

FANCY GUPPY ASSOCIATION (F G A) - Times Past.

by Brian Alan Brown and Malcolm Delingpole



Photo of the first award ever won by
an American at an FGA show

F.G.A. Memories from the USA © Brian Alan Brown, Long Beach, California

At age 14, Guppy breeding was a lot of fun. I wrote a serialized booklet called, "A Beginner's Guide to the Guppy" that, in the public domain, was translated into many languages, including German, Japanese, Chinese, Swedish, and Danish. I edited the SCGA journal in Southern California (known as "The Guppy Gazette") for a year or two until my studies placed me elsewhere. At that time the locals put on the world's largest fish show.

On a visit to the UK I remember Fred Campbell showing me his guppy house with an amazing (!) slanted vent pipe radiating heat for the tanks. This occurred when I was invited, at age fifteen, to address a meeting of the then very active FGA at Birmingham in 1970. I stayed with my friend Malcolm Delingpole at his home at Alvechurch. After leaving the UK I proceeded to Munich to meet Busch, the originator of the multicolour (or so I believed). I remember writing about my visit for the FGA.

On a subsequent visit, as Malcolm's interests had expanded to monitor lizards and other reptiles (he had become secretary of the International Herpetological Society), we retrieved from an RSPCA location in Birmingham a gigantic lizard that had escaped a show venue. I was 16 years old, and when the kind woman of the RSPCA asked me what the animal ate, I replied with my usual inappropriate humor, "Children and small dogs." Malcolm was not pleased, and I am afraid that my remark may have caused him some future difficulty.

Reading Alan's two articles on the site certainly brought back fond memories. Malcolm is enjoying his retirement and involved in a variety of stimulating activities. The FGA was a great group of people.

If anyone has a copy of my work, "A Beginner's Guide to the Guppy" as it appeared in the FGA Journal of the 1970s, could they please contact me on my email below.

F.G.A. Memories from the UK © Malcolm Delingpole

For several years breeding and showing Fancy Guppies occupied my entire spare time. Each weekend four of us would drive up to Manchester, then Birmingham, then South Wales, then North London and then repeat the sequence.

I was judging and showing on Sundays and working in the Fish House every other day, apart from a visit to Los Angeles and San Francisco to show guppies where I met Brian Alan Brown, who later came to stay with me in Alvechurch, near Birmingham.

At first I was active as Secretary of the Federation of Guppy Breeders Societies and then moved almost seamlessly to the same post in the Fancy Guppy Association. Emphasis in those days was on 'shape' rather than on colour and I was instrumental in visiting Berlin and Vienna in order to persuade them to harmonise 'outlines' with the UK.

After we had won with single fish in several classes our committee kept adding new challenges until they introduced the 'Advanced Master Breeders Class'. If my memory serves me this consisted of a single male in one jar, appropriate female in another, breeders pairs in another, plus 4 matching males and 4 matching females in 2 more jars. In all quite a lot of fish !

This was fine for those of us with time and space and gave us something to aim for. However our whole house of cards came tumbling down, when Guppies started to pour in from mass-production houses in Singapore where Guppies were raised in brackish water.

Advanced Master Breeders' entries came in from entrants who had just purchased rather a lot of matching guppies and this was true of most of the 'flashier' classes.

For me the hobby was never quite the same and I soon found myself secretary of the International Herpetological Society and went off to Kenya to collect Three-Horned Jacksons Chamaeleons and other lizards from the wild.

This activity was short-lived as the CITES regulations put an end to all private collecting and importing, which is why you have to pay at least £200 to own a pet Tortoise !