

Burmese Cat Association

Issue No 8

Winter 2014



Editorial

It is good, and somewhat unusual, to have so many varied, interesting and useful contributions for this newsletter and I appreciate your help in making it grow into something more representative of our many feline concerns. It will necessarily be longer than usual so if you find it tedious to read online you can print it out and enjoy at your leisure.

We are losing two valuable members of the committee this year. Cecilia Davies has retired as Treasurer because of ill health; we are sorry to see her go and thank her for all her hard work. We shall miss that lovely soft voice and her elegance! And Sheila Kimmins as Secretary is leaving at the end of the year.

Sheila's business experience, her long association with Burmese and her professional and capable organising talents have all helped to establish a firm foundation for the club's future. We are very grateful to them both and wish them all the best for the future. Claire James is taking over as Secretary in the new year and is well able to keep up Sheila's tradition of calm efficiency. We are very pleased to welcome Sally Rainbow-Ockwell as our new Treasurer. Not only is she a judge and has agreed to be a delegate for the BAC but she is also an experienced business person and understands computers. You are just what we need, Sally!

Our calendar for 2015 has been a great success. Thank you Carol Matheson for coming up with the idea of featuring our cats from the past whose memories we still treasure. More than 60 of you sent in photographs and the choice was not easy. I have included short descriptions of some of these loved cats from their owners and hope you enjoy them albeit shedding a tear or two. There are still some calendars left but not many!

Our great achievement this year has been to be granted affiliation to the GCCF which means we can have our own show in the near future and take part in some of the more controversial issues confronting the breeding world such as our small Burmese gene pool and the very serious risk of importing gene defects from Europe (see the article by Claire Lovell in this issue). The AGM is a forum where members can air and debate these and many other relevant topics. How can we persuade more of you to come? It is difficult to find a reasonably priced venue convenient to all and we would appreciate your comments.

And a cheerful note on which to end - we now have 126 members of whom 20 are joint members and 2 junior members. Most of you live in the southwest but several Burmese aficionados from the east and north are also joining us. And our welfare fund is very healthy thanks to your generosity.

Lastly, we would like to wish all of you and your cat families a very happy Christmas and a peaceful and healthy year to come.

Elisabeth Amies



The Calendar Cats

October

Maureen Smith

I remember this litter well. They got up to everything. The brown and chocolate boys were the ringleaders. They sneaked inside a lidded stool in which I kept the cat litter and I shut them in accidentally while I was doing the other trays. It took some time to find them! Another day I heard growling and spitting from their room upstairs and went to find 7 kittens with tails like brushes and all fighting each other. Panic set in as I didn't know what had happened. There were puddles on the floor, pictures off the wall, I didn't know where to start. The first thing was to rescue two who were hanging on the ivy outside the window despite being covered with a wire frame. I moved a big bean bag and found a live rabbit underneath. He, too, had weed on the floor and when the kittens saw it all hell was let loose again. I put them all in the bedroom next door, rescued the rabbit and then worried that it had left fleas behind. Having rung the vet to find she didn't know how much Frontline to give them either I used a toothbrush to dose them and hoped for the best. Peace was finally restored when I rounded them up, moved their quarters and flea-sprayed two rooms and rearranged furniture. It took 2 hours for us all to calm down. Shortly after this adventure I lost them again and searched the whole house. I found them all piled up asleep in the bottom of a roman blind in the kitten room. It was very cute but the blind was ruined. That's Burmese cats for you. When they went off to their new homes I heard for a couple of years of their exploits. They didn't get any better but they were, and still are, much loved pets.



