who judged the show?

- Mike Harvey, Rene Schoemaker, Brian Welch, and Dr Jim Phillips (South Africa)
- Toen Feyen (Netherlands)
- Louis van Reusel (Belgium)
- Tony Price (UK)

NB: It was Tony's last show. He officially retired as a ZNA judge this year and the previous weekend was his last official ZNA assignment.

There were also 11 NVN trainees. All of them were involved in the show in some capacity. Six as trainees and five as helpers on the day of judging.

Three volunteered to help with the benching on the Saturday and forego the Koi Trek – now that's dedication.

A walk round the vats saw that indeed the koi were content and enjoying their holiday in the sunny South East.

lecture theatre

One of the most obvious new additions to the show this year was the Lecture Theatre provided by *Nishikigoi TV (NTV)*. There was a varied programme of speakers provided each day, with excerpts from the NTV catalogue being shown in between. There was also a new award, 'NTV People's Champion'. Koi were selected and then visitors were asked to choose their favourite fish from the selection. The

award will be decided by votes cast by koi keepers the world over, and organised through *NTV* video magazine. I popped my vote into the ballot box and at the time of writing am awaiting to see which koi won!

did you know?

17 of the 40 booked exhibitors were first-time exhibitors at the show. Displacing some of the regular exhibitors who were slow in booking or completing the formalities. The 'one man – one vat' and 'first come first served' policies ensure the show is open to all. Six of those 17 are known to be first time exhibitors too. 鯉



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