

**NORTHERN GOLDFISH  
& PONDKEEPERS  
SOCIETY**  
*A Nationwide Society*  
**NEWSLETTER**



Online Version

December 2014

*A Merry Christmas to all Members*



Celebrate with Goldfish, Frankincense and Myrrh

Christmas time news from our Chairman

It has been, so far, a warm autumn and start to the winter, so it may not be a true test of more normal temperatures but so far my new regime of a little gentle heat and continued feeding in the fish house seems to be having very positive results, just as they did last year. I have a single unregulated 50 watt heater and a single 100 watt thermostatically controlled heater set at about 60 degrees Fahrenheit in tanks with the young bred this year, these tanks act as 'radiators' for the other tanks and keep everything just a bit warmer, the water exchange has been turned low and feeding restricted to one light feed a day. The fish have not lost weight and condition as they used to when they were left to cool right down with no food, but are in sparkling condition. I will report further later in the winter as to their condition and hope to be able to achieve as good a spawning season in the spring as this year ( one of the best ever ).

I am very pleased to report that Craig and Heather Clinton have had another spawning and Millie has been joined by twins Georgia Daisy and Max James. Many Congratulations.

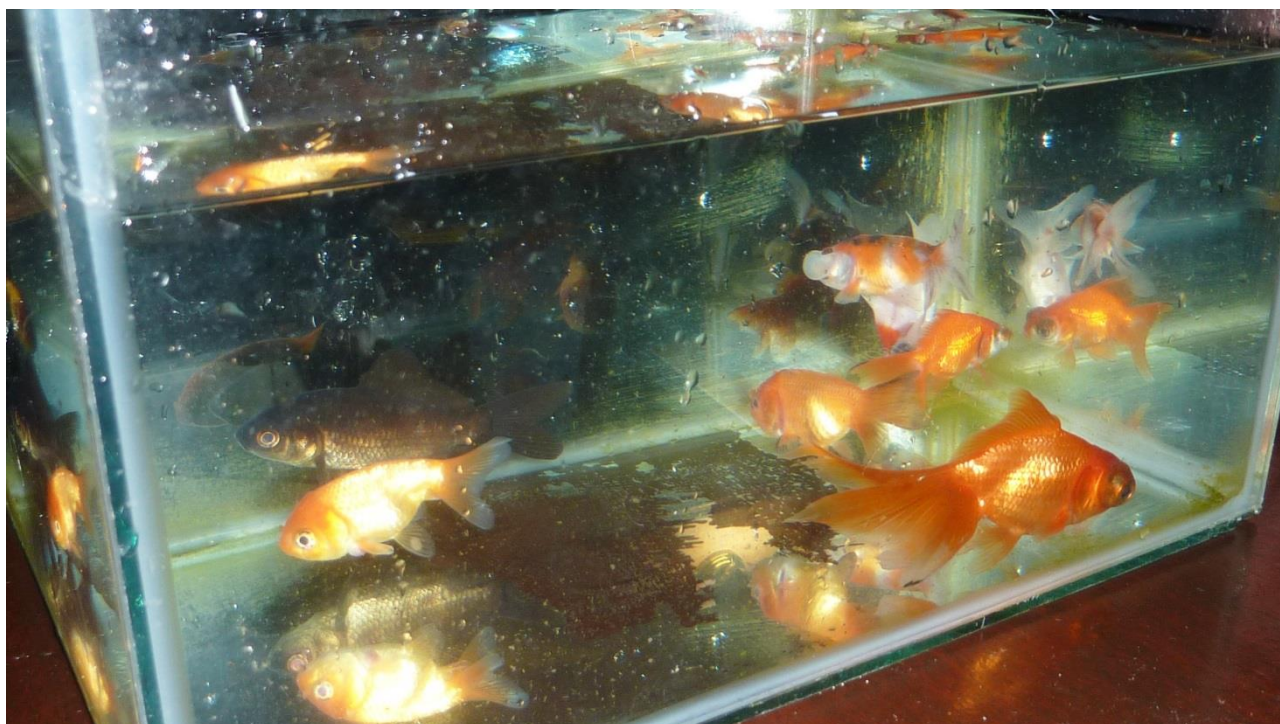


While not busy with the new arrivals Craig is planning an early journey to the shop he has discovered in Holland where there seems to be a huge variety of very high quality imported goldfish available. He is happy to look for anything you might want, phone him on 07954178895.

A very merry Christmas and a happy new year to all members.