April

Sharon Neal

Jemma was our first Burmese. She was a lovely little brown girl, "bred" by Clive and Pat Barham following an unexpected and unwanted mating of a very young Octavian with his mother, Kauri Melissa. I had met Clive Barham when he came into the office where I worked. He was wearing a Burmese Cat Club badge and I asked him about it. That was the beginning. Jemma took 10 seconds to work her way into our hearts and we were totally hooked. Jemma was a proper character. She always travelled in the car on a lap looking



out of the window. She never went to the vets in a basket/box/carrier but on a harness and lead and sat on a shoulder. She loved to sit on the top of the door and would run up us or visitors to get to the favoured shoulder position. She was excellent at "log-rolling" when you were in bed, always sleeping on top of you but somehow never falling off no matter how many times you turned over. She always arrived on your back if you were bent over doing the gardening and had to be watched as nothing would convince her that you had dug a hole for a plant rather than for her "convenience". Jemma was the most polite Burmese we have ever had, chatty without being raucous or demanding, and she always said "thank you" when we opened the door for her. She was almost 19 when she died, but what a wonderful 19 years we had.

December

Carol Matheson

Belvoir: Named after the local stately pile home of the Dukes of Rutland but pronounced the same as beaver. His official name was Cullanan Brown Bertie. The largest brown Burmese you ever saw who strolled through life missing his 20th birthday by a month thus doing us out of a party. He never exerted himself and nothing fazed him – unless you wore a white coat and called yourself a vet. Then he could be frankly dangerous.

Once on examining him (with difficulty!) the vet remarked his claws had been clipped. “I do them” I said. Looking me up and down he remarked, “I can’t decide whether you are very brave or very stupid”. “We’ll gloss over that shall we?” I replied.



Collecting him after another day at the vets, having warned them to take care (of themselves!) I was invited into the nursing station which was unusual. Belvoir was glaring at us from a cage decorated with a card depicting an enraged cat and the words “I’LL ‘AVE YER”. “Oh Belvoir, what have you done? You are a NAUGHTY boy”. I pulled him out, rolled him over and tickled his tum. He purred! Turning round, the nurses were huddled in the furthest corner of the room looking very apprehensive. “Told you” I said and left.

His brother was named Bendicks, he was chocolate.

Get it?!! Few locally did and thought he was named after my washing machine. After he died such was his nature that Belvoir welcomed a succession of rescued oldies. Within days they would be happily curled up together sharing beds, food and prime place in front of the fire.

Happy times.

August

Christine Pouncy

Khandana Kalico (Annie, brown tortie) and Khandana Karisma (Speedy, chocolate tortie) were born on 9th October 1993, a litter of 6 kittens. In due course Speedy, named by her new owners, went to her new home, but unfortunately the resident Burmese completely rejected her, so approximately 2 months later she returned home. Annie was absolutely delighted to see her again, so I made the decision not to separate them. They lived a very happy and fulfilled life – Annie a good hunter of mice and, to my dismay, rats – courtesy of a neighbour who kept parrots but was not too efficient at food storage and disposal. We live in a bungalow, and getting onto the roof was quite easy for



them if they shinned up a fence and leapt onto the roof. One particular game they enjoyed was playing chase over the roof, or sometimes sunbathing up there, or just sitting on the chimney pot taking in the view.

When my mother, aged 91, had to go into a nursing home, she longed for visits from Speedy whom whilst mum still lived with us thought was her late chocolate tortie cat, Shana – so once a week or so I said to Speedy, “today you are Shana and we are going to visit mother”! Speedy was amazing in the nursing home (where she caused lots of ooh’s and ahh’s – good therapy) and responded to Mum. Speedy sadly died in April 2008 with cancer, Annie was heartbroken, as we were, and she very sadly died on January 2009 with kidney failure. It was particularly heart-breaking to lose Annie because she was the last Burmese of my own breeding, However, now I can look back and feel happy to know both girls led a long and happy carefree life, and were very much loved.

Front Cover

Stevie Hillman

Angelica and her brother, Peri, were the last litter from Send in the Clown and were born on 13.05.97. They became the much loved pets of Peter Neates and his late wife, Pat. Sadly, Peri was killed by a tractor in 1992 and they then electrified their fence. Both cats had a very good life in the country and Angelica died a few months ago at 17+ years.



