

MARINE NEWS

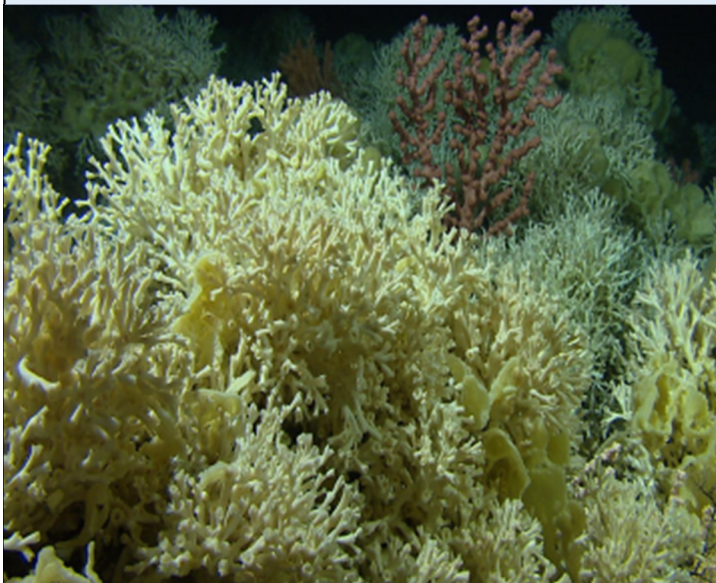


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Welcome to issue 15 of Marinews, the bulletin of York Reefers.

At the moment, if you want to visit a coral reef, you have to travel to warm oceans and seas. For many reefers, this may be something on their bucket list when time and finances allow. There may be two opportunities nearer at home than you might think. Unfortunately one of these is still expensive to visit and one might be wishful thinking!

Firstly, believe it or not, there are coral reefs in British waters. The down side is that these are restricted to a single species of coral which is only found in depths of 200-400 m. The species in question is *Lophelia pertusa* which forms reefs in the eastern Atlantic including off the west coast of Scotland.



The coral grows best on sloping sea beds where there is a strong current but small coral clumps have been found growing on the legs of oil platforms in the North Sea. At that depth they are obviously filter feeders and slow growing.

Reproduction of the coral is by broadcast spawning with fertilisation occurring in the water column, forming ciliated planula larvae. The planula larvae have food supplies and chemoreceptors to help them find a good place to settle. Once a larva settles on a hard substrate it can start precipitating a skeleton and forming a colony. It can also spread when sections break off and the coral will continue to grow in new areas.

Perhaps more in the realms of science fiction, it has been suggested that as the temperatures of the oceans rise it may be possible to grow corals off the coast of Wales to replace the corals on reefs which have been damaged elsewhere.



Ocean Science and Technology (OST), a global information hub for the marine and offshore sector, has examined some of the world's most prominent rescue efforts currently underway. With technology being developed to create and replant coral reefs, it said that, in decades to come, there was a "distinct possibility" the UK could host reef nurseries if current warming trends continue. Coral production is taking place in Britain already, albeit in laboratories. Derby University may be 75 miles from the sea but it's pioneered techniques that enable corals to reproduce in aquariums.

Before you get your hopes up, according to OST, current figures show oceans are set to heat up 0.2 °C globally - and 0.2 °C–0.3 °C in Europe every five years. This would yield a 2 -3 °C rise in UK waters by 2074. With late summer sea surface temperatures currently averaging 15.4 °C in local waters around Wales this would still be short of 20 °C, the baseline for tropical seas!

April Quiz Night

A 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire' night was held in April when members had the opportunity to put their knowledge on reef keeping matters to the test. As always, there were plenty of laughs as those attending debated some of the trickier questions. Just as in the real quiz show, there was an opportunity to go 50:50, ask the audience or phone a friend. We're grateful to Sapphire from Yorkshire Reefs and also John Clipperton, the editor of Ultramarine magazine, for fulfilling the friend role.

The actual scores achieved by the contestants depended not so much on their reefing knowledge but rather on how rash they were in going for answers they weren't sure about, especially since there weren't actually large sums of money at stake! The results of the quiz were as follows:

Name	Score	Prize
Paul Samson	£125 000	Yorkshire Reefs voucher
Tom Hector	£32 000	Algae food
Josh Phillips	£32 000	Yorkshire Reefs voucher
Elaine Robertson	£250 000	Ocean Corals voucher
Alice Wood	£64 000	Easter egg
Paul Samson	£250 000	Ocean Corals voucher
Tom Hector	£1 000	Glass cleaner
Josh Phillips	£64 000	Book



Paul is happy with his answer.....

but can't believe it when he gets his final one wrong!



