



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



March 2018



Our President Bill Ramsden choosing Show quality fish at Dave's Aquarium in Bolton (for our Vice-president!). He chose young Calico Orandas for their colour and potential ...



Bill, even at 91, is now well again and able to complete his latest article 'How to Build a Fish-house'. Here it is, with a lifetime's experience revealed. This is for new members who have just started in the hobby and are planning to breed Show fish. They need a Fish-house – here's how.

DESIGNING AND BUILDING A FISH HOUSE by Bill Ramsden, President NGPS

This is an introduction into designing and building a fish house.

Food for thought

Having been a fishkeeper for over 60 years, I have now retired. Over those years, I have gained quite a lot of knowledge, and would like to pass some of this knowledge onto others who are starting out as fishkeepers.

If you have never kept fish before, my advice is that you start off with a small tank, say about 2 feet x 12 inches x 12 inches. Fill it with fresh water and allow it to stand for 48 hours. In the meantime, you could visit fish breeders or good aquarium shops, where you can pick suitable fish.

A suitable fish to start with, would be the long-bodied fish i.e. Goldfish or Bristol Shubunkins or London Shubunkins, as these are better for starters. Round bodied fish are harder to keep as they swim differently and can suffer from constipation as their intestines are shaped differently. Longer bodied fish are better for the type of food you would be feeding so constipation doesn't occur.

Building a Fish House

There are two things you could do. The first is to purchase a greenhouse, but this isn't the best idea, because it is not substantial and would allow in too much sunlight. The second is to build your own fish house, which would be stronger and easier to design. When deciding this, you must first consider the following: -

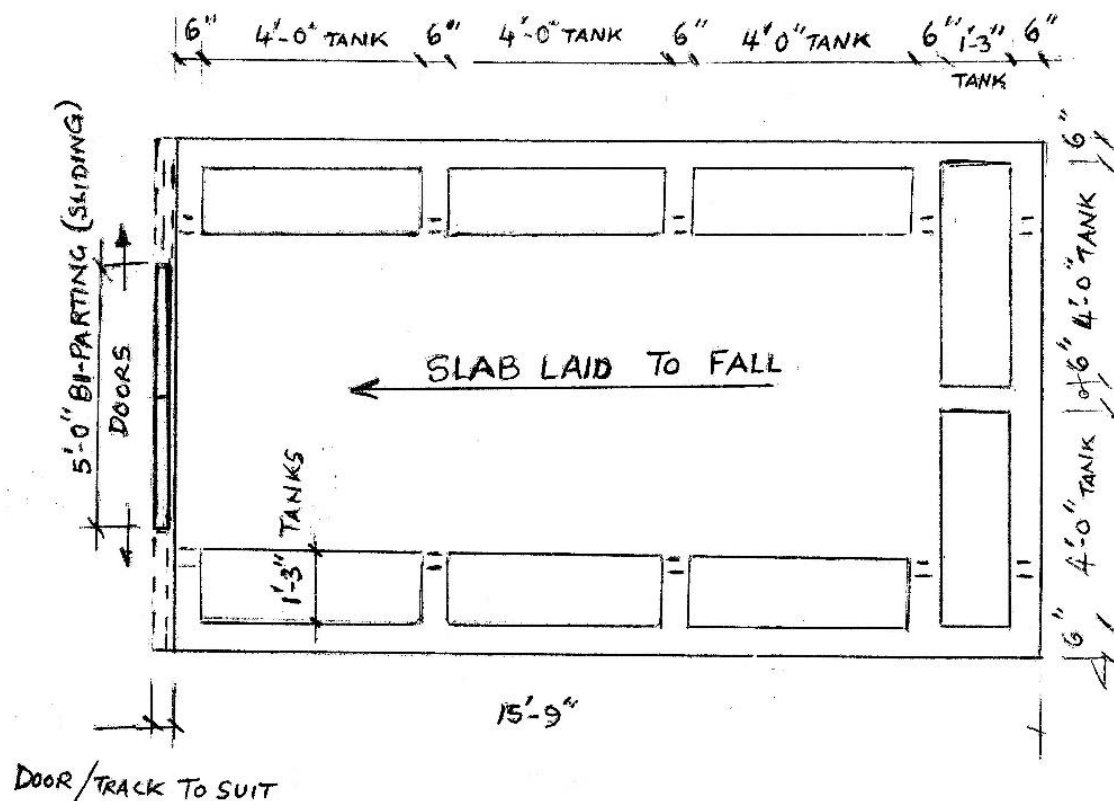
1. Where are you going to build your fish house?
2. Have you got enough space?
3. Will it be in a yard or garden?
4. Are there facilities such as water, electricity and drainage?