She was a great hunter in her youth and used to disappear for hours on end and worry Pat endlessly. She lived long enough to meet Peter's new young lilac boy and a year later a chocolate boy joined the family, Angelica's litter sister, Toscana Ruby Tuesday, who gave birth to many lovely kittens died 3 months later in October 2014



February

Stevie Hillman

Ellie, (Grand Champion Toscana Lilac Elianne), was the 2nd kitten born in my first litter on 22nd May 1985 from our gorgeous foundation queen, Walkabout Matilda 27, bred by Elisabeth Amies, out of Ch. Tapawingo Tahltan and Paradima Tiramisu, a



lovely chocolate girl. She was the big girl of the litter and I fell in love with her immediately. Ellie was a well known show cat but had only one kitten, Solitaire, known to her many fans as Daisy. She was my first tortie and was out of Yvonne Bruckel's beautiful stud, Gr. Ch. Silkpaws Cream Cougar. Among her many kittens was Toscana Send in the Clown 27F whose father was the super Gr. Ch. Mootam Flyaway Peter 27. Ellie had mammary cancer at 12 years but, after an operation, lived well into her 16th year. She was elegant, serene and

beautiful and my late husband and I adored her although his favourite was first-born, brown beauty and litter sister Gr. Ch. Toscana Lady Gytha, my first title winner. All my present day kittens are descended from Elianne.

FURTHER "TAILS" FROM AROUND THE SHOW CIRCUIT!

I have already made a New Year resolution! Next year, I will have to have a few weekends away otherwise I will hardly have any shows to visit and my "cat fixes" will be sadly depleted! I will certainly research the shows in the South Western Counties and possibly treat myself to a weekend or two in Taunton which is one of my favourite venues!

In August, I went to the 48th Championship Show of the Three Counties Cat Society held at Eastleigh. It was a very enjoyable show but sadly, the numbers were quite a bit down on last year. We have to wonder when this general downwards trend will end, if it does at all! However, it has been reported that this year's Supreme Show entries are slightly up on last year and one or two other shows have shown a slight improvement too, so here's hoping!

I must admit to preferring shows where all breeds are represented and our Burmese were well represented at the Three Counties. I was thrilled once again to be allowed a cuddle with my favourite Burmese - a very handsome chocolate boy who had recently celebrated his eleventh birthday. Our Burmese are ageless, aren't they? The BIS Burmese was the highly titled Mainman Kisschase. The overall BIS was a truly stunning Maine Coon IGRPR Isadoryou Mr Bojangles. The runner up was the "full of character" little Sphynx, Amarogue Hobgoblin who featured in my last report. I am keeping my fingers crossed that this show will still be at Eastleigh next August.

Shortly after this, I went to my first TICA show which was held in Swanley, Kent. As many of you will doubtless know, these shows are completely different from GCCF shows. As far as enjoyment is concerned, I think I will reserve judgement here! I can see that some exhibitors may prefer them but speaking purely as a spectator, I found the show to be rather confusing and lacking in structure not helped by the fact that I could not buy a catalogue (only enough for exhibitors). It was difficult to see some of the cats as they were "penned" in their owners' carriers some of which had a thick black mesh front. There was a predominance of some breeds (chiefly the Bengal which, I understand, is currently the most registered breed with TICA) but some other breeds were hardly represented. I only saw one Burmese but I think that probably the majority of Burmese breeders/exhibitors show mainly with the GCCF.

Well, folks, that's all for this year! I do hope that in 2015 there will be lots of positive things to report on including a rise in numbers at the shows and, hopefully, the possibility of reporting on the first Burmese Cat Association show! What a delight that would be!

Miranda Ainsworth

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Peggy wrote the following touching poem about another of her beloved cats.

Champion Pegavi Aphrodite

5 May 1984 – 27 June 1995

It's more than a year since Phreddie died,
Many a day and night I've cried.
Six generations have come and gone,
A little of her in everyone.

Helped at the birth of every litter,
Always the perfect baby sitter.
Also the boss, she ruled with love
The iron paw in the velvet glove.

Full of character, and full of fun
Loving the garden, loving the sun
In winter finding the warmest spot
On top of the boiler like as not.

Paragon of virtue was my Phred,
And that's not said because she's dead.
Perfect mother, perfect cat
There'll never be another one like that.

July

Sheila Kimmins

Paradima Noella (Michaella)

Like most of you, we know our cats are the most affectionate, intelligent, knowing and beautiful. There are no others like them. And this is how we feel about Michaella.



