

TONKINESE BREED CLUB

tonkinfo

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£1 (free to members)



Allegra Loch's Gr Pr Tonkinini Bojangles (MN), President's Choice at the December Virtual show

*Please join us at 2pm on April 24 at our online AGM. It won't take long and it will be a great opportunity to meet up with other Tonkinese owners and find out more about what the Club does. We can also issue an invitation that we never could for an in-person AGM: BRING YOUR CAT ALONG!
AGM information will be circulated later with the link to join us.*

If you are experiencing any difficulty looking after your cat during the pandemic please contact any of the club committee for information about support, either temporary or permanent.

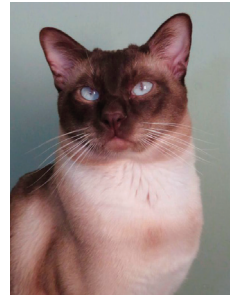
Winners of the December Virtual Show, Breed Support Classes



Overall BCR:
Tonkinini Pure Magic, TOS c 31,
MN. Owner: Annette Wright



Overall TCR:
Tallica Prince Charming, TOS n 32,
MN. Owner: Lorraine Phillips



Overall CPP:
GrCh Pahabbay Galactic Comet, TOS
b 33, M. Owner: Julie Singleton

TONKINESE BREED CLUB

President—Mrs Linda Vousden

Vice-President—Dr Sarah Caney BVSc PhD DSAM MRCVS

OFFICERS and COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman: Dr Julia Craig-McFeely
Tel: 01865 241323 julia.cmcf@gmail.com

Vice-Chairman: Mrs Jo Sturgess

Hon. Secretary and Webmaster: Mrs Linda Vousden
Lansdale, 12 Robinhood Lane, Winnersh, Berks RG41 5LX
Tel: (0118) 9619444 tbc.uk@ntlworld.com

Hon. Treasurer and Membership Secretary: Mr Mike Vousden
Lansdale, 12 Robin Hood Lane, Winnersh, Berks. RG41 5LX
Tel: (0118) 9619444 michael.vousden@btconnect.com

Committee Members

Mr Gerry Smith
Mrs Lizzi Smith
Mr Mike Smith

Delegate to GCCF Council and Tonkinfo Editor
[Julia Craig-McFeely julia.cmcf@gmail.com](mailto:julia.cmcf@gmail.com)

WELFARE

Mrs Valerie Chapple val.chapp@btinternet.com

HONORARY SECRETARY'S REPORT

Linda Vousden

Hello everyone, I hope this finds you well and still in good spirits. Last year, and so far this year has been one of such contrasts depending upon our individual situations – who would have bothered to think that the simple concept of going to work would be such a grounding part of our lives. I certainly never thought I would walk into a bank with a mask on! Much of 2020 for me was taken up with our web shows and raising a litter of kittens

(bliss). The Committee continued to meet (online) and watch out for the Club, not that there is much to be done at present.

I shan't take up any more space in Tonkinfo, but I do want to thank everyone who took part in the December web show, I had a wonderful time looking at all the photos (416 of them in the show!) – links below.

Cheers and keep well, *Linda*

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

It's that time of year again and we would love to welcome you all back again. If you are not sure whether you are due to renew this year (many members pay for more than one year at a time) just take a look on the TBC web site page "Have I Renewed Yet?":

www.tonkinese.info/have-i-renewed-yet.html

The page will list your post code and the last year for which you have paid your membership fee. If you are due to renew in 2021 you can do so very easily via this link:

www.tonkinese.info/subscription-renewal.html

On the page use either:

Option A (download and post a subscription renewal form with your fee); or

Option B (pay online via Paypal, which will also allow you to pay by card if you don't have a Paypal account). *If you use Option B please MAKE SURE we have Your name as a reference so that we can identify the payment correctly.*

VIRTUAL SHOW(S)

Many of you have been encouraged by your success in one or both of the two Club Virtual Shows to think about trying a 'real' show, and I hope you will hang on to that impulse as Tonkinese seem to love a day of being admired!

The GCCF Show season for 2020-2021 has been cancelled, and resumption of real shows is still up in the air although the question is revisited at each GCCF Board meeting. I think the hope is that by the middle of the summer they may be able to re-start, but as everyone knows, right now nobody can count on anything, so we just wait.

In the meantime the two virtual shows are

still accessible online and provide a wonderful spectrum of pictures of the breed. If you're a judge you will have the chance to see more Tonkinese here than you would ever see anywhere else: look out particularly for the 'Breed Support' class in the December show, where the cats were specially posed to give you face-on, profile and full-body pictures

The April web show can be seen here:

<https://tonkinesebc-webshow.weebly.com/>

And December's show here:

<https://tbcwebshow-dec2020.weebly.com/>

The shows will remain available at these URLs for the moment so you have plenty of time to see them.

www.tonkinese.info

tonkinfo

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Julia Craig-McFeely

The last year has seen us appreciating our pets far more than ever before. I do worry though about how those cats who have got so used to us being around all the time will cope when we go back to old routines. Spare a thought for helping that transition if you are going back to work.

I'm sorry to say that while the pandemic has brought out the best in some people, it has also brought out the worst in others. The number of incidents of scams involving pets, particularly kittens, has grown enormously: people have put down deposits on kittens that don't exist, with potential owners told they couldn't visit to see kittens because of COVID restrictions. Some pet-sales websites are trying to combat this by offering a service to hold deposits. If someone asks you for a deposit please consider this. Kittens have also been sold under age on the pretext that they can't be vaccinated because of COVID. General pet fraud is on the rise too, with kittens as well as puppies now being brought in from Eastern Europe and sold with fake or forged papers. I'm glad to say that at the time of writing these things don't seem to have found their way into the Tonkinese, but we are ever vigilant. There are other problems too: there has been a big upsurge in demand for kittens, and it is clear that some of that is down to pandemic living; many kittens bought to entertain people bored during lockdown will end up in rescue centres when their owners no longer have to spend most of their time in their houses. Fortunately most breeders are incredibly careful about vetting potential new homes, but do please be aware of cats of any breed who may be distressed or neglected because they have been unwisely sold to unsuitable homes. Each breed has a welfare system run through its breed clubs, and you can contact one of the clubs catering to that breed if you have concerns.

I'm glad to say that the last year, despite being one of exceptional difficulty for so

many, has seen four more people taking part in our 'New Breeder Day' with a view to becoming breeders. This is run on behalf of both Tonkinese clubs and supported by the Breed Advisory Committee. It is open to anyone interested in breeding Tonkinese and takes place online, a format that seems to work quite well for us as we are all getting better at managing in this medium. The Breeder Day is not just for people who already know they want to breed. Sometimes that decision can't be made until you know more, so this is a chance to sample what is involved and give you enough information to make an informed decision about whether breeding is something you would like to try. If you would like to attend one of these days, they usually run over two sessions on the same day: 10:30–13:00 and 14:00–15:30, date decided for the convenience of the participants. At 15:30 we are joined by a group of breeders who answer questions and can talk a bit about their own experience of breeding, and particularly about having their first litter. If you are interested, or even just a bit nosy about it all, please contact the club or me to express your interest, and we will contact you when we are fixing dates for our next Breeder Day.

I would like to say a particular thank you to our Secretary, Linda, who has put *many, many* hours into designing and managing our two online shows – other clubs are already copying us, but we were the first! This is a huge amount of work, as every image uploaded has to be processed by hand. Linda tells me there were over 300 pictures in the first show and more than 400 in the second. The huge entries for some classes are a testament to that. She has bravely agreed to do it again (despite saying 'never again' after both!) and will circulate information about dates to all members. The next virtual show will be in the Summer, with the hope that we can hold a real show in December.

ENTERING THE ONLINE SHOW

Mary Watters

Until the development of the digital camera in the 1990's, animal photography was mainly a job for the professional. Specialist cameras, plenty of reels of film, and very likely an assistant were all needed to capture the perfect shot. The amateur usually attributed any success they had to that elusive, and as yet unmentioned quality – luck. The twenty first century has brought us the almost ubiquitous camera feature on smart phones, and social media. Recording and sharing real time events is done almost without thought (here I hasten to add that I am ignoring techniques that adapt photographs, like airbrushing!) However, in losing formality, this new immediacy brings the danger of neglecting technique.

