



## **Editorial**

Welcome to the winter issue of the BCA newsletter – I hope everyone enjoyed their Christmas celebrations last month - did your Burmese wreck your decorations? Mine certainly gave it their best shot! In this issue we have our Chairman's report on the 2012 AGM and the results of last' year's election.

Rosemary Hale has written a very interesting article about the possibility of lifting the ban on imported Burmese. There are some superb photographs with the article too. I am also delighted to include a lighthearted article from Sharon Neal (who helps Marmite to write from time to time) - a Day in the Life of a Burmese - from two perspectives! I think many of you will identify with the owner's point of view! Another lighthearted article comes from Elisabeth Amies - how many Burmese do we own?

I hope you will forgive me squeezing in a piece I wrote myself recently, following my kitten's success at the 2012 Supreme. As Editor, I feel a bit guilty writing about my own cats but after reading it, I hope you will understand why I was tempted to share it with you.

Please send your contributions to me for the next issue - summer 2013. We would welcome news and photographs of your cats' newly gained titles for a "Roll of Honour" feature. But of course I would love some pet photographs too please! Also, if you have any suggestions, ideas or topics you would like the committee to consider, do let them know. They next meet in February. Finally, may I wish you & your cats a healthy and happy New Year! Very best wishes,

**Chris Stalker**

## **BURMESE CAT ASSOCIATION AGM 2012 – Chairman's report**

Over 30 members attended the AGM and they enjoyed a lunch of hot soup, followed by mince pies.

Maureen, our chairman, welcomed the members and called for a minute's silence to remember those friends who have died over the past year; including Margaret Somers, Sue Vickers and Elizabeth Harris.

Below is an extract from Maureen's address:

"As a committee we have been very busy and there are several important achievements to note. Firstly, we have pre-affiliation with the GCCF – only another two years to go!

We had our annual tea party in May, which was a huge success - even though we had to decamp to Goatacre Village Hall as my lawn was underwater. We had great support from our members and Tim Gruffydd Jones gave us the good news about the availability of Hypokalaemia testing. We all had a really nice afternoon. Please put the date of 25<sup>th</sup> May 2013 in your diaries for our next 'Cat Chat'. If anyone has any ideas for the day or suggestions for a better format please let me know.

Our web site has been up and running for a few months and seems to have gone down very well with our members.

Our thanks to Anna, who has produced the calendar again this year. Sales have been very good!

The club are sponsoring a class at the Asian Cat show in April.

On another note, I would like to remind our members that when we first started our club one of our guiding principles was that we would keep the Burmese breed as close to the original as we possibly could for size, colour and type. Moreover, we had always been told that the gene pool was large enough; we certainly did not want to bring in other breeds. The problem that we face now is that too many stud owners put restrictions on people using their boys' offspring, both male and female.

If we are going to stick to our principles, we are going to have to open our doors to all of our members and other breeders who want to use our studs (unless we know there is problem of course). We should be driven by the merits of a mating, not by whether we like an owner and should avoid restrictions wherever possible and encourage people to widen the gene pool. I urge you to please help me to get this message over to people in order to demonstrate that we are doing what is best for the breed. The approach never used to be like it is now and being forced to bring in other breeds is quite unnecessary and unhelpful.

This is particularly important for inexperienced breeders who need our help. Think back to when you started to breed and remember how hard you thought it was. We all have to start somewhere and we all make mistakes but we learn from them. It's difficult enough, without unnecessary barriers.

It is also very important to share such experiences of illnesses and abnormalities such as flat chests. We would save ourselves a lot of heartache if we were to be open about these things. It is not a disgrace when things happen, or a slur on your cats. It is far better to talk about why things happen and to try and find a way to sort things out. We really should be open and trust one another.

We are steadily building on our welfare fund and in the meantime, we will do all we can with our, as yet, limited resources. Over the past few weeks we have had two separate groups of rescue cats, ten in all. There is, of course, someone who deserves a special mention here... We put details of the ten rescue cats on our website on the 20<sup>th</sup> October and by the 26<sup>th</sup>, five had been re-homed! I am sure you know who I am talking about - Yvonne Bruckel who works tirelessly for the Burmese breed and has done so for the past 40 years. Gordon (her husband) started the Lost and Found register completely separately from the BCC and they also did re-homing country wide; over the years before it was regionalised. Together they have re-homed over 2000 cats and Yvonne still has the records to prove it.

At the tender age of 21yrs+ Yvonne is going strong and is an inspiration to all of us. Most people would have hung their boots up and said 'I have done my bit', but not her - Yvonne, I applaud and thank you for all those cats you

helped to have a 'happy ever after ending' to their lives. Claire James is now helping Yvonne - I would like to say welcome and thank you!