#### Minutes of the December Meeting

It was a dark and stormy night but seven members still made it to the Church Inn – Sherridan brought half-a-dozen Goldfish too. These were Telescopic, Bubble-eye, Black and Lionheads. The history of each was described – where and why it was bought.



He also reported on the status of the Nationwide Group and the plans for the 2015 Open Show.

The venue will change but where that will be is still to be decided.

Temperature feeding in the Winter was discussed (consensus was – let the fish decide!).



The room raffle prize was a Goldfish T-shirt donated by Eric Hutchinson. It carried the following logo, which will be worn with pride by Dean....

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Two Articles this month...more anecdotes from our President and what our Vice-President did after the Goldfish Social Weekend in Llandudno.

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Bill Ramsden has written several articles for our Newsletter and all contain anecdotes of the amusing things that happen to him in a lifetime of fishkeeping...two more herewith.....

### Adventures of a Fishkeeper (1)

Another Adrenalin overdose in my past started the weekend before our annual fish show was due to be held. Everyone in the Society had been working hard in preparation for the show and we were determined to get it well-publicised and make it a success.

I had just settled down in front of the TV on Friday evening after a hard day's graft when the telephone rang. It was the Public Relations rep. for the Society.

"Hello Bill. Just to let you know that Radio Manchester want to visit and interview someone about the fish show so I suggested you. They'll be round tomorrow morning. That's alright isn't it?"

"Yes, but....."

"Thanks Bill. See you."

I put the phone down and as I did so I felt Mike Tyson grab hold of my stomach and start to wring it out like a wash-leather.

That was the quiet evening I had planned ruined. I couldn't relax all evening for thinking about the interview. *How would they record it? Would the interviewer know anything about fish?* I suddenly had the idea to write the script for the interviewer to help him and so I wrote out questions for him to ask - at least the ones I knew the answer to.

The following morning I was up before the milkman. I couldn't sleep for worrying. *Maybe he won't come. Perhaps I should put landmines at the bottom of the street.* All to no avail. At 10.30am a strange car drew up in front of the house and suddenly an aerial rose from the centre of the roof to a height of fifteen feet.

"Is it RAMSDEN?" the man shouted.

"Yes" I replied as a coward would. I really wanted to say "No, sorry, he had to dash off to a summit meeting in Geneva."

"Where is your fish-house?" he shouted.

"At the back of the house."

With that, the aerial came down and he set off to drive round to the back of the house.

Like a man possessed I dashed through the house to meet him in the back street. Up shot the aerial again whilst the man proceeded to drag enough cable from the rear of the car for a transatlantic telephone call. Suddenly tidal waves appeared in all of my fish tanks as a loud speaker blasted out: "HELLO CHARLIE, HELLO CHARLIE. YOU'VE GOT THREE. OVER."

*Got three? What's he mean? I thought. Is this Charlie a mutant?*

Charlie replied: "Yes, over." "What does he mean, you've got three?" I asked tentatively.

"Three minutes before we go out on air" Charlie informed me. The hair started to rise on the back of my neck.

Tyson started to wring out my stomach again.

"You mean it's going out live?" I asked hysterically. "Yes."

**Scotty, beam me up!** I pleaded. I shut my eyes, opened them again. **Oh no! I'm still here.**

"I can't do a live interview on radio," I begged. "I've got my old clothes on." "You'll be alright," the executioner said reassuringly, as he put the bag over my head. "Don't worry about it." As Charlie entered the fish house he had quite a surprise. "What the hell are these? I've never seen any fish like these before!" he exclaimed.

**Ah! My turn** I thought. "Don't worry. I've written some questions for you to ask me," I said confidently.

"No - we don't need those," he replied. "We don't?" I repeated in defeat. "No," Charlie said. "WE GO IN ONE," the loudspeaker blasted.

*We go in one?* I thought. *Has it become a quiz programme? Is it talking about a car? Or a public loo?* (which, at the time, I was badly in need of) "Are you ready?" asked Charlie. He bent over and picked up the huge concrete boulder which was tied to my neck with rope. "Yes," I replied. Suddenly he threw it and I felt myself plunging into the water. To my surprise it was quite enjoyable once I was in and the twenty minutes of the interview passed like the blink of an eye. Before I knew it, it was over. "Thanks. See you," and Charlie was gone. I believe from friends it sounded o.k. My only regret is that after all the trauma I forgot to tape it!

## Adventures of a Fishkeeper (2)

This story started in the 1970's when most of the cold water Societies joined together to form the Associated Goldfish Societies, with the objective of making a national set of show standards. These meetings were held in Coventry every three months and while my colleague and I were enjoying a cup of tea during the half time break we were approached by two officials of the Goldfish Society of Great Britain, asking us if we would like to speak at their forthcoming convention.

