

TONKINFO



Spring 2024

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TONKINESE BREED CLUB

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Wishing You All A Very Happy Easter

Dear Folks,

We are not giving you a Chairman or Secretary's report this time, but there are some important items for your attention and dates for your diaries. I hope you enjoy this issue and I'd love to have your feedback.

All the very best – Linda Vousden [Editor]

IMPORTANT NEWS FROM THE COMMITTEE

- **TBC AGM, April 13th at 1:30pm** – Our AGM will be held online again so that as many members as possible may attend. We've chosen this date to avoid Easter and to prevent clashing dates with the Tonkinese Cat Club. The agenda and other relevant documents will be emailed to you in due course - so do check your junk mail box to be on the safe side 😊
- **The TBC Show 2024 – It is with regret that we have to cancel our Club show this year.** In December 2023 we were informed that the show manager has resigned from all GCCF shows that she was running; and so far no replacement has been found.

In addition to the loss of our show manager again, it has become clear that support for our show (exhibitors and helpers) has continued to decline for the past few years - as is the case for a great many of the GCCF shows. We cannot justify committing Club funds to a venture that may result in a loss. We are keeping our options open for 2025, and will keep you informed. In the meantime we look forward to seeing Tonk exhibitors at other shows.

- **Constitutional and Legal changes** affecting all cat exhibitors, breeders and owners – **See Pages 8 and 9**

HAVE YOU SEEN THESE CATS?



When you look over your pedigrees there are many names you'll recognise, but perhaps you haven't seen the face that matches - and it is always nice to put a face to the name.

Here is just a small selection of some of our breeding Tonks from the past 20 years - cats that may be ancestors of your own Tonks.

Left: Ch Angisan Xcaliber Knight M (Lilac TCR), the first UK male Tonkinese Champion.



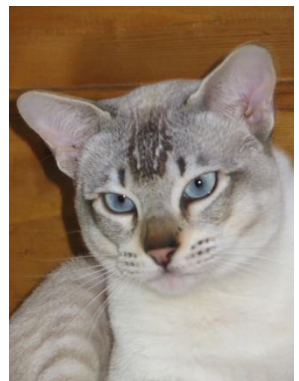
Above L to R: GrCh&Pr Mymystic Pharoah M (Blue-Tabby TCR) ~ Angisan Fearless Bjorn M (Brown TCR) ~ GrPr Mymystic Pagan F (Caramel-Tabby TCR) **Below L to R:** Ch&GrPr Romantica Carina F (Cream TCR) ~ GrCh&UKImpGrPr Copernicus Cherry Blossom F (Brown Tortie TCR) ~ Ch&ImpGrPr Fecheldee Venus F (Lilac TCR)





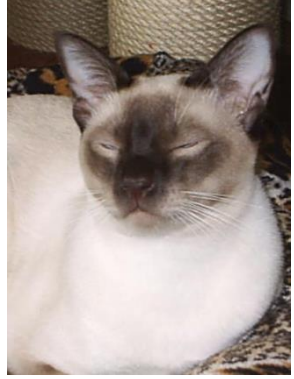
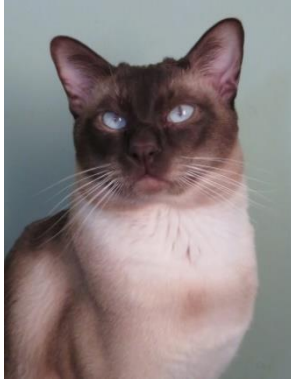
Above L to R: ImpGrCh Tallica Mickey Blue Eyes M (Apricot TCR) ~ GrPr Rameses Last Tango F (Blue-Tabby BCR) ~ Ch Adsepbu Toptonk Gabby F (Brown CPP)

Below L to R: Ramintha of Rameses M (Brown TCR) ~ GrCh Lilyput Camberwell Beauty F (Brown TCR) ~ Ch Tonkyway Chertan M (Brown-Tabby CPP) ~



Below L to R: GrCh Chocolatedot Rameses Ecco M (Blue TCR) ~ GrCh Tallica Parachutes M (Cinnamon TCR) ~ Ch&ImpGrPr Lilyput Duchess Kate F (Lilac TCR)





Above L to R: Chocolatedot At Tyrius M (Chocolate TCR) ~ GrCh Phabbay Galactic Comet M (Chocolate CPP) ~ Zephanco Dreamweaver M (Chocolate CPP)

Below L to R: Samkabar ZuriofHerkatz M (Brown CPP) ~ Rameses Reckless F (Chocolate-Tabby TCR) & Rameses Starbuck M (Blue TCR) ~ Advensh Dianthe F (Lilac TCR)