Josh looking for some divine inspiration!



There's a chance to try your hand at a new Who Wants to be a Millionaire on page 7 of this Marinews with prize worth £100!

From Concept to Creation - The Art of Designing and Setting Up YOUR Perfect Reefing System:

Part 1: Thinking About Stuff

By Rob Cookson

The prospect of relocating to another country once again stirred mixed emotions within me. Not only did it entail the arduous task of finding suitable schools for my children and aiding them in acclimating to a foreign country, but it also meant enduring a temporary separation from my wife, finding a new job, a new home, and most importantly setting up a new reef tank.

Fast forward to the present and with all the non-important tasks dealt with (kids in a good school, well adjusted, happy wife, set up and running my new consulting company, and having just purchased a new home) all the planning and preparing for the tank(s) was beginning to take shape. From the moment I stepped into our new residence, call me single minded, but I couldn't resist the chance to envision where my Dream Tank would stand. As time passed, that initial vision evolved, but one thing remained clear: to accommodate a potential 4000L system, significant changes would be necessary. It dawned on me that achieving this dream would require nothing short of a new extension to our home – a project that, realistically, I wouldn't be able to tackle for at least five years due to financial constraints. So, was that it? Dream over?

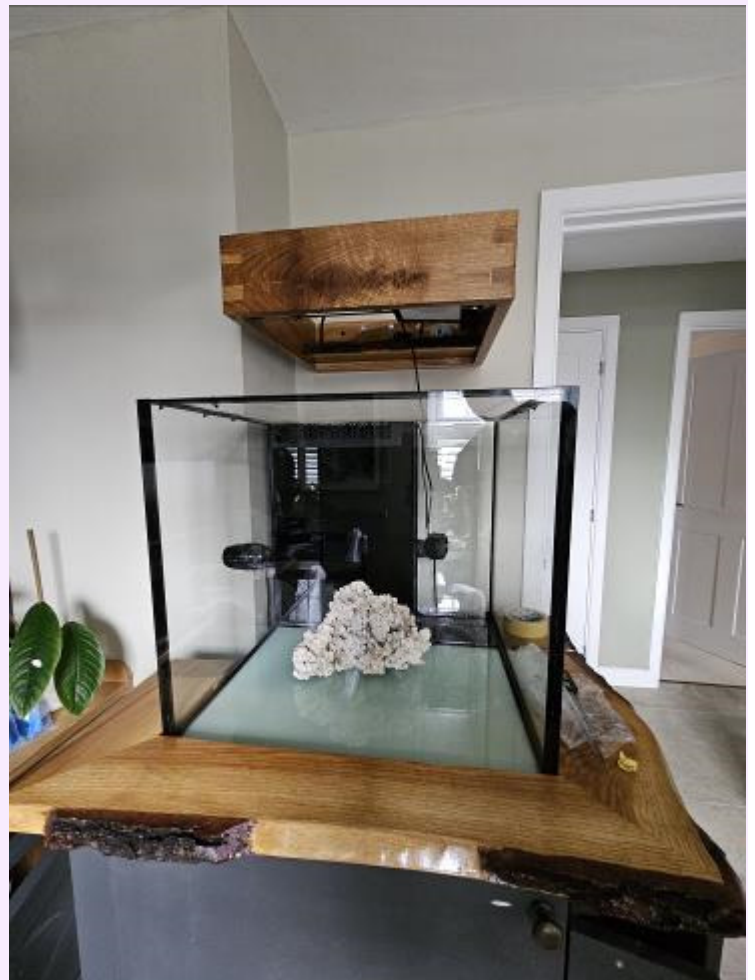
Strangely enough, this delay is a blessing in disguise. It afforded me the opportunity to progress through the hobby in much the same way as many beginners do, despite having had four tanks before, this time around, I was determined to do it right. I was committed to learning from my past mistakes.

TIP#1 Buy Your Second Tank First

In the midst of planning my new aquarium setup, the layout of our new house presented some challenges. The open plan kitchen/dining area would be ideal, but this was vetoed as it would be too close to where the dream tank would eventually go. The living room was impractical due to size constraints; however the previous owners had converted a cozy 9ftx8ft room into a charming office space. With my job requiring me to spend countless hours working from home, this room could serve as a place where I could immerse myself in both work and leisure. And what better way to enhance this space than by introducing a reef tank?

As I pondered the prospect of incorporating an aquarium into my home office, practicality collided with aspiration. It needed to be small enough to fit seamlessly into the room's layout yet substantial enough to warrant attention. The idea of a towering vertical reef momentarily enticed me, but I swiftly reeled myself back to reality. What I truly required was a compact yet elegant solution – something like a '60 cube' or its equivalent, the perfect fit for my space and my ambitions.