We now have charity status for the welfare fund. One of the main benefits of this is that we can claim back tax on donations. So if anyone re-homes a cat and gets a donation from the original or new owners, please always ask them if they are tax payers and give them a Gift Aid form. These can be downloaded from the website or obtained from anyone on the committee. For example, if someone gives £20 the Welfare Fund will get £25 when the Gift Aid is added, which is not to be sniffed at!

Before I close, I would like to thank the committee for all their hard work, we've had some challenges over the past year. It's quite hard setting up a new club - you think you know what there is to do, but suddenly some one says have you done so and so and you realise you haven't! However, everyone has pulled hard together and I hope you are all happy with what we have done and what we are doing.

Finally please don't forget that your annual membership fees are due in January - we don't want to lose any of you. You have given the club such a good start, firstly becoming members and secondly you have been so generous financially. We are not 'flush' but our hearts are in the right place and with members like you, we will get there!"

**Maureen Smith**

Chairman

## **ELECTION RESULTS**

The autumn election for two committee members had a very good response - 104 papers were received – 77% of the electorate. Anna and Naomi were duly elected and we are delighted that Claire is now working with Yvonne.

Anna Virtue 78 - 43%

Naomi Dunn 60 - 33%

Claire James 43 - 24%

The committee held an election in December and Yvonne Bruckel was duly elected as Deputy Chairman.

## **GCCF REGISTRATION POLICY FOR BURMESE CATS**

**By Rosemary Hale**

Discussions have been taking place recently about the future of British Burmese. For over 20 years there has been a GCCF Policy in place not to register imported Burmese. This was requested by the BJCC to prevent the Head Defect gene of Contemporary American Burmese from entering the British gene pool. But over 20 years of virtually no new genetic material has put our breed at risk.

The Head Defect gene was first recognised in American Burmese in the early 1970s. Cats had started appearing with excellent type, and these were selected for breeding and showing. It was only after some time that it was realised that these particular Burmese carried a very nasty lethal head deformity gene. Research started quite early on to try and find the cause of the deformity, and groups such as Searchcore were set up specifically with this intent. But as the years passed the deformity continued and there was a split within the American burmese breeders. Those who had never had this nasty gene in their cats continued to breed carefully to make sure the gene never entered their lines and they are now known as Traditional Burmese. Those who preferred to keep breeding with the affected lines became known as Contemporary Burmese. The Contemporary cats were of very good show type and most had superb temperament.



GC Good Fortune Fortunatas, DM  
Contemporary Burmese Stud born February 1975  
Bred and owned by Evelyn Chapman

After decades of research at last the gene has been identified by Leslie Lyons and her team, and a simple test is now available to show whether or not a cat carries the gene. Kittens will only be affected by this lethal gene if they inherit the gene from both parents. Cats with only one copy of the gene are normal in every respect, but carry and can pass this gene to their offspring. So now that all cats can be tested, and we can know for sure that we are not inheriting this defect, is it time to consider repealing the registration policy. There are so many beautiful cats all round the world who would bring new blood and genetic diversity to our Burmese. Cats from Australia and New Zealand are already similar in type to our own cats, as they started with imports from the UK in the 1950s and 60s. South Africa too has imported many cats from the UK over the years. But now they are also importing from further afield, and mixing the lines, so perhaps we could benefit from the work already done by other breeders.



**Kitten from the Burlamien Cattery in South Africa  
Bred by Lallie and Elmien De Wet**

The Traditional Burmese of America have type surprisingly similar to our own, apart from having a rounder eye shape. And these Traditional Burmese lines are now finding their way into Eastern Europe, especially Russia.



**Mouse Island Marcel of Lyuboburm  
Bred by Prudence Dorazio in the USA  
Owned by Natalya Gnatyuk of Russia**

The most exciting development in recent years in the import of a new female from Thailand by DJ & Renee Blythin of Catizen Cattery in America. Imported in February 2010, Mod Daeng gave birth to her first litter in October 2010. Both she and her offspring have been rigorously tested, and Mod Daeng's genes would be a total outcross to any others throughout the world.



**Supha Pearl See. Male Burmese from Mod Daeng's first litter.  
Bred by Nancy Reeves of Burma Pearl Cattery US**

# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A BURMESE CAT

By 'An Anonymous Burmese' & Sharon Neal

The **cat's version** of his day is recorded here in **black ink** & the **owner's view** is in **blue ink**.

