

BURMESE CAT ASSOCIATION

# NEWSLETTER

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## Editorial

Welcome to this second edition of the BCA newsletter, which includes reports on the AGM, the Christmas Fayre and a very honest and interesting article about Hypokalaemic Polymyopathy. The association has been very busy over the past six months, getting everything up and running. We now have a super new logo (above)...thanks and congratulations go to Sharon Neal of Kidderminster for designing the winning entry. Sharon won a Christmas Hamper, kindly donated by Anne Bell. Thanks too for all the other superb entries, all of which were of a very high and creative standard.

The website too is now 'in-hand' and hopefully will be 'live' in a few weeks time.

The very latest news (just received) is that the BCA has been granted 'Pre-Affiliation' status by the GCCF

My thanks everyone who has contributed to this issue – please feel free to send me your stories, photos, poems etc. for the next issue.

*Chris Stalker*

Editor

vintarnburmese@yahoo.com

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## Burmese Cat Association AGM and Christmas Fayre



Our first AGM was held at Chisledon Recreational Hall on 12<sup>th</sup> November and on a sunny Saturday afternoon about 30 members were welcomed with coffee and mince pies by Lee and Paula Orton who had found a very suitable venue – and it was free! A procession of boxes and bags were brought in and unpacked. Two tables laden with Christmas ornaments and decorations were set up, a beautiful cat

quilt, made and donated by Sheila Kimmins's sister, Lid Powderham, was displayed and later raffled. Tins of home made mince pies, cakes and sweets were unloaded and quickly disappeared into bags and mouths. Stevie Hillman, our raffle organiser par excellence, was soon hard at work selling tickets for the many really good prizes. There were enchanting knitted cats and kittens for sale and even a salmon kettle. The generosity of our members was overwhelming and at the end of the day our welfare fund had benefited by well over £150 – not bad for 30 customers!

All this activity made for a very friendly and informal atmosphere and it actually became quite hard to get down to business. We even enrolled six new members before we started on the serious stuff!

Our new club relies on the enthusiasm and cooperation of our members and these we had in abundance; with offers of help for our website, welfare and plenty of lively discussion. And there were some good ideas...Cyndy Robertshaw said her daughter, Lucy, would like to see a special section of the association for junior

members and she has offered to set this up. Everyone was keen to have another garden party at Bremhill (not surprising given the successful tradition of these). It was decided to hold a competition to design a logo and there would be a prize for the winner. The timing of the AGM was another lively issue but, finally, we came back to the beginning and discovered that November was the most suitable month after all – provided we could drive home in the daylight! We didn't quite make the daylight this time but everyone seemed to enjoy our very first AGM and we look forward to this becoming a social occasion as well as a necessary one.

**Elisabeth Amies**



## CHAIRMAN'S AGM REPORT 2011

Welcome to the first AGM of the Burmese Cat Association...

What a busy six months it has been! I don't think any of us realised how difficult it would be to set up a new club but we have had such great support from our members. It is a warm feeling knowing you are there, supporting us to get a firm base to work on. Everyone has worked so hard to get us where we are today. Your enthusiasm is what we all wanted for our club; that is to say, that any one who wants to be



involved can be. We will do all we can to help you get you involved. Before I go on I would like to welcome the three new Committee members, Stevie Hillman, Lee Orton and Gill Francis. We now have a full complement and the present Officers who will stay in situ until the AGM of 2012. Before that happens, we will have an election for of all the Committee and Officers which will be open to

everyone who would like to stand for any of the positions.

I want to be positive today and to tell you about the good things we have achieved thus far, since our first meeting in August. Rather than moan about what isn't yet done, I want to tell you what we have already achieved. We have 100 members now, I believe, which is brilliant in such a short time.

We should be on the agenda for the next GCCF council meeting regarding our pre-affiliation; which we all hope will go through.

I would like to say a special thank you Mike Kimmins for guiding us through the wonders of building a website. We are not yet up and running (as hoped) but we do want our site to be 'different' and with so many different views and ideas, it has been much more difficult than any of us originally envisaged. However, once it goes 'live', we hope it will have been worth the wait!

The committee have written pages for our website which includes:

- WHAT WE STAND FOR
- WHO WE ARE
- A STUD LIST
- HAVING A BURMESE IN YOUR HOME
- A MEMBERS KITTEN LIST
- MEMBERSHIP PAGE
- WELFARE
- COMMITTEE MEMBERS LIST/PROFILES

Much work also went into producing a splendid calendar – which is on sale today! Sales have already shown it to be a great success. We have been overwhelmed with the response we have had so far and the generous donations made to our welfare fund. We will at least be able to give the basic care to the cats, which is brilliant.

Yvonne has two helpers who would like to carry on this important work. The next plan is to set up a network of Advisers.