When the first national lockdown brought dark days, insecurity and a certain amount of fear, the idea for a Tonkinese Virtual Show was born. Under normal conditions the cats themselves are judged on temperament, pattern and physical shape. Given the challenging times, photographs had to suffice. Wonderful as a diversion, it yet presented a curious anomaly. How could one adhere to general show guidelines and capture the essence of the Tonkinese in two-dimensional form? For all its ability to record an image, how did a photograph convey personality? How did it convey the fine, soft, silky fur and the prized eye colour, so dependent upon mood and lighting? The first show dealt with this rather cleverly. The Open Classes concentrated on a view of the head and separate classes judged eye colour and coat pattern. A variety of Miscellaneous Classes allowed (me, certainly) a search through the alarmingly numerous pictures taken of our beloved pets to find ones fitting for categories that celebrated the mischief, fun and beauty of these captivating little cats.

By now we have all had the opportunity to see and enjoy the results of this first Show. How respectfully the entrants followed the

instructions for the Open Classes – and what entertainment was had in viewing the interpretations of the Miscellaneous categories. What a happy marriage of formality and impulsivity shone through the submissions!

With growing confidence in the format (and no doubt a huge sigh at the continued necessity for it) the second Web Show introduced a new challenge. The Tonkinese Breed Support Class, seeking to school new judges in their craft. For this class three photos were required of the same cat – head, showing full face and eye colour; head in profile, showing nose break and chin; full body standing, showing cat's full coat pattern. Helpfully, a comprehensive guide to showing your cat, including the Tonkinese Scale of Points, duly arrived in the post.

At this point I think we can summarise the key elements needed to take a successful photograph for a cat show as follows:

Accuracy – following the guidelines to display the cat to best advantage.

Clarity – the cat is the focus of the picture.

Patience – waiting to get the right shot.

Technique – lighting is good and the shot is sharply defined.

Luck – a good photograph captures a little magic of the subject.



It is now time to demonstrate how I learned that knowing the theory does not necessarily translate into good practice... or, more precisely, how the theory did not so much as go out of the window, as go off on a very long walk indeed.

Dulcie and Cecilia are my two delightful Tonkinese cats. Just over eighteen months old, they are very typical of the breed. Lively, playful, affectionate, companionable, and err, wilful.

On the ill-fated Wednesday afternoon that I chose to select and take the photographs, I had been working on the computer for some time.

After waiting patiently for me to play with them, Dulcie and Cecilia had dozed off. When I arose, with the list of what to do for the Tonkinese Breed Support Class in my hand, they bounded into action, clearly thinking that playtime had arrived.

Instead, they were to be disappointed. Whilst they jumped around my legs, playing hide and seek and encouraging me to join in, I scanned through the pictures on my phone to find suitable head views. Cecilia's picture was probably not clear enough, and, upon reflection, the fact that she was playing with a toy corn on the cob distracted somewhat from the aim to show 'head and eye colour'.

In Dulcie's picture she was giving her "I am not amused" hard stare at the camera, which, cute though it appeared to me, very likely sent a less than accurate message about her temperament. But I had the head shots! What, I ask myself now, of the 'take your time' advice, and the 'accuracy – display your cat to best advantage' points that I thought I knew?

Consulting the list once again, I saw that "head in profile" was next. (Definitely this

was mistake number two, for photography is not the same as checking the items on a shopping list.) Again, I quickly found a previously taken picture of Cecilia. For Dulcie, I needed to take a picture. I scooped her up and

placed her on a box, beside a wall, where I thought her profile would show quite clearly. Then I went to get my mobile phone.

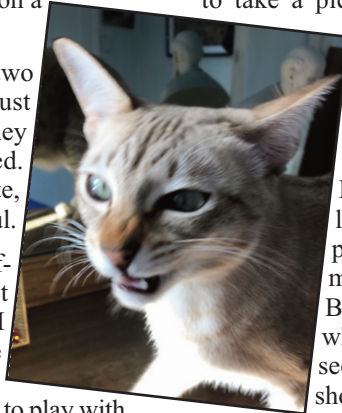
Dulcie bounced off and followed me. I returned, and placed her on the box once more. I prepared the camera. But I had neglected Cecilia, who jumped up beside her to see what she was doing and the shot blurred. I removed Cecilia,

and tried again. Undeterred, Cecilia jumped up on my back and I wobbled. I put Cecilia out of the room and tried one final time. Cecilia started scratching at the door and Dulcie stared towards it. Profile visible! Photo taken! A masterclass in how to take a picture? Not at all!

Last was the "full body standing" shot, requiring a view of the cat's full coat pattern.

This one was new for me, and I needed to take a picture of both Dulcie and Cecilia. By this time, I am

ashamed to admit, I was feeling rather stressed. (I didn't put this on the list, but obviously if you are not feeling relaxed then this affects your ability to take a good picture). I popped Dulcie on the box once again, and she looked at me, not really knowing what I wanted her to do. I prepared the camera. At the exact moment I took the shot a drill sounded sharply from my neighbour's house, where building work was in progress, but I thought it had stopped for the rest of



the day. It gave us both a nasty shock, and, looking now at the picture, I see this clearly in Dulcie's eyes. Her body is rounded, preparing to move backwards and at no point is her "back rising gently from shoulders to rump" as it should. Even her tail is not fully in the picture. Bad owner! Cecilia is braver by nature, and, as the drill sounded again, she jumped up on the bed. Quick as a flash I pressed the button and recorded the picture. Cecilia's ears are very alert, her face is turned to the noise. In my mind it was a good picture of her, but a bed is soft and her back legs sank into the mattress. Once again the "gently rising back" is missing. Disaster!

Of course I should have abandoned the pictures and tried again later, but I didn't. I was so relieved to have caught a picture that showed a side view that I got them ready to send off at once. The subjects of the pictures were relieved too, and disappeared as quick as a flash.

Until these events, I had thought myself passably adept at taking photographs. I now see that I have been an instinctive photographer – catching a chance moment, realising



that it would make a good picture and being grateful that it turned out well.

The Tonkinese Virtual and Web Shows have shown me the error of my ways. They have also cemented in my mind the greatest of respect for animal photographers, and for the judges, who all have such a lot to consider.

Should a third Virtual Show need to be proposed I shall not be precipitate, and predict my immediate improvement – but I promise to take my time, try my best and – most important of all - ensure that my cats and I enjoy the experience.

If, as we all devoutly hope, we can return to normal, then there is even a good chance that my photograph albums will benefit!

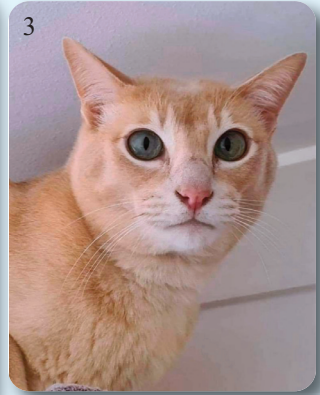


Cecilia, the final shot

TBC KITTEN LIST

There are so many enquiries for Tonkinese kittens these days that they are virtually all gone before they get to the kitten list. However, the list is still a valuable resource for potential owners seeking breeders. If you are not already on the TBC Breeders List do let the Club Secretary know.

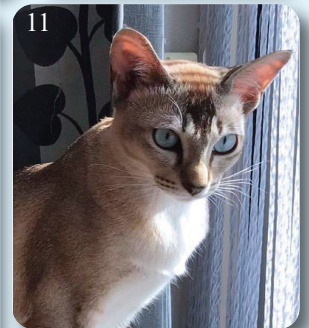
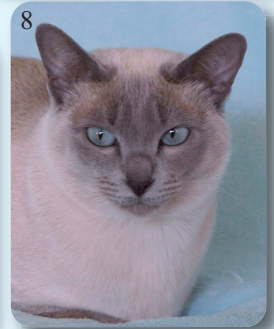
Furthermore, instead of having just names and contact details it would be nice to see a page of more picturesque adverts so why not send me a breeder card (about the size of a standard business card) or a suitable photo to go with your entry? Just email it to me at tbc.uk@ntlworld.com. I'll let you know if we can enclose it as it is or whether it may need tweaking. Don't forget the listing is free to Club members.

