

# A Quest for 80 Centimeters

## Part III - Mike Snaden

Nearly a year has passed since the last instalment, following the growth and progress of the Tosai that reside in three UK hobbists ponds. This should hopefully now start to reflect how important it is to scrutinise small Tosai before you buy them. Things that don't seem to significantly wrong when small, tend to become amplified as the Koi grow big. Also, you will be able to see how the body type and head of a small Koi effect the Kois probability of becoming Jumbo.



Unfortunately, because of unforeseen circumstances, Colin has had to withdraw from the 80cm Quest, so a few of the Koi from his pond, have been moved to Cliff's pond, and a different pond, this time in Bristol. This pond, is the 10,000 gallon pond belonging to 'James & Amanda Carter', and to 'James & Amanda Carter', and is another Bakki Showered pond. This system is running three double Sets of Bakki Showers from four bottom drains. Two drains feed to vortexes, with one pumping from before the vortex, up the Showers, and one pump pumping after the vortex, and up to the Showers. The other two drains just feed directly to the Showers. Turnover rate on this pond is about 168% per hour, and the pond is topped up with a mix of mains, and RO water, in the same fashion as Iain Graham's.

So, we will start with the Koi that

were formerly at Colin's. These were moved to James's in late March 2005.

Kohaku '4' (Momotaro 'Seio' line) measured 15cm in December 2002, and now measures 57cm. To my surprise, the pattern has held together, and is actually looking reasonably stable. The Sashi is still very slightly too deep, but will hopefully recede a little as the Koi gets bigger.

Showa '6' (Takeda) measured 20cm in December 2002, and now measures 65cm. It is a little bland, but should become of reasonably good quality when bigger. The Hi plate is pretty good.

Showa '7' (Momotaro, from 'Shiro Showa') was 15cm in December 2002, and has now grown to 64cm. This Koi is now showing some promise. It isn't of particularly high quality, but there are traces of Sumi now showing along the lateral line, on white ground, that appears to be of pretty good quality. I feel that this Koi will become very big, and will improve greatly during the next twelve months. However,

at the rear of the Koi, the Sumi will probably fill in all of the white ground. If all of the Sumi were to develop, I don't really think that this kind of Koi will be very appealing. With Showa, a good one will have a good Kohaku pattern, but such that there is plenty of white ground where decent Sumi can develop, whilst still leaving enough white ground for the Koi to be eye catching.

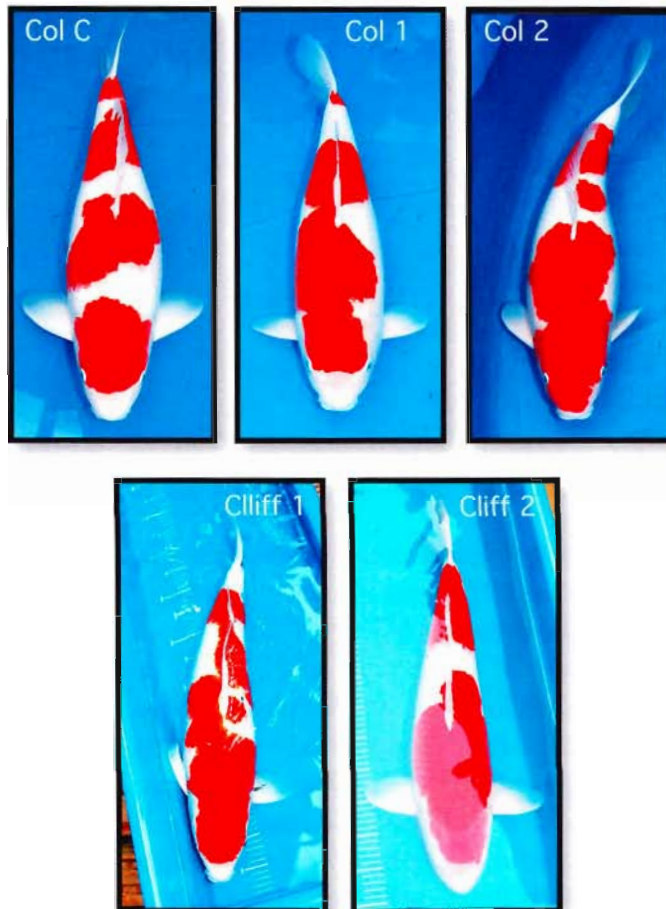
Kohaku (Momotaro 'Eagle' child) 'Colin A' now measures 68cm, but will now be retired from the 80cm challenge, and will continue to reside in Colin's pond, but unheated.