Setting up our Bank Account proved to be headache - but the cheque books should arrive next week.

Finally, I would like to thank-you all for your support and wish every one a Happy Christmas and a brilliant New Year for the Club!



**Maureen Smith**

## **CALENDAR 2013 – PHOTOS NEEDED**

It may seem a little early to be thinking about 2013!

However, Anna would very much appreciate it if the photographers amongst us gave some thought to sending in photos of their beautiful Burmese for consideration for the next Association calendar.

Where possible it would be lovely if the photos could relate to particular months.

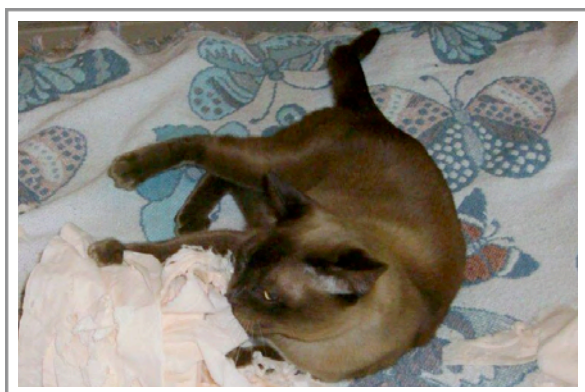
If you have taken any photos over Christmas, amongst the wrapping paper, under (or even up) the tree, with tinsel or cards that would be great for December.

Easter is in April, Midsummer in June, Halloween in October and August is traditionally the “silly” month, so a few ideas there.

Please email your photos to Anna at [anna@hobberdy.co.uk](mailto:anna@hobberdy.co.uk)

If you are sending very large photos please send them one at a time and please be sure to let Anna know whom they come from!

## KISSY'S STORY



This is the life story of a small, brave chocolate Burmese cat called Kissy. She was born to very well bred titled parents belonging to good friends of mine. I had been breeding Burmese for a number of years, but had come to a full stop due to bad luck with two breeding queens who had to be neutered. My

husband bought me a kitten as a surprise Anniversary present, and I only found out when I went with him to visit the friends who bred her. She was a very lively kitten who soon made friends with my three neutered cats. Within four days of her arrival she was sleeping with them and playing with them.

At the age of four months she developed a limp. It was difficult to tell exactly what the problem was and when it didn't improve after a couple of days I took her to my veterinary surgeon who diagnosed muscle strain in one or both front legs. As she was a typical very lively Burmese kitten, I wasn't too worried. We went away for a week's break with friends, leaving the other big cats with a family member, but taking Kissy with us.

We were staying in a rather remote cottage deep in the countryside when Kissy became much worse. She wouldn't walk at all and stopped eating. I force fed her with liquidised cat food and a syringe and kept her going until we returned home early, after only three days away, and rushed her straight back to the vet, where she was hospitalised and put on a drip.

I had been reading in a magazine about the dreaded Hypokalaemia and the possibility occurred to me that this could be the problem. I looked on the internet for all the information I could find, but none of the symptoms seemed typical.

In the mean time Kissy was X-rayed, scanned and blood tested. Nothing was found so I asked my vet to test for Hypokalaemia, and he agreed, although he was sceptical as he hadn't actually heard of the Burmese variety. I rang the friends who bred her, and they agreed with my suspicions, and were also very worried and upset.

When my vet rang me with the results of the blood test he was both horrified and surprised at the findings, and she was finally diagnosed with Hypokalaemic Polymyopathy. Her potassium was barely above 2, so low he didn't know how she was still alive. The normal level is between 3.5 and 5.8. He rang the Veterinary Training hospital near Bristol and spoke to Professor Tim Gruffydd-Jones for more information on the subject. We could have sent her up to Bristol, but my vet and I both agreed that she would be better in home surroundings with people she knew, as he didn't expect her to live long. He started the treatment of one Tumil-K tablet a day, which at that time were £25 for 100. Luckily I had carried on her insurance with Pet Plan, which meant they would cover her for life.

She responded fairly well. She started eating again and seemed much happier, but she didn't have the energy to play any more and as it was winter, she was constantly sitting on the radiators, and looking cold and hunched. The other cats took turns to wash her and sleep with her, and it seemed as if they knew she was ill because they never tried to play with her.

After only two months she was back in the veterinary hospital after collapsing again. The Tumil-K was increased to two a day and once more she showed some improvement. Unfortunately this happened several more times and her dose rose to five a day.

My vet seemed to think she might grow out of it as I believe some cats do, so every time she was stable for a few months we would try to reduce the dose very gradually, in case the high dose damaged her kidneys and liver.

