

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.



Bernie Woollands reports on the South East Section's 20th Open Show, as usual a roaring success for both UK and International visitors alike....

How the South East was won...

It has to be said – our Show Chairman is jinxed. Ever since he took on this role back in 2000 every year's planning has been blighted by some occurrence outside of our control, be it loss of venue, a foot and mouth epidemic, pet licensing laws, or KHV. This year was no exception, there was just more...

Firstly, outlay on any improvements was on hold until we obtained more information about the pending Animal Welfare Act going before Parliament, then it was the implications of drought restrictions imposed by our local water supplier, and then finally a rumour circulated amongst our dealers and exhibitors that we had cancelled the show. Every one was an annoyance, an obstacle to be surmounted and one by one, all hurdles were overcome and we eventually staged our 20th Open Show, which took place on the August Bank Holiday. As I write this, every indication, be it financial, attendance and/or feedback suggests it was another success.

we shall overcome

'Triumph over adversity' was the phrase I used to sum up our sister club's (the NVN) show on the previous weekend and it was the same for ours, with many parallels to be drawn between



the two. Both clubs faced adverse publicity that insists that koi shows are in decline and yet both were able to attract increasing numbers of vendors, and maintain the status quo in terms of exhibitors and visitors, which belies the suggestion that it is a general trend.

The statistics for the South East Show were 38 exhibitors in 40 vats (due to two last minute cancellations), 315 exhibits (down just nine from last year) and over 50 vendors, broken down ▶

show facts

Where: Parkwood Hall School, Beechenlea Lane, Swanley, Kent **When:** 27/28 August
Visitors: just over 3,000 **Vendors:** 50 **Exhibition vats:** 40 **Koi exhibited:** 315
Exhibitors: 38 **Judges present:** The International Judging Panel consisted of: Hayamasa Ikeda (Japan), Bill Ennis and Tony Price (UK), Oosie Strydom (South Africa), Toen Feyen (Netherlands) and Art & Nicole Lembke (USA). The BKKS Judges were: Kate McGill, Gary Pritchard, Gary Hillier, Christine Woolger, Heather Payne and Alan Coogan.



Grand Champion – Size 6 Hiroshima Sakai Sanke – owner Alan Archer (photo left). All photos by Mark Gardner, Vanessa de Boer, Des Harris and Bernie Woollands

In the centre ring 315 exhibits were on display and both visitors and judges (from home and abroad) all commented on the increase in quality

B.J. the Clown takes a break from child-minding to enjoy the new South East bar



into 30 koi and koi-related dealers, 17 arts and crafts, four food vendors, three free exhibitions, a face painter, a static display of Mark Gardner's Mount Fuji charity climb and two koi health related stands. The gate just exceeded 3,000 over the two days.

There are two factors that the Show Chairmen of the world have no control over: the quality of fish in the show and the weather! However, in 2003 when we instigated a 'one man - one vat' policy to make the show open to more exhibitors, it has had the knock-on effect of making exhibitors that previously booked more than one vat consider their choice of exhibit more carefully. The result, a gradual increase in quality, which was more noticeable this year. But sadly, the weather remains uncontrollable and over the extended weekend we suffered from drizzle, downpours, cold winds, gentle breezes and some bright sunshine; every possible combination on each and every day.

social side of koi

We believe that koi shows should be social events for the koi fraternity and over the years we have experimented, improved and evolved a formula for providing the right environment for this activity to take place. In a central position on one side of the show we lay a large refreshment area with over 60 tables and 250 chairs. From this position our visitors can survey the whole show site and enjoy the facilities provided for by the catering stands. One disappointment here was the Pork Roast stand. Our long standing purveyor of this item had retired and we didn't get enough notice to source and try out an alternative vendor. However, we now have a year to find a suitable replacement and check out that they are good enough to satisfy our visitor's needs. To make up for the shortfall amongst the caterers, Zoe's Kitchen (one of our own members) brought in extra staff, equipment and dishes to ensure our visitors weren't inconvenienced. We like to think that every year we get a bit better and that was certainly the case where the bar was concerned. We'd given the task to Lynne and Dave Pearson and they didn't let us down. A larger, smart and well-stocked bar became the focal point of the refreshment area and was enjoyed by both the visitors and workers alike. I personally give Dave and Lynne 10 out of 10 for their choice of bitter!

