

NVN members



# koi trekking

*Bernie Woollands shares the success of this year's koi trek, allowing koi keepers from the UK and the Netherlands to experience shows away from home*

**K**oi trekking is now an established part of the European koi scene. Started in 2003, this is the third excursion bearing this name and encompasses the yearly exchange visit between the Dutch National Society (Nishikigoi Vereniging Nederland or NVN) and the South East Section of the BKKS — two clubs that openly share their expertise and enjoyment of the hobby. Koi Trek centres on the two shows put on by the clubs on consecutive weekends.

**outward bound**

A coach left the South East's showground

on 19 August and headed for Kasteltuyn, Arcen, the site of the NVN's 13th National Koi Show. After a visit to a nearby distillery, trekkers returned to the showground to participate in the NVN's show barbecue. The news of the day was that approximately 5,000 visitors were expected on the first day.

The statistics for this show were impressive: 72 show vats containing 596 koi; 132 dealer stands, and a total footfall for the whole three days expected to be a few short of 25,000. The judges came from six different countries — Australia, Belgium, Japan, South Africa, Taiwan and the UK. The British contingent ▶



BKKS South East Section





Supreme Champion the Mask



comprised BKKS and ZNA judges and trainees, with the whole benching and judges administration co-ordinated by Louis Vanreusel, himself a BKKS and ZNA judge.

On Saturday the UK trekkers returned to the showground for the day to take in the biggest koi show outside of Japan, set amongst the grounds of a fine stately home that includes several themed gardens, moat, menagerie and lakes. In addition, the picturesque village of Arcen is literally 10 minutes walk from the show's entrance.

In the evening they returned to the hotel to participate in the now infamous NVN Show dinner-dance which went on (unofficially) until 3am. On Sunday they returned to the showground to rid themselves of that morning-after feeling before leaving for home at around 2pm.

**dutch show**

The 596 koi on display provided the normal NVN spread of varieties that the NVN bench into 17 different classes, some of which are unique to the NVN. This year's Grand Champion was an 87cm, five-year-old Momotaro Sanke exhibited by the Nishikigoi Nederland Group. The Supreme Champion (runner-up) was the Mask, the 2004 BKKS National GC exhibited by Koi-San Germany.

These two awards typify two of the main differences between the Dutch National and any UK show. Firstly, a similar fisheries health status allows the movement of fish between Holland and its neighbouring countries, thus making the NVN show the European National. Secondly, they allow dealers and hobbyists to compete together. Indeed the dealer contingent accounts for over two-thirds of the vats booked at the show.

Grand Champion 87cm five-year-old Momotaro Sanke



Pink flamingos at Lady Rothschild's estate

These few words just scrape the surface of what is now, and has been for several years, the biggest koi show outside of Japan. Hopefully the accompanying pictures fill in the many blanks.

**return leg**

Sixty-five of the NVN contingent arrived in the UK on 26 August from Belgium and the Netherlands. Upon arrival in Swanley they were taken to the pond of Tony Hussey, one of the South East Section members. The following day they visited ponds of some of the Middlesex and Surrey Borders Section, organised by Sue Ravenhill.

The MSB ponds had been carefully chosen to add interest. The first was Sue's own pond, which was imported from Holland earlier in the year. The second was the venue of the MSB Section's Closed Show, the home of Rosie and Barry Alger-Street and the finale was the home of Lady Rothschild, which includes a

menagerie as well as two koi ponds. Somewhere in between Sue had overseen the feeding of the NVN at a convenient hotel on the route. Thanks must therefore go to Sue for putting herself out. However, she has now joined the section so she must have enjoyed it.

The day finished back at the showground, where a pre-show barbecue offered NVN visitors the opportunity to mingle with the South East Section members and get a sneak preview of the already benched fish.