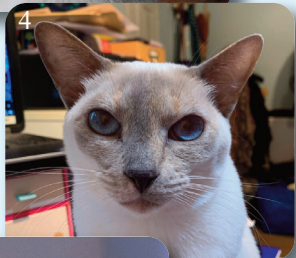
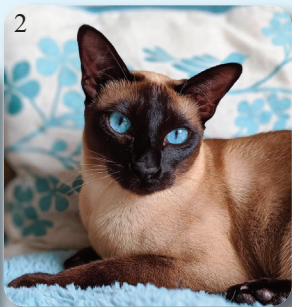
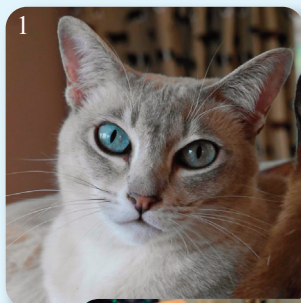


From the December Virtual Show

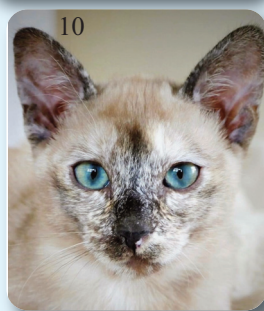
Open Class winners:

- 1 Chorus Dulciana (Mary Watters)
- 2 Tonkinini Pure Magic (Annette Wright)
- 3 Tonkinini Trickster (Annette Wright)
- 4 Chorus Cecilia (Mary Watters)
- 5 Chocolatedot Limerick (Sam Marking)
- 6 Tonkinini Coconut Ice (Sally Atkinson)
- 7 Ch&GrPr Taleh Ko Samui (Allegra Loch)
- 8 Ch&IGrPr Lilyput Duchess Kate (Lorraine Phillips)
- 9 Tonkinini Evening Star (Raina Vorren)
- 10 Tonkinini Misty Morning (Allegra Loch)
- 11 Lavandablu Giulia Gaiya (Ria Pierlot)





More Open Class winners:
 1 VonLenne Aqua Magica (Lorraine Phillips)
 2 Kraytay Jasmine (Beth Noble)
 3 Adsepbu Bustopher Jones (Ulla Korterman)
 4 GrCh&ImpGrPr Lilyput Parma Violets (Lorraine Phillips)
 5 Tonkyway Zorria (Julie Singleton)
 6 Rameses Perceval (Laura Hill & David White)
 7 Rameses Tobermory (Alexandra Lloyd)
 8 GrPr Tonkinini Bojangles (Allegra Loch)
 9 Rameses Blancheflor (Anna Gregorek)
 10 Tonkinini Dancing Queen (Allegra Loch)
 11 Tonkinini Uptown Girl (Annette Wright)
 12 Caitlin van Zuylenhove (Yvette Bodaar)
 13 Mymystic Malko (Asha Heys-Limonard)



FIRST TIME AT A CAT SHOW

Sarah Brooke

Our last 'real world' show was in December 2019, which seems an improbably long time ago now. Several of the 'novice' exhibitors from that show very kindly test-drove a guide for new exhibitors that has evolved with their help, and is now available from the Club. You have probably received one in a recent mailing. Of course, the minute it went into print we no longer had shows, and there is some question about whether the format might have to change in the future. We decided though to go ahead and circulate the information anyway, since the show scene isn't likely to change a lot and pretty much all of the information will remain pertinent. Here is one person's experience of that 'real' show. Ed.

I've enjoyed attending a few cat shows in the past, meeting some lovely people, who seem as potty about cats as I am and also meeting the breeders of my two Tonkinese boys. I'd never considered exhibiting my own cats, partly as I've felt showing is somehow mainly for breeders, and partly because I wouldn't describe either of my two as show types, i.e. they're not perfect, except to me of course!

Another reason that had put me off was the complexity of the show schedule and entry form, but Julia Craig McFeely has written an excellent *Comprehensive Guide to Showing Your Cat at a GCCF Show*, which certainly helped demystify the process. She was looking for volunteers to 'road test' her draft version and wanted complete beginners. As she had bred one of my boys I offered to have a go, which was how I came to be sitting in Bracknell Leisure Centre car park on a dark December morning last year, wondering how on earth I was going to move my two cats and the rest of the show paraphernalia from my car into the hall, on my own.

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE
TO SHOWING YOUR CAT
AT A GCCF SHOW
WITH DETAILS FOR TONKINESE



I'd transferred the boys out of their single carrier (they like to travel together) into separate but bulky plastic carriers (the smaller wire ones seem much better for this) and decided to carry them both in with their vaccination cards for the vetting in process, then come back for the rest of the gear, leaving them in the hall. I watched enviously as experienced folk wheeled numerous crates of cats on trolleys but I managed to reach the hall with my two heavy lads, one on each side. I was glad I'd made the effort to be early as the vetting in queue wasn't too long at that stage (a little after after 8am).

To my great relief, Julia appeared at my side in the queue, welcoming me with a beginner's blue cap provided by the Club to put on (it might seem a bit daft but I felt a bit more confident wearing it!), and an armload of prewashed whites and said she'd place them in the pens ready for me. That was an enormous help as I could get the cats settled in their pens then just pop back to the car for food and toys.



'Vetting-in' was straightforward, certificates checked, animals carefully looked over (my vet had checked and clipped the nails of the boys a few days before). A young vet was being guided by a senior vet, so I wasn't the only first timer. The senior vet pointed out Duke's squint and the bobble at the end of Pip's tail of which I was already aware, but which made me feel as though this was definitely going to be about the process and we were extremely unlikely to win any prizes. As I was only there as a tester of the Guide it didn't matter. However, as things turned out, you can never tell!

The senior vet also mentioned Pip's rather thin coat (he was just two then and his coat has matured a lot since) and suggested to the younger vet that this was probably caused by living in an overheated house (he may have assumed I was a breeder). That made me chuckle because actually we live in a very old, draughty house. Vets don't always get everything right!

I found our two pens some distance apart in the hall but with fleece, blankets and bowls ready inside as Julia had promised. Duke was in the Tonkinese section in the middle and Pip in the Pedigree household pet section, on the other side of the hall. Despite reading the *Comprehensive Guide* when I was filling out the entry form, I did need advice about the most suitable classes. The guide is very detailed but an experienced exhibitor can help you select the most appropriate classes out of a huge choice. Julia did know Pip who was put in the Pedigree household pet section because the pip on his tail would disqualify him from the pedigree section.

Lots of people offered help seeing my cap (it did cause some amusement among other exhibitors, but I could see numerous other people wearing them, and that was reassuring), though it wasn't difficult to spot my inexperience: I was walking away from Duke's pen, only to hear horrified voices calling out that he was halfway to freedom. I managed to foil his bid to escape realising I'd not fastened the pen latch properly. The other exhibitors were always kind and offered their help in a friendly, encouraging way. I was shown where to put the bowls (after Duke had managed to knock his water bowl over) and arrange the bedding into a sort of tent shape for the cat to hide in. This didn't work so well for Pip, a wriggly chap, who later managed to get himself completely tangled up in his 'tent', according to the judge's report. The judge or steward had had to disentangle him.

After settling the cats with lots of fuss and cuddles, it was nearly 10am, time to leave before the judging started and to grab a

much needed coffee. I'd had no time to look around the hall where various tables had been put up for the different breed clubs' displays, except to say hi to the TBC club members at their table. I did make a quick note of the most interesting looking craft stalls to look at later. At this show, you could buy pretty much anything you might have forgotten from the various trade stands.

Around lunchtime we were allowed back in, and I went straight to my cats to see how they were. Absolutely fine of course, though they weren't interested in the food I offered. The hall began to fill with visitors and my Tonks were far more curious and interested in people watching. Neither was scared.

The judging hadn't finished and I sympathised with the white coated judges trying to manoeuvre trolleys through ever decreasing gaps to reach the pens, then handling the cats to judge, as the aisles were filling up quickly with members of the public.

Another exhibitor mentioned that some of the results were out and showed me where to find them. A large group crowded in the corridor outside the hall where thin strips of paper were stuck on boards on the walls, with almost illegible numbers on. Someone kindly helped me find the strip relating to one of the classes Duke had entered, and to my great surprise I saw he'd come second! I could hardly believe it but when I found my way back to the pen, a large impressive blue and silver rosette was fastened to the wires.

Throughout the afternoon, results kept appearing and some of the pens were almost covered in rosettes as well as gifts from the various breed clubs, plus additional awards. A nice touch was the TBC's embroidered blue fleece blankets for 'Committee Choice' TBC entries. They've become favourites with my two.

During the busiest times I had trouble getting close to my boys, but I had some nice cat chats and a chance to view some beautiful cats and a lot of breeds and types – there

were about 200 cats there with about 40 of them being Tonkinese. I met a Russian Blue breeder from Glasgow, a regular exhibitor, who'd travelled with her three breeding cats on an overnight sleeper, the cats sleeping on her bed on the train of course. Her journey, by train and taxi, put my own problems in the car park into perspective.