The Sandan Kohaku 'Colin B' that was featured in the last issue, unfortunately had some damage underneath, that went un-noticed. This led to a bacterial infection, then dropsy, and died. This is a shame, as this Koi would have become extremely big. Kiwa was it's weak point, but it's pattern and body were very imposing. This Kohaku was one of the few Koi produced by Momotaro, from the famous 92cm Sakai Kohaku

'Sakurahime'. A sad shame.

Cliff's pond

Kohaku (Momotaro, child of 'Eagle') 'Colin C' has been moved to Cliff's pond. This Koi measured 21cm in December 2001, and now measures 72cm as Yosai (4 years old). This Koi is continuing to improve. Beni is a little pale, but I am confident that with Cliff's meticulous keeping, her colour will deepen this year. Her only weakness, is that the tail tube is a little thin. I am hoping that this will improve this year as the Koi gets big, and starts to gain weight.



The Kohaku (Momotaro 'Seio' line) 'Colin 1' measured 35cm in May 2003, and is also at Cliff's now. She now measures 64cm. I think that this Koi will become very big this Summer. This Koi has a wonderful body. Sashi is excellent, but Kiwa is excellent, but Kiwa is a bit of a 'mixed bag'. Some of the Kiwa is very good Maruzome, but unfortunately, some of it is the less prized Kamisori (straight cut) Kiwa.

Kohaku (Momotaro 'Seio' line) 'Colin 2' is the last of the Koi that were moved from Colin's, to Cliff's, and now measures 57cm. This Koi arrived in May 2003, at 30cm. This Koi has wonderful skin, Beni, Kiwa, and Sashi of a level that is seldom seen on such low price Koi But, unfortunately, she doesn't have the kind of body

that makes a big Koi. The pattern is pleasing, but not exceptional. It's a shame that this Koi doesn't have the body type, of 'Ian 4' (mentioned later).

'Cliff 1' (Momotaro, parent unknown) is a Sanke that arrived in March 2003, and was shown at the BKKS National in June, at just

21.5cm. This Koi is now definitely female, and now measures just under 69cm. The Sumi is now starting to re-emerge. The Beni of this Koi is still a little pale, but I think that this Summer will see a great improvement. This Koi has hit the BKKS National Show 2005 target of 68cm, and will probably be slightly over 70cm by 'Showtime'.

'Cliff 2' (Momotaro 'Seio' line) is a Kohaku that was shown alongside the 2003 'BKKS Baby Champion'. This Koi is male. He

arrived in May 2003 at 33cm, and now measures 61cm as Sansai. This is an extremely high quality male!

Moving on to Ian and Jill's Koi...

Kohaku 'Ian 1' (Momotaro 'Eagle' bloodline) measured 23cm as Tosai in December 2002, 63cm as Nisai in June 2004, and now measures 68cm as Sansai, so has already met the target for June 2005, of 68cm. The quality of this Koi is very good, and will improve further as it gets bigger. Kiwa is a mix of decent Maruzome, and weaker Kamisori. The Sashi is pretty much ideal. This Koi has a pretty good head, but the body seems slightly short, with it's broadest point being quite far forward. The tail tube is also a little thin. In order for a Koi of this kind of size to become Jumbo, it is more favourable for the body to be longer, with the broadest point being a little further back. 'Ian 4' has the ideal body type for a Koi to be grown exceptionally BIG!

Kohaku 'Ian 2' (Momotaro 'Seio' bloodline) measured 33cm in July 2003, 57cm as Nisai in June 2004, which was slightly behind target. She now measures 68cm (May 2005). The bad area of Sashi around the dorsal area, is still a problem, and will mar what will eventually be a very good Jumbo Koi. This Koi has a wonderful head, being both broad, and long. The body is also excellent, although not quite as good as 'Ian 4'. It is popular opinion that as



a Koi grows, the pattern breaks apart more, allowing white areas to become more apparent. I don't know why people feel this way, and as this Koi is demonstrating, the poor Sashi is actually preventing the breaks in the pattern to become properly defined. If the Koi was small, but with good Sashi, a 'one scale break' would look almost joined. But, as the Koi got big, the Sashi should recede because of the scales becoming thicker and hiding the underlying colour. This would then make the break in the pattern look much neater, but still only one scale of gap. So, when choosing small Koi, try not to think, "Oh, it will be nice if the pattern breaks across there". This will more often than not lead to disappointment. Either buy a Koi with solid pattern, or a decent breaks. Avoid vague weak joins in the pattern!

weak joins in the pattern!