We were so delighted that the whole journey back to Bolton was taken up planning our forthcoming trip. The big plan was that we would write the speech between us, but I would deliver it on the day. Then we decided that we would travel to London by car taking our better halves with us, but leaving the car some twenty miles outside London and travelling the remainder by Tube.

Then came the big day and full of excitement, off we set for the "Smoke". Everything went well; we parked the car and caught the Tube. The next move was to give our wives a couple of pounds each and send them off for a day's shopping. Being good generous Northerners, money was no object.

On approaching the place where the convention was being held, the excitement grew. An even greater shock was awaiting us on entering the main doors, because although it was still two hours before the meeting was to commence, the hallway was full of people enjoying tea and sandwiches. Pushing our way through the crowd we eventually arrived at the lecture hall and, on entering it, were astonished to see so many more people inside. My colleague pointed out to me that no-one we knew had approached us, but at the far end of the hall was a stage and perhaps they would be waiting for us there. As we drew nearer the stage, we came to a sudden stop. There, hanging down above us, was a large banner. It read:-

### **CONVENTION FOR HOMOSEXUALS AND LESBIANS.**

We just could not see the forest for the trees! This shows you can be blinded by enthusiasm. We later found the right hall and all ended successfully.

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The Goldfish Social Weekend in Llandudno was a success and on the following Monday, your VP David Ford took the opportunity to visit the Sea Zoo at Anglesey...no Goldfish on show, but lots of other fish...here is what I found...

## A Welsh Sea Zoo



There are several Zoos in Wales but only one Sea Zoo (in fact the only one in the UK). It is beside the Menai Straights in Anglesey in the far North of that Principality.





From the A55 you drive over the Menai Bridge and then follow the Lobster signs – about 10 minutes from the bridge (or 100 minutes from Liverpool or Manchester, they advertise!). It is down by the sea edge on a one-car lane, so not the best of journeys in the Winter-time. This is why they close at the end of October and reopen in February.

The site has a long history, being a Mussel Farm, Salt Producer and more, back to Victorian times. It has been a public aquarium for the last decade, privately owned too. The theme of the Zoo is to show visitors the abundance of sea life in the Menai waters, but has several special projects, including breeding and restocking the British Seahorse and the edible Lobster. This research work is with the ZSL (Zoo Society of London) and includes 'edutainment' such as 'Save the Shark' and 'Ban the Plastic Bag' campaigns. All typical of a Zoo (rather than just a public aquarium).

The prices are £7 for adults and Kids £6-50 (3 to 15 years) with the usual concessions for seniors and families. Hours are 10am to 5pm but with longer Summer times. There is a large, free car park and a play area for the children.

The cafeteria (Hygiene rating 5) is a 100 seater and is open to the public without paying to enter the zoo. Called 'The Lighthouse', they specialise in locally grown produce and can organise birthday parties (£100 for the first 10 children, adults free).

The Zoo also offers 'Seafari' trips on powerboats with Marine Biologists and Local History Guides to see the Menai waters all the way to Llandudno Island.

### The Zoo Tour

Queue (I had to – it was Half-term) to enter and pay the fee, then walk into a wooden sided corridor that weaves through the Zoo until ending at the Shop.





Lots of decorations and descriptive signs complete the busy feel to the displays.


Tanks range from traditional glass fronted concrete to modern acrylic shapes and all were clean and clear and well stocked.

The sea flora and fauna included Blennys, Wrasse, Turbot, Mullet, Plaice and Spider Crabs, Scallops, Lobsters, Crabs, Sea Urchins and many species of Anemones - all endemic to the local sea waters.









Each specimen is described in English, Welsh and Latin.

### Atlantic Wolf-fish

#### Morfaidd



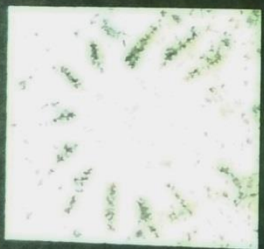
**Anarhichas lupus**

-  Rocky seabeds down to 120m deep.
-  Found off Scandinavia, Britain, Iceland, Greenland and Canada.
-  Vary in colour from purplish-brown to blue-grey.
-  At least 6 years.
-  Up to 150cm.
-  Eggs are 5-6mm diameter and are laid on the ocean floor with the male protecting the nest.
-  Molluscs (cockles and whelks), crustaceans (hermit crabs), starfish and sea urchins.
-  Threatened by overfishing, bycatch and habitat destruction.









