



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



**December 2019**



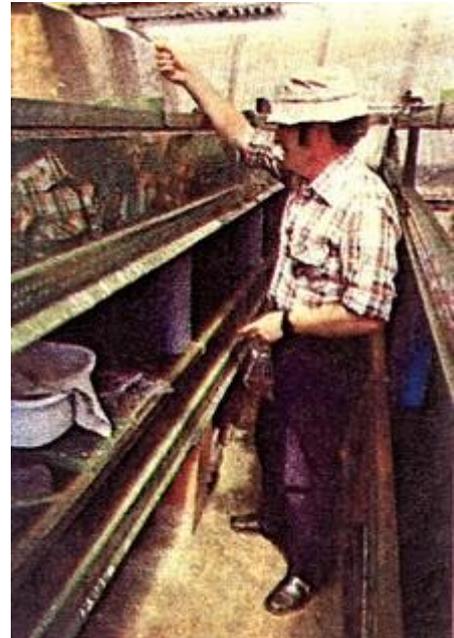
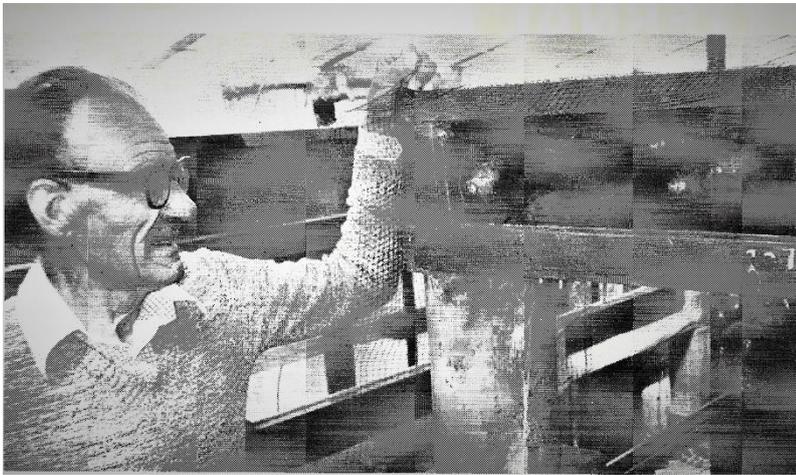
We are a Pondkeepers Society too – here's a famous one .....



**The Tommy Sutton Fish Farm**

The legacy of the 80 years of these ponds in the back garden of the Sutton home, near Coleshill, in Birmingham, is that many NGPS

members breed their Goldfish from this stock. Sadly the two Tommys (father & son) have passed on and the ponds are no longer there.

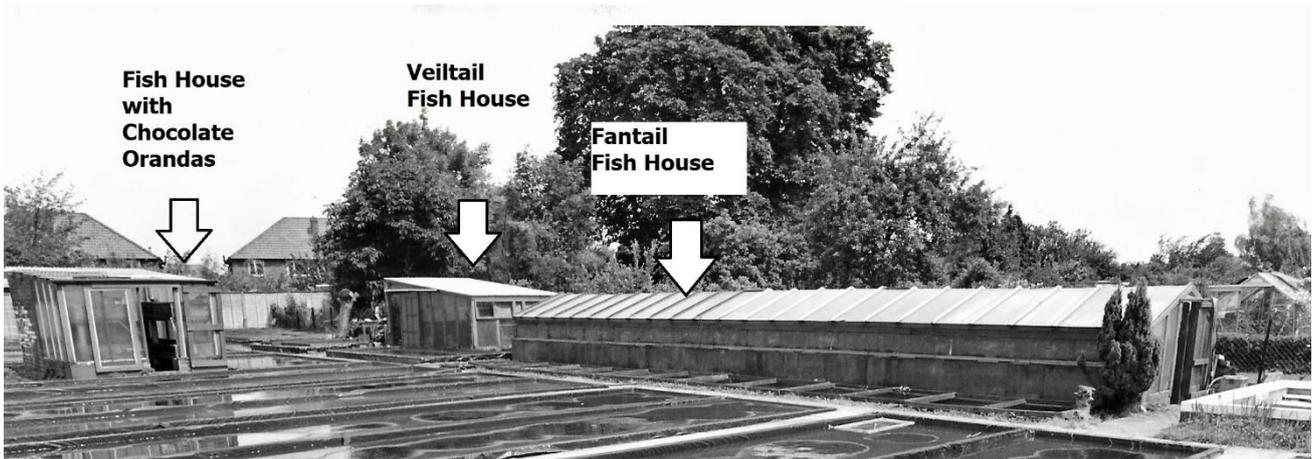


On the left is Tommy Sutton Senior in one of his fish houses with a breeding collection of Bristol Shubunkins, on the right is his son, Tommy Sutton Junior in the Fish House with a breeding collection of Veiltails. Born in 1911, the Senior Tommy became a keen fisherman and this started his interest in the fish themselves – he started a coldwater aquarium with caught fish, but changed to Goldfish, then began breeding them.

