



Something Fishy



The Newsletter of the Ilford & District Aquarists & Pondkeepers Society

Merry Christmas

**Next And Last Meeting
Tuesday 12th December**

Last Month

Chris Cheswright - Rainbow fishes



Chris gave a talk on Rainbow fishes, which my spies tell me was very good.

Rab said that the meeting went very well and not like a club that was about to close.



Cliff has done our famous Christmas hampers and Mike is providing the refreshments.

Your partners are more than welcome to come to the meeting so please bring them along.

Ray was going to read the following out at the meeting but thought it would be better in the Newsletter as members who could not attend would know what was said.



If you know any of the faces in this photo could you please contact the Police.

The trophy below is the Treasure Hunt Trophy and was presented to Mike Brill, as he was the last person to win it.



"I joined Ilford in the early seventies and soon became a committee member. My role became P.R.O and in those days our annual show was a big thing. So I was busy with monthly news for magazines and the suppliers for show packs for the annual show.

As we grew, Redbridge Library became too small for our meetings and the show. We moved to Wanstead Library and our show to Ilford Town Hall.

The club was very active in those days in many ways. We used to hold an annual Dinner Dance which was always a very good evening.

I got more involved with the social side of activities apart from PRO. Together with Ron Ruth we organised a Treasure Hunt which surprisingly ran very successfully for quite a few years. Then there were other events which turned out to be popular. I set about arranging day trips, quiz nights and who will ever forget the magic nights. Don Taylor arranged some trips abroad to visit the Aquariums there.

In 1984 our Golden Jubilee we held a big seminar at London Zoo, with many known faces in the Aquatic hobby invited. This was a super day.



This Month

The Christmas Meeting

It is sad times as this is the last regular meeting of the club, so let's make it a good one.

Rab has put together some slides which is a trip down memory lane and Mike will attempt to give a commentary - should be interesting as he hasn't seen the slides ...



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In 2009 together with Ken Wrightson (our chairman at that time) we organised a very nice dinner at Luigis in Ilford (much to the horror of our treasurer Rab Dingwall as the cost was high) with invited guests. Even our ex-chairman Mike Shadrack came over from America

Ilford has been a very big part of my life, not from the hobby point of view but the friendships that have been forged over the years. I have been honoured to have been your chairman these past few years, but sadly it is to say to goodbye to our monthly meetings, but hopefully this will not be the end and we will continue to meet up from time to time to keep the name of Ilford alive.

There is so much that could be said about Ilford and its history (like in the committee minutes of Sept 1939, no club due to outbreak of war) A CLUB TO BE REMEMBERED.”

The New Ilford Aquarists



An email from Mike about the New Ilford Aquarists quarterly (I think) meetings.

“Most people wanted an afternoon meeting; preferably on a weekday. It might be a good time to meet at 3:00 p.m., followed by aquatic discussion with a subject to start with, then any other as needed; finally some tea & biscuits.

Meetings should be in people’s houses to start, if an alternative venue is requested such as a pub we can do that.

Some people have said they would not mind holding a meeting. It would be a good idea if all interested members had contact details for each other if only to offer lifts if needed.

We need to confirm members do not mind. If a list of names only is published in the newsletter, then anyone not wanting their details given can let either of us know so they can be excluded; also other people not on list can let us know if they wish to be included.

When a meeting is arranged if anyone is unable to come, then please let whoever is holding the meeting know as they will need to know how many to cater for.”

Organising Committee.



Mike Brill mikeandjoywell@btinternet.com

Ken Wrightson wrightson4@btinternet.com

Members that are interested so far are:

Ray Downer Dick Barnetson

Mario & Jan German Martin Howells

Jim Humphries Ken Lloyd

Cliff Tayler Keith Winch



Brian & Chris Waters Barry Brown

Chris Cheswright Garry Steptowe

Anyone wishing to join the list can contact either Mike or Ken by email. They will be pleased to hear from you.





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Sorry Mike it was the only photo I could find.



I asked Mike Shadrack (who was our Chairman for more years than we care to remember) if he would like to write an article about his memories of the club, which he was more than happy to do. Here is what he had to say.