I gave up trying to read the results notices, just too many people doing the same, but towards the end of the afternoon (which despite being on my feet all the time, had flown by), approaching Pip's pen, I noticed a small card pinned to it which read *Best of Colour*.

I'm afraid I hadn't read the whole of Julia's *Guide* before the show, convinced that we wouldn't win anything and I didn't think the results would matter. The lady with the next pen pointed out the card and said 'congratulations, that's really good' to which I must have looked a bit blank. Julia arrived and explained patiently that not only did this mean that Pip had been nominated for the next level, 'Best in Show', he had also received a Master Cat certificate, if Pip achieved two more certificates from different judges, he'd be awarded a Master title. I felt quite overwhelmed! Pip was eyeing us both from the back of the pen with interest and as Julia spoke to him and asked him if he'd enjoyed his day, his eyes held hers and he winked!

Of the two cats, I was surprised that Pip was the more relaxed at the show, which bears out the advice I'd heard that it's best to start showing cats when they're young. Duke, who is five, although a very laid back character, seemed to be missing his regular cuddles and wasn't so relaxed by the end of the day. Pip on the other hand, who can be shy and nervous, particularly with men, including my husband, seemed to have coped really well. One of the judges in Pip's classes was a man who must have handled Pip very sympathetically, because when we got home, Pip went straight to my husband for a cuddle which he's never done before. He might also have been punishing me for taking him out all day!

I did indeed get the warm, fuzzy feeling that Julia said people have on the way home, happy that my cats had been appreciated, and not only because we gained a certificate and several rosettes. It was particularly good to hear some lovely comments about my cats as I stood near the pens, from members of the public. Several remarked on how much Duke, my lilac boy, had reminded them of much loved Siamese cats they'd owned, because of his squint! It was also nice to chat to people who seem interested in the breed and share what I've learned.

A few weeks later I looked up the judges' reports and was relieved to find how gentle and complimentary they were with no obvious criticism, just an appreciation of the whole cat. The only critical comment was from Pip's judge who suggested he should have been shown in a double pen as he's quite a big lad! At the end of Julia's *Guide*, she explains some of the judges' phrases so one can interpret the report, but she also points out the very different views that judges can take of the same cat! Judging is highly subjective.

I enjoyed the experience, particularly meeting so many interesting and enthusiastic cat lovers. Would I do it again? Possibly, though only with Pip who seemed to enjoy himself. Writing this, mid-Covid with all the restrictions about indoor gatherings in place, cat shows seem a long way off in the future. I hope they can continue as they are important for the breed, the breeders and the cat-loving public.



Pip and Duke relaxing after their adventure

URINARY PROBLEMS ?

Allegra Loch

Please always push a vet to test urine fully if a cat is peeing inappropriately, spraying (particularly if neutered), straining to pee or spraying uncharacteristically or over a prolonged period. If your cat is straining to pee or there is obvious blood, get to the vet immediately. Not a moment to lose.

Several years ago now one of our cats (only 2 years old at the time) had started weeing and spraying on my bed and bedhead and, knowing this is commonly a medical symptom of an underlying issue, I took him to the vet to be checked. Sadly, due to absolutely no other symptoms at all, they felt it was solely behavioural. His bladder was empty and he showed no signs of discomfort when checked. We were sent home.

The peeing and spraying persisted and I was not content with the behaviour diagnosis as a sole reason without tests, as I know how critical an issue this can become if indeed there is more to it. After two further vet visits I insisted on full urinalysis tests, which means sending to lab as in-house (dipstick) results won't show bacteria and can often miss other vital information.

Because it wasn't felt to be at all urgent the vet said to get a sample at home. Our boy won't use the special litter provided (being fussy as cats can be) so I held a sterilised dish under him while he peed. And I then syringed it up and delivered to the vet immediately to be sent off. This isn't ideal as the sample can become contaminated but with an empty bladder sometimes it has to suffice. If the cat has a full bladder the vet can extract via cystocentesis.

The results we had were astounding: the test was full of blood (not visible at all to the eye) and our poor boy had an awful infection. Plus the worst part were vast amounts

of potentially life threatening crystals, which can cause blockage. The vet was horrified and embarrassed, but lesson learned for the entire team. Never assume anything.

He was immediately put onto prescription wet food and antibiotics and pain killers. Incidentally after a lot more research I found out that one can add a supplement called **DL methionine** to their current food for breaking down struvite crystals which makes things a lot easier. There are other supplements too that can help with other aspects of the bladder. We were extremely lucky to catch this before a blockage occurred as many cats sadly don't make it. It is an extremely common occurrence in felines and on the rise for a number of reasons.

So I cannot stress enough, for the sake of your cat, please get urinalysis done. Even if you truly feel it's behavioural, there is absolutely no harm checking and everything to gain. If caught early you can save thousands in fees that you could end up paying if the cat ends up with an obstruction. You could discover all manner of issues that your cat won't show you. Equally if not, at least it sets your mind at ease.

Cats are designed in the wild not to show any sign of pain or illness until they simply cannot cope, and usually by that time things are pretty dire. It's a protection mechanism so that predators don't sense anything is wrong or a weakness. Because of this we have to be very astute to spot a problem. Cats are masters at dissembling.

Without analysis you and your vet cannot possibly know what's going on inside. Vets are not psychic! Time and time again I have now helped people in the same situation, and sad to say time and again vets are mislabelling without doing a urinalysis. Either

misdiagnosing as behavioural issues or cystitis. Yes cystitis is common but UTI and crystals are also common. Many times cats are treated for cystitis but the underlying cause isn't cleared so they repeatedly flare up. Don't be fobbed off by 'young cats rarely have UTI or crystals' sadly this means nothing as without checking no one can be sure.

Some of the cases have been caught too late, devastatingly. Others, particularly females, can be in agony for months, even years without help. Females have a wider urethra so are able to pass crystals more easily but can still be in extreme pain.

What many also don't realise is that stress can lead to UTI and crystals too. Even slight anxiety, for example a house move, another cat they don't like as much, a cat seen outside, a christmas tree going up, etc. All these can cause small anxiety levels to alter the pH of the urine. This creates an ideal environment for crystals and bacteria to form. Our cat had anxiety issues surrounding one of our other tonks that had led to all this.

In the best-case scenario all inappropriate urination and spraying can cease, and this is thankfully common. Sadly occasionally when the behaviour is also stress-based some elements may still continue in which case one starts to look into behaviour aids and modifications to home and lifestyle.

Something else that has really been a lifesaver for me in our home is motion triggered cameras focused on the litter trays. In the case of our boy our vet said this had very probably saved his life as we could monitor his litter-tray behaviour very accurately.

We sadly had a flare up this year, although cystitis (full tests done) rather than crystals, but that in itself can lead to a blockage if the inflammation and bladder spasms become extreme. Again it was assumed it was stress-induced although we are not sure of the

exact triggers. However, thanks to my cameras I was able to spot the issue before a blockage occurred. The specialist vet said to me 'how he hasn't yet blocked is a miracle'.

So on top of urinalysis. I would advise that if your cat has any litter issues a motion-detection camera (which can be extremely reasonable: ours were around £30 each on Amazon) can again be an essential. This is something our vet now recommends to all clients with these issues.

I briefly mentioned diet and supplements above. So at this point I will just mention that some people wrongly believe that a wet only or raw diet means the cat will never suffer with crystals, mucoid or equivalent blockages. Devastatingly I know a breeder of Sphynx cats who lost one of her cats to a crystal blockage, who was raw-fed his entire life. A diet with high moisture content undoubtedly helps to flush the system if there are crystals, mucus or debris but again it does not unfortunately mean that these issues won't ever occur, or indeed that levels won't become too high for a cat to pass urine.

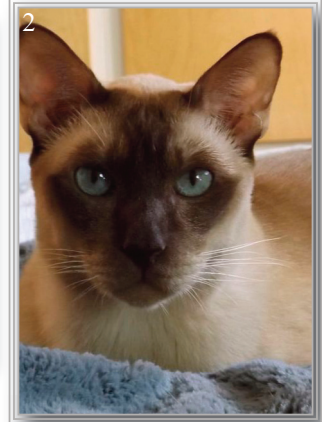
In terms of supplements for a cat with urinary issues. Aside from the crucial vet treatment some that are helpful are:

Cystophan or cystease. These are reported by many to help with bladder inflammation and cystitis flare ups or FLUTD. Glucosamine, which many feel protects the bladder lining, zyklene or yucalm - for stress including bladder stress. Corn silk - natural diuretic that calms inflammation in the bladder and urethra.

