

8:00am Saturday the 6<sup>th</sup> of May – As final preparations are taking place at stand A32 for The Federation of British Herpetologists (FBH) before the doors open at 9:30am and approximately 12,000 people walk through the humungous doors looking for prospective pets.



One last check by the Vet to make sure all of the animals that the clubs and societies have brought along to show and handle are comfortable in their display enclosures and everyone has water and is securely locked we are ready for a great couple of days of

showing and educating the public about just how amazing these animals are and truly rewarding they can be as pets.

At 9:30am the humungous shutter doors slide up and open to reveal waiting crowd of people eager to enter and see if they can decide on what sort of animal they would like as a pet.

With members from The British Herpetological Society (BHS), The British Reptile & Amphibian Society (BRAS), The Essex Reptile & Amphibian Club (ERAC) and The East Sussex Reptile & Amphibian Society (ESRAS) in attendance, ready and waiting with animals in hand to show, educate and dispel the many widely held but incorrect myths and fears that surround these animals the show gets under way.

A fantastic selection of animals has been brought along by the clubs and societies including.

- A Blue Phase Emerald Tree Monitor - *Varanus prasinus***
- A Freckled Monitor - *Varanus tristis orientalis***
- A Water Monitor – *Varanus Salvator***
- A Canary Island Giant Lizard - *Gallotia galloti***
- A Leatherback Bearded Dragon – *Pogona vitticeps***
- Rankins Dragons - *Pogona henrylawsoni***
- A Blue Tongued Skink - *Tiliqua scincoides scincoides***
- A selection of 5 Corn Snakes - *Pantherophis guttatus***
- A selection of 4 Royal Pythons – *Python Regius***
- A Hog Island Boa Constrictor – *Boa constrictor imperator***
- A selection of 3 Reticulated Pythons – *Python reticulatus***
- Madagascan Hissing Cockroaches - *Gromphadorhina portentosa***
- ‘Tiger Stripe’ Madagascan Hissing Cockroaches - *Princisia vanwaerebeki***
- A Chilean Rose Tarantula - *Grammostola rosea***
- 3 Solomon Island Monkey Tailed Skinks - *Corucia zebrata***
- 2 Bosc Monitors - *Varanus exanthematicus***
- A Western Hognose Snake - *Heterodon nasicus***
- A Pueblan Milk Snake - *Lampropeltis triangulum campbelli***
- A Chuckwalla - *Sauromalus ater***
- 2 Cuban Night Anoles - *Anolis equestris***



A great selection of animals from the most commonly kept to some of the more rarely seen species for people to see and interact with.

With all of the animals looking spectacular many people left with mouths agape at the awesome beauty and amazing examples of evolutionary problem solving these animals display. Adults and children alike crowded around the BHS tables, so packed was the crowd that frequently security guards told us to “control the crowd” and “keep the walkways clear”.

Throughout the day we are visited by many 1000’s of people wanting to look, learn,

stroke, hold and have photos with the snakes and lizards we brought along. Among the people in attendance which seemed to range from New-born's to Octogenarians (80+), from people who had had reptiles and exotics before and still do, to people for whom this was their very 1<sup>st</sup> encounter any sort of reptile or exotic ever and those who wanted to conquer their long held unexplained fears they all left with a smile and a new found appreciation and respect for these animals.

It was truly fantastic to see reptiles and exotics represented in such numbers and so positively from us as Hobbyist's right through to Industry, Suppliers and Wholesalers showing exactly what is achievable with setups nowadays with all of the new equipment that is now available.

It was great to witness the Hobby coming together from different Clubs and Societies displaying together alongside Industry helping each other out. All presenting a united front on the correct way of going about getting a new animal as a pet. From the leaflets and handouts available at the FBH stands through to the enclosure displays at the Exo-Terra and Peregrine and the Talks from Exo-Terra helped out by the clubs and societies with animals to help educate and dispel the myths surrounding them, plus promoting responsible keeping and putting emphasis on the correct procedure to getting a new exotic pet. We all stressed the need to:



- 1. Research your desired animal including talking to keepers or joining a club for support.**
- 2. Acquire the necessary equipment.**
- 3. Responsibly buying you new animal from a reputable shop or breeder.**

Also extolling the benefits of joining a Club or Society and especially the access to the wealth of knowledge available from their members.

With the end of Saturday in sight and people leaving the show we all realised what a great event and what an amazing time we had all had on the 1<sup>st</sup> day and how much we were all looking forward to Day 2 on the Sunday. Bring on round 2.

Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> was almost a repeat of Day #1 with even more visitors. After 2 days and an attendance of around 25,000 people, many 1000's that had visited the FBH stands it





could only be described as a roaring success especially for showing that reptiles and exotics as marvellous pets and that all of the misconstrued facts and wrongfully held fears and prejudices about these animals were nothing more than precisely that.

With at least 100 individuals cured of their irrational fears of snakes, lizards and other exotics and many 1000's of people who came to realise that they are not 'Slimy' or 'Disgusting' and going away realising that they are in fact 'soft and smooth' and that they posed no more danger or threat to them than any other animal that people keep as pets plus the many positives that reptiles and exotics offer as pets, I can say that it was a great event and show for our hobby and a great show for people to interact and enjoy our amazing animals.



We also enrolled 11 new YH members on the day and by post the following week.

*Kim Le Breuilly & Richard Butler*