This tank wasn't just going to be a standalone piece; it was going to be the starting point for my ultimate dream system. I like to think of it as my testing ground, where I could try out new ideas, new technology and perfect my skills as an aquarist. Additionally, this little tank wasn't just for show – it had a crucial role to play in my grand plan. It was going to be my feeder system nurturing corals until they were ready to graduate to the big leagues, as such, the success of the small tank will directly impact the larger one. Setting up my Second Tank first was beginning to make more sense.



TIP#2 Know Yourself – What kind of a reefer are you? What are you willing to accept?

Setting up a reef tank can definitely put a dent in your wallet, and navigating the myriad of choices can be overwhelming. For me it all boils down to one key question: *what are you willing to accept?* This isn't just about budget constraints or placement; it's about your personal priorities and values as a reef keeper. Ultimately, the choices you make will depend on your own unique circumstances and preferences. Sadly there is no definitively right answer (however be warned there are many wrong ones) it's all about finding the balance that works best for you. Every decision you make – from equipment selection to maintenance routines – carries its own set of consequences. It's a bit like Newton's third law of motion: for every action, there's an equal and opposite reaction. Each choice you make will have ripple effects throughout your reefing ecosystem. For example, if you opt out of water changes, regular testing becomes more important. If testing isn't your forte, regular water changes become far less negotiable.

Ultimately, navigating this requires careful consideration of YOUR priorities, preferences, and resources. You have to be honest with yourself in terms of time, effort, cost and results you can accept. Be realistic. By weighing the pros and cons of each decision it is possible to create a reef tank setup that meets YOUR needs.

Here are the questions I asked myself as I prepared my reefing solution.

Was I willing to commit the time and effort to a strict maintenance schedule to ensure the health and stability of my reef, or did I prefer a more relaxed approach that might lead to fluctuating water parameters and increased risk of issues?

Knowing that consistency is indeed the cornerstone of successful reef keeping, underpinning not just maintenance and coral care, but also the vigilant monitoring of water parameters. Yet despite my aspiration to nurture a flourishing tank, time and time the pursuit of balancing demanding schedules with thorough maintenance routines and diligent monitoring becomes an uphill battle, often resulting in the sporadic neglect of crucial tasks. For me, personally, regular testing and water changes prove to be my Achilles' heel amidst the daily responsibilities.

Implementing automated systems for water testing, water changes and dosing, employing reliable equipment that minimises manual intervention, and establishing a streamlined maintenance schedule can (I hope) help mitigate the time commitment without sacrificing desired outcomes. Ultimately, the key lies in finding a maintenance approach that aligns with YOUR individual circumstances and goals.

Was I willing to trade off the ease of an automated system for a more basic setup that would potentially require more hands-on set up (and maintenance?), knowing that automation could simplify tasks but might come with a higher upfront cost, and a big risk if it goes wrong?

Hmmm... An automated system can make your life easier by taking care of tasks like water changes and dosing automatically. However, these systems tend to be more expensive upfront and may require regular maintenance and troubleshooting to ensure they're working properly. They certainly require some way to tell if they are working as intended. On the other hand, a basic system might require more manual intervention, but it can also be more affordable and easier to troubleshoot if issues arise.

I'm also incredibly intrigued by the idea of near-constant monitoring. Given my background working with AI (btw, it is never "A" nor "I") I understand the importance of collecting accurate data to make informed decisions. That's why I'm really excited to explore some of the latest auto testing tools on the market. The ability to track essential parameters in real-time is truly a game-changer. However, like any solution, its effectiveness ultimately depends on how well it's implemented (maintained) and utilised.



For me, I am comfortable with technology up to a certain point, although my motto is 'Trust then Verify'. With this in mind, I've been itching to delve into Auto Water Changes, especially for a small system where a water change can give you fantastic value for money. I've devised a plan to start with a 20% water change weekly and then gradually reduce this over time. My goal is to see how low I can go while still maintaining a healthy environment. I'm curious about the impact of small changes over time versus making big changes all at once. Automating this activity just makes sense to me. If I'm going to stick to the 'consistency doctrine of reef keeping', then having a machine handle the changes seems like the logical choice.

My plan is to leverage the data provided by these tools to track trends over time. Rather than relying solely on point-in-time measurements, I aim to manage my reef based on these trends. Additionally, I plan to exercise caution when implementing automation. Initially, I'll limit the degree to which the system can make changes automatically. For instance, I might only allow it to adjust dosages by a small fraction. This cautious approach allows me to gradually build trust in the system and ensure that any automated adjustments won't have detrimental effects on my tank (I'll leave that to me!).