D-Mannose. Said to help flush out the urinary system and loosen bacteria on the bladder walls.

The above are well known natural supplements that some feel help. However always be led by your vet in any treatments but always push them for that crucial urinalysis.

Special Awards from the December Virtual Show



Heritage Memorial Awards:

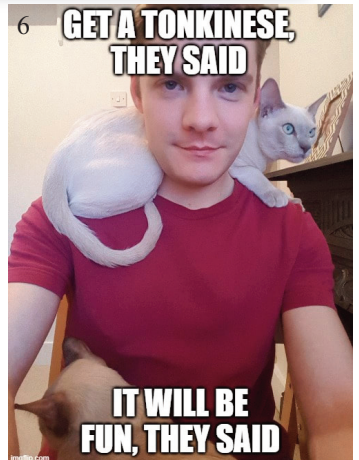
- 1 GrPr Mymystic Mischa & GrPr Mymystic Goldenshadow (Kathy Wilkinson)
- 2 Chocolatedot At Tyrius (Karen & Steve Mould)
- 3 Ch&GrPr Mymystic Pharoah (Linda Vousden)
- 4 GrPr Adinnsh Ricercar (Julia Craig-McFeely)

Chairman's Choice:

- 5 GrCh Phabbay Galactic Comet (Julie Singleton)

Best Overall Meme:

- 6 Rameses Galahad (Laura Hill & David White)



VETERINARY STUDIES

There are a number of interesting studies under way or completed that help us to understand our cats and their health. This is something anyone can help with, so please do take part if you can.

BRISTOL CATS

The 'Bristol Cats' study was a pioneering study investigating cat health, welfare and behaviour because we don't know much about the causes of common behaviour patterns and diseases of cats. It was launched in the Bristol area in June 2010, and rolled out across the UK in March 2011. The study is now closed, but proved to be extremely popular with over 1300 kittens enrolled. All kittens, both non-pedigree and pedigree were included, kittens from the same litter and multiple kittens from the same household. We were particularly keen to hear from owners of stray cats. The results from the study have been published widely (and we continue to publish new data), with the list of publications linked from the project front page here:

bristol.ac.uk/vet-school/research/projects/cats/

How we collected information

Kitten owners completed online or postal questionnaires, initially when their kittens were between 8-16 weeks, then again at 6, 12, and 18 months of age. If further funding becomes available, the study will continue to a lifetime study of the kittens – but kitten owners may leave the study at any point should they wish to. We will then analyse the data to see what extent specific problems (e.g. obesity) are associated with management (e.g. diet, lifestyle) and other factors (e.g. breed).

What are the benefits?

The study aims to identify factors that increase or decrease the risk of common behaviour patterns and diseases of cats, for example, obesity and hyperthyroidism. We hope to provide information that can be used by veterinary practitioners, cat breeders and owners to improve the health and welfare of cats in the future. The study is the cat-equivalent of the 'Children of the 90's study' which has been collecting in-

formation relating to children in the Bristol region since the early 1990's. This study has identified ways to prevent many important conditions such as cot death (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/alspac>). The lives of many children have been saved by those who gave their time and enrolled during the 90's and we hope our study may make a similar difference to cats.

How can I find out more

We have set up both Facebook and Twitter pages which we keep up to date:

www.facebook.com/bristolcats.study
[@BristolCats](https://twitter.com/UniofBristolCat)

Newsletters are produced approx. every 6 months to update owners of study cats about the progress of the research. Links to them can be found on the front page of the project website. Updates are posted regularly.

Can I speak to someone about the study?

If you have any questions or would like to discuss any aspect of the study, then please do not hesitate to get in touch. Although the study is closed, the research is ongoing, and continuing follow-up work is undertaken by members of the veterinary unit. When possible they are happy to talk over the phone, or to answer questions by email. You can also keep an eye on the website for newsletters and updates about the study; to save time, please check the website and newsletters for answers to your questions before making contact.

FREEPOST RSHR-AGRJ-UABZ

Bristol Cats,
 Dr Emily Blackwell,
 University of Bristol
 Langford House,
 Langford,
 BRISTOL, BS40 5DU
 Tel: 0117 394 0850
 email: cat-study@bristol.ac.uk

STRABISMUS STUDY

My name is Arajeane Aravindan, a final year Veterinary Medicine student, and supervised by Dr. Kiterie Faller, a lecturer in Veterinary Neurology at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, University of Edinburgh, UK, I am conducting a study relating to congenital strabismus (crossed eyes/squint) and nystagmus (involuntary rapid flickering of the eyes from side to side) in certain pedigree breeds of cats (see list below).

If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked a number of questions regarding your cat and whether he/she has congenital strabismus and/or nystagmus. If possible for you, you will also be asked to upload a photo and/or video of your cat. These should ideally clearly show the whole of your cat's face so that we can assess eye position and pupil size as shown in the examples above.

The aim of this study is to assess the prevalence of congenital strabismus and nystagmus in various breeds of cats with colourpoint or Burmese-coloured coat patterns and by taking part in this study, you will be helping me and the University better understand the variations, if any, in such a prevalence.

More details regarding the study can be found here: tiny.cc/kyyvdz

I humbly thank you for your support!



DIABETES IN BURMESE

Research into breeds that are the ancestors of the Tonkinese have already been of great benefit to our breed, so we always watch closely any research into our parent breeds that might impact us. Diabetes mellitus is a common disease in cats. Older, overweight and inactive cats are at increased risk, which suggests that diabetes in cats resembles type 2 diabetes in people. Both environmental factors such as obesity and genetic mutations are involved in the mechanism of the disease in people. In fact, diabetes is a highly heritable condition, which is underpinned by the 3-times increased risk of diabetes if one parent is diabetic and 6-times increased risk if both parents are affected.

The predisposition of some cat breeds for diabetes suggests that the disease is likely to be heritable in this species too. The Burmese breed has been identified to be at increased risk in several geographic regions, including the UK, other European countries and Australia. Interestingly, Burmese cats in the USA do not seem to share this predisposition, which might reflect separate breeding programmes, and further supports the assumption that genetic mutations – present in Burmese cats outside the USA - might be involved.

A pedigree analysis of Australian Burmese suggested that a mutation in a single gene (which is yet to be unravelled) might be responsible for this increased susceptibility. If the mutation is present in a gene responsible for the metabolism of glucose, this could explain why Burmese cats “struggle” to handle glucose (so-called reduced glucose tolerance) in comparison to non-pedigree cats, which has been shown in an Australian study.

It is possible that such an abnormality of glucose metabolism caused by a genetic mutation is present in all Burmese cats, but only those exposed to certain environmental factors (e.g., obesity, pancreatitis) will eventually develop the disease. This is an area of research that certainly deserves attention as the identification of such mutations could have a

major impact on the prevention and treatment of diabetes.

Diabetes has a major impact on cats' and owners' quality of life

Unlike in type 2 diabetic people, dietary therapy alone is not effective to treat diabetic cats and insulin injections are inevitably needed. Successful management requires owners to have a good understanding of the disease and actively participate in treatment. As such, diabetes has a major impact on the quality of life of both cats and their owners. Knowledge of genetic mutations involved in the disease will enable identification of animals at risk, earlier recognition of the disease and possibly assist in prevention. This information might also be useful to refine current treatment strategies. For example, people suffering from diabetes caused by certain genetic mutations benefit from treatment with specific oral antidiabetic drugs rather than insulin injections.

At the Royal Veterinary College, alongside providing specialist clinical care for diabetic pets, we are engaged in research to identify diabetes susceptibility genes. Our plan is to use a technique called Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) to investigate the genetic mutations involved in diabetes in Burmese cats.

Owners of diabetic Burmese cats can participate by asking their primary care veterinarian to submit a blood sample collected at a routine diabetes check-up for a free-of-charge fructosamine measurement performed by the RVC's Companion Animal Diabetes Register. Any left-over blood from this sample will then be used for genetic analysis. You can also submit Tonkinese samples.

For more information and to download the sample submission form, please visit <https://www.rvc.ac.uk/research/research-centres-and-facilities/clinical-investigation-centre/projects/investigation-of-genetic-risk-factors-of-diabetes-mellitus-in-european-burmese-cats> or Facebook (www.facebook.com/RVC.Diabetic.Remission.Clinic/).

