

Saturday 3rd and Sunday 4th September saw Kennet Valley hold their 2011 Show at Hare Hatch Sheeplands Garden Centre near Reading for the third consecutive year, only this time it was an Open Show!

Quite late on in 2011 it was decided that the Club would hold an Open Show in 2011, something that has not been done by the Club for a number of years. This would give an opportunity to any other Koi Clubs or other Koi enthusiasts to show their koi. As always no show is possible without the club members who work in the background ensuring everything is in place when show time arrives.

Preparations began at Sheeplands on the Monday before the show with Mike Fisher (KVKS Chairman) in charge, and it has to be said that a great big thank you needs to go to the members who turned up to help put the show together. The Show was held under glass and, as we had some quite heavy showers over the weekend, proved to be very handy so no one got wet. With the show preparations completed it was 'sit back and take it easy' time – yes I just as anyone who is part of the great show fraternity of the UK Koi Clubs will testify it doesn't stop until the last fish has been de-benched and is safely on its way home and the massive break down starts and is completed.

Our exhibitors started to arrive very early on Saturday morning, with Steve and Angie Watson being the first to arrive, and the time consuming benching process began. We were very lucky, once again, to have the assistance of Geoff and Tina Kemp from Connoisseur Koi leading our benching team and whilst we only had 18 vats of Koi we were lucky enough to be able to have on view over 80 stunning Koi. As many of you will know once the fish start to arrive, as we are a BKKS Section Show, there should have a Health Standards Committee (HSC) member in attendance, luckily Steve Watson is an HSC Officer so we were covered and by 7.30am we had our official HSC officer, Rod Taylor, in attendance. By about 8.30 we actually had four members of the HSC in attendance at the Show – is this a record for the number of HSC's at one show?

With the benching completed and paperwork ready the BKKS judges arrived led by Mr Gary Pritchard, other judges who attended were David Pope, John Anderson and trainee Jamie

Johnson. One of the judges, John Anderson, stayed on for the second day and was very enlightening in critiquing the Koi on display.

After much discussion and deliberation they awarded the Grand Champion to Steve and Angie Watson with their beautiful size 5 Matsue Kohaku. Not only did they win GC but they also won Baby Champion with their size 2 Showa. Paul Uden won Mature Champion with his size 6 Tancho and also Jumbo with his 84cm Kawarimono. Adult Champion was won by Donald Kerr with his size 5 Kohaku and Donald also took the Visitors Prize with his Doitsu Sanke. Young Champion was won by Andy Day and Carol Cook with their size 4 Kohaku and Best Kennet Valley Vat went to Mark Cole. Our Congratulations go to all these exhibitors along with everyone else who showed their beautiful Koi.

Also in attendance was Fuji Fish & Food, this was a first for the club as we don't normally have dealers in attendance and although he didn't have any Koi for sale on his stand he did have some very nice pictures of his 'For Sale Koi'. Our Tombola stand actually ran out of prizes and had to be replenished not once but twice with donations from Hare Hatch Sheeplands and our members.

The turnout for the two days was very encouraging and the feedback from the public was excellent. Thanks to the efforts of our Membership Secretary, Roy Palmer, and other club members who were in attendance taking the time to speak to visitors, we also had a record number of new members join following the show!

Sincere thanks go to Geoff & Tina Kemp, the BKKS Judges, the BKKS HSC Officers (yes all of them!), John Anderson for giving up his private time on the Sunday, our members who took time out to help put up, attend and take down the show, everyone who showed their Koi and of course Andrea, Andy & Rob from Hare Hatch Sheeplands Garden Centre who without their generosity and help the show would not have been possible. Our sincere thanks also go to our Sponsors namely sponsors Tetra, Kusuri, EA, A4Koi, Bradshaws and Selective Koi Sales who very kindly provided the food for the major prize winners.

We were very pleased to welcome Sam Collyer, a photographer, who has kindly allowed us to use his pictures of the major prize winners in this article. Many thanks for this opportunity Sam and we look forward to seeing you in September.

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2012 will see Kennet Valley Koi Society holding their Open Show, once again, at Hare Hatch Sheeplands Garden Centre (www.harehatchsheeplands.co.uk) on Saturday 15th & Sunday 16th

September. This is the year of the ladies, with Sue Fisher and Sue Ravenhill taking the lead as Co-Show Chairpersons. Mike Fisher is Show Manager so will be doing all the hard work! Do look out for further information regarding our Show and we hope to see many of you there in September.

Mark Harrowell - KVKS Pro - Sue Ravenhill – Co Show Chairperson 2012