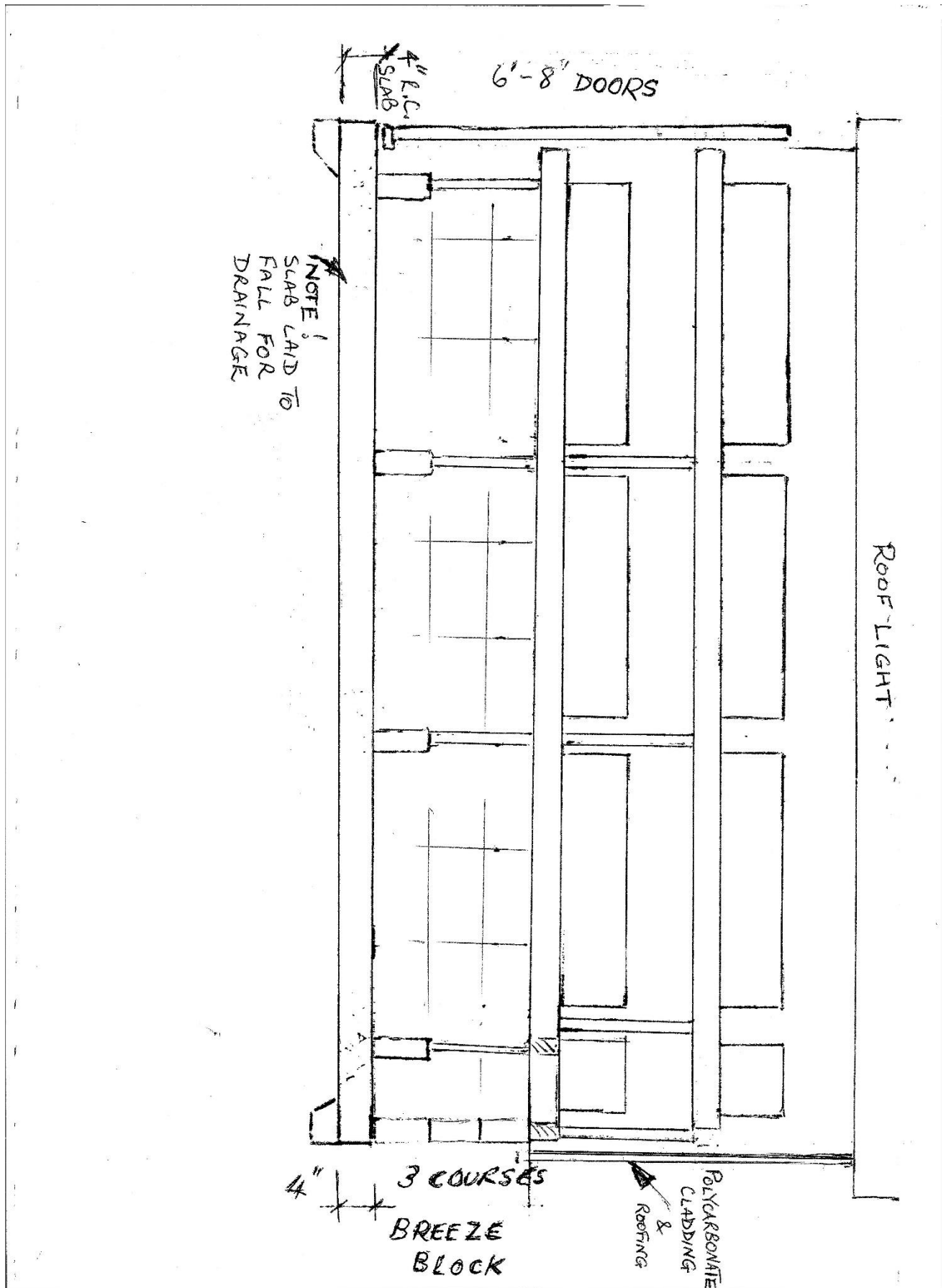
Once you have decided where you are going to build your fish house, you need to decide how big it is going to be. First of all, you would build a concrete base as this would be more substantial, especially as there will be lots of water flowing over it regularly. Your fish house needs to be wide enough to allow you ample floor space once you have erected the framework for the tanks.

Once you've built the outer walls of the fish house, the best option would be to build a three feet high wall all around the fish house with breeze blocks, which would then become the bottom section. You would then build the frames using 4-inch x 3-inch timber, which should have been treated and then painted with a good quality paint. If you fail to do this, the wood will eventually begin to rot and you would have a major job on your hands to replace it as you would have to move all your fish, dismantle everything and rebuild your framework using new wood. Having experienced this, myself a few times, over the years, I would not recommend it!