Also known as Seawolf or Atlantic Catfish. Is eel-shaped with large rounded pectoral fins. Its name is derived from its teeth structure - both the upper and lower jaws have a front row of 4-6 fang-like teeth.

### Common sun-star

#### Heulseren



**Crossaster papposus**

-  Rocky sea beds
-  North West Europe as far south as English Channel
-  Bright red, orange or purple with white bands. Has 8 - 13 arms
-  Maximum age not known
-  Up to 25cm
-  Little known, but has no larval stage
-  Mussels, sea cucumbers, urchins and other starfish
-  Not currently threatened

This brightly coloured starfish has a rough upper surface and up to 2000 tube feet on its underside. The pale banding, not often seen on other starfish, usually forms a ring around the main body at the base of each arm.



The sign above describes the Atlantic Wolf-fish and the aquarium holds several of the actual fishes....



You then pass into an area that is designed to be a sunken galleon with old timbers and flotsam and jetsam everywhere. Silicon-sealed large aquaria have Topknots and Butterfish and Tadpole Fish and more. A tidal display with cascading seawater, a Rocky Shore Pool with Beadlets, Sea Scorpions and Mussels leads you to the main display with a giant (artificial) shark statue.

Then the largest aquarium – 200,000 litres of seawater with a curved viewing window made from 5cm/2inch acrylic sheet.



Two laboratories with viewing windows are devoted to the breeding and raising of the Seahorses and Lobsters.



This unit is billed as 'The Lobster Hatchery of Wales' and the procedures are fully explained with many mini-tanks holding the baby Lobsters (so they do not eat each other)....



The Seahorse project is also a separate unit with tanks of the British Seahorse - an endangered species. Matured Seahorses are released back into local waters.

A large shop with many sea-based trinkets and books ends the corridor walk; then the Lighthouse Café for snacks or a main meal.



### Behind the Scenes

There are 50 aquariums in the Zoo maintained by a permanent staff of four, with another part time staff of six, when needed. In keeping with good Zoo practice there are many 'volunteers' too who can help.

There is a small laboratory for water testing (commercial aquarium kits are used, such as API products and hand-written records made). No artificial salts or chemical treatments are used, or needed, since every tank is part of a flow-through system.

120,000 litres a day are pumped from the Menai Straights into a settling tank and then to a holding tank in the upper floor of the dormer-style building. The filtered seawater then drip feeds into every aquarium at 50 litres per hour. This means there is no ammonia or nitrite crisis despite daily feeding with fresh foods.





This is senior aquarist Matt Davidson with the inlet pipe that is pumping seawater from the Menai into the large settling tank.

Another pipe attached to a coarse filter takes the water to the gravity tank in the roof via a powered sand filter.



This system keeps out the larger wild flora and fauna of the Menai but the microscopic sea creatures pass through. However, this feeds the anemones and planktonic animals in the Zoo. Seawater flows back to the Menai after its journey through all the aquaria and its quality is regularly checked and reported. The pipework does become clogged with sea creatures eventually, but the annual winter shut down allows manual cleaning of every pipe and filter.

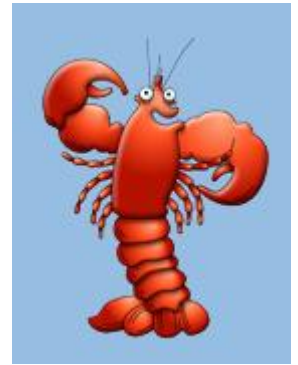
The staff take it in turns to give a talk at 11am, 2pm and 3.30pm about the Zoo and its animals, seven days a week. Feeding times vary, but are declared too for visitors to attend.

The Zoo has won many prizes - Best Anglesey Attraction – Winner, Welcome to Britain Award, Welcome Host Award, Gold Medal for Services to Tourism, Wales Tourist Board Environmental Award, Health Promotion Wales Gold Standard, Tourism Training Award National Winner, Welsh Language Board Bilingual Design Award – Commendation, Best Visitor Attraction Anglesey –

Finalist, Wildlife Gardening in Business – Bronze Award, Environmental Tourism Award Anglesey – Winner, and Winner of the Bridge Marine Science Conservation in Business Award.

An excellent little zoo with many sea creatures, well cared for in a very natural habitat.

You will marvel at the many marine fish and invertebrates that you will never see in the marine hobby. Well worth a visit if holidaying in Wales – or even a special journey, the scenery is spectacular on the way too.



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The next meeting will be in the New Year – January 13<sup>th</sup>, 8pm, Church Inn, Prestwich.

Until then, have a great Christmas.....

