

Judges Report – North Region Show, Birdwell, January 28th 2018

Judge – Georgina Busher

I duly travelled up to Barnsley and after some searching found the comfortable hotel kindly recommended to me by Sandy King. I had taken the precaution of Googling it, but alas the directions had not been updated since a terrifying new junction had been opened (which I gather has been confusing the natives and not just me) so I got to know the area quite well by the time I arrived! Next morning, I found my way to Birdwell and was very impressed with the hall. It looked as if it was a relic of the Second World War - is it listed? - but had been very well modernised inside and was just the place for a chinchilla show, no wonder it is a regular Northern venue. I was also impressed to find a contingent from Scotland there, and it was so nice to see them, we Southerners don't get to see you Northerners very often, and it is great when we do.

There were sixty chinchillas entered, and after the usual colour phasing I started with a class of three medium/dark young standard females. There was a first ribbon for a large well furred animal of reasonable colour, except for a slightly muddy tum, then we dropped to a third for an animal without the desired blocky conformation, being narrow over the shoulders, and there was no award for the final chin which was badly out of condition, with weak fur. They were followed by a class of three Mediums, and again I awarded a first ribbon, this time to a good coloured animal, with nice dense quality fur, good conformation and good size. A third went to a large chin with nice fur and finish, but very down in colour by comparison with the first, and there was an H/C for a better coloured chinchilla, but which had weak fur over the hips and was not in show condition. The Medium first ribbon winner became Best Young Female and the Medium/Dark was Reserve, so well one Sandy King and Paul Spooner.

There were only four Young Standard Males and the one Medium/Dark took a second ribbon, being rather long and narrow and lacking coverage over the hips. It had nice tight fur on the back but weakened down the sides and needed more fur in the neck area. The one Medium did get a first ribbon, it was a good size, blocky, and of good clear colour, with nice coverage and fur strength. The last two young males were Darks and they went first and second. The first was a very nice, good quality animal, and the second, though much smaller, had good fur, was of clear colour and was blocky. Sandy's Dark became Best Young Male, but this time James Buchan's Medium was Reserve., so well done to him too.

There were no Novice Young Standard Animals on show.

There were three animals up for Best Young Standard, when Sandy's large well-furred Medium female just pipped her very attractive dark male, where a slight dip in its neck just spoiled his conformation, for first place, but he took Reserve.

There were nine Adult Standard females, starting with the Medium/darks. The first ribbon winner was a great big animal, with good fur strength and finish, a really nice chinchilla. The second did not have the strength of fur but was a good colour and blocky. It was smaller than the first animal, and there was an H/C for a younger animal whose fur still needs to develop, but which showed promise. The Mediums also had a first ribbon for a big animal, with tight fur and a nice shape, but not so bright for colour. The second was a better colour but the fur was weaker. The third went down on condition but could improve. The first Dark was very big, and maybe I was a bit generous as the fur was all over the place, maybe the groomer wasn't concentrating on the job in hand? I also gave a H/C to a small chin which lacked fur in the neck and clarity. I thus had three firsts to choose from for best adult standard

female which went deservedly to Paul for his excellent Medium/Dark with Sian's female which was second to it following hard upon.

There were eight Adult Standard males. Paul's M/D had a first - I have down good colour, good finish, good size, well developed fur - what's not to like? In the Dark class they went 1,2,3. The first was a big blocky animal, with strong stand-up fur, and good coverage coming down over the hips. The second was another good chins, but the fur was weaker than the first and lay rather flat, the third was very small for an adult, but had nice tight fur and a clear bright colour. There were four Extra Darks. The first was the best all round, being of good size, with good fur and nice blocky conformation. The second was only fair for colour and size, but had very good finish The third was a very big animal with weaker fur, again the groomer could have been more particular as there was loose fur all over its back. I gave an H/C to the fourth animal, it was not a true Extra Dark being much lighter in colour than the others and lacked good conformation. There was also a First ribbon for a very good Novice animal, well prepared, in good condition and having a very nice clear colour. It went on to win the Best Novice Award, so congratulations to Kelly Buchan. The Best Adult Standard Male was Paul's very nice Dark, and the Reserve was Sian's Extra Dark. Paul did very well with his Adult Standards, they were good quality and well presented. Congratulations.

