



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



**DECEMBER 2018**



**&**



**To all our 70 members World-wide**



An early Christmas dinner – the NGPS annual social weekend at Llandudno with David Ford (behind camera), Dean Roberts, Sherridan Moores and Alan Birchenough. This was at the Grand Hotel on the pier where they had started Christmas celebrations early – weekend of November 17<sup>th</sup> 2018.

Note that there were only four members, whereas there used to be at least eight for this social occasion. One of the reasons must be that we have been going to Llandudno for four consecutive years and every aquatic feature has been visited, from Anglesey Sea Zoo to the SeaQuarium Rhyl, even the Blue Planet in Chester.

Although Llandudno is attractive (especially this trip with the blue skies and almost Summer sunshine.... here is that Grand Hotel and that weather)....



.... we need to find somewhere new for 2019. So far, we think that the venue should be near a major public aquarium, such as London (for the Zoo and SeaWorld) or another seaside such as Scarborough (SeaWorld and The Deep). Ideas please (to [drdmford@outlook.com](mailto:drdmford@outlook.com)) and a commitment for a long weekend in early November 2019.

## **Members Write**

Our President, Bill Ramsden, noted David Roberts suggestions for determining the Best in Show in last month's Newsletter. Bill believes that no change is necessary; the current system is more than adequate, with judges (chosen for not having winning Showers) conferring and agreeing what should get the award.

Bill also agreed that the Nationwide Standard for the Bristol Shubunkin is ideal and should be guaranteed a no-change shape for several years. In fact, all Standards should have a fixed minimum life to prevent minor changes occurring (he said).

But he does believe that white should not have been adopted – this is a non-colour and in his fishkeeping days, would merit lost points. Bill was sometime Chair of the



Colour Committee and they used the British Standard Colour Chart (BS2660) to identify the exact colours for judging. White is 18-B-15, but not adopted back then. Bill believes the following is an ideal colourful Bristol...



Air your views here – email me via [drdmford@outlook.com](mailto:drdmford@outlook.com) (and allow publication).

### **This Month's Top Tip**



For Christmas, retail outlets sell devices for holding your Xmas ornaments – one from 'Range' is ideal for holding your cables or airlines in place within or on the aquarium. They are Phthalate-free plastic suckers, less than £3 for 25 (if you are wondering, Phthalate is used to give soft, pliable plastic and is poisonous to fish). They are meant to hold electric cable lighting on a window via a flexible claw.

### **A Hard Question!**

A new member emailed: I have been reading up on water hardness and am confused by all the different terms.

Can you help sort out the various types of units etc. for me?

OK – here are the facts: Water Hardness refers to the 'feel' of water, because the more material dissolved therein, the harder and brittle it 'feels'.

When chemists first wanted to assess the value, they knew that soap would not lather well in hard water, so they measured how much of a standard soap solution was needed to be added to give the first lasting bubbles when shaken. This was called Wanklyn's Soap Solution and is still used to this day (in labs where they can't afford electronic gear).

What makes soap form a scum, instead of a lather, are Calcium and Magnesium ions. They are usually present in the carbonate form, or perhaps bicarbonate. Bicarbonates are broken down by heat, so boiling turns the bicarbonate into a smaller amount of carbonate (or it 'cracked' out e.g. fur in the kettle).

Historically this was called 'Temporary Hardness', and since the Calcium and Magnesium remains, it became the 'Permanent Hardness'. Hence Total Hardness is Calcium Hardness (the Magnesium was just added to the Calcium level) plus any Temporary Hardness.

The Germans were the first to write aquarist books, so they listed the Calcium Hardness in German Degrees DH (Deutsch Harte) and the carbonates as KH (Karbonat Harte). Americans translated the German books but refused to give the values Imperial 'status' (anti-colonialism) and so DH became GH for German Hardness but is now called General Hardness. KH remained.

Now we have the European Union and metrication has taken over (but not yet in the USA!) so values are listed in ppm (parts per million but can be mg/l which is *numerically the same*) as Calcium or Carbonate Hardness. That is how your local Waterboard will list it.

By the way, if the Waterboard find only traces, it becomes parts per billion, ppb, but note that it is an American billion not an English billion (a million-million, grammatically correct, but the World uses the American format nowadays).

Sometimes DH becomes dH (perhaps as a typo!). Note that because of the soap history, things like salt (Sodium chloride) do not count as hardness, because the Sodium does not react, since soap is Sodium palmitate etc. But it is still there, as far as the fish are concerned! That is why things like Redox (electrical potential – a measure of the cleanliness of the water) or TDS (Total Dissolved Solids – measured by evaporation to a solid and weighed) may be of greater value than just Hardness.

Most modern kits measure Calcium, Magnesium, carbonate and bicarbonate and other anions, such as sulphate, as the Total Hardness GH (General Hardness, but some claim it means Gesamtharte, which is just German for General Hardness).

The kits measure the carbonate and bicarbonate as KH. The difference, GH - KH = Sulphate Hardness, called NKH (Nonkarbonatharte — German again).