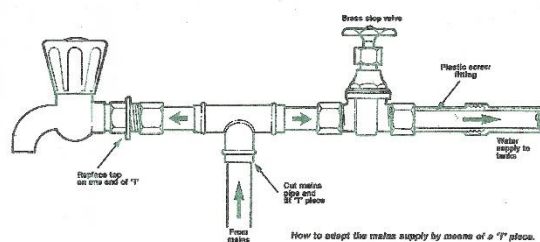
You must decide what size of tanks you would like and how many tiers you are going to have. The tanks that I used were all 4 feet x 15 inches x 10 inches, which I found to be best as, if I wanted to move fish from one tank to another, the amount of water etc. would be the same in each tank.

My actual Fish-House is shown in the diagrams and is the best choice for ideal dimensions....

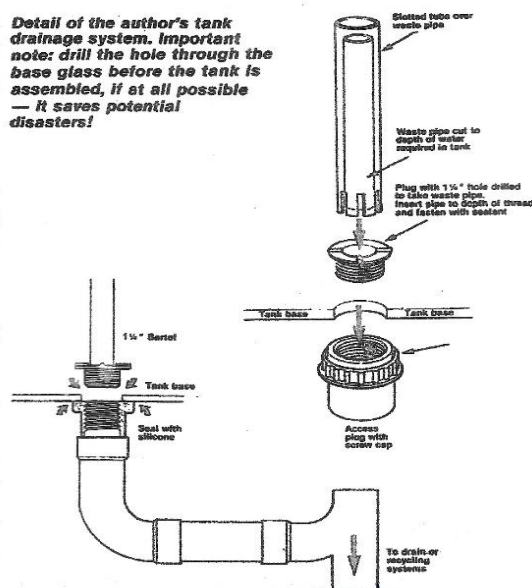




Next, you need to decide what else you need for your tanks. After 60 years, I realised that the biggest problem of keeping fish is being able to keep the water condition good. Some people add features to their tanks like gravel, plants, ornaments etc. I found that the best way was to add nothing but a good water and filter system. I used inch bore plastic pipe to supply water to the tanks, feeding this all around each tier and into each individual tank. Above each tank, this pipe was fitted with a tap, which allowed the water feed to be adjusted when necessary, but normally would allow a simple slow water drip into each tank. The best taps I ever used were purchased from a wine makers accessory shop. A dual tap supply is needed too, again see the diagrams of my system...

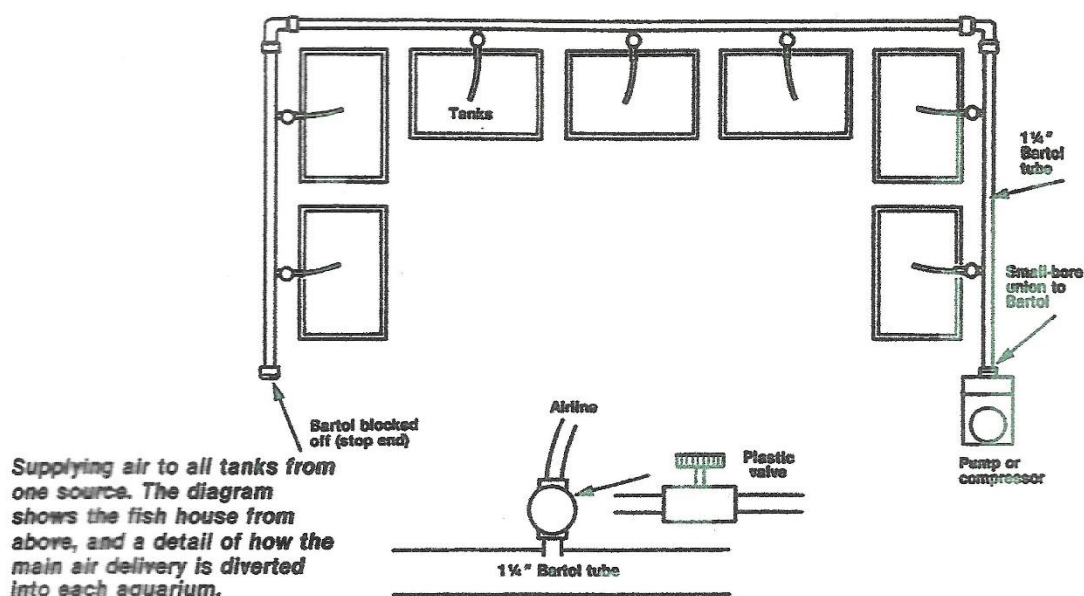


Each tank had an overflow system.....



Another thing that needs to be added is an air system, allowing adequate aeration into each tank. Two air stones are connected to flexible air pipe, which is then

connected via drilled holes, to 1 inch and a half bore tube. This tubing is finally connected to an air pump. One air stone is then placed at each end of the tank. There are tiny plastic clamps available which can be attached to the air pipe above the air stone, and these can be altered to adjust the amount of air going into the tank.