Kohaku 'Ian 3' (Momotaro Seio bloodline) measured 35cm in July 2003, 57cm in June 2004, and now measures 65cm. This pattern is quite appealing, and the skin quality is superb. Hi quality is pretty good, and the Koi generally has quite good Sashi. Kiwa is reasonable. This interesting thing about this Koi, is that the fault in the head which was very obvious as Tosai, is now far less noticeable. The growth has slowed a little with this Koi, but will hopefully pick up again this Summer. There



is no obvious reason why this Koi shouldn't have grown as well as the others.

Kohaku 'Ian 4' (Momotaro Seio Bloodline) measured 31cm in June 2003, 58cm in June 2004, and now measures some 71cms, with six weeks spare before the June 2005 deadline! This Koi has an exceptional body. The body is long, and strong. The thickest part of the body is in line with the front of the dorsal, and the tail tube is strong. The Beni on this Koi is pale in the fukurin, but this is unlikely to be a problem. The Koi has predominantly been fed cheap food, but this can be improved upon later on, when the Kois growth slows down. Kiwa is generally very good, and Sashi although slightly deep in places, is pale enough that it should hopefully cover and recede in time. The only off-putting thing about the Koi is the red eyes. Could this Koi reach

80cm as Yonsai?

Showa 'Ian 5' measured just 18cm back in December 2002. She is a child of Momotaro's "Shiro Showa" parent Koi (92cm). This Koi measured 58cm in June 2004 (Nisai) and now measures 70cm as Sansai (May 2005). The Hi quality is getting better, and the Sumi is now starting to come up. The area of messy Sashi on the shoulder isn't really Sashi, but secondary Hi which lies on the underside of the scales. The body strong, and she has a good head. The growth of this Koi has been surprising.

Sanke 'Ian 6' (Momotaro) is a sibling of Cliff's Sanke 'Cliff 1'. This Koi has also turned out female. She measured 21cm in May 2003, 48 as Nisai in June 2004, and now measures 58.5cm. This Koi has improved considerably. Kiwa is excellent, as is Sashi. The Hi plate is nice, thick, and uniform. Sumi has come up noticeably, and

is quite nicely placed. This Koi is very unlikely to get big. Although a very attractive Koi, the head is a little short, and also not broad enough, to make a big Koi.

Sanke 'Ian 7' (Momotaro) has turned out male. It measured 23cm in July 2003, 55cm in June 2004, and now measures 61cm. Although this Koi is still likely to exceed 70cm, despite being male, it now has milt, and is showing interest in the females. Males can sometimes get very big, but the chances of this one exceeding 80cm, are slim. The risk of damage to other Koi with an in-pond breeding is high, so we have decided to withdraw it from the article.

Sanke 'Ian 8' (Takeda, and from an 84cm Hiroshima Sakai female x Momotaro 'Mako' male parents). This Sanke measured 22cm in December 2002, 58cm in June 2004, and now measures 67cm. This Koi's strongest point is its Shiroji (white ground). The body is also very good. It's weak point is the development of secondary Hi, and the fact that although the Sumi appears to be good, it all falls on top of the Hi pattern, so since it can't be regarded as decent Sumi, it lacks value. The Menkaburi (hooded head) also detracts from it's value. But, at £90, it was the cheapest Koi in the article, and still attractive in it's own right. Note the way that the Kiwa has stretched out to the edge of some scales since the last photo. This may be something that some people will be happy about, but this development of 'extra Hi' has also occurred elsewhere (secondary Hi). Personally, I don't get too excited about Kiwa that changes (by creeping to the outer edge of the scales) on a Koi, since can also deteriorate just as easily when the Koi gets older. 'Easy come, easy go!'



