

Shop Profile

Featured this month: Penfold's Reptiles

Although Penfold's Reptiles only opened in June this year, the response has been so good that there are plans in place to double the size of the shop. It is already fitted out with 76 vivariums, accommodating a wide range of reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates.

"It seemed a logical step for us to open a shop, as my partner and I had our own large breeding collection of snakes and lizards. Also, as I'd been working in the reptile retail trade for about 17 years, I knew what we were getting into," says owner Terry Matthews. "We'd been going to all the shows around the UK and major European ones, such as Hamm, so we'd built up a good range of contacts too."

Interesting stock

Although you will find all the common species that you would expect at Penfold's Reptiles, you are also likely to encounter some surprises as well, particularly as Terry is well-known for his boa, Burmese and reticulated python morphs. He believes, however, from a commercial viewpoint, that the future will lie with species rather than morphs.

"I know they are not the most colourful lizards around, but I really like chuckwallas, and I think more people would if they saw them," he says. "I realise that I may have them in stock for some time though!"

An area where Terry has specialised from the outset is poison dart frogs. "They're just so stunning," he says. "You go to Germany and Holland and they have fantastic set-ups for these amphibians. I want to try and show people what can be accomplished with them."

One thing you will not find in the shop though are sliders and other large turtles. "I'm



sticking to the smaller species, which people can accommodate easily, without having to build a pond or dispose of their pets in a few years time as they grow in size. I've been able to source some fantastic Reeve's turtles already, and I'll be getting some musk turtles shortly," explains Terry. "I'm also hoping to stock American box turtles. One of my customers breeds them, and they make fantastic pets."

There is also a good range of invertebrates in stock, including a number of different stick

crickets and other more commonly-available items, in a full range of sizes.

New club planned

It has been an interesting period for Terry, meeting customers. He has already had visitors from as far away as Nottingham, not to mention a number of local residents keen to investigate the new shop. "I think they have found it fascinating - hopefully, some of them will become customers in due course. At least none of them screamed and ran out!" he adds.

One of Terry's aims is to build up a network of reptile keepers across Kent, and with this in mind, he has persuaded a number of the reptile shops across the county to support the idea of backing a new reptile club. The first meeting of the group will take place in Canterbury in September.

"The social side of the hobby is very important because it helps people to gain knowledge and confidence, enabling them to develop their interest," he explains. "When we opened, we organised a barbeque, and invited as many people from the area as possible who we knew were interested in reptiles."

"Our late night Friday openings, will hopefully gain more of a club feel too, with people coming along to meet up and chat, rather than necessarily spending any money - although that would be a bonus!" ■

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insects. "I'm keeping them on living privet bushes, rather than having to hunt around for bramble," admits Terry. "We have a wide choice of praying mantids too, and we're planning a Bug Day later, with leading breeder Graham Smith from Metamorphosis, so people can just turn up and talk about them with Graham."

As well as a broad choice of livestock, Penfold's Reptiles stocks a wide selection of dry goods, such as Arcadia's lighting systems and the complete F10 range. The shop also offers one of the broadest ranges of livefoods in Kent, including fruit flies and roaches, plus



Plan a visit

Where: Penfold's Reptiles, 51a Sea Street, Herne Bay, Kent, CT6 8QB. Tel. 01227 366700.

Web: www.penfoldsreptiles.co.uk / email: terry@penfoldsreptiles.co.uk

Opening times: Tuesday-Thursday 10am-6pm, Friday 10am-7pm, Saturday 8am-6pm, Sunday 10am-2pm. Closed Mondays.

Getting there: Come off Thanet Way (A2990), heading over the railway line and then turn left into Sea Street, with the shop being close to the junction. Nearest train station is Herne Bay, which is about 0.8km (0.5mi) away. In this case, head up Fleetwood Avenue and turn into Sea Street.