A setup like this allowed me to keep large numbers of fish in each tank, without compromising their health at all. Even the most delicate of fish, like the Veiltail with its long finnage, can be kept like this without causing such ailments as white spot, fin rot, fin congestion etc., which would kill them off. It is also a good idea to have a filter hanging on the outside of the tank. This syphons water from the tank, filters it and then returns it to the tank.

Note also when building the Fish-house:

1. All secondary tank support members are constructed from 3" x 3" S.W. Timber.
2. All timber to receive 3 coats of waterproof paint before installation.
3. All screws/fixtures to be in stainless steel.
4. All Bartol* Pipework to be adequately plumbed in to suit.
5. All airlines to be adequately supported.
6. All electrics to be securely isolated and to include a circuit breaker.

Each evening I used to check the tanks for anything left on the bottom of the tank. If there was any waste, I would syphon that off to ensure each of the tanks are kept as clear as possible.

Regarding the heat of the water, I had a thermostat on the outside of each tank, and a heater in each tank. These were controlled by separate switches, so I could keep all the tanks at the same temperature or have some at different temperatures if necessary. This was ideal, especially at breeding season, when the tanks being used for breeding would need to reach a temperature of 70 degrees, and this would be done gradually, increasing the temperature 1 degree at a time.

You can see my fish house in the YouTube video 'Bills Goldfish' which can be accessed directly (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cW-IDYcQroo>) or via the Northern Goldfish Society website: www.northerngoldfishsociety.com

* Bill used traditional 'Bartol' pipework – no longer available because pipework is now in a range of plastic types all in metric dimensions. Your plumbing suppliers can advise. BTW – Bill drew the diagrams too.

That Quiz

I had no photo of Pat's winning Best Exhibit in Question 16 and the records indicated that his Bristols won, in fact it was his team of four Broadtail Moors. Thanks to Mike Smith who spotted the error and to June Pons who sent me this photo of the winning Moors.



It doesn't alter the result however, David Padfield still won!

One More Top Tip from Alan Ratcliffe

If a whole spawning fails (all the eggs turn white) do not always suspect a genetic problem with the male – it could be the water. If it is at all acidic (pH less than 7) this will actually kill the male's sperm. Check the water chemistry before spawning, the ideal pH is 7.5.

Pond News

During his recent visit to Japan President Trump went to a traditional Japanese Koi pond and joined the Japanese Prime Minister in feeding the fish. The Prime Minister Shinzo Abe sprinkled a spoonful of pellets, but President Trump up-ended the whole box into the pond.



This caused a deluge of criticism in the USA via Twitter etc.

'He can't even feed fish right!' was the more polite comment.

(Never mind the politics – think about the Koi.)

Minutes of the March Meeting

In a busy meeting Alan Ratcliffe brought a Goldfish he had line bred to try and develop a black Calico variety – however it became a black Metallic ...



Here is the Goldfish with a wild-coloured for comparison – the iPhone photograph does not do the fish justice – the black one has red flashes under that black colour. But it has a good shape and finnage and everyone hopes Alan will develop the line further.

Sherridan reported that the A5 aquarium shop in Nuneaton has closed down – a loss of a popular retailer.

He also confirmed that tickets for a Chester Zoo visit have been purchased at half price (about £10 per person). The visit will be next Saturday, March 17th and we need to meet him at the main entrance at 10.30 am. Arrangements have been made for a behind the scenes tour at the Chester Aquarium. If you wish to visit, let Sherridan know (now! 07933732123).

It was proposed that the NGPS Trophies could be recycled to reduce costs. If you have any of interest that you do not cherish, bring them to the April meeting.

David Ormondroyd, the manager at St Matthews Hall will be leaving the post (sad loss for us) in April. There will be a farewell party for everyone who uses the Church and Hall on Easter Saturday March 31st at 7pm, buffet included – but David needs to know numbers, so let him know if you are attending via saintmatthewshall@btinternet.com .

There was some discussion of the suggestion that the Far East method of judging Goldfish from the top view should be adopted. There was a unanimous decision that the method just will not work for our Nationwide Standards.

The Members' Meeting planned for Saturday April 21st was confirmed for St Matthews Hall, Chapel Lane, Stretford, Manchester M32 9AJ. This will be in the annex room (where we hold the annual Open Show auction) which is booked from 10am to 5pm. There will be a Table Show (any variety) and a free buffet for early arrivals. There will be a series of (short!) talks from members, anyone wishing to do this should let Sherridan know. Final arrangements at the April meeting.

That April meeting will be at the Church Inn, Church Lane, Prestwich M25 1AJ on Tuesday April 10th at 8pm. Please attend, especially if you also plan to visit the Members' Meeting on the 21st, to help finalise the plans.