So far this is adding up to be an expensive system, so it brought me to another decision...

Was I willing to trade off the additional time needed to source reliable second-hand gear – saving money but also requiring more effort in the search process – in order to have more options within my budget?

When considering whether to source all the gear second hand, I weighed the trade-off between saving money, life expectancy, reliability and investing additional time in the search process. Ultimately, I was willing to dedicate the extra effort to find quality second-hand equipment, as it provided me with a wider range of options within my budget. While it required more time and diligence to locate the right pieces, the potential cost savings and increased flexibility in equipment choices made it a worthwhile trade-off for me.

As a rule, I decided that all the equipment for this tank would be sourced second-hand. I set a strict guideline not to pay more than 60% of the retail price, and even then, only if the item was effectively new, else nothing above 50% retail price. I also set a monthly budget which I admit I didn't keep to it at all. But I believe after a year of trawling eBay and the like, I was able to assemble what I think is a high-quality setup.

The tank is a modified RedSea E170. It was modified to work with a sump, plus the overflow area was 'resized' to add more room for the display. Overall, the system has 225L capacity. Small but not too small.

For flow I picked up two MP10's, admittedly one needs new wet side and for that I won't be going second-hand. I also acquired a cheap wavemakers for use in the salt mixing container (a powerful Sicce Voyager 8 – these are built like a tank, although be careful not to damage the propellers as difficult to source replacements rendering the whole keeping thing cheaper completely mute). For the overflow I found a Rossmont Mover is great as it's mount allows it to swivel in such a confined space. As for the sump I have a Jebao RW8. Maintaining high flow in the sump and overflow areas is a strategy I historically employed to keep detritus suspended and minimise maintenance. To achieve this, both wavemakers will be operated using intermittent timers, which will be controlled via smart plugs.

My big score has been finding two Reef Factory Smart Testers. It's a little risky getting these second-hand, but both were sourced locally and 'almost new'. I plan to use one for phosphate and the other for nitrate. (If anyone knows how to scrub the RF data and place into a tile let me know!) Similarly, I picked up a KH keeper plus. A lot of Reefers trust these and they have good reviews, so I am looking forward to seeing it in action. To round out the control and monitoring equipment I was able to find a suite of Reef Factory salinity, temp, PH monitors. This should give me enough real-time data as I can handle, plus keeping it all within the Reef Factory universe allows me to apply actions to the findings.



As such, for the actioning devices I decided to again keep within the Reef Factory universe and get a Reef Factory 4 head doser along with a smart plug. This should be enough to enact the Modern Reefing dosing regime I was planning on using (it's good to go with additives that you LFS stocks to ensure a consistent supply)

As far as 'in sump activities', I picked up a NyoS 120 skimmer, plus a spare pump, along with a Vectra M2 return pump (I find running a bigger pump at lower %output puts less strain on the unit overall). I also picked up a NyoS Torq for Carbon and/or Rowaphos it's gen1 but I can't grumble too much.

Finally, for the AWC I managed to get two Ecotech Versa's. I am hoping these are quiet at a reasonable speed! The only gear I paid full price for were the plumbing fixtures, and a 70L water container for Saltwater mix, which fits neatly under my desk.

Conclusion

In the realm of reef keeping, the journey to crafting the perfect aquarium setup is as diverse as the ecosystems we aim to recreate. From equipment choices to maintenance routines, every decision plays a vital role in the success and longevity of our underwater worlds. But with a seemingly endless array of options available, how do we navigate this landscape to create a setup that truly meets our needs and goals?

The answer lies in understanding our individual priorities and preferences. While some may thrive with a minimalist approach, others may prefer the convenience and peace of mind that comes with advanced automation. The key is to assess what you're trying to achieve and what you're willing to accept in terms of maintenance, complexity, and cost.

For some reef keepers, a straightforward setup with manual testing and occasional interventions may suffice. However, others may opt for the latest automated monitoring and dosing systems to streamline their maintenance routines and ensure optimal conditions for their aquatic inhabitants.

Take, for example, the decision to invest in automatic water change systems or auto testers. While these may not be essential for everyone, for those who lead busy lives or struggle with consistent testing routines, they can be invaluable tools. By automating these tasks, reef keepers can



rest assured that their tank is being monitored and maintained even when they're not able to do so personally.

In the end, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to reef keeping. Each setup is as unique as the individual behind it. By taking the time to understand your own needs and goals, you can tailor your equipment choices to create a setup that not only meets your current requirements but also has the flexibility to evolve with you over time. After all, the beauty of this hobby lies in its ability to adapt and grow.