It never worked, and she'd collapse after a couple of weeks on anything less than three Tumil-K a day. Eventually, after two years of ups and downs, hospital admissions, blood tests and stress, (even when she was 'well' her potassium levels were never more than barely into the normal range,) my vet agreed that we should leave her on a dose of four tablets a day for the rest of her life. She never showed any signs of kidney or liver failure and looked healthy. She remained quite small and quiet, but was obviously happy. I showed her as a neuter and she was made a premier in three straight shows. She was capable of more, but I decided enough was enough, and I didn't want her stressed any more than necessary.

She hated anyone in a white coat and if she needed a blood test it meant a full sedation, and usually several attempts in both legs and neck, so we didn't do it unless it was absolutely necessary. She would bite anyone other than my husband and

myself if they tried to stroke her, and gained the reputation of being a stropky little cat. (Another reason why we didn't show her any more!)

I had to change vets after a while because for some reason, my vet wanted her to have the liquid form of potassium. It meant she had to be force fed about 20 mls of foul tasting liquid twice a day, after which she often vomited. I changed to another vet who became a good friend, and Kissy remained stable. The only time she became ill was after she had her yearly booster, so we stopped that. Another time she developed an abscess on her head after a fight with one of my other cats and was very poorly for weeks.

When the last of my original cats died, I introduced another cat. She was an adult female, and although I was very careful how I introduced them, I'm afraid it was hate at first sight for both of them. I persevered, and introduced a kitten. Same thing! Eventually Kissy learned to tolerate them both, but never liked them.



I had several more litters of kittens, but I never introduced them to Kissy, in case of trouble.

Everything went smoothly until the beginning of this year, when my vet was unable to obtain Tumil-K tablets. The practice managed to buy some in from several other vets in the area, which tided us over for another six weeks.

Tumil-K tablets were now costing about £54 for 100, which lasted her less than a month on four a day. She was also now over ten years old, so the Pet Plan excess was up to £90, and because of her age I had to pay 20% of every bill. My vet decided to try her on the 'human' variety of potassium, Slow-K, as a last resort.. Apparently the absorption rate is different, so she was prescribed one pill a day, which is easily cut in half with a pill cutter, and given half morning and night.

She had a blood test after three months and her potassium was well within normal limits for the first time since she was four months old! She has put on weight and has learned to play again. She looks healthy, her coat is glossy, her appetite is good and she

no longer feels the cold. She has at last found a little friend, a kitten from my last litter. They play together, sleep together and share food. If the kitten becomes too cheeky she is smacked and sometimes bitten, but is always quickly forgiven and washed vigorously. Kissy has even chewed her little friends' eyebrows off, showing that she has some maternal feelings, I suppose!

It has made a tremendous difference to us, only having to give half a tablet twice a day instead of two tablets twice a day. When I called in to pay the bill for the first lot of new tablets, I thought the vet had made a mistake. The cost was £13 for one hundred tablets, which last her nearly three months. What a difference! Why don't other vets try Slow K?

Think on this...It will cost more per month for the insurance, than the cost of the tablets. Kissy will only have one blood test a year, which, with sedation, will cost less than the excess.

I would love to know why Slow-K hasn't been tried before for Hypokalaemia. Maybe someone out there will have the answer. I wonder how many little kittens have been put to sleep because the cost of treating them was so prohibitive, and not everyone has insurance that lasts for life. I realise that every case is different, but maybe some research could be done on the treatment of this terrible scourge of our beautiful Burmese cats.

Kissy's parents were neutered immediately following her diagnosis, and neither cat had ever produced an affected kitten that we knew of. The disease carries a stigma, and no breeder likes to think that they may be responsible for producing an affected kitten. Most breeders will avoid cats known to have Hypokalaemia in their pedigree, but it still turns up unexpectedly, and out of the blue. Although research is being done in the United States, the progress is slow. A specimen of Kissy's blood has been sent to the USA as part of the research, so all we can do is wait