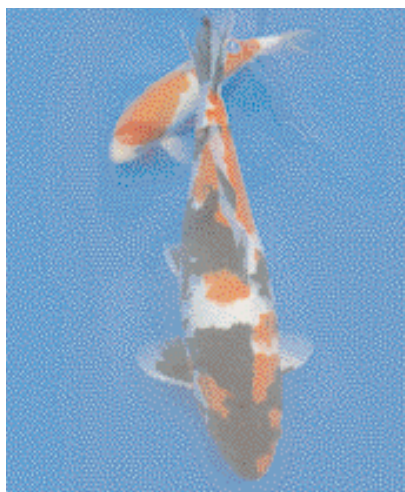
Size 6 Kohaku – owner Alan Archer



Size 5 Kohaku – owners Sue and Colin Ravenhill



Size X Showa – owner David Pope



Size 2 Sanke – owners Barrie and Keith Burkin



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something for everyone

Keeping the visitors happy is as important as looking after the fish, and in addition to the catering we provide a number of alternative features to bring interest. The British Reptile and Amphibian Society provides a display of snakes, lizards, turtles and frogs as well as providing an information service to explain their up-keep and requirements. The North West Kent Bonsai club put an exhibition of beautiful bonsai as well as providing several demonstrations throughout the days of the show. In addition, there were 17 arts, crafts and gardening stands. Visiting children are kept amused and looked after by our now resident clown B.J. However, it has to be said that given the chance, the kids like to make their own entertainment by sliding down the slope at the side of the catering tents on sleds made from cardboard scrounged from the dealers. Creative little souls they are too – you should see the designs that they draw on the sleds with felt pens.

the stars of the show

Refreshments and entertainment aside the focal point of a koi show are the koi themselves. In the three marquees that formed the remaining perimeter of the show, were 30 koi and koi-related dealers selling everything a hobbyist could need. Probably the most abundant item was koi food with many new manufactures appearing for the first time. Hikari made a comeback too, after two years of being unavailable due to some EU bureaucracy, and it was good to see some re-introductory deals going some way to making up for its absence.

In the centre ring 315 exhibits were on display and both visitors and judges (from home and abroad) all commented on the increase in quality. However, our total number was down from last year, but they were more evenly spread across the show classes.

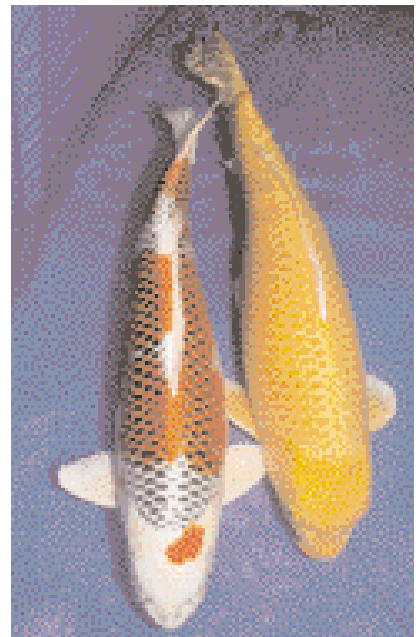
international calling

Dutch photographer Vanessa de Boer was a part of the vast horde of international visitors to the show that increases every year. Two coach loads of NVN members came over on the Koi Trek. Cliff Neale tells me that 91 of them turned up at his house and when it comes to numbers, I'll take his word. Other Dutch and Belgian visitors came by car and minibus, and there were also visitors from South Africa (three with the KoiTrek and three not), Japan and the USA.