After a very good lunch, kindly prepared by various members and friends of the Region, it was time to get down to the Mutations. There were thirteen youngsters and five young Novices and I started with a class of three beiges. The first ribbon went to a really good animal of Sandy's, who has bred quality beiges for as long as I can remember. Unfortunately, it had acquired a water stain during the day, but I ignored that as its fur basically was so good, nice and tight and dense, with excellent colour and clarity. It was a good size and had blocky conformation, and no hint of tinge. It became Best Young Mutation. There was a third ribbon for a smaller darker beige chinchilla, with good conformation but lacking finish. The third animal received no award as it was way out of show condition.

I then moved on to the AOCs, starting with two Sullivan Violets, both of which were very nice but sadly lacking in a good violet/blue colour. I gave them first and second ribbons, the first was big with a good shape but needing stronger fur over the hips, the second needed a bigger size and better conformation, although it had nice tight fur and was in good show condition. Next up were two Black Velvets. The first had a better depth of colour and very nice silky fur. The second needed much more mutation coverage over the flanks and at the back of the neck area. Both animals showed promise for the future. Two interesting Royal Blues came next, and with outstanding generosity I gave them a second and a third ribbon respectively. They were both rather small, and lacked coverage over their flanks and hips, and were not nearly blue enough, but they were in good condition and well prepared and I think people who embark on the long road to producing show quality versions of new mutations should be encouraged. It takes patience, perseverance and time, but eventually improvement becomes apparent, thanks to the dedication of particular breeders - look at the violets and the self blacks, for example. After this I gave a first to a rather small brown velvet with good quality fur and attractive colour and a third to another bigger one, of good colour and conformation but whose fur had slightly curled over tips. A large pink/white animal did not get a ribbon as its colour was not acceptable, being very apricot tinged. The Novices did well:- Kelly Buchan got a first for a good brown velvet of nice size and colour and Heather Arnstein took Reserve Young mutation with her very good black velvet which had well developed mutation fur and a good blue colour. She also won ribbons with her other three entire in this class, a second for a nice Sullivan Violet of good colour, a third for another violet, and a third for an ebony violet, which had good fur quality but needed to be much darker in colour. But very well done, you and Kelly won't be Novices for long at this rate!

We then came to the last class of the day, the Adult Mutations, 10 in the Main class and 3 Novices.

I started with three Wilson/whites and gave a first to a big clear blue white chin with lots of reasonably strong fur, in good condition. The second ribbon went to another big animal, but it had softer fur than the first and rather a creamy colour. There was no ribbon for a third animal as it was a very poor muddy colour. In the AOC class a pink white gained a second ribbon, it was a very good size but had slightly weak fur, but was a good clear colour. A Sullivan Violet had a first, it had very good colour and was in excellent condition but was rather small for an adult. A homobeige in excellent condition and of good size and colour had a first ribbon, as did also a nice coloured big beige with good fur quality. A brown velvet with rather a lot of loose fur on its back got an H/C, and a black velvet with rather long, loose fur got a second. The Novice Class consisted solely of Black Velvets, all shown by Kelly Buchan. The first ribbon winner was a good size and colour, well covered with mutated black fur - a handsome chinchilla. The second needed better coverage with too much standard fur still showing for an adult, the third animal got a H/C, it was right out of condition. The Best Adult Mutation was Paul's Sullivan Violet and Dave Green took Reserve with his Beige. Best Mutation was Sandy's excellent young Beige and Reserve was Paul's Violet.

Finally, I awarded Grand Show Champion to Paul Spooner for his lovely Medium/Dark Adult Standard female and Reserve to Sandy King's young Beige. The Novice Award went to Kelly Buchan, for her lovely Extra Dark Adult Standard Male.

Many congratulations to the ribbon winners, and especially to those winning major awards., and to the Novices for breeding and preparing such commendable chinchillas. Thank you very much for asking me to judge your Show, I really enjoyed my foray "up north", and seeing you all again. It was one of the best organised shows I have ever judged at, animals just arrived on the table for each class as if by magic, and always the right ones, and you kept the judge's coffee flowing too! I hope I see you all again at the National.

Georgie Busher
Senior Judge
President NCS