

Judges Report North Region Show Birdwell 22nd **November 2015 Paul Spooner**

A disappointing entry of 49 animals greeted me at the Birdwell show, the plus side of this was having a judge under instruction, Sian Allcoat, the low turnout meant we could take our time with each class so offering a better learning experience.

Starting as usual with the Young Standard females we divided the 6 animals into two colour phases, the medium dark class were judged first, the 1st ribbon from Denise Oaten having good size and conformation, silky, strong fur, good density but just slightly down in clarity. The 2nd to this from the Crutchleys having good size and conformation, silky, strong fur but not quite the density of the 1st winner, but showing potential for improvement.

Onto the medium colour phase and the 1st ribbon from the Crutchleys was a bright animal with good size, conformation, clarity and silky fur, going on to take Best Young Standard Female. 2nd to this having good size and conformation but a bit dull compared to the 1st ribbon, attractive guard hair but slightly open fur (lacking density), going on to take Reserve Best Young Standard Female.

Onto the Young Standard Males, this time 9 animals split into 3 colour phases. We started with the medium dark class, the 1st ribbon winner a 6 ½ month old had good size conformation and clarity, strong stand up fur with good coverage and density in good show condition. Onto the dark class, the 1st winner from James Buchan was a little on the small side but had good conformation, very good clarity, very bright, long, silky fur, with attractive guard hair and lots of eye appeal, going on to take Best Young

Standard Male, Best Young Standard, Best Standard and Reserve Show Champion.

The 2nd to this having good size and conformation, good density but a bit dull. Onto the medium colour phase, the 1st a large animal with good conformation and clarity, long fur, in good show condition, going on to take Reserve Best Young Standard Male and Reserve Best Young Standard.

Onto the Adult Standard Females, the 6 animals were split into two colour phases. The medium dark 1st ribbon was huge with good conformation, coverage and density with good fur type but a little loose on the hips, going on to take Best Adult Standard Female and Reserve Best Adult Standard, 2nd to this was a bit small with good conformation, coverage and clarity taking Reserve Best Adult Standard Female. Denise Oaten received another 1st in the medium colour phase, with good size and conformation, strong fur, good coverage, but a bit dull.

Onto the Adult Standard Males, 5 animals making one Medium Dark class, the 1st ribbon from the Crutchleys having good size, conformation, clarity and coverage, strong fur but slightly off condition, going on to take Best Adult Standard Male, Best Adult Standard and Reserve Best Standard, 2nd to this was a bit small, conformation was ok, strong fur with good clarity but slightly out of condition, taking also Reserve Best Adult Standard Male.

Onto Group E, the Young Mutations and an AOC class of 7 animals produced just one 1st ribbon winner, a violet from Sandy King with good size and conformation, good clarity and fur strength. A class of 5 Black Velvets produced a 1st ribbon for the Crutchleys, having good size, conformation and clarity, strong, silky fur with good coverage, going on to

take Best Young Mutation, Best Mutation and Best in Show, 2nd to this having good size, conformation and density but slightly down in clarity, going on to take reserve Best Young Mutation.

Onto the Adult Mutations and an AOC class of 4 produced a 1st ribbon ebony for the Crutchleys with good size and conformation, slightly down in clarity but long silky fur, and a 1st ribbon beige for Denise Oaten with good size conformation and clarity but slightly open fur. A class of 4 black velvets produced a 1st ribbon for the Crutchleys having good size and conformation, silky strong fur just slightly down in clarity but good coverage and condition. 2nd to this was from James Buchan, good size, conformation and coverage but a little grey in the neck.

Judging for Best Adult Mutation.

The Best of the 1st ribbon winners in the Adult Mutations were the Ebony (F3) and the Black Velvet (F4).

In judging we don't look for an animal outstanding in one particular quality but an animal that has a balance of all the good qualities with no major faults. These two animals, although totally different, on balance were very equal in quality. When this situation occurs, the way I look at it is, the ebony was a very high quality example, one of the best I have seen on the judging table, whereas the black velvet, although of 1st ribbon quality was not anywhere near the best of the black velvets I have seen in the past, so the ebony became Best Adult Mutation. When judging I will always reward what I consider a step forward in quality, of course not all judges may agree with me and they are entitled to their opinion.

Well done to James Buchan achieving Reserve Best in Show and Best Standard with a slightly small but very bright animal, which I am sure, when this one starts breeding will be very beneficial to his herd.

Overall a most enjoyable show, helped by Judge-under-instruction Sian Allcoat who performed very well and will do even better, and louder as her confidence improves.

When teaching Judges-under-instruction, I find with many of them, the most difficult aspect is building up their self confidence, so when I spend the day trying to do this and then someone, who should know better, says something that is likely to undermine this I find it most annoying. (Name supplied if requested).

Paul Spooner