BKKS judge Alan Coogan takes a closer look

It wasn't just quantity there was also quality, with at least three National Society Presidents and numerous club Chairmen and officials amongst their numbers. But, it isn't only the international visitors that put themselves out to come to the show, we get them from throughout the UK and this year was no exception. The Yorkshire Koi Society (YKS) came en-mass and the logos on shirts showed that there were visitors from Manchester, the Potteries and Nottingham alongside those from our neighbouring clubs from down south. ▶



Double billing. The Kujaku took the SAKKS Best Non GO-Sanke for the 2nd year in succession and the Yamabuki the Banana Bar Koi Society Award. Both fish supplied by Connoisseur Koi and owned by Tony Hussey

There are probably a dozen unsung and unseen heroes whose work is just as valid and necessary to make the show a success

special awards

Some years back we copied an idea from the ZNA National Show where they select a particular variety for a special award. This year we chose the Kumonryu and we weren't disappointed with the response. Even though we give three prizes for this award irrespective of size, there were several excellent examples that failed to get one of those due to the competition being so very high.

The Selected Variety Awards and all of our other non-standard prizes are adjudicated by a panel of international judges. They also have to select a Best Doitsu prize on behalf of our American sister club, the Oregon Koi and Watergarden Society (OKWS). This year they had no hesitation in choosing the Doitsu Kujaku owned by Michael Preston – the same fish that won the award last year. Judging standards within our International team are certainly consistent as last year's team was made up of totally different individuals. A similar story can be told about the South African Koi Keepers' Society (SAKKS) award for Best non Go-Sanke given to the Kujaku owned by Tony Hussey – another double winner and again it was awarded by a completely different judge. Tony's fish also received a JSC Special Merit Award showing that the BKKS Judges appreciated the quality of the fish. She also happens to be the front cover stunner this month...

One other 'foreign' award that deserves a special mention is the UK ZNA Merit Award presented to a rare Kado Gin Rin Sanke exhibited by Tony Pittas. To ensure I got a decent photo of its delicate scales I employed the services of visiting Dutch photographer Vanessa de Boer to record it for posterity.

Despite the changeable weather the show was well attended



and the winners are...

The centre ring provided ample examples for our BKKS Judges to select the winners from. Our Grand Champion is a size 6 Sanke from Hiroshima Sakai bought as a private purchase from Martin Plows the co-owner of this year's All Japan Show (AJNPA) Grand Champion. But despite its impeccable pedigree, it took several years of grooming by its owner Alan Archer to make the grade at this show, even though it had taken Grand Champion twice before at previous Laguna 4 Section shows. Alan also took Mature Champ with a size 6 Kohaku. We often hear about major prizes being bought, but I can honestly say our GC and Adult

Champ were the results of their owner's koi-keeping practices. Both fish have been in their ponds for several years. Both will qualify for the BKKS Koikeepers award I am sure.

BKKS Magazine Collator Sue Ravenhill took Adult Champ with a size 5 Torazo Kohaku, my JSC colleague David Pope took Young Champ with a Showa, and MSB Members Keith and Barrie Burkin took Baby Champ with a Sanke that Alan Coogan pointed out had the new Atarashi Sumi developed by Toshi Sakai. A full list of winners can be found on our website www.koi-clubs.com/SouthEast and also in the BKKS pages of last month's November issue of *Koi Carp*.

winners announced

When the punters arrived on Monday morning a full list of the results were available at the show ring as well as all the individual certificates being on display over their relevant vats. Each entrant was presented with a CD containing the photos of their fish, along with now famous ceramic trinket boxes depicting the Selected Variety of the year. Each fish had