DYSTOCIA IN PEDIGREE CATS

Dystocia means difficulty in giving birth, which causes a life-threatening emergency to both the queen and her kittens. There have been a few previous studies looking at dystocia in pedigree cats; however, with the breeds changing over time and new breeds being registered, it is important to obtain up-to-date data in order to improve our understanding of dystocia in the cat. A study by Gunn-Moore in 1996 reported the overall prevalence of feline dystocia as ~6%, which varied between breeds. High levels were seen in Siamese-type cats, Persians and Devon Rex cats. A similar study was then performed in the UK in 2006 by Sparkes and others, which found different breeds were more likely to need a Caesarean section (0%-18.5%). A later study, evaluating feline dystocia using an insurance database in Sweden, found dystocia was more common in British Shorthairs, Orientals, Birmans, Ragdolls and the Abyssinians, while being significantly lower in Norwegian Forest Cats, Maine Coons, Persian/Exotics and Cornish Rex cats.

The aim of this survey is to gain a better understanding of breeders' experiences with feline dystocia, and how it has changed over time as new breeds have been introduced. The questionnaire is divided into three parts, where we ask questions i) about your breeding, ii) the birth of your kittens and iii) the litter itself.

By participating in this survey, you are giving us consent to use this data for research, publication and teaching. By submitting your data, you are indicating that you have read the description of the study, are a registered pedigree cat breeder over the age of 18 years old, and that you agree to participate in this survey. This study has been approved by the Human Ethical Review Committee (HERC) at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies. If you have any further questions you can contact us at petra.cerna.mvdr@gmail.com.

<https://tinyurl.com/SurveyCats>

AFTER THE WAIT

A follow-on from our last issue piece about breeders waiting for their litters to arrive...

Taufiq and David...

So, we are now officially Tonkinese breeders! Our journey from pet owners to fully fledged breeders has finally been realised. Apart from our Queen being late giving birth (a few sleepless nights waiting) all went as expected and we became the proud guardians of a healthy litter of six and a very proud mummy cat.

The first few weeks were relatively easy from a human perspective as (thankfully) mum took care of everything; all we had to do was look after mum and weigh the little ones twice a day to check their progress.

Before we knew it mum, an inexperienced Queen wanted to move her litter but didn't know how, and being new breeders ourselves we misinterpreted the signs. This is where our breeder support network became invaluable, sharing their experience and knowledge which helped us recognise the signs and act accordingly.

Once we got past this hurdle the following weeks became a blur as the kittens started to grow and develop their own unique personalities, started toddling towards the sound of our voices, started purring and seeking human contact ... before we knew it they were their own cuddly, loving little individuals at the age of 4-5 weeks.

They grew and gained weight over the following weeks becoming braver and more curious about the world and more adventurous.

At 13 weeks old they were ready to fly the nest to their new homes. We were sad to see them go but also pleased that they were starting their own new chapters and we knew how much joy and love they would be giving their new families. Little did we know that our journey as breeders did not end there: we now receive updates and pictures of all our kittens. It makes us feel so proud and so happy and we can't wait to do it again!

New owners waiting for their kittens to arrive...

Mairi...

I can't seem to concentrate on anything today. My mind keeps wandering off and thinking about kittens.

When I got that initial email saying that there were kittens available, the rush of excitement was something I've not experienced in a very long time. I couldn't believe it! The email had to be read again, more slowly (just to be sure). I had to keep a lid on my joy however, and not gush about it to my children just in case things didn't work out. Covid-19 has certainly made it extremely challenging getting 2 little kittens to the inner Hebrides. We have been through plan A, plan B, plan C AND plan D and back to plan A again (this time with the help of a friendly pilot and the good will of several others, to whom we are hugely grateful). Some days I would wonder if we were doing the right thing as it all seemed to be becoming more and more complicated. The next day (usually after watching a kitten video) I'd be full of excitement again.

I waited until things were looking more likely before telling the children, who are utterly delighted and cannot wait for the days to pass when they can finally have cuddles with cats that actually enjoy the attention.

"How many days now, mum? But that's like 50 billion hours! I can't wait THAT long!"

We watch the videos that Julia posts again and again, trying to work out which of the cuties are ours. It's been lovely getting to watch them on camera in their home and seeing how they interact with each other; seeing how the attention seeker operates and how the more laid back ones chill out in a pile! It feels as though they are part of our lives already.

The days are too long and "arrival day" always

seems so far away. Now I remember what it used to feel like when Christmas Eve stretched on forever! We've been busy preparing; taking down breakables from the temptingly high shelves, fixing latches on cupboard doors, choosing toys, buying "essentials" (like a water fountain drinker because cats instinctively don't want to drink still water in case it's bad. Who knew?) Note to self: stop reading things about cats online, it's getting expensive! There have been a few wobbles along the way: "Mum, what if the kittens don't like me?" "What if they miss their mummy too much?" Lots of reassurance and we're back on track.

Two sleeps to go. A lovely, soft, fluffy bed is waiting for its new occupants. The brand new and delightfully clean litter tray is waiting for it's first deposit! Just one more watch of the kitten videos before bed...

One sleep to go. The weather is still looking fine for tomorrow. The plane should make it. This is ridiculous, I actually have butterflies in my tummy! One more check on "kitten cam" before bed.

Today seems to be three hundred and fifty seven hours long. My partner asks, "At what point along the way did one puppy morph into TWO kittens?!"

Guy and Sue...

15 months ago our Pearl disappeared. We and her uncle Binky were bereft, missing her terribly. We always felt Binky needed a companion and when Julia told us she was planning to breed from Izzy in the Autumn we booked a kitten, if there were enough in the litter. We were in luck; she had eight.

The countdown to making our feline family complete started. Like the guide dog advert we got regular pupdates (or kitdates in this case) and followed the kittens' progress avidly, getting more excited the nearer the date for us to have Poppy came.

Then, LOCKDOWN! Would we be able to

travel to collect Poppy? Or will we have to wait? No worries, Lynda, like a knight in shining armour came to the rescue – delivering kittens the length and breadth of the British Isles. Our delivery date was fixed, and the countdown continued. We told Binky he would soon have company, but he seemed non-plussed by the situation, while we were beside ourselves with anticipation. The day arrived, and the wait was only hours, then minutes.

Hooray, Poppy has arrived, the handover went smoothly and anticipation turned to delight. She was everything we could wish for.

Thank you everyone: we are a whole family again, and even Binky is pleased!

Fiona...

The wait for our Tonkinese kitten has been an exciting experience, mostly due to having regular updates from our wonderful breeder with plenty of photos and videos, allowing us to bond with our bundle of joy since due to Covid regulations we can't actually see her in the flesh! It has been all the more positive due to previously having a very stressful wait for a kitten, from an unregistered breeder with questionable methods. The two experiences could not have been more different, and overall I feel less anxiety about the impending arrival as I know we will have on-going support once she is with us. Of course the wait for a kitten is always tinged with anxiety; after all you are welcoming a new member of your family so you want everything to be perfect! Will she settle with us? Will she like all the attention from our children? Will she like our other kitten? Will we be good enough for her? I suppose my main anxiety is that I want to give our kitten the best possible home, full of love and attention, and sometimes you worry you might not be up to the job! But I'm sure once she is in my arms the anxiety will be forgotten (at least temporarily) and we won't remember life without her.

CONCENTRATED LAUNDRY LIQUID TOXICITY

Following an incident in which 4 Burmese cats suffered serious injury (including one fatality) following contact with accidental spillage of Persil concentrated laundry liquid, I would like to warn cat owners and veterinary surgeons of the danger of all brands of concentrated laundry liquid for pets.

The high concentration of chemicals in these products is extremely irritant to skin and mucous membranes. Skin contact can result in serious burns and if the liquid is ingested it will cause severe irritation of the lining of the gastro-intestinal and respiratory tracts. Cats are especially at risk because of their instinctive tendency to remove any contamination from their fur by licking.

The more costly branded concentrated laundry liquids containing 15-30% anionic detergents are particularly dangerous. Cheaper products containing 5-15% anionic detergents are less dangerous but still irritant.

The UK Veterinary Poisons Information Service (VPIS) has records of 78 cases with follow up involving liquid detergent exposure in cats. Of these 10 cats were asymptomatic, 6.4% of cases were fatal (3 died, 2 euthanized), 4 cats had on-going signs at the time of follow up and 59 cats recovered fully (75.6%). In total, 53% of symptomatic cats had respiratory signs, 50% of symptomatic cats had gastrointestinal signs and 22% of symptomatic cats had dermal signs.