Below L to R: GrCh Tonkitu Flynn M (Red TCR) ~ Whyoo Nehesi M (Brown TCR) ~



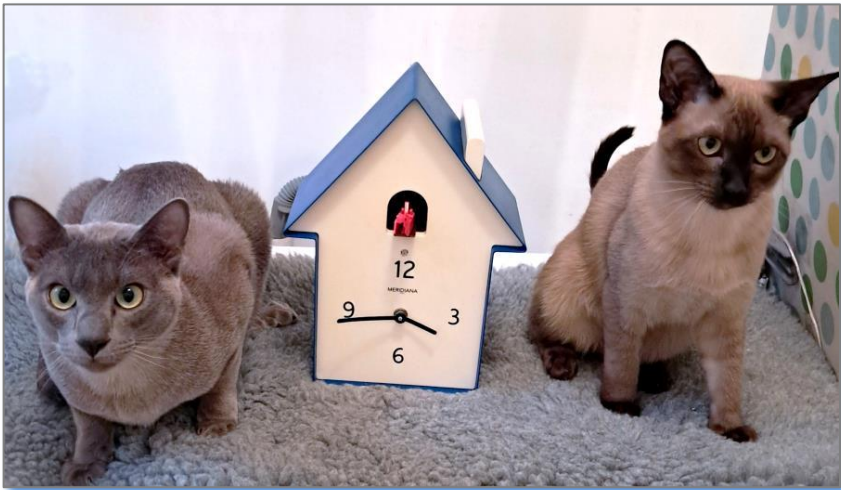
Bess vs The Cuckoo

by Sue Pike

When Bess came to live with us it didn't take her long to win our other Tonk over. Indeed he has been her devoted fan ever since day five, when she boldly marched over to him and peered closely into his face as if to say, "get over yourself Bodhi, I'm going nowhere."

A week later, when Bodhi was trying to muscle in on his own food, I watched as Bess lifted a paw and pushed him out of the way. I should have known then we were in for trouble but... she was/is such a sweet little kitten....

There have been many 'scrapes' and the most successful (according to Bess) has been the cuckoo clock. It's always divided opinion that clock but, from the start, Bess loved it. She'd jump on the ice cream maker which sits on the microwave then, standing on her back legs, she'd stretch up and try to grab the cuckoo as he welcomed in each hour.



One morning I came down to find no hands on the clock (she'd dismantled them with her teeth) and the cuckoo hanging out of its house. Following a quick repair job, the hands are jauntily askew and the cuckoo will never go back in his house again, but the clock is still in working order and the cuckoo (which has only one wing and half a head) now gaily does the requisite number of 'cuckoos'.... **twenty to each hour!**

Important News for Owners, Breeders and Exhibitors.

Compulsory Cat Micro-chipping

Under the Animal Welfare Act, as of **10th June 2024**, all cats must be micro-chipped and registered with an approved database. Under the Act the term *Cat Keeper* is the "person with whom the animal normally resides". Setting aside all arguments and queries about the management of this law, here are the basics:

- Cats must be implanted with a microchip before they reach the age of 20 weeks.
- Non micro-chipped cats over 20 weeks are also required to be micro-chipped.
- An imported cat must be micro-chipped within 30 days of entering the UK.
- A cat need not be micro-chipped where a veterinary surgeon certifies, on a form approved by the Secretary of State, that a cat should not be micro-chipped for reasons relating to the health of the animal. The certificate must specify the duration of non-compliance.
- Cat keepers found to have a cat without a micro-chip will have 21 days to have one implanted or may face a fine of up to £5000.
- Cat keepers not using one of the DEFRA compliant databases may face a fine of up to £500
- Cat keepers must ensure that their contact details are stored and kept *up to date* in a DEFRA compliant (government standard) pet micro-chipping database - for a full list of DEFRA compliant databases check the page on the TBC web site.
- Where a cat is transferred to a new keeper the new keeper must ensure that the cat's database record is updated.

No one may implant a microchip in a cat unless: -

- They are a veterinary surgeon; or a veterinary nurse or veterinary student acting under the direction of a veterinary surgeon.
- They have been satisfactorily assessed on a training course approved by the Secretary of State on or after the commencement date for the purpose of implanting a microchip in a cat; or received training in implantation which included practical experience of implanting a microchip in a cat before the commencement date.

To read the relevant section of the Welfare Act yourself here is the link:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2023/468/body/made>

New Prescription Rules From The RCVS

From 1st September 2023 new guidance on the issue of prescription-only medication for pets (POM-Vs) came into force from the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, the veterinary profession regulatory body in the UK.

The guidance is that a clinical assessment including a physical examination of the animal is required at the time of prescribing any antibiotics, antifungals, antivirals or parasiticides. This includes topical preparations such as ear and eye drops, and all prescription flea/worm/tick products. Once a physical assessment has been made it is then the vets decision, whether or not to prescribe further medicines remotely.

The guidance is an important step towards ensuring responsible use and reducing the veterinary impact on the wider issues of global antibiotic resistance and decline of insect populations.

The full guidance can be found on: <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/setting-standards/advice-and-guidance/under-care-blue-guidance/>

GCCF Rule Changes On Show Write-Ups

To reduce the burden on the declining number of GCCF Judges the following Rule changes (shown underlined) were approved in Council on 24/02/2024:

Section 2:14e) and Section 3:5e)

In the Olympian Class, after the Certificate winner and the Reserve (if awarded), placings must be recorded to 5th position. **Note:** written critiques for publication are required for the Certificate winners only, which need not describe the cats in full. A reason for the award or withholding each certificate is sufficient.