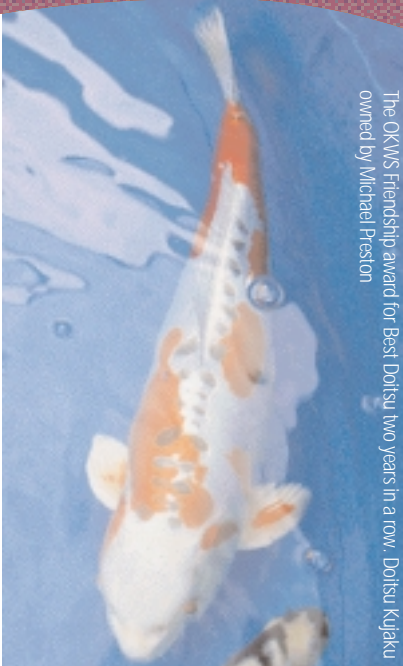


Pics right: The unusual Kado Gin Rin Sanke belonging to Tony Pittas

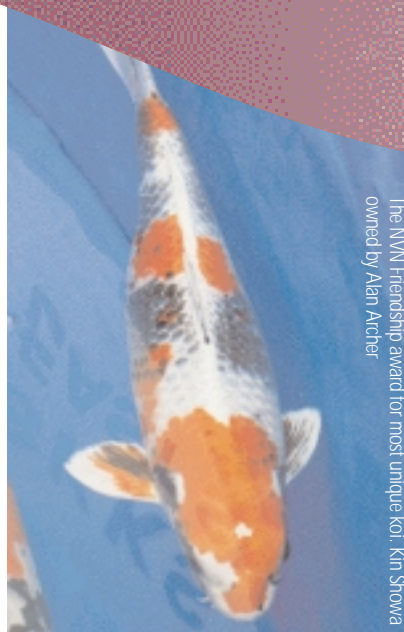
Tony Pittas accepting his UK ZNA award



I can honestly say our GC and Adult Champ were the results of their owner's koi-keeping practices



The OKWS Friendship award for Best Daitsu two years in a row. Daitsu Kijaku owned by Michael Preston



The NVN Friendship award for most unique koi. Kin Showa owned by Alan Archer



Membership Secretary Denise Denbow and some of her new signings...

their own show certificate and those that progressed to the Best in Size round took home an engraved crystal trophy. Some of the Friendship Awards from our overseas visitors were worthy of a special mention. The Banana Bar Koi Society's trophy of a handshake carved in ornate rock said a lot and was very substantial (heavy), and the International ZNA's fine porcelain plate that contained a paper cut out of a previous South East winner (Hayamasa's joke) got a few laughs.

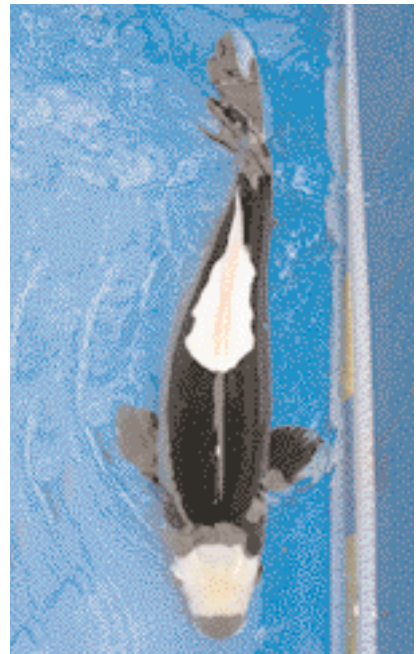
The penultimate paragraph belongs to all the members who gave their labour to put the

show on. Some are high profile and their efforts obvious for all to see, but for every one of those there are probably a dozen unsung and unseen heroes whose work is just as valid and necessary to make the show a success. On behalf of our Show Chair and Secretary Terry and Lynne Wells, I extend the Section's thanks.

But for all our efforts, they would be wasted if the koi fraternity didn't turn up to enjoy them. So to all of you that turned up – thanks for coming and we look forward to seeing you next year. For those that didn't – tough! You missed out. 鯉

all for a good cause

Questers make a grand for KHV research. In the run-up to the show we were contacted by Kim Rafferty a local hobbyist and regular poster on the Koi Quest forum to help her raise funds for the AKCA KHV project. We provided a stand free of charge and she sold and auctioned various goods donated by hobbyists and members of the koi trade to raise £1022.66. Well done Kim.



The Selected Variety (Kumonyu) Winners left to right: 1st - Trevor Childs. 2nd - David Constable, 3rd - Tony Hussey

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