Total Hardness is all most aquarists need, but KH can be useful if you want to change the pH (acidity/alkalinity – often misspelt Ph). The carbonate will react with acids, so you need to know how much is present to calculate how much acid to add to drop the pH.

Indeed, it is good to have about 20ppm carbonate/bicarbonate because it slows the pH change down, with less stress on the fish. This is called the 'buffering capacity' in the UK, and 'reserve alkalinity' (although this is all the alkaline salts and the best value can be 180ppm) in the USA.

What values are assigned to the DH or KH depends on what the makers choose. If metric, it will be ppm, but many stay with German and call the GH value degrees dH based on parts of Calcium oxide per 100,00 parts of water. The English (British eventually!) chose grains of Calcium carbonate per gallon of water and called this 'degrees Clark'. The French chose Calcium carbonate per million parts of water. Hence, there are conversion tables in most books.

However, ppm is the best system, and Soft Water is 0 to 50 ppm Total Hardness, Hard Water is up to 200 ppm, Very Hard 300 ppm. Therefore, your GH is the total value, and the KH is just part of that total (so do not add and divide by two).

The best water for Goldfish is 200 ppm Total Hardness but they tolerate a wide range. pH is important too – the ideal is 7.4 which is the same value (on average) as your blood, which cannot be a coincidence!

### **Continuing Ian's account of Aquarama 2018 in Shanghai China**

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> August. The exhibition is open to trade people only on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday morning and the Public Friday afternoon and Saturday.

Wednesday started with the official opening ceremony, various people gave speeches and then they declared the event open.

Here are Alvin Lim with Mr Wang Aimin, the top fish breeder from Fuzhou...



The Judges were invited on stage and presented with an engraved glass plaque for their effort. Then the Grand Champion Goldfish winner was presented with his award. I was honoured to be asked to present this.

The rest of the morning I enjoyed looking round the other varieties of fish on display also many of the trade stands had some interesting displays of fish, frogs and equipment.



I was introduced to several Goldfish Masters and had a long chat to the people on the Fuzhou Goldfish stall who I had met six years ago when I visited the First International Goldfish Competition in 2012.

At 2pm I gave a talk to about two dozen people (I was glad it was not two hundred). I was asked to give a view of keeping Goldfish in Europe, but I kept it to the United Kingdom. I started by explaining my involvement in the hobby showing pictures of my set up, The origin of the Bristol Shubunkin and the foundation of the



Bristol Aquarists Society also the other society's in the UK. I also covered the development of the Nationwide Standards and explained that the hobbyist control the Goldfish scene in the UK unlike China where commercial breeders control the scene.

The talk went very well until my interpreter Shena was asked to translate a very technical question from a Pearlscale breeder. Never mind. The talk lasted about half an hour and the rest of the afternoon gave me more time to enjoy the rest of the exhibition,

In the evening Louis Chan in his thanks to the Judges took us to Jesse Restaurant, a very nice traditional restaurant in the old part of Shanghai only thirty covers with three sittings a night, ours was the last at 9pm. We arrived twenty minutes early and waited on the pavement our order was taken whilst outside so the first course of our meal was ready as we sat down. This was a traditional Chinese meal with many course's, luckily by now I had re mastered the use of chopsticks and could even pick up peanuts.



After the meal we were taken to the Bund to see the Shanghai tower and many other buildings that are all lit up until lights out at 11pm although they are still well lit after that time.

**This is a Buddhist Temple**

In the next and final part, Ian visits a Chinese Fish Farm – will be in the January 2019 Newsletter.

## Minutes of the December Meeting

A printed copy of the AMGK's Newsletter about the Nationwide Open Show was viewed and everyone was amazed at its excellent presentation of the data and photos. An On-line copy will be sent to all NGPS members and printed copies will be posted members not on-line.

Sherridan reported that the St Matthews Hall manager, Helen, has been told by her Church Elders that the cupboard space we have occupied for our 150 tanks must be moved elsewhere – since it is valuable storage and we only use the Hall once a year.

**Does any member know of secure, clean, storage somewhere in or near the Stretford area please?** We are willing to pay a reasonable fee. Let Sherridan know (01619697567 or email [moores\\_s@sky.com](mailto:moores_s@sky.com)) – or me at [drdmford@outlook.com](mailto:drdmford@outlook.com).

Goldfish breeder David Jones sent a request via Sherridan for the members' opinion – should he accept a water meter to his home in Leeds. Unanimously we said no! If it can be avoided.

With new member Louise Rylette being present, there was much reminiscing about past members and their eccentricities, as well as love of Goldfish. She brought a box of chocolates as a Xmas gift for all, but won (eventually) by David Roberts as a room raffle.

The New Year's meeting will be at The Church Inn, Prestwich M25 1AN, 8pm January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019. The consensus is that this January Meeting should not be cancelled unless there is very bad weather. If that does happen Sherridan will phone everyone who may visit and I will email all.