It was in 1980, that Margaret Howe introduced us to Joyce Seville who was the owner of the big and beautiful lilac Champion Paradima Nimrod. Joyce's Paradima Albertine was in kitten from Nimrod and we asked if we could reserve a kitten. I asked for the smallest girl and we collected her on my birthday.

Well, she may have been the smallest but she made up for it in personality. We already had Burmese cats but this bundle of trouble soon stamped her mark on our canine and feline family. Her favourite game was to hide and then jump out on anyone passing by. We could not leave open any door, cupboard or drawer without Michaella climbing in. We spent hours looking for her; she would hear us, and at times see us, but there would be no indication as to where she was. When she was found all she would do was purr.

The picture in the 2015 calendar is of her sunbathing in what seemed the most uncomfortable of places, an open window. This was one of her favourite places, though once she did fall out, luckily without harm.

Because she was so small, we had her neutered, and because she was, of course, the most beautiful of cats we thought we would show her. We could not believe the number of rosettes on her pen when we returned to the show hall. Michaella had come first in all her classes. Joyce too was taken back that the smallest of the litter had done so well. We were proud "parents". Michaella went on to win many more rosettes and was made up to Premier. Our showing days stopped when we moved to Wiltshire and opened the Boarding Cattery. And our Town Cats became Country Cats.

Unfortunately, Michaella's love of climbing into small spaces and hiding was her down fall. The door to the tumble dryer was left open, it was warm and cosy and no one noticed. I can say no more. She brought so much into our lives and gave so much that even now I cry as I write this.



Win Tadd Website Report

November 2014

The past year has been a huge learning curve for me as I know very little about website development and what I have gleaned is thanks to the patience of Phil Smith.

One major glitch during the past year was the loss of the kitten, stud and breeders' list facility which was frustrating for all concerned. Again it was thanks to hours of work by Phil that this was rectified.

The website is now hosted on a new server and so far this has worked very well.

I would be pleased to hear from members of any developments they would like to see in relation to the website as I firmly believe that it is the members' site. Finally, I would like to formally record my thanks to Phil Smith who still makes a huge contribution to the smooth operation of the website and without whose help I, for one, would be lost!

Rescue and Rehoming

So many of you generously support our Welfare Fund by your donations but you may not always know how we spend your money and where it goes. Many of our cats need to stay in a cattery before they can go to their new homes and complicated travel arrangements need to be made. Vet bills seem ever increasing and cats may need treatment or inoculations. If a cat with a chronic medical condition is rehomed those bills may have to be paid for years to come. Vet fees are always at the top of our expenditure list. Numerous phone calls to different people can take hours and often heart rending tales have to be listened to. It is thanks to the work of Yvonne Bruckel - our indefatigable and very experienced "rehome" - and her calm and reliable second-in-command, Claire James (who also looks after the Lost and Found register) that we have already established a reputation for our welfare work. It is hard but very rewarding. And, of course, our chairman, Maureen Smith, who is the main trustee and whose heart has always been in welfare work, keeps a close and understanding eye on it all.

The following letter from Frances and Ian Brook says it all.....

Sam and Rosie

We adopted Sam and Dinkie (who we call Rosie) two years ago. Sam is a lilac neutered male of about 5 yrs old and Rosie is a chocolate female a year or so older. We adopted them through Yvonne Bruckel in October 2012. She previously helped us to adopt two nine-year olds from Haywards Heath area some years ago, who were wonderful.

Sam and Rosie were in a cattery in Thornbury after their owner had to go into residential care and her friend (and Burmese cat owner) Liz Saunders got in touch with the Burmese Cat Association.



They are really beautiful animals in very good health and we love them dearly. Despite our best efforts, it has taken ages for Sam to allow us to stroke him which he now enjoys ecstatically in certain places in the house. He's a great character. Pretty little Rosie is more of a challenge and is still very scared of people. We can occasionally stroke her in her bed. Both shy away and bolt if we reach down to stroke them and we wonder what happened in their past. Both of them are more scared of people than of our dog who has been wonderful with them. They really love going out of doors, have caught mice- even a rat! - and play with strings and toys sometimes.