**show time**

There were 324 koi in 40 vats benched in the 13 BKKS show classes; 800ft of marquees housing 44 dealers and crafts, six independent food vendors. A total in excess of 3500 visitors attended the show this year, not including the NVN guests. In addition, a contingent from the new Belgian koi club, Koi@home paid us a visit. Their focus is very much on the use of the



Galapagos tortoise at Lady Rothschild's estate



The lake and gardens at Arcen



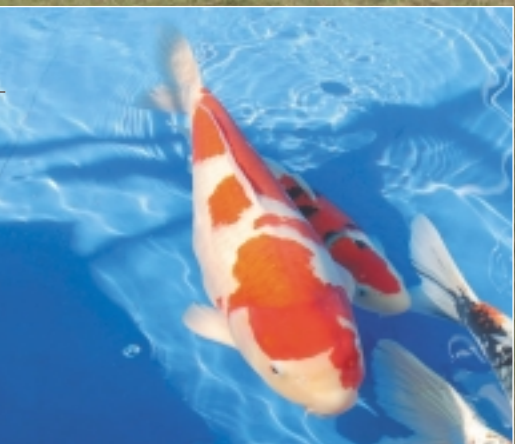
Rosie and Barry Alger-Street's pond

*The MSB ponds had been carefully chosen to add interest*





Reay and Dee Squires (pictured above), winner of Adult Champion Kohaku Size 5 (pictured below)



internet, hence the name, and they turned up with some very professional video equipment to film aspects of the show.

Children s entertainment was provided by BJ the clown, a regular feature of our show. The children also amused themselves sliding down the overlooking embankment on cardboard boxes. BJ made himself useful by supervising this activity and seeing that the kids came to no harm. Additional interest was provided by the free exhibitions laid on by the Northwest Kent Bonsai Society and the local branch of the British Reptile and Amphibian Society.

Two days of glorious weather added to the atmosphere and there was the usual problem of running out of tables and chairs for visitors who seemed happy to spend all day at the show. Luckily, the school supplied more tables and nobody seemed

to mind sitting at miniature furniture! The section-run bar registered a new record profit — it s not every day you get the opportunity to promote the hobby by indulging in a drink and watching the world go by.

Back in the centre ring the eight BKKS judges got the job done whilst allowing our overseas judges to observe the BKKS training methods first-hand. BKKS judges were Tony Sheffield, Carol McCall, Alan Coogan, Louis Vanreusel, and Bill Ennis, plus trainees Christine Lowdon, Christine Woolger and David Pope. Carol, Dave and



Grand Champion Sanke Size 6



Mature champion winner John Burns



Mature Champion Kohaku size 6



NVN Most Unique winner Angie Watson (pictured left) and the winning Kawarimono (pictured below)



Christine W had judged at the North East section show the previous day where Christine L had shown fish. However, this dedication to duty was soon outshone by Heather Payne, who had judged the North East on the Saturday, the West Wales on the Sunday and turned up with husband Roger to chill out at the South East on Monday. That has to be some sort of a record.

**international flavour**

The South East show has attracted overseas visitors for many years now and to make their visits more involved, international judges are able to participate in the show. Every year a Selective Variety award is held, focusing on a particular variety, regardless of size. This year Kin-Ki-Utsuri was chosen. These awards, together with any Friendship awards, are adjudicated by the International Judging Panel. This year s panel consisted of Tony Price, an NVN & ZNA judge from the UK; Guus Roijen and Toen Feyen, NVN & ZNA judges from the Netherlands; Dr Jim Phillips from South Africa; and Doug Raby from the BKKS. The major award winners from the show appear on the BKKS pages, whilst all results, including photos of the main winners can be found on the website, [www.bkks.co.uk](http://www.bkks.co.uk)

It was during breakdown of the show

on Tuesday that comparisons of the South East Section and the Dutch club could be made. The Dutch club actually have more show volunteers than South East section members and they have more members than total visitors to the South East show. However, they seemed happy with what they had they seen and as they left, everyone said thank you and see you again or, as the Dutch say, tot ziens .

**measure of success**

Koi Trek is a spin-off from the close liaison between these two clubs, which encompasses the trading of ideas, allowing both shows to make progress in almost every aspect of running a Koi show. It should therefore come as no surprise to learn that the two people that pull Koi Trek together every year are also their clubs Show Chairmen, Toen Feyen and Terry Wells. Their success can be measured by the waiting lists for exhibitors and dealers every year. One aspect where the NVN stands alone is that they also have a waiting list of volunteers to assist at the show. If only the South East was that lucky! Still, with an increase in overseas membership every year, maybe a one-way workforce exchange could be organised for next year s show! 錦里



Gregg Harris, winner of the ZNA Best Gin rin (pictured above)