Section 2:17 and Section 3:8

Cats to be considered for Best of Breed shall be the winners of the Breed classes for that breed and cats of that breed that are entered in the Olympian, Imperial Grand Champion/Grand Champion/Imperial Grand Premier/Grand Premier classes and not in the Breed class, with the exception of cats withdrawn, by their exhibitor(s), from such consideration. A written report from the judge that gives a reason for the BOB award to the winner, or for withholding it is sufficient. Exhibitors who require an opinion on an individual cat should meet and discuss it with the judge when their judging is finished

CLUB SHOW 2023 WINNERS PAGE

Thank you to Julia, Linda & Lorraine for the photos. It was one of those shows that was so busy we didn't have time to take all the photos we'd have liked to; but, if you haven't already seen them, there are more photos on the Club site: <https://www.tonkinese.info/2023-show-gallery.html> and also <https://www.tonkinese.info/2023-show-photo-exhibition.html>



Three very proud & happy ladies with their beautiful Tonks

L: Malgorzata Skuza with BIS Adult: GrCh Toptonk Mercedes, F (TOS a 32)

C: Christina Gordon with OBIS & BIS Kitten: Toptonk Sapphira Asia, (TOS c 33)

R: Lorraine Phillips with BIS Neuter. GrCh & OB,IGrPr Lilyput Parma Violets, (TOS j 33)

TBC Roll of Honour

So many of your beautiful cats have won their titles in the past year or so, please send in their details so that we can include them in our Honour Roll – see the Roll & online form on our web site:

Titles, Merits & BIS History under the **SHOWS** tab.

What's In A Name?



Since 1991 I've been building my pedigree database of Tonks, Burmese and Siamese. It has revealed much about the times in which people were breeding and often about the breeders themselves through their choice of prefix. You'd be surprised at how many Rhett Butlers, Scarlett O'Haras, Jubilees, Strawberry Fields, Chewbaccas, Skywalkers, Gandalfs, Nijinskys and Rafa Nadals there are just for starters. *Cheers, Linda*

Selecting a suitable prefix to represent yourself and your cats is significant as it will be attached to you for life. So I'm interested in how today's breeders made their choices. Thank you to all who sent me their stories.

Antikpatina (1970s) Val Chapple – My prefix was conceived when I and my ex-husband had an antique business. I started breeding Siamese cats and wanted a prefix, Antik (antics play on words) because of the business, Patina as in old furniture also gleaming cat coat.

Chorus (2014) Lizzi & Mike Smith, choruscats.uk/kittens/litters/

We wanted a very short prefix so we could have the most letters possible to give our kittens interesting pedigree names. CHORUS reflects Mike's lifelong passion for choral music and all our kittens have had music-related pedigree and pet names, each litter on a different musical theme. For our last two litters, we created some cover notes with links to the music behind their names.

Honeyway (2021) Leann Atkinson - My first breeding queen was Tonkyway. I live at Honey Acre Farm - so I went with Honeyway.

Lilyput (2010) Lorraine Phillips, www.lilyput.co.uk/tonkinese - My mother's maiden name was Gulliver. It has been said that Jonathan Swift got inspiration for his book, Gulliver's tales, from a gravestone of one of my ancestors. Our first breeding queen was called Lily so we changed it to Lilyput rather than the original name Lilliput.

Mooncastle (2018) Emma Mountcastle - Tinkerbelle (called Tink unless she's being especially naughty!) was my first Tonk - and she was certainly a little Tinker! As were her kittens in due course. I applied for the prefix 'Tinky Tonks' when her first litter was born, but it was unavailable. Having to come up with something else quickly, I chose a variation on my surname (Mountcastle) - something with an air of enchantment. So now all my babies are Mooncastle

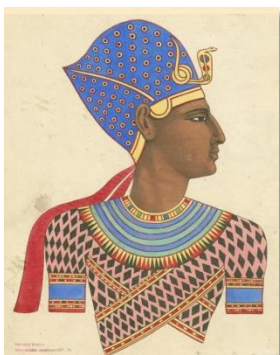
babies. Tink has retired from breeding (though not from ruling the house) and recently became a proud grandmother when her daughter Coco carried on the Mooncastle family line. And when I say 'proud' I mean she tolerated the little interlopers while looking highly unimpressed 😊

Mymystic (1993) Linda Vousden, www.tonkinese.me – In 1991 our lovely blue Burmese breeding queen (Mistry) gave us our first amazing Tonks. I wanted to honour her name and although I'd have liked 'Mystic' it was taken way back in the 1920s. So the answer was clear, I would have My Mystic. Serendipitously a beautiful seal-point Siamese stud born in 1944, called Mystic Dreamer, was one of my darling Pharoah's ancestors.

Phabbay (1986) Wilma Morrison, www.phabbay.co.uk - When my daughter was very young and beginning to talk, she used to call one of our three Siamese cats, 'Favie'. We don't know why she did, because our first cats' names were, Bambi, Susie and Mindy nothing relating to Favie. Even more strange was my dad was on holiday with my mum in the far north of Scotland way back then, and he came home with a little clan badge for me and it had the name 'Phabbay' on it which in Gaelic means 'The Family of Morrison' how strange this was, but that was it so we proudly now own the Phabbay prefix.