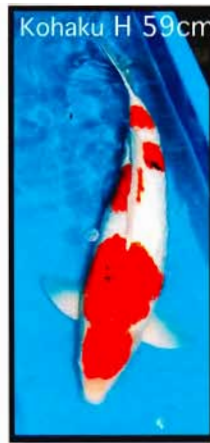
The last of Ian's Koi (Ian 9) is the Omosako Shiro Utsuri. This Koi measured 13cm in December 2002 as Tosai, 48cm in June 2004, and now measures 58cm. Shiro Utsuri of this level are very few and far between. Such a Koi would cost in the region of 400,000 to 600,000 yen if purchased at this size and age from Omosako. This Koi has Sumi of the absolute highest quality, being a deep glossy black, so much so, that the scales can barely be seen! The Shiroji is also wonderful, and the body is also very good. Motoguro is still only present in one pectoral fin, and when photographing it, I failed to check the likelihood of it developing in the other fin. Nonetheless, this is the kind of Koi that I would happily buy back from Ian, for my Wife's future pond! Superb!

This pretty much concludes the Koi so far. After writing this, I have decided to write an early letter to

Santa, to give him plenty of time to prepare...

Dear Santa,  
For Christmas, I would like a Kohaku. Please can you send me one with the pattern of 'Colin C', the body of 'Ian 4', the Hi and skin quality of 'Colin 2' (now at Cliff's), the head of 'Ian 2', and the Kiwa and Sashi of 'Colin 2'. I would appreciate it if it could be female too! I realise that such a Koi would probably cost 4 or 5 million yen, and be very rare, but you are my only hope of getting the perfect





Koi. FYI, I have copied this letter to Jimmy Saville just in case you can't come up with the goods.

If you thought that things were going well with the progress of these Koi, I'll let you in on a secret. Cliff and Ian have exceeded our Sansai target of 68cm... with Nisai! Yes, that's right, Cliff bought a 24cm Momotaro Kohaku in November 2003 as Tosai, and has now raised it as Nisai to some 71cm!

In the previous instalment of this series, you may remember me mentioning that Ian put 10 Tosai into his 3800 gallon pond in February 2004, at between 23 and 28cm. Apart from 2 Shiro Utsuris, the others were Go-Sanke. These were, one Takeda Showa of 26cm, one Momotaro Kohaku (23cm), and six Momotaro Sankes. I chose these Koi for Ian, as I thought they were the best of the cheap Koi that hadn't sold at that time. Well,

'Sanke A' has turned out female and 61cm. The Maruten Sanke 'Sanke B' measured 23cm, and is now 59cm (sex unknown). 'Sanke C' is female and 62cm. 'Sanke D' was 28cm, female, and now measures some 68cm! 'Sanke E' is female and 62cm. The Kohaku 'Kohaku F' is male, and 53cm. The Takeda Showa 'Showa G' turned out male and 66cm (now Nisai), and 'Sanke H' is male, and 59cm. The Koi from 'A' through to 'E' have turned out to be very desirable Koi indeed, in fact, better than most of the

original featured Koi! 'F', 'G', and 'H' need new homes, but all in all, I feel this is an excellent success for growing small cheap Tosai.

I hope that this article continues to be of interest, but please remember that keeping Koi means compromising. If you don't compromise, you will never be satisfied. A perfect Koi will always be financially out of reach! So, enjoy the best you can afford, and decide which attributes you can compromise on, and which ones you can't. You don't have to be rich to get good results with growing Tosai. But, the key to success lies in choosing the right Koi, and then to being in control of any many 'variables' as possible. By controlling the light that hits the pond, temperature, water hardness, feeding regime, etc, you can moderate the Koi's environment as they grow, and hence control how fast they grow, and how fast they develop. It's not rocket science, but it's great fun!

This third installment of the 80 cm Quest concludes the series. Mike Snaden has taken us all on an educational journey, highlighting visually the possibilities of spectacular growth even in relatively cooler climates such as that of Great Britain. Favorable results are seldom a product of mere chance, but rather the fruit of dedication to quality coupled with determination.

Mike's commitment to koi is easily seen in his endeavours, and his passion for their finers points is evident in both his writings and conversations concerning them. He has certainly brought many new ideas to the forefront and to the attention of many hobbyists outside of Japan. The koi world has sat up and taken notice of both his introduction of the Bakki Shower system, and by supplying the two-time BKKS National Supreme Champion. We thank him for contributing this series and welcome future contributions from him as well. 鯉人