In Part II we'll look at Building the System

Who Wants to be a Millionaire

This month there is a prize of a Hanna ULR Phosphate tester and a set of reference solutions worth over £100. Use the answer form on page 15 to submit your answers.



You are ALLOWED to use Google to help find the answers!

50 50 50 50

£500

IN THE DISNEY FILM, THE LITTLE MERMAID IS CALLED

A. ARIEL B. ANGELA

C. MEGAN D. OREO



50 50 50 50

£100

WHICH FISH IS NAMED AFTER A SWEET?

A. DOMINO DAMSEL B. ELECTRIC BLUE DAMSEL

C. HUMBUG DAMSEL D. JEWEL DAMSEL

50 50 50 50

£1000

WHICH REEF SHOP WOULD YOU FIND IN MALTON?

A. OCEAN CORALS & REPTILES B. KRAKEN CORALS

C. YORKSHIRE REEFS D. RADICAL AQUATICS

50 50 50 50

£200

A DISTRACTION FROM THE TRUTH IS

A. A SPOTTY SPRATT B. A RED HERRING

C. A COLOURFUL COD D. A STIFF SARDINE

50 50 50 50

£2000

HOW MANY MILLILITRES IN A LITRE?

A. 100 B. 1000

C. 10 000 D. 1 000 000

50 50 50 50

£300

THE CORRECT SPECIFIC GRAVITY FOR A REEF TANK IS

A. 1.25 B. 1.0025

C. 1.025 D. 25

90:50

£4000

WAVELENGTHS OF LIGHT BEYOND VISIBLE VIOLET ARE CALLED

A. ULTRA VIOLET B. INFRA VIOLET

C. SUPRA VIOLET D. MICRO VIOLET

90:50

£125000

A SKIMMER REMOVES MOLECULES WHICH ARE

A. AMPHATHETIC B. AMPHIPATHIC

C. GRAM POSITIVE D. GRAM NEGATIVE

90:50

£8000

ANIMALS IN THE PHYLUM PORIFERA ARE

A. CRABS B. CORALS

C. SEA SLUGS D. SPONGES

90:50

£250000

WHO DISCOVERED THE GREAT BARRIER REEF?

A. JAMES COOK B. FERDINAND MAGELLAN

C. VASCO DE GAMA D. CHARLES DARWIN

90:50

£16000

THE COMMON NAME OF CORIS GAIMARD IS

A. CLOWN WRASSE B. CLOWN SURGEON

C. CLOWN SWEETLIPS D. CLOWN TRIGGER

90:50

£500000

CAULERPA IS UNUSUAL BECAUSE

A) IT IS FOUND IN ALL MAJOR OCEANS B) IT CONSISTS OF A SINGLE CELL

C) HAS NO CELL NUCLEI D) FRONDS CONTAIN CHLOROPLASTS


90:50

£32000

BOBBIT WORMS GET NOURISHMENT THROUGH

A. EATING ALGAE B. EATING FISH

C. SIFTING SAND D. PHOTOSYNTHESIS




90:50

£64000

REEF FACTORY PRODUCTS ARE BASED IN

A. AUSTRALIA B. CZECH REPUBLIC

C. POLAND D. GERMANY

90:50

£1000000

THE ROCK BEAUTY, HOLACANTHUS TRICOLOUR, IS ONLY FOUND

A. AROUND HAWAII B. IN THE RED SEA

C. IN THE INDIAN OCEAN D. IN THE TROPICAL WEST ATLANTIC

Feedback Forum



Only two responses to the questions in the last issue so we're either asking the wrong questions or people are too busy to reply! Thanks to Paul Samson and Campbell Robertson for putting their thoughts to paper.

Q1. How often do you measure your water parameters, which ones and which tests have you found the most or least reliable?

Paul replies

"I measure alkalinity most days using Hanna, and try to maintain 8-8.5dkh using Kalkwasser. I used to use Red Sea but found using Kalk much more economical.

I did note when using Kalk I had plenty of Coralline but when I switched to Red Sea all the Coralline disappeared within a few months? Perhaps someone can explain?

I am using Kalk now and my tank is showing signs of growing coralline again? I have tried Red Sea for alkalinity testing and its fine too, but I like the digital reading with the Hanna and it seems to be industry standard. The reagent will go off in time especially if kept warm. Both Hanna and Red Sea give similar results and seem reliable."



Campbell replies.