Rameses (1994) Julia Craig-McFeely, www.ramesescats.co.uk - Rameses wasn't my first choice! I had several more local choices based on my name or address. The first four on my list were turned down as they didn't fit GCCF requirements, which is how they got down my list to Rameses, and if I'm honest I really can't remember why I put that name down! You had to put down 12 choices, and I confess that by the end I was putting down absolutely anything just to fill the boxes! I'm really glad that I ended up with Rameses though: it has a regal feel to it and harks back to the original exotic 'oriental' types of cats from Egypt, cats with long slender athletic bodies and short coats, that were worshipped (of course!), but also that had tabby markings, and I was particularly fond of the tabby pattern from my childhood growing up with my mother breeding Siamese. — She had one of the earliest tabby litters. So In the end I'm really glad that this turned out to be my prefix as it has a special sound to it and lots of the right sort of associations to suit beautiful, regal and elegant cats.



Rodaho (2023) Dan Whitfield - It's the first two letters of our son's name, Rowan plus Dan (Me) and Holly all combined in to one!

Tigmist (2013) Rebecca Beard - Tiger because I love tigers (only wish I could have one as a pet!!) and Mist because my first Tonkinese, back in the late 80's, was called Misty. Seems a long time ago now that she was in my life but she was very special to me.

Tivalli (2022) Nicki Harmer - We found it quite hard to settle upon a name. I knew, as many others do, that I wanted an old mythology name that denotes what divine little beings they are! Tivali is an ancient Egyptian name meaning 'Gift from God' and allegedly Cleopatra named her favourite cat Tivali. Of course, this prefix had already gone so we added an extra L and came up with Tivalli, which we were granted.

Tonkinini (2012) Allegra Loch, <https://tonkinintonkinese.co.uk> - Some years ago we had a very beloved Doberman called Tosca, nicknamed Toscanini like the famous Italian conductor & musician, and eventually just Nini. The next Doberman we had changed into a Nini too, she was Topaz but became Topanini. Then along came our most beloved Tonk, Maia. And somehow Maia also became a Nini, again I'm not really sure how, the nickname just came to be. But certainly she was either known as Maianini or just Nini. She was and still is today, the most extraordinarily amazing, loving & human cat I've ever known, my shadow and soul mate. She was also one of our first queens, her & our dear Minerva. So when we were looking at prefixes we felt we would use the Nini part to take forward. We were accepted as Tonkinini which actually comes almost full circle in sound to our original Toscanini.

Tatannu (Ta'Tannu) (2023) Biagio Cassar - In Malta families are given nicknames and these names sometimes go back many generations and Ta'Tannu was the nickname given to my grandmother's family from my mum's side of the family. So my mum's family would have had two nicknames, one from her mum and the other from her dad, Ta'Tannu and Ta-Nazik respectively. I found this fascinating so at the time of choosing a prefix I asked my relatives and cousins in Malta about how the names were derived and what they meant. The words are not in the Maltese dictionary but have just been adopted over the generations. They would have been nicknames related to what the families used to do to make a living – I suppose like old English professions that turned into surnames like Blacksmith and Cook. So after a bit of investigating the name Tannu relates to some sort of fishing or fishing boat and as far as we know Nazik may have been something to do with graves! I chose the fishing name!



The Tonkinese Breed Club

Serving the Tonkinese & Club Members since 1991

Visit our web site and make use of our free kitten list, stud list, breeder's rehoming page, information downloads and much more.

www.tonkinese.info

Membership Renewal For 2024

Thank you to members who have already sent in their Subscription renewals. If you're not sure whether you need to renew, check out the Members page on the web site

<https://www.tonkinese.info/have-i-renewed-yet.html> ☐

For your convenience there are instruction on how to renew (and we do hope you will ☺) on the Membership Payment option under the 'Membership' tab.



BOOKS FOR TONKINESE ENTHUSIASTS & CAT BREEDERS

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Tonkinese Cats – A History

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Spring and Summer Horticultural Hazards

by *Mary Watters*



As we discovered at Christmas, many decorative, seasonal plants are dangerous to pets. In researching this article, it has been sobering to realise that this is a year-round threat. There are numerous plants in our gardens that use poison as a defence to ensure their survival.

Whilst it is probably true (and reassuring to know) that most cats have developed a certain wariness, or sixth sense, about what to chew or not – whether by scent, or a quick lick of a sharp-tasting petal, leaf or berry – it is equally true that Tonkinese are not “most cats” and caution is not a breed characteristic. Unwittingly, we may also bring flowers or plants into the house that is dangerous and their ‘novelty’ will arouse our cats’ curiosity. This article aims to help us all to be responsible owners by identifying poisonous plants; highlighting the reactions to watch out for; and enabling us to protect our inquisitive furry companions.

This article is not an exhaustive list and cats do not always react the same way. If your cat exhibits reactions typical of poisoning, whether you know what they have eaten or not, contact your vet at once.

SPRING

BULBS:

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the challenging weather, our loveliest spring bulbs are mostly toxic. Their stems, leaves and petals are poisonous, too.