**(A Burmese owner - name supplied)**

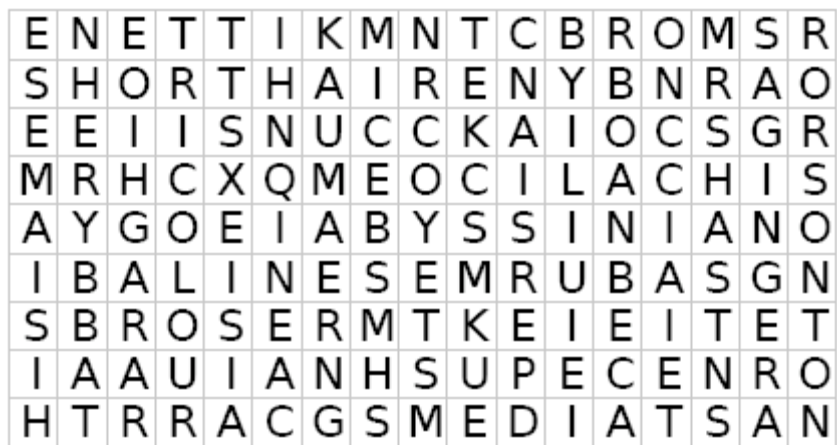




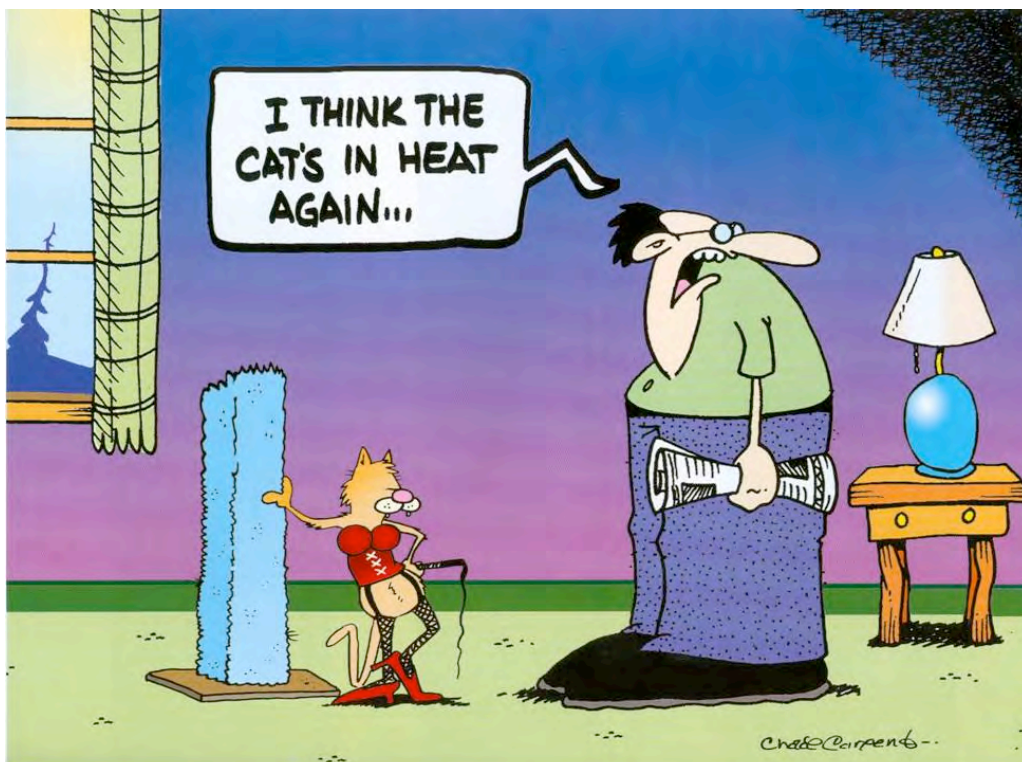
## CAT WORD SEARCH – just for fun!

Can you find the following words?

ABYSSINIAN	BALINESE	BURMESE
CALICO	GINGER	HARLEQUIN
KITTEN	MANX	MICE
PERSIAN	SHORTHAIR	SIAMESE
STUD	TABBY	TRICOLOUR



### CARTOON FUN...



## **A CAUTIONARY TALE OF A 'KITTEN TOY'!**

When I have a litter of kittens, I always stock up on plenty of paper kitchen towels. I find them great for mopping up spills and for wiping surfaces etc. The inside cardboard tube makes a cheap toy for the kittens too - they love to roll over them and practice their chewing too!

However, I never thought that this innocent item could be dangerous!

What happened?

Well, when last year's litter was about three and a half weeks old, I casually tossed one of the cardboard tubes into the kitten's play area. I then left the room and went back to answering my emails. I don't know why, but just a few minutes later I felt that I should check on the kittens.

Imagine my horror when I saw one of the little females had burrowed into the tube - only her lower tummy, rump and tail was visible. She was 'curled' into a fetal position - and tightly wedged inside the tube! I pulled her out and was distraught to find her totally limp and blue. I grasped her scruff, shook her head and began mouth to mouth resuscitation. To my great relief, she spluttered and 'came back to life'... Just another 30 seconds and she would have been dead! Following this terrible fright, I still use kitchen roll in the kitten but the cardboard tubes go straight into the re-cycle box!



**Chris Stalker**

**Membership Enquiries: Elisabeth Amies 01386 561326**  
**[aea@pershire.wyenet.co.uk](mailto:aea@pershire.wyenet.co.uk)**

**Welfare: Yvonne Bruckel 01452 520653**  
**[zenopuskat@tiscali.com](mailto:zenopuskat@tiscali.com)**

**Secretary: Sheila Kimmins [sheila@exertus-training.co.uk](mailto:sheila@exertus-training.co.uk)**