"I have a Reef Factory KH Keeper which is set to measure alkalinity every four hours. This then controls the dosing of four pumps dosing Modern Reef's four part system. There are preset doses and then the Keepers Actions will adjust these if the levels fall too low or go to high. It works well and my alkalinity is always around 8.2 plus or minus 0.1 dKh.

I use a Hanna ultra low phosphorus checker to measure phosphorus and phosphate which I do twice a week and measure nitrate once every 2-3 weeks using the Hanna UL

nitrate checker. Calcium and magnesium I measure every 3



weeks or so using AquaForest test kits. These are titration based and the kits come with reference solution included which is a great idea. If these values need adjusting I add an appropriate dose of Reef Zlements solutions to the top up reservoir which will add the solution over several days so no sudden changes."

Q2. What success have you had with hard to feed fish and how do you encourage them to eat?

Paul says

"My copperband which I had for five years was a nightmare. It only ever ate mussels which I had to buy religiously every week or so, until I started it on frozen/thawed mussels. I would like a long nose butterfly and will only purchase one if it is shown to eat a variety of foods (frozen and flake). Apparently, copperbands and long nose butterflies can be trained to eat flake, the problem is they find it hard to eat foods from the water column due to their snouts and the fast flow of water movement in most tanks.

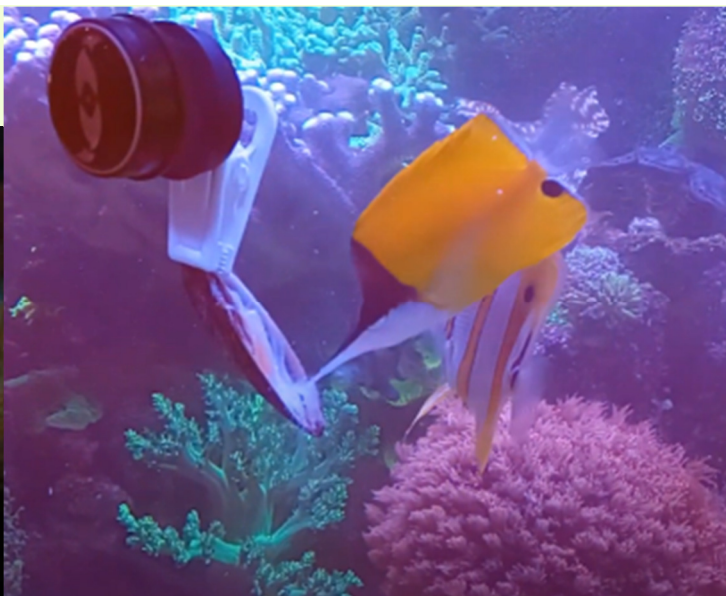
I have also tried Mandarins which only ate copepods. They perished within a few months. I don't believe fish can thrive if they only eat one food type. I guess, in a nutshell, hard to

feed fish should be avoided."



Campbell has always tried to avoid difficult fish.

"I have avoided those fish which I knew were going to be a problem to feed. Funnily enough, I have both a copperband



and a long nose butterfly whose mouth shape would seem to indicate that they could be fussy eaters.

I've had the copperband now for four years having bought it on a trip to Abyss Aquatics in Manchester. As it was a quiet Thursday morning, one of the assistants was happy to add food to the four tanks holding copperbands. The largest, which I fancied, avoided the food (mysis) but the one I picked was quite a bold eater. Good advice is always ask to see it feeding in the shop.

Q3. Have you ever fragged corals and with what success?

Paul gives us his thoughts first.

"I only have Xenia and have never fragged corals. I find it hard to get the time to keep corals and it is a lot more involved than fish only. Maybe when I can afford to retire!!"

Campbell has also been a reluctant fragger.



The long nose butterfly was a more recent addition about 7 months ago. It was bought from an importer near Hull and was one of two he had in. Neither were overly keen on feeding but the one I picked had only been in the country for a few days. So I broke my own rule and took a chance! It was quite plump and looked very healthy but it took a few days before I got it to eat. Initial foods tried were frozen mysis and brine shrimp, live white-worms and finely chopped scallops from Tesco.

Knowing that Paul had used mussels to feed his copperband I thought I'd try these and Paul gave me a fw to try. It did the trick and I was able to get more fresh mussels, from Tesco, which were held open in a two little fishes algae feeder. Once it had started feeding it never looked back. It now eats most foods including flake food. The flake food I use is mysis based and very soft so this seems to be attractive to it.



"If I've had an LPS or SPS needing cut up I've taken it to one of our local shops. I do have some SPS where branches break off, such as stylophora, and I'll mount these on small pieces of rock and let them grow on. When you have a coral growing healthily, the thought of taking a saw to it doesn't appeal!"