1. Get up after good night's sleep and gently wake Mum up, so she can get breakfast.  
1. Give up trying to sleep through heavy Burmese snoring, paw in mouth, claw in nostril and feed culprit.
2. Go outside and catch a live toy. Play with it, kill it then dispose of it in the best possible way.  
2. Check and see what the cat has got in kitchen/bedroom, then either vomit and rescue, or dispose of the remains accordingly.
3. Retrieve hidden prey. Smile innocently at Mum (who hasn't found the last one yet) and then go to visit our neighbour's home.  
3. Put on coat, wondering why cat is smiling. Find dead mouse in sleeve. Pick up handbag, remove the lizard hiding inside it and go out – ignoring the fact that cat is eating a mouse on top of our neighbour's white car.
4. Lunch - dine out locally, taking a picnic lunch with me.  
4. Apologise to neighbour and offer to pay for half-thawed chicken nuggets.

## 5. Siesta time

5. While chatting to a now somewhat pacified neighbour, trying not to notice your cat exiting via her bedroom window.

6. Pop home, preferring to use rear cat flap (locked) rather than walk round to front one (open).

6. Repair wrecked rear cat flap which accidentally left in the locked position.

7. Play 'chase' with the dog through the lounge, into the hall and up and down the stairs.

7. Straighten all rugs, cushions and surviving ornaments and separate playmates before the poor dog gets hurt.

8. Check and see if top of cupboard has been dusted lately.

8. Throw broken ornaments in bin with others.

9. Go for walk with Mum, Dad and dog. Then run ahead and jump out; yelling "Surprise"!

9. Calm startled dog and husband and take cat back home before setting out again to catch them up.

10. Sit on the stile opposite the house and wait for Mum, Dad and the dog to come back.

10. Apologise to people who are complaining about not being allowed to use the stile.



11. Have an afternoon snack.

11. Investigate the noise in kitchen, eventually noticing a tail sticking out of a sack of dog food. Remove cat.

12. Tea time. Visit neighbours, who are having barbeque.

12. Ignore various half eaten pieces of barbequed food (no chicken nuggets!) in garden and dark mutterings coming from over from the hedge.

13. Go home and have some quality time with Mum and Dad before supper.

13. Turn TV volume up to mask snoring cat noises and tuck its' tail and leg (dangling across screen) under the sleeping cat on top of the TV.

14. Sit on top of the door and to greet neighbours when they come in to see Mum and Dad.

14. Get plaster for neighbour's bald head which is now covered in scratches from when the cat landed on it, from the top of the door.

15. Play with toys.

15. Remove dead bird just dragged from behind chair neighbour is recovering in.

16. Supper time for all.

16. Console hungry dog and feed him again, promising to lock the door not just close it this time.

17. Sneak out just before 11.00pm curfew and see if there are any friends about.

17. Try to work out where cat fight is taking place, break it up and try to get the cat to come home.

18. Watch world go by and Mum walking up and down road.

18. Walk up and down calling cat as quietly as possible. See plenty of other cats - just not yours.

19. Getting cold, friends all gone, so go in house but stay downstairs on boiler.

19. Worry about cat who is still out 3 hours after curfew. Keep looking out of window and front door, calling softly and trying not to imagine bodies in the road.

20. Heating has gone off so go upstairs to Mum, who is opening windows and doors and letting the cold in.

20. Respond to raucous miaow from "missing" love of your life, forgive him everything and fall into exhausted sleep



*Note from Sharon - "OK, maybe it didn't all happen in one day, but this is life with a Burmese cat...great isn't it!"*

## CALENDAR 2014 - PHOTOS WANTED PLEASE

Please starting taking photographs of your cats and send to Anna (via email if possible, please) - [anna@hobberdy.co.uk](mailto:anna@hobberdy.co.uk) - hopefully we can portray our Burmese cats throughout the seasons; displaying their beauty, wit and charm!

### **A SUPREMELY GOOD DAY!**

**By Chris Stalker**

I had a wonderful day at the Supreme show on November 24th 2012. It had been 5 years since I had last entered this very special show and I was really excited to be exhibiting there again. I entered my own bred lilac tortie Burmese kitten (Vintarn Verity) in the kitten class, way back in September. Verity was born in March this year and I have been showing her at my local GCCF cat shows since July and she has done really well, winning Best of Variety at the Gwynedd, Chester & North Wales & Cheshire area shows! However, I knew that competition would be high at the Supreme as exhibitors come from all over the country. The Supreme is different from other shows as it is "ring judged" which means the cats pens can be "dressed or decorated" – this all adds to the atmosphere as well as attracting visitors to the show. It does however, mean that there is more planning involved beforehand and the pens need to be set up before judging begins.

This year, my friend Jane offered to drive us up to Birmingham from Cheshire, the night before the show; as she was entering her cream kitten, Vintarn Hobnob - who is Verity's brother.

So, after a good night's sleep at the onsite Hilton Hotel, Jane, her son Benjamin and I all arrived at the NEC on the Saturday morning with our kittens and lots of "cat luggage"! After vetting-in, we set up our pens and chatted to some of the 14 other Burmese kitten owners whilst we awaited the judges to begin their unenviable task.