- ❖ **BEGONIA** contains toxins called soluble calcium oxalates. If consumed in sufficient quantities, liver failure and even death may occur.
- ❖ **CYCLAMEN** contains terpenoid saponins, which, if enough is consumed, causes heart rhythm abnormalities, seizures and possible death.
- ❖ **TULIPS** are part of the Lily Family – the most dangerous plant for cats.
- ❖ **DAFFODIL**, all parts of which are similarly toxic. Water that these have stood in as cut flowers is equally affected. Ingestion can result in salivation, vomiting or diarrhoea. Cats may also suffer breathing difficulties, an irregular heartbeat or appear dazed, confused or quiet and depressed. These symptoms can occur between 15 minutes to 24 hours afterwards.

- ❖ **CROCUS, SNOWDROP, BLUEBELL, IRIS** and **HYACINTH** (including the smaller Grape Hyacinth or Muscari) - leaves, flowers, stems or bulbs of can cause mouth irritation, and, if swallowed, abdominal pain, vomiting and diarrhoea. Ingested in large quantities, weakness and tremors may be observed. The heady scent of Hyacinths, if in an unaired location, can cause confusion or an unsteady gait.
- ❖ **ALLIUM** bulbs, leaves, stem and flowers contain organo-sulfoxides, which damage a cat's red blood cells, causing anaemia. They can also relax the heart muscle and dilate blood vessels causing circulatory problems and low blood pressure. Moreover, the toxins impede the ability of blood to clot. Cats appear lethargic, with pale gums, an elevated heart rate and increased respiratory rate. Effects can appear between 12 hours and two to five days after ingestion.
- ❖ **LILY OF THE VALLEY** is not a bulb, but a small rhizome; if ingested it can be fatal. The plant, stems and flowers are also toxic, causing heart irregularities and gastro irritation if even a tiny part is digested. As with all in the Lily Family, if cut and put in a vase, then the water is toxic, too.
- ❖ **ARUM LILY** (*Arum maculatum*, Cuckoo Pint or 'Lords and Ladies') all parts are poisonous, especially the bright reddish-orange berries. Renal failure can result if your cat ingests any part of the plant and is not treated quickly.
- ❖ **FRITILLARIES** contain allergens that lead to sickness and drowsiness. If any part is nibbled in large quantities, it can prove fatal.

A Note About Bulbs: *Some gardeners regularly lift bulbs in spring, to store them before replanting in the autumn. Bulbs should always be stored safely, well out of reach.*

PLANTS:

- ❖ **PRIMROSE:**(*Primula vulgaris*) - the pretty yellow flowered plant, one of the first plants to bloom in Spring, is toxic if ingested, leading to severe stomach pain, drooling, vomiting and diarrhoea. Longer term reactions may be tremors and seizures. Rubbing against the flowers and leaves can also cause eye or skin irritation. The coloured variant, *Primula obconica*, (helpfully known as the 'Poison Primrose') is also toxic. *Primula veris* – the Cowslip – is recorded as poisonous in some publications, but not poisonous in others. *To be safe, contact your vet if your cat ingests some of it.*



SHRUBS:

- ❖ **RHODODENDRON:** A toxin that affects the body's nerve cells is present in all parts of the rhododendron. Cats, by reason of their small body size, need only to ingest 0.2% of their body weight to have gastrointestinal upset followed by weakness, abnormal heart rhythms and paralysis.
- ❖ **AZALEA:** All parts of the plant are moderately toxic, causing sickness. However, unless you are a plant expert, azaleas and rhododendrons look similar and can be confused. Act quickly if in any doubt.

CLIMBING PLANTS:

- ❖ **WISTERIA:** All parts of the plant are toxic, especially the seed pods and seeds. If even two seeds are eaten, it causes severe dehydration and can damage the central nervous system. Vomiting (with blood) can occur, and the clotting of red blood cells is affected. If you suspect your cat has nibbled any of the Wisteria plant, a visit to the vet is vital.

TREES:

- ❖ One notable tree that is extremely toxic is the **LABURNUM**. Also called 'The Golden Chain Tree', all parts of it are poisonous –bark, roots, leaves, flowers (you will probably recognise the long, bright yellow racemes that cover the tree in spring) and seed pods. They contain an alkaloid toxin that causes headache; nausea; vomiting; drooling; convulsions and death through paralysis.

SUMMER

PLANTS:

- ❖ **FOXGLOVE** – despite it having medicinal properties for people for animals, specifically our cats, it has the same danger as the LILY. All parts of it are toxic. The chief reactions from ingestion are cardiovascular: causing abnormal heart rhythm and life-threateningly high potassium levels. Gastrointestinal reactions can occur, also nausea, drooling or central nervous system problems, dilated pupils, tremors and seizures.
- ❖ **LUPIN**, with its spikes of attractive lilac (and other colour) petals, and its umbrella-shaped leaves, is instantly recognisable. However, all the plant, in particular the seeds and seed pods, are toxic. Ingestion causes salivation, vomiting, diarrhoea and difficulty breathing. Symptoms can take up to two days to appear. Lupine poisoning has been documented as causing foetal abnormalities in cows and sheep. Humans, mistaking the seed pods for edible peas and beans, lose coordination and feel dizzy.