“My memories of the Ilford and District Aquarist's and Pondkeeper's Society are happy, agreeable and, for my age, extensive.



I joined 'Fish Club' as a teenager back in the early sixties with my next door neighbour Mike Brill and we have both been in continuous membership ever since, although Mike's has been more substantial than mine. I moved away to start my career, but later returned to the area with my young wife and baby daughter, and then many years later I moved to a new life in the USA.

Early meetings were held in a smoke filled church hall where the membership were faced by the triumvirate of secretary, chairman and treasurer sitting at the head table. Although we stopped the smoking, the head table idea continued for decades. We moved on to occupy the library room in Barkingside and then, when the club prospered and grew, to the room at the Wanstead Library. In time the hiring of that room became too expensive and we moved to our last resting place, the Gants Hill church hall.



I remember little of the actual meetings, of the speakers and the programs. I recall good people like Henry White and David Allison travelling from Hendon to speak to us and members of the Goldfish Society and the Federation of British Aquarists Societies also came and gave talks. Dick Mills of the FBAS



and David Ford of Aquarian Fishfood became friends of the Society. At that time there were several good local clubs and we enjoyed combined activities and speaker exchanges with clubs like East London, Walthamstow, Southend and Romford.

Ron Ruth was the lynch pin around whom the Society revolved in those early years and soon he was joined by Rab Dingwall who kept our finances straight and knew how to work the projector. We held monthly meetings that included auctions, fry rearing contests, table shows, quizzes and speakers while the newsletters kept everyone informed and connected.

We have always had the benefit of a keen and active committee who worked hard collectively and as individuals to keep the club running and the membership informed and entertained. The committee met monthly. Originally it was in the homes of various committee members but in time this became onerous and we moved to meeting in a church committee room. This arrangement worked well until today.



We were very lucky to have as our Vice Presidents kind and generous people. Stan Wade, who had a tropical fish shop in East Ham and later his son Geoffrey, who had a wholesale fish importing business, were very generous with donations of fish. It was they who, by donations to the auctions, put money in our bank account and kept us afloat. Sammy Bray, who had an aquarium manufacturing business in Romford, also donated both aquariums and services for many years. For several decades the Fish Club maintained an aquarium in the childrens' ward of the King George's Hospital. It must have been there when I had my tonsils removed but I don't remember it although, along with others, I visited it scores of times in later years.



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Later we looked after an aquarium at the Ilford Central library.



Ilford members enjoyed some long weekend foreign trips. The trend was started by the Walthamstow Club who included Ilford members on their trip to see the wonderful aquarium in Nancy, France. Later we ran our own trips to The Netherlands, France and Belgium. We also took trips behind the scenes at the London Zoo Aquarium, to the beaches of Dorset to collect marine life and to various public aquariums and aquatic shops.



Personally I was very fortunate to be able to attend a series of evening classes held at the Natural History Museum and conducted by Dr Keith Bannister and the ichthyology research staff. Not only did I learn a great deal but was able to explore the Museum after dark and actually hold jars of preserved fishes bearing labels that were signed by Charles Darwin. Later Ilford members also enjoyed a visit to those store rooms beneath the Museum.



As a result of that association the club was presented, by a very circuitous route, with two dozen fish that had been seized from a would be smuggler at Heathrow airport. *Ameca splendens* were, I believe, the first Goodeid livebearing fishes bought to the UK and they were absolutely fascinating. Ron Ruth and I shared them and were able to breed them and distribute them to keen aquarists all over the country. Although still available in the aquarium trade these fish are now believed to be extinct in the wild.



The club has always thought big. Ilford was believed to be the first 'Tropical Fish Club' to be organised and we were very proud of the fact. We had kept minutes of those early meetings, including one set that simply read 'Meeting cancelled due to outbreak of war'.

Our 50th Anniversary celebration was held in the meeting rooms of the Zoological Society of London and our All Classes Table Shows were held, for a time, at Ilford Town Hall. Ilford always held a 'closed' all classes table show. It was for members only and did not invite entries from other clubs. It was a huge undertaking for a single Society to put on a large public show but many of us relished the challenge.