As the years passed he married, bought a house and installed ponds in the garden, bought the neighbour's garden and extended the ponds, all the while breeding Fancy Goldfish that won prizes at Fish Shows all over the UK. He sold the prize-winning Goldfish at premium prices and Goldfish lovers all over the country bought his stock and used them for their breeding lines. The business was so busy you had to make an appointment – and bring cash. At 3pm business stopped as he and his son, Tommy Junior, went fishing.

Senior died in 1988 but his son carried on the business until he passed on and the business closed at the end of the millennium.

Here are those famous ponds and fish houses.....



The ponds were only 3 or 4 inches deep (7 to 10cm), ideal for viewing and netting sold fishes. Tommy also believed this gave higher Oxygen levels and warmer water under sunshine.

One section was two feet deep and used to house breeding stock that were not kept in fish houses over cold winters.

There were several of these Fish Houses, built (and collapsed) over the years. These were used for selective breeding and fry moved to the warm ponds for growing on.

Almost all the Line-bred pedigree Goldfish we now own are descended from Tommy Sutton stock. Some have been sent abroad so the Sutton Goldfish Genes are World-wide. Quite a legacy.

## **Annual Social Weekend**

This year five members visited 'The Deep' in Hull. This was on Saturday November 2<sup>nd</sup>.... Alan Birchenough, Dean Roberts, Sherridan Moores, David Roberts and with camera, David Ford.



We stayed in Barton on Humber in some rather nice cottages with a fish & chip shop next door, who specialise in giant portions of fish!



Photos of our visit to The Deep can be seen on the NGPS Website at page 9 (scroll down it). [www.northerngoldfishsociety.com](http://www.northerngoldfishsociety.com)

## **Annual Xmas Dinner**

It was early this year to avoid booking restaurants in December. Sadly several members couldn't make it for various reasons and the invite went out on-line only a day before the Dinner (no chance for postal versions of the Newsletter). Hence just three of us (Sherridan Moores, Alan Birchenough and David Ford) met at The Orion, Trafford Park, so we decided to visit ChaoBaby, the Thai Buffet – this was on 14<sup>th</sup> November.



.... and I am behind the camera.

The Thai Green Curry is excellent.

## Member's Fish Houses

Back in the December 2016 on page 7 (check it out via Googling 'northerngoldfishsociety') Dean (Show Secretary J.D.Roberts) revealed his plans for his new Fish House. It was reported: see the results next year (2017). Now it is nearly 2020, and it is still not finished! He planned a water flow-through system but enjoys the ritual manual water changes so much it has never been installed.



Here is the current Fish House. There are six tanks 4ft x 2ft x 8ins, plus assorted 3ft, 2ft, 30ins and 18ins ones, totalling 21 in all. They

stand on grey polystyrene (that was the packing material with the original tanks) and the staging is professionally made by a local joinery firm.

The plants are Spider, Baby Cacti and Bonsai, who thrive in the warm, moist atmosphere, but to prevent too much condensation a large Dehumidifier is used (it removes over 5 litres of water daily). This replaced the small Unibond 360 Aero units that can be seen on the concrete floor.

It is all ready for the 2020 breeding season – to be reported soon.

### **Members Write**

Last year we lost one of our most experienced Goldfish Breeders, Alex Stephenson.



He used to write for the Aquarist & Pondkeeper too: on the next page is an example from Nov. 1993 page 9.

More from Alex in 2020.

# Bubbling with Enthusiasm



STEPHEN SMITH

One of the more recent types of Bubble Eye, the Calico.

**Alex Stephenson** advises on a Fancy Goldfish that can reach emotions other fish are not capable of even beginning to touch.

*Main photograph: Bill Tomey.*

Of the many so-called coldwater fish kept by hobbyists, by far the most popular are Goldfish. This is not surprising, when you appreciate the vast assortment of shapes and colours which are available.

