

SHOW REPORT – NORTHERN BIRMAN CAT CLUB – 8TH APRIL 2017

By Carol Walker

It hardly seemed like 12 months since my last visit to this wonderfully warm and welcoming show yet here I was, once more, enjoying the breath-taking scenery of the Woodhead Pass on my way across from Lancashire to Yorkshire, this time to the Club's new venue at, coincidentally, "The Venue", in Stocksbridge. Unfortunately, being the sole 2 legged occupant of the car and, therefore, the driver, my ability to take in and enjoy the amazing views of hills, woods, rolling countryside, rivers and lakes, was restricted to passing images but I thoroughly enjoyed what I could see, albeit much of it semi-shrouded in early morning mist. This really is THE most picturesque journey to and from any cat show on my calendar! After such a lovely journey (apart from the "singing" of one of my 4 legged companions lol) could the rest of the day and the show itself possibly compare? The answer was, as always, a resounding YES! From the minute you enter hall you are enveloped in a warm Yorkshire welcome (and I say that as a Lancastrian!) from everyone connected to the Club in even the slightest way, from the venue staff themselves who fell over themselves to be helpful, to the committee and workers of the Club, to the vets, to its exhibitors, to the stallholders, some of whom had even provided freebies, everyone seemed in the brightest of moods and determined to make the day as pleasant, friendly and enjoyable as possible. Vetting in envelopes were handed out with a cheery greeting, the vets carried out brief and gentle, but at the same time thorough, examinations, the hall was buzzing with eager anticipation and show manager, Lynda Ashmore and her team were on hand to make sure all ran smoothly.

The new venue is brilliant, easy to find and with ample free parking, it boasts two large dining/bar areas containing a mixture of seating for all needs, including some very well worn but oh so comfortable leather sofas, the wear being testament to the comfort; the catering, carried out I believe by the centre's volunteers, was appetising and reasonably priced, the "full English" was superb and plentiful, the sandwiches at lunch were fresh and tasty and the chocolate cake with fresh cream was moist and simply irresistible! The main hall held only the pens for the cats, with the stage accommodating the workers, whilst the reception area and additional hall held a wide variety of stalls catering for most needs including the Club's enormous chocolate tombola. The show itself was everything you would expect from a show manager of Lynda's calibre, and more. The pens were heaving with goody bags – food, treats, toys and a Hi Life play tent for the cats, chocolate eggs and lollipops for their slaves and we were each given a Northern Birman Cat Club pen with our vetting in envelopes. The BIS winners needed a truck for their prizes and the rosettes were lovely and given for every single class, no miscellaneous prize cards here, the exhibition pen rosettes were personalized with the cats' titles and names and the BOV/BIS rosettes were simply amazing - the two (pedigree and household pet) Overall Best in Show ones being, quite literally, dinner plate sized and, in the case of the HP winner especially, larger than some of the winners themselves! And on top of that the Club ran a photograph competition and an Easter bonnet competition, both judged by the local Mayor, who very kindly came along to join in the fun, and with the bonnet wearers being paraded around the edge of the hall during the afternoon so that everyone could admire the weird and wonderful creations. Not a dull moment throughout the whole day!

Lynda and her band of willing helpers are to be hugely congratulated on a bumper entry of 79 cats – 3 on exhibition, 42 pedigrees and 34 household pets - and on yet another wonderful day out, an

efficiently and smoothly run and managed show and an overall atmosphere of warmth and friendliness, to which all the exhibitors contributed 100% as well, with an attitude of support, encouragement and good sportsmanship throughout and a general willingness to answer the visiting public's questions happily and in depth. In fact the only "criticism" about this show is that it seems to go far too quickly and all too soon it is time to pack up and go home and live on the memories until the same time next year. To anyone thinking of giving this one a try in 2018 I would say wholeheartedly, DO, and to anyone who has not already voted in the GCCF annual awards, where the show is one of the nominations for Best Show, I would say VOTE, they don't come much better than this!!!!