We were competitive in others ways too. There were annual Home Aquaria and Pond Competitions. I have learned in later life that deadlines are wonderful and cleaning up the pond and the aquarium in anticipation of the judges is no bad thing. Judging was always fun and the membership often learned something new when the photographs of the entries were shown at a club meeting.



I will never forget as a child seeing my first tropical freshwater aquarium in Mike Brill's front room. Nor the thrill of laying on my bedroom floor a few years later with my head under the 24 inch iron framed aquarium on the bottom shelf of my two tier angle iron stand, holding a magnifying glass and observing the Zebra Danio fry moving around while still in the eggs that had fallen between the carefully placed glass marbles. The first egg layers I ever bred.

There is such joy in keeping a pet as easy as fish. You can easily create and understand an entire ecosystem in a few cubic feet of house or office space. Such a pity that the next generation are unlikely to know it. No matter, if they are bothered they will be able to see fish swim across the screens of their iPhones."





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PFK Article

Kens article for PFK



Ken sent an article to the PFK telling them that the clubs last meeting would be in December.

He said it was in the latest edition of the magazine (hope I've got the right one) but said it was edited so

much that it was almost unrecognisable from the original.

Here is the article that Ken sent so you can read what it should have said.



“After 83 years in existence Ilford Aquarist's and Pondkeepers Society will close its doors in December 2017.

This decision has been regretfully made due to numerous Committee and Club members moving away from the area and nobody being prepared to help keep the Society going.

Only a few years ago we had regular attendances of 40+ people, and guest speakers always remarked how good it was to speak to such a large audience. However, with dwindling attendances and after much deliberation it was obvious that the support required would not be forthcoming so we were left with little choice.

Ilford AS was formed in 1934 and except for a break due to World War II it continued to be the largest society in the south-east. It is to be hoped that someone will write a history of this once great club one day.



As an aquarist of 50+ years standing it makes me sad that the club side of our hobby is fast disappearing.

We used to have inter-club competitions, monthly table shows, etc. but most local clubs no longer exist.



The breeding side of our hobby doesn't seem as popular these days either, where many members who had fish-houses used to bring surplus fish, plants, etc. to club meetings.

Most people prefer to use the Internet now and whilst forums are useful, you can't beat talking to like-minded people face to face at a club meeting.

The assumption seems to be that if it is on the Internet it must be true, which is not always the case.

I think that the continued demise of Clubs was evident at this year's FBAS Annual Festival where some very good people worked so hard to stage a worthwhile event. But to be honest it just didn't compare to previous annual festivals of a few years ago.



I feel privileged to have been a member of Ilford, having shared experiences with good like-minded people over many years. We are going to try and form a Study Group which would meet quarterly and in that way the name of Ilford AS will in some small way continue.

I have a fish-house of some 20 tanks and I intend to continue keeping and breeding fish, but I know that I won't get the same buzz without my monthly club meetings.

Yours truly,
Ken Wrightson, Vice-President
Ilford Aquarist's and Pondkeepers Society”





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My Bit

There is not a lot I can add to what has been said about the club. But I have enjoyed all the years I have been a member of the club and serving on the Committee.

I have made many friends and learnt a lot about keeping fish, or should that be keeping water?

There are too many people to name but I would like to thank Ken & Ray for picking me up each month for the meetings and Committee meetings.



I have been doing the Newsletter for almost 10 years and have produced nearly 120 editions, which I hope members have found some of the items interesting and some a little funny. It is going to feel strange not doing it every month.

It is a shame the club could not continue in its present form but at least the New Ilford Aquarists will keep the club going even if it is only three or four times a year.

Last Month I showed you the cardboard model This is the real thing, but still no water in it yet. In the throes of setting it up, so still got money to spend on it (but don't tell Carole)

The tank is a Red Sea Reefer 170 Deluxe this comes with a sump and Ai hydra 26 HD lights. The total volume is only about 43 gallons but it fits in the space I had available.



The Committee would like to wish all members and their families a very Happy Christmas & New Year



Please try to get to this final meeting of Ilford & District Aquarists & Pondkeepers Society and why don't you bring your partner with you as well.

I will be at the Christmas meeting so see you on Tuesday

Barry



And Merry Christmas from the Browns