Usually we'd end at this point with questions for the next issue but to encourage responses, I'll send these out nearer the time of putting the next issue together.

AquaFest 2024

For those of you who didn't manage to get to AquaFest 2024 I thought it would be a good idea to do a quick run down on the event. It included four of our 'local' reef shops and had I gone to all four it would have involved a journey of almost 220 miles. I had been asked by Ultramarine magazine to write up a review of the event so to make it more manageable, member Tom Hector stepped in and covered Radical Aquatics in Leeds for me. Google Maps was used to plan a suitable route though I missed out the Leeds section. Being in the middle of the Easter weekend I was hoping that traffic wouldn't be too bad. So with the sun shining we set off to our first visit to Ocean Corals and Reptiles.

Ocean Corals and Reptiles

Ocean Corals and Reptiles is the longest established reef shop of the four taking part in AquaFest and opened its doors in 2009. It's since moved to several locations within the industrial estate of Clifton Moor next to the city's outer ring road with Ben Turner taking over in 2022. Regulars to OC&R will know that



Ben has been doing a lot of refurbishment and he was working tirelessly to get it ready for the event. I went in on the preceding Thursday and it did look as though it had been hit by a bomb. But by Saturday morning it was looking much better!

I was one of the first to arrive just after the shop opened. There were selected offers on dry goods plus 10% off all fish and corals. If you made a purchase then you were also entered into a free raffle. There were a few other early visitors to the shop but at this time in the morning they were mostly local aquarists. Some were making their usual Saturday morning pilgrimage to a reef shop.

There were nice corals on display including some lovely, puffy, green candy cane coral (*Caulastrea*) which caught my eye. In the end I decided to treat myself to some *Acropora* coral which had newly arrived from Bali. As I had quite a long day ahead, Ben was good enough to supply a heat pack to add to my polystyrene transport box.



If you're a long term visitor to OC&R you'll be aware that there was a large tank in what used to be the freshwater section. This is now housing a new resident who is quite an attraction with children, a Cayman called Sobek, named after the Egyptian lord of the crocodiles.



Radical Aquatics

Member Tom Hector made the trip to Radical Aquatics for me on my behalf and when he got there it was pretty busy. Formerly Radical Reefs, the shop has been open for 4 years. The Aquafest event is actually the brainchild of Radical's owners, Andy and Katie Jackson. Originally, only within their own shop it was expanded this year to cover 3 more shops in the area. This was partly due to the fact that the event had become so popular that the numbers attending were more than the shop could safely accommodate. Spreading the event over more shops would even out the flow of visitors but it would also provide a boost for the hobby generally by encouraging people to visit shops which they might not have travelled to otherwise.



There was a warm welcome inside with hot drinks and free crème eggs. If you arrived and were also a bit peckish after your travels there was a pizza van outside for something more substantial. Inside was very busy. Apart from a wide range of fish and corals for sale there was a trade stand for Aqua-Print who were showing off one of their new designs for dipping corals.



Also there, was Colette Pennington from Tropical Marine Centre (TMC) who was filming for her YouTube series, 'Out of the Offish with Colette' (no, that's not a mis-spelling!). If you do a search on YouTube you can find her reviews of Radical Aquatics and Yorkshire Reefs on episodes 23 and 24.



One of the first things to strike you as you come in the door at Radical Aquatics is the very large and impressive display tank. You have to look closely at it before you realise that the corals are actually TMC Natureform synthetic corals. These create a really natural looking display for someone who wants a fish only tank without live corals.



The Reef Experience

My next visit involved heading up the A1(M) to the third shop, The Reef Experience. The Reef Experience is situated in a modern unit in Bowburn Industrial Estate and proved easy to find. It's a shop that has only been open for a couple of years. Given the poor trading conditions during Covid and lockdowns and the increases in energy prices since, it's nice to see great new shops opening and providing for the hobby



On entering the shop, you are greeted by the sales counter in a spacious area reserved for dry goods. This was especially well stocked with all the major manufacturers being represented. You then pass through a nice area with soft seating and display tanks. There were loads of refreshments available for the weary traveller before you enter through to the most important part of the shop—the fish and coral tanks. It's a long narrow room with fish against the wall and coral tanks in the middle, accessible from both sides. At the far end are also a number of tanks reserved for invertebrates.

Chatting to Howard Robinson, the owner of The Reef Experience, he told me it had been very hectic when the shop opened its doors in the morning. It was now lunchtime so things were much quieter and it was possible to look at the many different species of coral on offer in a much more relaxed atmosphere.