Verity's Open Class was judged by Sandra Woodley and I was delighted that she awarded Verity 1<sup>st</sup> & Best of Breed. Verity's competitor was a very pretty chocolate tortie bred by Prof. Kym Jarvis.

The next stage of the day is that all the Best of Breed winners (six lovely kittens) are judged against one another. Dr Peter Collin judged this class after lunch in ring 6. Peter explained what he liked about each individual kitten to the small crowd of onlookers and we all held our breath as he deliberated and

made his choice! I was absolutely over the moon when he declared Verity as his winner – Best of Variety Burmese Kitten!

I was very close to tears at this point and thanked Peter and his stewards – this truly was “beyond my wildest dreams”.



*(BOV Kitten Vintarn Verity)*

I then took Verity to the Best in Show pens, located beside the stage and spent some time talking to her and reassuring her that all was well – she was a little over awed and a wee bit nervous about what was happening.

At about 4pm, Mr. John Hansson, acting as MC with his microphone on stage, introduced the judges (Mrs. Joyce Green, Mr. John Harrison and Mrs. Val Kilby) and one by one, the kittens were brought up onto the stage and were assessed by the three very experienced and well respected senior judges. When it was Verity's turn she suddenly had a moment of fright & her steward returned her to her pen. I was very anxious at this point (!) but after a few moments, Verity reappeared with judge Sandra Woodley who managed to handle her beautifully for the judges, restoring Verity to a semblance of calm! I was so proud of my lovely kitten and it was an honour to see her in the final. The judges' final choice was the beautiful Oriental Black male kitten, Hemlock Bella Mafiosa.

Verity won a beautiful rosette, a framed certificate and an engraved piece of crystal from the sponsors, Royal Canin. A Burmese breeder from the Pearl cattery in South Africa also gave her a lovely rosette as a special gift.

It was truly a remarkable day for me. I have owned Burmese since 1975 and never did I think my own cat would be 'up there' with the winners!

My thanks to my fellow competitors for their messages of congratulations and good sportsmanship, to her judges & stewards and to GCCF for a really memorably happy day!

\* This article was first written for Cat World Magazine and is published in the January 2013 issue - on sale now.

# STATISTICS SAY IT ALL

By Elisabeth Amies

When we devised a membership form for our new association we thought it would be interesting to hear a bit more about your cats, for instance your prefixes, how long you had owned Burmese and how many were in your household. I had in mind writing about different prefixes – why they had been chosen and what they meant because they sounded intriguing and there must be so many interesting stories hidden away there. I still intend to do that one day, once I have persuaded you all to write and tell me some of those interesting and hidden stories, but I then got sidetracked by looking at the application forms and being amazed at just how many cats we all own and for just how long we have all had them.

It was thrilling enough to count up the number of members we now have and to find there are over 118 of us who have joined the association in less than a year. But, as for counting how many cats we owned, that was another story and you may well be surprised to read that, collectively and at the last count, we own 336, give or take a few incomplete forms and my bad maths. That averages out at each member having at least 3 cats.



Someone wrote down vaguely – “some neuters” and another said “too many to count” so you will appreciate these are not the most accurate figures but they are nevertheless revealing. Understandably most cats were much-loved neuters, then came breeding queens and studs and a number of retirees but the most rewarding and surprising revelation was finding out just how many re-homes and rescues there were – and how keen you were to tell us what an important part of your lives they are and have been, So many life stories were squeezed into the small space available simply because you wanted to share your pleasure and gratitude. Yvonne Bruckel you have a lot to answer for in these statistics! It is very gratifying for us all to see the evidence of all the

excellent work you and your helpers have done over the years and the happiness you have brought to so many people. We owe you a big “thank you”.

Apart from finding that few of us seem willing to settle for less than two or three Burmese at a time I have also found that we have all been incredibly faithful to the breed for several generations – more than 2015 years in total! The belief that once you have had a Burmese you will continue to have one (or several!) is well borne out by these figures. Admittedly, the fact that most of us have owned Burmese for well over 30 years says, I am a bit reluctant to admit, something about our collective age but no matter. It also reveals our loyalty, affection and the timeless nature of Burmese themselves. We cannot bear to be without them. I suppose we have always known that but it was good to see, for once, that statistics don't lie!

P.S. I hope this article will now encourage you to write to me about your prefixes. If you would like to contribute to our Dictionary of Prefixes please email me at: [aea@pershore.wyenet.co.uk](mailto:aea@pershore.wyenet.co.uk) or write to 57, Bridge St, Pershore WR10 1AL



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### **SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER**

**Please note: subscriptions for 2013 are now due. You can pay online via our website <http://burmesecatassociation.org/join-us/pay-now.html> or post a cheque to Helen Hewitt, 160 Heritage Rd, Woking, GU21 8XH.**

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