



Southend, Leigh & District Aquarist Society

It is with great sadness that we have to report the death of J.H. Preston, Howard to all his many friends and acquaintances in the aquarium hobby world. Howard passed away on the 17th of January 2012 from a stroke.

Howard was probably best known for his interest in the livebearing fishes, their popularisation, the breeding and the dissemination around the UK. Also for his pioneering trips to Mexico in the 1970's to collect wild Swordtails and Platies and numerous other livebearers that had never before been seen in Europe before his and Chris Lyons trip. The first trip involved a flight to New York and then Greyhound buses all the way to Mexico City where they hired a car to search for fishes in earnest. When they arrived back in the UK the late Dave Cheswright received a phone call asking if he had any aquariums free to house some of the various fish collected. Many of the species Howard and Chris collected are still being bred and maintained by aquarists throughout Great Britain.

Apart from the fish collecting trips Howard restarted Southend, Leigh & District's Journal in October 1963 only passing the editors chair on when he travelled to Mexico; the Journal then carried on until 1985.

Howard was not the most organised of individuals as visitors to his house in Braintree will affirm. He will however be remembered for his willingness to help other aquarists whether it was by freely passing on his beloved fishes or for example his willingness to stay overnight at several of Southend's Open Shows guarding the exhibits on a Friday night for the opening on the Saturday.

I am sure everyone will join the writer in expressing thanks to Mr & Mrs Bernhard Meech who looked out for him after he lost his sight.

Peter Capon
Southend, Leigh & District Aquarist Society