- ❖ **MONKSHOOD.** (*Aconitum napellus*) with its tall, deep blue flower spikes contains aconitine throughout the plant. This causes skin irritation, nausea, vomiting, seizures and increased heart rate. It can be fatal.
- ❖ **LOBELIA:** This popular, low-growing, spreading blue plant contains high levels of lobeline, an alkaloid that reacts with the central nervous system of any animal and causes it to vomit repeatedly. Interference with the nervous system also affects the heart function, causing arrhythmia. A rapid visit to the vet is needed to stabilise any cat who consumes it.
- ❖ **THE LILY FAMILY** is seen again, with all parts of the **Agapanthus** (African Lily) and the **Hemerocallis** (Day Lily) being highly toxic.
- ❖ **BUTTERCUPS; DAHLIAS** and **CHRYSANTHEMUMS** - ingesting any part of these will cause loss of appetite, stomach ache, vomiting and diarrhoea. The symptoms might be short term, but some cats may have a stronger reaction to the toxins. **Note:** Chrysanthemums contain pyrethrins, a substance used in dog flea and tick medication that is particularly poisonous to cats.
- ❖ **PEONY**, is another popular cottage garden plant. The flowers contain a harmful toxin. If ingested, peonies can cause mild to moderate poisoning with the common signs being vomiting and diarrhoea.
- ❖ **GERANIUM & PELARGONIUM**, regular plants in our gardens, window boxes and hanging baskets, contains the essential oils linalool and geraniol which, if ingested, cause vomiting, diarrhoea, lack of appetite and lethargy. If your cat brushes against the plant, or sits beside it, skin irritation or dermatitis can occur.

SHRUBS:

Summer brings many seriously toxic shrubs to our notice. Despite their attraction, the following are not good plants to include in a cat-friendly garden.

- ❖ **BELLADONNA** (Deadly Nightshade): Although the berries of Deadly Nightshade are widely known to be poisonous, the whole of the plant is toxic if ingested –to humans as well as to animals. Owners will notice muscular weakness and loss of motor functions in affected cats. The cardiovascular system is also affected, with a slow heartbeat and audibly laboured breathing.
- ❖ **HYDRANGEAS:** A well-loved garden shrub, the Hydrangea is also popular in fresh and dried flower arrangements. All parts of the plant are poisonous, but the buds and young leaves have the highest concentration of the toxin amygdalin. When ingested and metabolised, it converts to dangerous cyanide. Cats exhibit exhaustion, depression, stomach ache, vomiting or



diarrhoea. Vets recommend that you call them if you see that your cat has nibbled any part of the hydrangea –even if no symptoms have developed yet.

- ❖ **NERINE:**(*Nerium Oleander*)All parts of the Oleander –leaves, stems, flowers, fruit and roots –are toxic to cats if ingested. The toxins directly attack the heart causing the muscle to malfunction. Cardiac arrhythmias result. There can also be gastrointestinal and neurologic symptoms: listlessness, overall pain, muscle tremors, wobbliness, and pupil dilation. A vet needs to act immediately if they suspect Oleander poisoning.
- ❖ **PIERIS:** (*Pieris Japonica* or the Lily of the Valley Shrub): All of this plant is toxic to humans and animals if ingested. If touched, some people may also develop a rash. Cats that have eaten any of the plant will drool or foam at the mouth and will show poor coordination. They will be lethargic and have an erratic heartbeat.
- ❖ **YUCCA:** The Yucca plant is a striking, structural feature plant both as a houseplant and in the garden. But it contains a harmful chemical called saponin. When ingested, cats lose coordination, and have seizures. Vomiting and diarrhoea are also present. A visit to the vet is vital.

CLIMBING PLANTS:

- ❖ **HONEYSUCKLE** (*Lonicera*): There are 52 varieties of this pretty and sweet-smelling plant, and many are toxic. The berries are most dangerous. Vomiting, diarrhoea and lethargy can occur. Some publications report that *Lonicera tatarica* produces an effect equivalent to Catnip, and so is safe – but others report that it is noxious. Care is recommended.
- ❖ **CLEMATIS:** Another pretty, sweet-smelling climbing plant that is dangerous to our cats. The roots, leaves and stems contain an irritant glycoside called anemonin. Ingestion can cause hyper-salivation, vomiting, diarrhoea and weakness.

This article is not an exhaustive list and cats don't always react the same way. If your cat exhibits reactions typical of poisoning, whether you know what they have eaten or not, contact your vet at once and go armed with the name of the likely plant, or, even better, the chewed part. Additionally, in cases when the cause is undetermined, a sample of what was vomited up is invaluable to the vet for diagnosis.

However, it bears re-iterating that most cats have an instinct about what to chew or not – whether by scent, or a quick lick of a sharp-tasting petal, leaf. So do enjoy your garden, but just be aware.

.... A Happy Wee Nip For The Cat



Most cats find catnip (*nepeta cataria*, *nepeta mussenii* and its hybrid *nepeta fassinii*) simply irresistible - even the big cats.

A component of the oil in the leaves acts as a nerve stimulant in the cat's brain, lowering its inhibitions and promoting relaxation. Interestingly, a cat's sensitivity to it is genetically predisposed.

Overuse may render a cat disinterested but it has no addictive properties and none of the damaging side effects of a narcotic. It may even be used as a medicinal herb for humans, a gentle infusion aids digestion, perspiration and may also be a cough remedy.