It is generally agreed there are well over 100 different varieties of Goldfish throughout the world. However, many of these are rare, and the chances of seeing them in your local aquatic shop are almost nil. This still leaves about a dozen or so types which are regularly available, with several more turning up occasionally.

Broadly speaking, the more exotic the variety, the more delicate the fish. I have often seen Fancy Goldfish recommended for beginners to "practice on" before going on to tropicals. In my view, this is entirely wrong.

There are many of the easier tropicals which are much more forgiving. In fact, I would suggest you don't try exotic Goldfish until you have at least some experience of general fishkeeping.

## Recent arrival

To illustrate what we mean by 'Exotic Goldfish', let's take a look at just one of these: the Bubble Eye.

In Goldfish genealogy, the Bubble Eye is a comparatively recent development. Said to be of Chinese origin, these fish are imported in quite large numbers and are usually easy to obtain.

Before rushing off to buy some, be aware, though, that the extreme appearance of this variety has been known to produce some extreme reactions among fishkeepers! Not all Fancy Goldfish can do this. It seems the Bubble Eye can incite emotions other fish can't hope to reach.

## BUBBLE EYE FACT FILE

- 1 The Bubble Eye is a fancy variety of the Common Goldfish (*Carassius auratus*).
- 2 Fins:
  - (i) Dorsal (back) — absent
  - (ii) Caudal (tail) — double
  - (iii) Anal (belly) — double
  - (iv) Pelvic (hip) — two, as in 'normal' Goldfish
  - (v) Pectoral (chest) — two, as in 'normal' Goldfish
- 3 Eyes have large fluid-filled sacs which are very delicate. If damaged, they will re-grow, but not to their original size. Damage of sacs can lead to infection.
- 4 Bubble Eyes are NOT suitable for ponds; they are strictly aquarium fish.

## Bubble Eye features

So what is all the fuss about? Well, the bubbles mainly; they're a bit like water bags. For those who are prepared to lose friends and wish to devote loving care on a real 'exotic', here is a brief description.

The Bubble Eye is (at least, as far as UK standards are concerned) a short, deep-bodied variety, without a dorsal (back) fin; the caudal fins (tailpiece) should be double and fully divided; likewise, the anal (belly) fins. Development of the bubbles on either side of the head, under each eye, should be even.

In earlier years, these bubbles were of medium size and fairly firm. More recently, however, they have become much larger and tend to wobble about quite a bit.

Colours for the metallic version are usually orange/gold, but others such as red

and white, and all-black do exist. As with most Goldfish types, a calico or nacreous option has also now been bred. Some of these show good colouring and are very striking fish.

## What to look for

It has to be said that Bubble Eyes are not the hardiest of Goldfish. When choosing specimens, avoid anything that stands on its head for long periods. If showing or breeding is not anticipated, faults such as joined caudal fins, uneven backline, etc., are unimportant. In such cases, a strong, healthy fish which pleases you, is a good fish. Breeding stock or show specimens are something else.

An experienced Goldfish breeder will know which faults are of minor importance, and which are certain to be reproduced in the progeny. He or she will always choose physically strong stock.

One of the problems facing the British Goldfish fancier is the fact that our image of the ideal fish is rather different to the Oriental view. Bubble Eyes produced in the Far East tend to have much longer finnage and rather longer, slimmer bodies than those which are preferred by our Goldfish societies.

## Choosing good fish

Choosing fish for competition requires some knowledge of Show Standards. Armed with this knowledge, it is just possible to spot a real gem in your dealer's tanks. However, as with all Fancy Goldfish, the quality of specimens offered for sale can vary greatly. Small fish, serving the cheaper end of the market, are usually of indifferent grade, the better ones being retained and 'grown-on' by the breeders in order to obtain a better price. It is, after all, their livelihood.

Not all aquatic retailers deal in the more 'up-market' Goldfish. So, if you are a serious enthusiast, you really need to find a specialist dealer who can offer you something worthwhile.

Good-quality Goldfish, whatever the variety, are never cheap, and difficult types, where the number of good specimens obtained is very low, can therefore (understandably) command a high price. Bubble Eyes are definitely in this category.

Whatever you do, do not buy Fancy Goldfish unless you have already prepared suitable accommodation. Long fins, protruding eyes and large bubbles, are all easily damaged by sharp or protruding objects, so I'm afraid that a tankful of rocks, water wheels, and sunken chests just will not do.

A6P

## Tip of the Month

Add these to your Aquarium Tool Chest. –

Toothpicks (these were £1 at the Pound Shop).