So that's the score. We are patiently hoping that they will learn that they can trust us but I wonder sometimes.

Please send greetings to Liz Saunders and Yvonne Bruckel, tell them our news and thank them for sending us Sam and Rosie.

Frances and Ian Brook

AGM AT LYNEHAM 8TH NOVEMBER 2014

This is an abridged version of the meeting. Full Minutes and appropriate reports are available from the Secretary.

Maureen welcomed members to the AGM at Lyneham and reported that as there had been no applicants to join the Committee she and Elisabeth Amies would be returned unopposed and Elisabeth would be Vice-Chairman for the next year. Cecilia Davies has resigned as Treasurer and was thanked for all the work she had done. She takes our good wishes for the future. Now that affiliation to the GCCF has been confirmed Claire Lewis has been co-opted and has agreed to be a delegate at the Breed Advisory Committee meetings. Maureen said ideally five delegates would be needed to attend these meetings, probably in Nottingham, and agreed to contact members to see if anyone was interested in becoming one.

Holding our own show was now possible and Maureen said she had been approached by the Burmese Cat Society to join them next year. We would benefit from their experience and having an able show manager. The matter and the timing was discussed at length and Maureen agreed to undertake costing for both a joint and a back to back show and to consult members before anything definite was decided.

The success of our campaign to have the question of Asian Variants being shown in Burmese classes withdrawn from the GCCF agenda was discussed at length. The wide support received via our website and Facebook had been a significant contribution. Members questioned why Asian Variants could not be shown in their own or foreign section of shows. A discussion followed about the small Burmese gene pool. The possibility of using self coloured British Blacks and Reds was discussed although, as they can have different blood types, they would need to be tested. Another unknown is just how many stud owners there are in this country as many are not registered breeders.

The Association has been contacted by the World Wide European Society who had voted overwhelmingly not to use American Burmese for breeding. This was good news and Maureen went on to say Claire Lovell was willing to talk to anyone contemplating the import of a European Burmese because of the midline and stomach defects. It was unfortunate the ban had been lifted before the defects were known about. Claire's article will be included in the newsletter.

Because the May 2014 Tea Party lost money a discussion was held about how to persuade more members to attend. A suggestion was made that it be held further to the south-west.

Members were told that the subscription would not be raised next year but that an increase in 2016 would be necessary.

Finally the meeting ended with Maureen saying the Welfare Fund stood at £3991.95. and the Association account at £3460.31. She thanked everyone for attending and said the next AGM would be on 14th November 2015. Thanks were given for lunch and £88 was raised from the raffle.



The following article by Claire Lovell is important for all Burmese breeders. If you wish to know more please contact Claire at cats@kennbury.co.uk We apologise if you find the photographs distressing.

DIAGNOSTIC RESEARCH AND TESTING IN BURMESE AND ASIANS

EUROPEAN MIDLINE DEFECT

Many of you will breed Burmese alongside your Asians and will have been notified about the new genetic test for the American Burmese Head Defect. The import ban on European Burmese has now been lifted to increase the gene pool but will also leave us vulnerable to certain genetic problems, the most worrying of these being the European Midline Defect. Langford have again risen to the challenge and preliminary research has been undertaken.

Below is the latest information from Langford -

About the congenital defect -

The Burmese head defect (craniofacial) mutation affects the development of the head and facial areas in affected cats. The mutation is recessive, meaning that two copies are required for the head defect to develop. This genotype is incompatible with life and kittens are still born. Cats with one copy of the mutation do not have the head defect but may have a shortened facial structure (brachycephaly) and can pass the mutation to their offspring.

The Burmese head defect mutation is common in lines of Burmese in the United States (personal communication Prof L Lyons). A recent study undertaken by Dr Chris Helps at Langford Veterinary Services has shown the prevalence of the head defect mutation in approximately 800 European and UK Burmese was around 1%. No carriers were found in the UK Burmese.