It is now understood that the euphoric effect of catnip is associated with sexuality in the cat, hence kittens will not usually be affected by catnip before 79 days of age, although there are the rare, exceptionally precocious kittens.

Dried catnip clearly has an effect on most cats, but planted in the garden gives you the opportunity to give your cats fresh leaves – and it produces wonderful sprays of lilac flowers to attract bees. *Why not plant or pot some up?*



Meet Your Judges

The GCCF is trying to build a web page to introduce you to your judges – many judges have yet to contribute; but if you'd like to know more about the people who handle your cats you can see them here:

<https://www.gccfcats.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/MeetTheJudges.pdf>

Irritable Lap Syndrome

Symptoms:

The cat appears unable to settle comfortably on laps, instead treading, kneading, rearranging itself, fidgeting, vocalising, getting up and turning around, falling off lap and getting back on again, attacking magazines, needlework, computer keyboard, telephone etc.

Treatment:

Immediate treatment is essential. Drop whatever you are doing (literally if need be) and give 100% attention to the sufferer otherwise symptoms may escalate and become quite distressing to the lap owner. Only prolonged attention will cure an attack of Irritable Lap Syndrome. It is incurable, although attacks may be effectively treated as and when they occur.

Veterinary Defects

For those of you who may not show your cats you will be pleased to know that the GCCF outlines breeding defects that preclude a cat from being shown, and that any reputable breeder will take into consideration when choosing their breeding queens and studs. These defect includes problems covering all breeds and, in the breed Standard of Points, those specific to some individual breeds. Judges will not grant certificates to cats or kittens with such defects.

If you are interested you can read more information here:

<https://www.gccfcats.org/ownership-health-welfare/veterinary-info/>

... but if you prefer to watch the new GCCF videos on YouTube here are the links (don't worry, no gruesome images):



Part 1 – Ears, Skull, Eyes & Nose

<https://youtu.be/7Z2G3FnAYZo>



Part 2 – Body, Limbs and Tail

<https://youtu.be/gv6UjCTx5-g>

Weight Gain in Sterilised Cats

by Linda Vousden

I've had many cats in my life, all of whom have been sterilised (neutered or spayed) at some point. It is generally assumed that once the cats are no longer pumping as much testosterone or oestrogen they become calmer and less active, but there is no conclusive evidence to support this.

However studies have shown that where an intact cat can manage 305 calories per day, a sterilised cat only needs 261 calories per day. The excess, as we all know, is weight gain. In other words, unless we manage our cats' food intake they will become fatter – and some become very fat.

Most of my cats have been fine but two became noticeably obese including sweet little Mymystic Phoenix, so I had to look into this more carefully. They had both had kittens and they both had feline acne for a few weeks after being spayed, an indication of the hormonal changes.



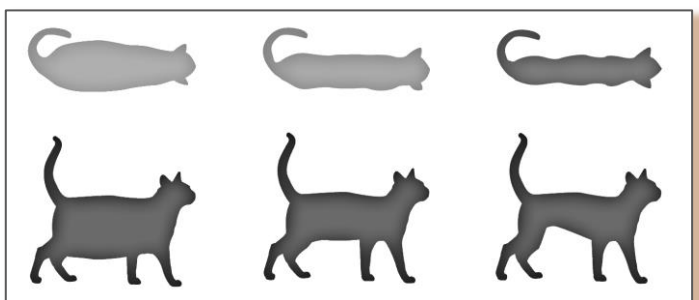
Mymystic Phoenix before, and a year after, being spayed

Studies have shown that a sterilised cat will eat significantly more after their operation than before. In some cats this increased appetite continues well-after the surgery healing process is complete. Veterinarians generally consider planned meal-times with portion control to be more appropriate for cats than free-feeding for most of their lives.

There are a lot of differing opinions on the causes of rapid weight gain in sterilised cats but one constant is that, given the opportunity, sterilised cats generally eat more than intact cats. Not free-feeding your cat in the immediate months following their procedure can help prevent them from getting fat in the long run. However, if you need to free-feed your cat, it's best to restrict their food intake for 4–5 months after surgery to help prevent weight gain. As long as your cat gets proper nutrition, there's no need to overfeed them.

In a multi-cat household this is going to be difficult but it is definitely worth the effort on our part as obesity in cats considerably increases their risks of heart failure, diabetes, osteoarthritis and a generally shorter life.

If your cat doesn't have a visible waistline, you can't feel its ribs using just a slight amount of pressure, or your cat doesn't have an abdominal tuck-up near the pelvis (ignoring the little tummy flap that they all have) then your cat is overweight.



Overweight

Normal

Underweight

So what can you do to help your overweight cat lose weight?

- 1) Manage their food intake: look at the calories and quality of food that you are feeding them.
- 2) Avoid free-feeding, they'll soon get used to it.
- 3) Avoid too many treats.
- 4) Encourage them to exercise – play with them for at least 10 minutes per day with a chase object such as a wand, ball or an exercise wheel.
- 5) Have them checked over by a vet if they become obviously overweight, in case there is an underlying problem.