If you suspect your cat has had contact with such a product contact your vet immediately. If they are unaware of the effects of the products show them this article and ask that they contact VPIS who provide a 24 hour service to help veterinary surgeons manage poisoning cases.

VPIS advice for management of exposure in a cat or dog would be prompt and thorough decontamination. Contaminated skin should be washed in lukewarm running water for up to 30 minutes. A buster type collar should be considered to prevent self grooming. It would also be important to check for any ocular exposure. Any skin or eye irritation or burns should be treated supportively. There is also the risk of respiratory problems as these products can cause chemical pneumonitis if in contact with lung tissue. This is probably most

likely if the patient vomits, as the vomitus can be frothy and foamy and easily inhaled. Treatment is entirely symptomatic and supportive.

Although these are good products when used correctly please be aware of the danger to pets as well as children and take great care to store them safely. Always mop up any spillages immediately, screw bottle cap on tightly and wipe any excess liquid from the outside of the bottle. Never allow your cat to play with a liquid tab as they are easily pierced by sharp feline teeth. Do not leave bottles on a work top where your cat can knock it on the floor as bottles/lids can split. If your cat is clever at opening cupboards consider fitting a child proof catch.

Please also remember that many other household products are also irritant/toxic to cats. Common examples are bleach products, shower cleaner, oven cleaner and lime scale remover. Most of these products are obviously irritant as they emit an unpleasant vapour which tends to warn the user of the potential danger. The seemingly innocuous nature of laundry liquid which has a pleasant smell does not alert the user to its irritant properties.

Always read the safety information on the packaging. Most irritant products carry the standard warning logo of a black cross on an orange rectangle. Unfortunately this is not compulsory and some well known brands of concentrated laundry liquid do not carry this label and warning messages are not displayed so clearly.

ANY PRODUCT LABELLED AS IRRITANT TO HUMANS WILL ALSO BE IRRITANT TO PETS

FURTHER INFORMATION

Veterinary Poisons Information Centre
<http://www.vpisuk.co.uk/portal/>

VPIS Emergency Telephone Number (Vets only) : 020 7188 0200

NB: The VPIS is primarily a service for vets. They do NOT take calls from the general public. However there is some useful owner information on the website.

*Sue F Moreland BA Vet MB MRCVS
 GCCF Veterinary Officer*



Some Miscellaneous Class Winners from the online show (sorry, there were too many to include them all!)





11



12

- 1 Most Glamorous Male: Tonkinini Naughty But Nice (Nikki Phillips)
 2 Most Glamorous Female: ImpGrPr Phabby Sweet Raspberry Jam (Beth Noble)
 3 Best Chocolate Box Picture Female: Rameses Alerion (with Rameses Navarre) (Jo Sturgess)
 4 Best Peekaboo Picture Female: GrPr Lilyput Jaffa Cake (Natalie Bor-man)
 5 Best Adult or Neuter 'Come Hither' Expression: Rameses Tamtonks Ma-jabbech (Gia Harvey)
 6 Best Kitten 'Indignant' Pose: Rameses Zephyr (Anna Gregorek)
 7 Happiest Looking Kitten :Rameses Scirocco (Alexandra Eadie)
 8 Best Eye Colour for BCR Coat Pattern Neuter: Tallica Sweet Amber (Lorraine Phillips)
 9 Best Eye Colour for TCR Coat Pattern Neuter: Rameses Juno (Loretta Smith)
 10 Best Eye Colour for TCR Coat-Pattern Kitten: Rameses Mistral (Helen McIldowie-Jenkins)
 11 Any Cat or Kitten Enjoying the Heat: Tonkinini Naughty But Nice (Nikki Phillips)
 12 Any Cat or Kitten Enjoying the Heat: Tonkadello Harry Thehero (Gia Harvey)
 13 Most Appealing Male Kitten: Rameses Khnad Lek (Rachel Pennell)



13



14



15

Best Buddies winners:

- 14 Rameses Zephyr (Anna Gregorek)
 15 Lavandablu Grissley Aslan (Ria Pierlot)
 16 Longnap Rameses Steggles (Alexandra Lloyd)
 17 Tonkinini Caramella (Sally Atkinson) — placed 3rd, but I couldn't resist it, ed.!



16



17

LOCKDOWN LITTERS

OR WIRE BASKET CHICKEN TONKS AND THEIR FOUR FRIENDS

Christina Gordon

Minoo, our blue ticked tabby, was a good size and weight and had just turned one when she was mated with Ramintha, Julia's gorgeous imported stud boy in Oxford.

Biba our cinnamon TCR, three years old, had accompanied Minoo mainly as a companion for the long journey, and to help Minoo settle on reaching Oxford. Biba wasn't expected to come on call as she had had sporadic calls and hadn't had a proper one since May but to my astonishment and joy I received the text 'Mark your diary' from Julia not once but twice!

Biba had been mated with Julia's adorable blue boy Ecco. Here they are cuddled up together.



I didn't have long to wait to see if they 'pinked up' which would tell me if they were pregnant. Minoo's teats went pink at day 16 and Biba oddly went pink then back to normal then pinked up 'full time' at day 21, which is when it normally happens.

Minoo grew very large poor thing, she truly waddled and to help ease the load I fed her small meals but often. I expected her to have six kittens. Biba looked slightly larger than her first litter of three so I expected four, possibly five kittens.

Day 65 (due date). Poor Minoo had problems trying to deliver: she tried her best to no avail. I called our vets twice in the early hours and was told to bring her in at 7 am for c-section. I dropped her off and was so worried for her and the kittens.

There was an awful wait of about an hour and a half until I got the call to say Minoo was fine and they'd delivered eight kittens safely, all had survived. Such a big relief: I couldn't believe it, eight kittens and all ok!

I went to collect my lovely brave queen and her new tiny babies.

They came in the vet's wire basket but I couldn't see them as they were covered with a blanket. Once back home in the warm I settled Minoo first and then nervously I lifted the blanket, excitedly expecting eight fluffy tiny kittens but I was confronted with yellow messy looking 'chicken like' kittens all in a row.



I placed them with mum and smiled as I pulled out what had lain underneath them - two huge pink veterinary operating gloves filled with warm water, coiled like Cumberland sausages in the bottom of the wire basket. I made use of them to keep Minoos warm as she felt so cold after her surgery and they certainly helped to raise her temperature.



Minoos wasn't very interested in the kittens at first but tentatively tried cleaning them and feeding but must have felt very groggy after the anaesthetic. So enter Biba: 'super mum' came immediately to the rescue; she helped clean the kittens and fed some of them also even though she hadn't produced her own kittens yet. Minoos thankfully gradually recovered from surgery and did an absolutely brilliant job of raising her beautiful kittens.

Biba had four kittens four days later at (her) day 67 (picture opposite) and thankfully managed to do this without much intervention from me - at first she did try pushing whilst surrounded by Minoos and the eight chicken-kittens, so as I thought that may be a bit messy she and I went into another bedroom and she gave birth a couple of hours later. The first kitten being feet first (so was pulled out with the help of an exfoliating glove (good tip Julia!)).

Oh, and not forgetting my vet on the other end of the phone, egging me on to 'pull quite hard' and giving me much needed confidence. The rest of the kittens followed quite quickly.

Growing daily, all changed from messy looking yellow chickens to different coloured and patterned dumplings, gradually evolving a few weeks later to bright-eyed, extremely lively, fun and adorable kittens.

All in all it was an amazing experience (again). It was much harder work with two litters (as expected) and an emotional roller-coaster at times; mostly very good but some downers. I really need to find out how to do a top-up feed properly with a syringe or bottle, and get kittens to suck instead of me squirting little drops - that is so scary. The newish carpet has gone to the tip and wooden-effect flooring is going to be ordered so it can be disinfected and cleaned up easily - twelve kittens make a lot of mess, which again was expected.

Now that the house is peaceful again I have time to reflect carefully on how I can do better next time and what I would I do differently - it's all a learning curve.





Biba being super-mum, looking after all twelve while Minoo took a break.

New owners

During this time the kittens new owners had been identified: all lovely, keen, excited, caring people. I knew and was confident they were perfect people for the kittens – this I think is the biggest worry (for me anyway).