Please note: the Burmese head defect genetic test detects the recently identified mutation found in lines of Burmese in the USA and, as mentioned above, in a low percentage of European Burmese cats that are probably related to cats in the USA. A similar congenital defect (Midline Defect) has been reported in lines of European Burmese. We have recently shown that this defect is not caused by the mutation that causes the Burmese head defect. Currently it is not possible to genetically test for the Midline Defect found in European Burmese.



BCA members will be old hands at providing DNA samples, thanks to your participation we now have a test for Hypokalaemia. If you have fellow breeders on the Continent or in the UK that have encountered these problems can we ask you once again to obtain mouth swabs from parents and to contact Langford (catgenetics@langfordvets.co.uk) to arrange for tissue samples to be utilised from any affected kittens. These are recessive traits so family swabs will also be of benefit.

Details and a short video of how to collect a DNA sample can be viewed at the link below (all information gathered is completely confidential).

www.langfordvets.co.uk/diagnostic-laboratories/diagnostic-laboratories/general-info-breeders/how-swab-your-cat

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MARMITE'S MEWS-INGS

Hello everyone, it's your mate Marmite again!
Yes, now that holidays are all finished, Mum's started going on about Christmas which set me off mews-ing again.

Now, I wrote to you all a couple of years ago warning you of the dangers of all the things that turn up at this time of year, but, My Whiskers! there are a few other happenings that I find strange so I thought I'd share a couple of them with you.

First of all, there is the great card mystery. Now, these apparently innocent things come in packs and seem to get bought by Mum in two stages. She buys some at the beginning of the year and puts them away then, later on, after the end of the summer, she buys more and puts them away as well. My Claws! are those cards naughty or what? As soon as her back is turned, those bad cards go and hide and when she needs them she can't find them anywhere. They have legged it, scarpered, gone out to play or something. Mum spends ages trying to find them, but the good thing is that by the time the cards are tracked down, she has

found all the things that she, Dad, THE DOG and I have lost during the year. Once she's got them in her hands she splits the little horrors up so that they aren't in packs any more in the hope that it is harder for them to get away in big numbers. Next she spreads the cards all out on the table and sits there writing her and Dad's name on each one. Then she puts a paper coat on them and writes on that as well. My Ears! Am I in trouble if I try to help once the cards are out of their packs? I am only trying to keep them in order, but Mum does not agree. She thinks that the odd nip, tap or chew is not being helpful at all. Because no-one is keeping them in hand - or paw as the case may be - the next thing that happens is that the whole lot of cards run away. My Tail! I don't know when or how they go, or where they go to, but one day they are there and the next there is no sign of them. Every last card has just disappeared overnight and Mum had thought they were safer not in packs. Then, amazingly, just when you think it is bye-bye cards, they start coming back through the letterbox. I suppose they must get cold outside in just paper coats as they are not very well nourished cards and very thin, so they go to a centre, like the vets, where they get scanned and sent back home. I am surprised that Mum doesn't have to go and fetch them, but it may be that as they are so thin cards can get through the letterbox whereas pets can't. It makes me glad that I am microchipped as well.

Another thing that confuses me is presents. These are bought by Mum and Dad separately but instead of showing them to each other - well maybe not every handbag gets shown to Dad - the presents are hidden. Later on Mum and Dad go and find them again - well, most of them - and wrap them in pretty paper before putting them under the Christmas tree. Now at this stage, if THE DOG or I go and rip the paper off, we are in Serious Trouble. Yet, My Paws! just a few days later, it is ok for Mum and Dad to get them and tear all the paper off. I just look on with disapproval until there is a present for me, but THE DOG "helps" - if dogs can - and gets to rip up loads of paper. THE DOG is also allowed to open her own presents, but not me! And even if I am, it is too hard to get the paper off! Not fair!

Well, folks, you have a mews about that and if it makes any sense to you, please let me know.

There are other strange happenings, like the overgrown, featherless sparrow that is suddenly the best food in the world, and Mum singing all the time about shepherds, kings, cradles and holly - with or without drink having been taken - but My Claws! (not Santa) we'll leave that for another year.

Paws up, Burmese!

Your mate, Marmite. . .

Sharon Neal

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This year I'm just going to give everyone kittens