Being wood they can be safely used to poke into mechanical parts of power-filters and pumps to clear algae and mulm.



Their most effective use is to clear the jets of spray bars.

Even during the pump running, as well as routine cleaning.

Within a few days' use the outlet holes of spray bars collect mulm that slows the jets – one wiggle of a toothpick restores the flow.

### **Minutes of the December Meeting.**

Only a few members made it to the meeting with very bad weather over the Pennines, then even they said there were reasons for not making the January Meeting. Hence it was decided to cancel the January 14th Meeting - the next one at The Church Inn will be February 11th 2020.

It was noted , with regret that London Zoo Aquarium has been closed.

Sherridan described planted aquaria with Aquarium Home Services and the discussion included a shortage in the trade of Vallis varieties. He proposed that these require Iron in the water - with the change from iron-framed tanks to Acrylic ones, this element was missing. Search of the Internet showed that solutions of essential minerals for planted aquaria abound.

He also raised the plans for the Nationwide - there are plans for up to 8 new judges being trained and a dedicated website being published - via a series of emails between Nationwide Committee members.

From an e-mail by Pat Davies, new Nationwide Chairman:

*(Referring to plans for a Nationwide website)* Grahame Draper from the AMGK has done a cracking job on it so far. I'll send everyone the link once we have everything in place to set it live.

Thanks also for the list of judges. I've heard from Alan Race, who is also a judge of course and gave me Alec King's name. So we have 12 in all.

As for the training of future judges - we have 8 volunteers, most of whom will start training at the AMGK first meeting in March 2020. This will be a table show with eight single tails and eight twin tails. (2 trainees started at the National last year and one started at the AMGK Open Show also in 2019). I agree with the basic format of training and have had the previously used training manual produced by Derek Seymore of the former GSGB produced in 1997 scanned by Grahame Draper (AMGK). This is now undergoing some revisions and editing by myself, and, with Derek's agreement, should be ready as a background guide for anyone undergoing training and for any judge who is willing to supervise within the next couple of weeks for review by all societies.

AMGK have also agreed to run the 'judging course' at a table show in March, May, at the Open show in June, August and at the AGM in October 2020. It is also envisaged that training will also be made available at the Bristol Show, NGPS Open Show and the National.

Also NEGS if it happens. that should do the training for most of the trainees!!!  
Cheers, Pat

Response to Pat from Sherridan:

Hi Pat and everyone. NGPS fully supports the Nationwide movement in all its aspects, in all probability it represents the future of serious British goldfish keeping more accurately than any of the individual societies and a web site would seem a sensible idea, though it should always be remembered that the content of such a website is the crucial matter.

Our judges are; Bill Ramsden, Alan Ratcliffe, Dean Roberts, David Roberts, Alan Race, Craig Clinton and myself. We do not have any trainee judges currently.

I am afraid I have to question some of the assumptions that have been stated regarding the training of future judges. It has usually been recognized that a trainee must have bred several varieties and had some success showing them, when this status has been agreed by the active judges a willing trainee has been required to accompany as many different judges as possible around two seasons worth of shows, that is eight in total and gives sufficient exposure to the guidance and education given by the experienced judge and for the trainee to gain knowledge, experience and confidence. When this has happened the judges consider the trainees progress and consider their suitability to become a full judge. This is quite a long and involved process if done properly and I would submit that it must be done properly to be of any value. One season of shows, especially where several of the candidates might be acting as officers of the show in other roles and would therefore not have time to attend to both, would be woefully too short a time.

My specific worries regarding the 'plan' for the new trainees are;  
1. We cannot just accept eight candidates because they are willing, they must be suitable - this may be the case in some or all of them but it must be tested.

2. The training process, of necessity, slows the judging speed of the judge and trainee considerably and a large number, such as eight, all at once would lead to considerable and unacceptable delays at the shows.

3. I would strongly question the suitability of the old GSGB 'training manual', with or without editing or revision, for any role in our training. This document has never had any place in our training schedule, it was administered by one individual to train GSGB judges for their Show only and was not available for scrutiny by others.

4. While I can see no problem with trainees accompanying judges at table shows, these cannot be regarded as equal to an Open Show, the judging process is very much simplified and abbreviated.

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These were discussed at length. Members are welcome and encouraged to e-mail their opinions, please contact Sherridan with them at [moores\\_s@sky.com](mailto:moores_s@sky.com) (note underscore between the two s's) or on 01619697567.

Meeting ended with mince pies for all. Have a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year and don't forget there is no January meeting, see you in February 2020!