I created an online ‘group’ so photos, videos and info could be shared easily with them and I think they appreciated this as they said they were delighted seeing their kittens grow and develop. I enjoyed chatting to them also; lockdown is a lonely time although I have my husband to talk to, so it was nice to speak to others with something we all had in common.

The kittens were going to new homes in Edinburgh, London, Yorkshire and Lancashire. Due to lockdown breeders have to either deliver kittens to new owners or get them couriered.

The day before the kittens left I did tear up quite a few times and kept getting lumps in my throat thinking about them leaving and dreading the next day as I’d never see them again. Some of the kittens had attached to me and, well, I love them! My husband kept saying to me, ‘are you crying?’

However the next morning I was fine and held it together, the kittens had a good breakfast and final cuddles and were sent on their

long journeys with a good kitten pack and clear written instructions for the courier.

I tracked their long journey to London and it was exciting as I could follow the kittens as they arrived at the two destinations – (they passed some very famous places en route, not that they’d be interested). One owner emailed straight away with a photo of the courier reversing into her driveway; the other I waited over an agonising hour to hear from them that the kittens were ok. In the end I emailed them and still had a wait – of course I knew they would just be doting and fussing over their little new additions. After all, they’d waited so patiently for them and were probably just so excited to get their little hooligans that I’m sure I was the last thing on their minds.

Ten days after rehoming I’ve heard from them all – all have sent photos and videos of their kittens, all saying how much their lives have changed for the better one even saying it was the best day of their lives’ – hearing this of course makes parting from them bearable – I know from our conversations showing their commitment, their questions and eagerness, that the new owners will love and care for them and give them so much more individual attention than I ever could.

I know my eight little ‘chickens’ and their four friends are going to be just fine.



PETITION ABOUT SCANNING FOR MICROCHIPS BEFORE EUTHANASIA

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/300025>

Following a couple of reports of cases of dogs being taken to vets and euthanised by people who were not their owners, it emerged that this had happened with cats too, though they seemed to be relatively isolated incidents. You might wonder how this is possible, but if you take your animal to the vet and ask for it to be euthanised, the vet has to do it, even if it seems healthy. They cannot insist on scanning for a microchip, as they have to have the owner's permission to do that, and obviously unless they know the animal and its true owner well, they cannot tell whether the person presenting the animal is indeed the owner or not.

As you might imagine, this led to high levels of anxiety among pet owners who allowed their cats out. The petition, to institute a law called 'Tuks Law', after the first dog euthanised in this way, is now closed, but received the requisite number of names to have a reading.

Scanning for chips also means that if an animal has been chipped by a rescue organisation, they will be contacted to make sure the person who took the pet isn't simply someone who has taken the animal with the wilful intention of destroying it.

Tuks Law requests vets to:

- Scan microchips prior to euthanising a healthy/treatable animal.
- Confirm keeper details on original database of unknown animals presented for euthanasia.
- Seek alternative options in non-life-threatening/non-emergency situations.
- If an unsubstantiated reason for euthanasia is made corroborating evidence is required.
- On government endorsed databases a prefix is to be added to microchips to identify dual registration of rescue animals.

Government response on 7 May 2020.

The Government understands the distress that the death of a pet can cause and is considering scanning requirements, as part of the Post Implementation Review of the microchipping regulations.

We agree that no dog should be put down unless there are extenuating reasons for having to do so.

Paragraphs 8.9 and 8.10 of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) Code of Conduct provides advice to vets on euthanizing animals when the owner is not present. See:

<https://www.rcvs.org.uk/setting-standards/advice-and-guidance/code-of-professional-conduct-for-veterinary-surgeons/supporting-guidance/euthanasia-of-animals/>

Every responsible dog owner wants to ensure their pet is safe and microchips are often the only hope of finding dogs that are lost or stolen. It is a legal requirement for all owners to microchip their dogs, and to enter the details onto a database. Since compulsory microchipping for dogs came into force in 2016, we have seen a clear drop in the number of stray dogs on the streets and an increase in the number of lost or stolen pets reunited with their owners.

British Veterinary Association (BVA) best practice is that vets should scan dogs on first presentation at their practice, and at other regular intervals including prior to euthanasia, where euthanasia is deemed the appropriate course of action by the veterinary expert. BVA's website sets out their position on scanning.

The guidance includes advice on what a vet should do if the details of the person presenting the dog are different to what is recorded on the database, and what to do when stray or lost animals are brought to the practice by checking the microchipping databases in order to reunite the animal with their owner.

The Government is considering proposals for the compulsory scanning of dogs before euthanasia by vets as part of the ongoing Post Implementation Review of The Microchipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2015.

This is a revised response as the Petitions Committee requested a response which more directly addressed the request of the petition after the first response.

Note: this petition currently does not include cats; however the government has indicated that a first stage in including them is to introduce compulsory microchipping for cats, a proposal that is currently under consideration by the Canine and Feline Sector Group of DEFRA, and seems likely to be implemented, though we have no information about the timescale.

TBC Recommendations For Breeders

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In addition to the GCCF Code of Ethics and Rules For Registration and Showing of Cats the TBC strongly recommends that the following points are noted by owners of queens and studs.

1. If breeding first-generation (Burmese x Siamese) Tonkinese, ensure that both parents comply with the current Tonkinese Registration Policy. Some cats are on the Reference register because they have ancestors that are not permitted in the Tonkinese breed programme (e.g. Orientals, cats of unregistered or unknown parentage, or experimental colours).
2. A stud owner is not obliged to accept a queen to stud and may refuse mating on application or on inspection of the queen on health or other grounds.
3. GCCF-registered Queens and Studs must be on the active register. Queens not registered with the GCCF may be accepted for mating provided their registration is not endorsed 'not for breeding'. Studs must have their Certificate of Entirety (COE) and DNA test results as required by the Tonkinese Registration Policy lodged with the GCCF prior to the registration of their first litter. Stud owners should retain a copy of the COE and DNA test results to show to a queen's owner if requested.
4. Studs and visiting queens must be vaccinated against Feline Enteritis, Feline Herpesvirus and Calicivirus (no less than 14 days before the mating). Homeopathic vaccinations are not acceptable. Vaccination certificates must be available for inspection.
5. Studs should be regularly tested for FeLV and FIV, even if they are inoculated against FeLV and the documentation should be shown to the owners of visiting queens on request.
6. The stud owner must supply the following for the queen's owner: a) A mating certificate that complies with GCCF Rules For Registration and Showing of Cats Section 1 Rule 3d (<https://www.gccfcats.org/About-GCCF/Forms-Downloads>) b) A full pedigree of the stud showing at least three generations with full registration numbers; c) A receipt for the stud fee.
7. The stud owner must make clear any conditions relating to the kittens or repeat matings, before the queen is left with the stud.
8. The stud premises should be available for inspection, by appointment, by the queen's owner prior to the queen being brought to stud.
9. Queens should be tested for FeLV and FIV before going to stud, ideally no more than 24 hours before the visit (unless from a fully-tested indoor household, when a longer time interval may be agreed with the stud owner), and the documentation should be shown to the stud's owner. PCR testing for Chlamydia, FHV and Calici virus are also strongly recommended for both studs and queens.
10. The queen's owner has a responsibility to make arrangements, including the inspection of stud premises, well in advance of taking the queen to stud, and should make enquiries about the availability of the stud before testing and making any other arrangements.
11. The queen's owner should be aware that the stud fee is for the services of the stud and does not guarantee conception.
12. Kittens should be registered with the GCCF and must not be sold less than 7 days after completion of a full course of vaccination against at least Feline Enteritis, Feline Herpesvirus and Calicivirus. The breeder must supply each kitten owner with a valid vaccination certificate signed by a veterinary surgeon showing that the first vaccination and booster have been completed; a pedigree certificate that includes at least four generations, at least three with full registration numbers; the GCCF registration card for the kitten.
13. It is essential that all breeding Tonkinese must be DNA tested in accordance with the requirements of the current Tonkinese Registration Policy (see <https://tonkinesebac.weebly.com/downloads>). If you are unable to download a copy please contact the Club Secretary (tbc.uk@ntlworld.com) to obtain one.

*List of available DNA tests applicable to the Tonkinese breed (*currently required for studs):*

*Burmese Head Defect

*Burmese Hypokalaemia

*Progressive Retinal Atrophy (rdAc)

*Pyruvate Kinase Deficiency (PKDef)

Burmese GM2 Gangliosidosis

Korat GM1 Gangliosidosis (low prevalence)

Mucopolysaccharidosis VI (MPS VI) (low prevalence)