Paws For Thought

A SMALL HOTEL

A man emailed to a small countryside hotel he planned to visit on his holiday. He wrote, "I would very much like to bring my cat with me. He is well-groomed and very well behaved. Would you permit me to keep him in my room with me at night?"

An immediate reply came from the hotel owner, who said, "I've been operating this hotel for many years. In all that time, I've never had a cat steal towels, bedclothes, silverware or pictures off the walls. I've never had to evict a cat in the middle of the night for being drunk and disorderly. And I've never had a cat run out on a hotel bill. Yes, indeed, your cat is welcome at my hotel, and if your cat will vouch for you, you're welcome to stay here, too."

THE TRUTH

Noted Judge.....He put up our cat
Respected Judge..... He put up our cat twice
Esteemed Judge.....He puts up anything that crawls
Shown Sparingly.....Once we had it in the bag
Show Potential..... Has 4 legs, 2 eyes, 2 ears, 1 tail
He has good points.....His head is shaped like a carrot
Won in heavy competition.....The others were revoltingly overweight
Quiet gentle natured.....After four Valium
Personality Plus.....Wakes up if you put catnip up his nose
Large boned.....Looks like a Clydesdale
Good bite.....Missed the judge, got the steward
Lovely head..... 2 eyes, 2 ears, 1 mouth, 1 nose
Excellent colourNeither tartan nor paisley
Tail doesn't quite balanceTail missing, caught in door as kitten
Nice clean coatStill frothing from the shampoo
At stud to 'approved' queens..... The owner's cheque 'clears' the bank
Line bred from famous champions.... Ch Kitkat appears twice in 6th generation
Terrific breeding queen..... Poor type, but she has big litters
Great stud cat..... Mounts anything that can fog a mirror
Loves children.....For breakfast, lunch and dinner
Wins another Best In Show.....His 2nd, under the same judge,my uncle

Tips For Photographing Your Cats With A Mobile Phone

The photos in this article were all taken by Club members.

Nowadays almost everyone has a mobile with a decent camera, and many include edit and filter effects. Here are a few tips to help you get the best when photographing your cats:

Know Your Camera

The better you know your camera the more likely you'll use it instinctively at that crucial moment. Practice using it one-handed so that it feels comfortable and steady. If your camera allows you to tap to focus before taking the picture practice it. Does your camera have a wide-angle lens to get environmental cat shots, and telephoto lens for headshots and portraits? Practice, practice, practice – and happily delete those missed attempts. *Just keep shooting!*

Know Your Subject & Keep Your Camera Handy

There are certain times when you know how your cat will behave, waking-up, after eating, sleeping, washing a friend, playing with a particular toy etc. A lot of great images happen when cats are minding their own business, they can strike beautiful poses, but you *must* have a camera nearby otherwise, the moment will be gone by the time you've found it. To take more natural pictures of your cat get down to their level. This way, you can capture a direct gaze and get striking shots.

Be Patient

You may take a score of photos before you get that desired image, it doesn't matter, the bad ones are easily deleted. You need to be patient with yourself and most importantly with your subject. If you are fidgeting about your cat may change position just to watch you.

Lighting

Whatever the setting, the key is lighting. Try practicing different lighting with an inanimate object to see the effects. Use natural light to avoid red eyes, turn off your flash and put your cat against a window. For dark cats, use as much directional light as possible and shoot against a medium-coloured background. If they are nice and still hold an angled sheet of white paper below them to reflect light back on to their face.

Avoid background light or you'll have to use a flash to light your subject – unless you actually want a silhouette shot. Midday light can create strong contrast; sidelight can create beautiful shadows and highlight the contours of your subject.



Focus

In close-up your camera will automatically focus on the cat's nearest part, usually the nose. Animal photos *must* include sharp eyes. If you can, shift the focus to the eyes by tapping on the cat's eye area on your phone before shooting (if your camera has aperture control you can try narrowing the aperture to increase the depth of field and put more of the image in focus). When taking a photo from an angle, keep the nearest eye in focus.



Composition

When photographing your cat the most important rule is to emphasise the main subject. For example by framing your cat with other elements – such as shooting through long grass, shrubs, or tree foliage for a natural frame; or through chair legs, banister railings, cupboards, doorways or windows etc. The cat is such an elegant subject that you don't even have to photograph it entirely – what about paws, ears, tails or noses?



Whatever you do avoid zooming in too closely on your subject; it gives you no opportunity to make a more considered crop later on.

Backgrounds

Simplicity is key. A busy background will detract from your main subject. A simple background is the safest option - a solid coloured wall, floor or furniture. Try to ensure that the background colour is flattering or complementary to the cat's colour. Neutral tones are failsafe choices but don't be afraid to get a little creative with your backgrounds. Experiment with different textured surfaces or vibrant patterns just make sure that the background doesn't overpower your subject. It's about finding the right balance.



Finishing

Make sure you save your photo, and if you edit it save it with a suffix, so that you can go back to the master if you need to. You might play around with cropping your photo, brighten it or give it more contrast to get the best image. You could use a filter for a sepia or night time effect. Use a filter to create digital art or simply convert your photo to black & white; which is surprisingly effective.

Above all, enjoy making images of your beautiful cat for posterity ☺



This is why we are here.

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The use of Club Members' photographs is greatly appreciated