My visit to The Reef Experience ended with a bonus. After I had bought a some dry goods and drew a free ticket in their tombola, I unexpectedly won a Reef Ion 30 LED reef light. This was the icing on the cake for this visit!



Yorkshire Reefs

The final leg of our road trip now lay ahead. Back down the A1(M) for a spell then cross country through part of the North York Moors National Park. On a sunny day this made for a lovely journey and included the infamous Sutton Bank. This has a 1 in 4 gradient and hairpin bends and caravans are banned from using it and even HGVs frequently break down!



Yorkshire Reefs is also one of the newer shops in our quartet, having opened its doors for the first time in April 2022. As we were now into the afternoon the morning rush was over but there were still home bakes with teas and coffees available which was very welcome. Duncan also had some cool beers in the fridge which was most acceptable on a warm day!

Colette had also made her way across to Yorkshire Reefs from Radical

Aquatics in Leeds and was doing some more filming for her 'Out of the Offish with Colette' series.

As with the other shops, Yorkshire Reefs had 10% discount off all fish and corals on the day along with free entry to a raffle with any purchase. There were also goody bags for the first 30 customers through the door which were long gone by the time I arrived. On the plus side, there were still some free reefing books available which had been supplied by TMC. There was also free entry to a raffle for making a purchase. Once again my luck was in and I won a bucket of Nyos salt - it really was turning out to be a lucky day.



Yorkshire Reefs is well organised with a wall of well stocked fish tanks and opposite are a row of coral tables filled with some very tempting corals and frags. I was so tempted I bought my second *Acropora* coral of the day.

Yorkshire reefs also has a couple of nice display tanks including a large SPS dominated tank as you come in the door and a softie/ LPS dominated smaller tank. It's certainly nice to see shops displaying tanks that would be of a size a beginning reefer might set up and gives a good idea of what can be achieved with even a modestly sized tank.

So what's the overall impression of Aquafest 2024? Admittedly it is a bit of a drive getting around all four shops but well worth the trouble. Many of the reefers attending had decided to take in just a couple of shops to make the day a bit more manageable. There were some great discounts on offer as well as the other extras such as tombolas and raffles. Having visits spread over four shops also meant that some of the problems created by a lot of people attending a single shop at once were alleviated. Aquafest 2024 proved to be a great advert for the shops 'up north' and hopefully we can look forward to an even bigger and better Aquafest 2025!



Who wants to be a Millionaire - Answers

For a chance to win this issue's prize, complete the table below with your answers and photograph and send back to either marinews@btinternet.com or send as an attachment to 07825 294114.

Good luck.

Your answers - A, B, C, D or E					
£100		£2000		£64 000	
£200		£4000		£125 000	
£300		£8000		£250 000	
£500		£16 000		£500 000	
£1000		£32 000		£1 000 000	



WANTED—Articles for Marinews

Why not write of your experiences in Marinews. We're always delighted to publish material from aquarists out there who have a wealth of information to share. There's no need to feel your spelling or grammar isn't up to it, that can all be sorted.

You can write on any reefing topic or also share through an Equipment Review, Fish of the Month or by contributing to our FEEDBACK FORUM. Or why not write about some other reefing topic which you have experience of.

Send your contributions to marinews@btinternet.com



Interested in receiving every issue of Marinews - absolutely free!

Marinews is published bi-monthly on the last Friday of the month. If you would like to receive every issue as it is published then simply send an e-mail to marinews@btinternet.com and we'll add you to the mailing list.

Interested in Joining York Reefers

York Reefers is a group of friendly reefers in the York area. We have regular meet-ups, social events and offer mutual support when we encounter reefing problems! If you are interested in joining then please complete the form on the back page, photograph or scan, and return to either:

Campbell Robertson (07825 294114) or e-mail to marinews@btinternet.com



YORK REEFERS



York Reefers are a group of friendly, reef-keeping enthusiasts in the York area. We have members with all levels of experience and diverse interests. Meet ups are usually held on a Monday or Tuesday evening and include various fishy events as well as more social occasions and are held approximately every 2 months. A newsletter, Marinews, is sent out to members in between.

Name _____

e-mail _____

Phone number (mobile) to join WhatsApp _____

What type of aquarium do you keep?

Fish only

Coral only

Mixed reef

Softies

LPS

SPS

I'd like to attend York Reefers meetings and be part of the WhatsApp group



Are there any aspects of the hobby you consider yourself to be particularly experienced or expert in?

Any suggestions for future meetings?

PLEASE PHOTOGRAPH OR SCAN THIS FORM AND RETURN TO
Campbell Robertson (07825 294114) or Mark Taylor (07746 256869)
or e-mail to marinews@btinternet.com

