

Judges Report – Scottish Show 25th November 2018

Judge: Siân Allcoat

To break up a 6-hour drive, I ventured up to Carlisle the Saturday before and spent the night in a B&B, then continued the following morning to the show venue in Maddiston. Although there were only four exhibitors and 2 animals in the assessment class, the quality of the chinchilla's present was impressive. It was also nice to see a number of spectators who were not exhibiting since this meant that there was an even better atmosphere at the show, which I felt was very relaxed and friendly.

After colour phasing, we started off with a class of Medium Dark Females. The first in the class was for Aileen and David Blakey. At 5 months old it had good size and conformation. It was a bright blue chin with a nice white belly, unfortunately, it was not in top show condition and was priming in the hip area. However, despite its condition, it was the worthy winner of the Reserve Best Young Female award. The 2nd in the class was from James Buchan and again was an animal with clear colour and a white belly, however, the preparation could have been better. The HC from Wendy French was well prepared, but could have been bigger and was somewhat wedgy.

We then went onto a class of three Dark Young Females. This class provided us with the Best Young Standard Female, Best Young Standard, Best Standard and ultimately the Grand Show Champion. She was bred by James Buchan and what a lovely female she was! Not only did she have excellent conformation and good fur density, but her lovely blue colour and contrasting white belly meant she had bags of eye appeal. A well-deserved winner of the show! There was no 2nd but a third for Aileen and David, for a chin who had acceptable conformation, but was a bit open on the hips and out of condition on the day. The HC for Wendy was a bit small and unfortunately was steely grey rather than the blue grey we all strive to achieve.

We then moved onto the Young Standard Males. We had three Mediums, which produced a 2nd and HC for James. The 2nd ribbon winner was nicely prepared, had reasonably strong upright fur along the back but soft baby fur on the hips. Size and conformation were good and it had reasonable clarity of colour. The HC was still a real baby and needed to develop further.

The Dark class was the best class in the Young Standard Males, deservedly producing the Best Young Standard Male and Reserve Young Standard Male. All four animals were exhibited by David and Aileen. There was very little to choose between the top two animals, it was one of those classes where, although the two up for the top awards were quite different "types", as a judge you need to work out the balance of the different qualities. Both chinchillas had good size and conformation (the 2nd ribbon winner's conformation was in fact excellent and had the edge), fur density was good on both and the 2nd ribbon animal was in better condition. However, it did not have the blueness of the 1st ribbon winner which meant that B19 just pipped it to take the 1st ribbon and Best Young Standard Male. Both were very good animals. The 3rd ribbon winner was another good chin but did not quite have the fur strength of the 1st and 2nd ribbon winners, while the HC had soft fur which didn't bounce back.

We then moved onto the two Medium Dark Males, with a 2nd going to David and Aileen and a 3rd to James. The 2nd was just 4 months old and had very much baby fur. However, it had a blueness about it and is one that needs to be put back into the shed to see how it develops. The 3rd ribbon winner

from James had decent conformation, the colour was good, but the fur was soft and breaking up, this was not helped by the fact it was priming.

We then progressed onto the Adult females of which there were two Medium Darks, both bred by Aileen and David. Unfortunately, I could only award a 2nd and 3rd. The 2nd ribbon went to a huge blocky female, it had reasonable density but the fur was soft. It could not be awarded a 1st since as well as soft fur, it was not as clear and as blue as I would have liked. The 3rd had better colour than the 2nd, but the fur was open on the hips.

The two Adult Standard Males were again exhibited by David and Aileen. Once more, there was no 1st ribbon but a 2nd for the Dark (D11) and a 3rd for the medium D12. The 2nd ribbon winner had the better colour of the two, but it was out of condition and the fur looked on the short side. The 3rd ribbon animal was of acceptable size and conformation, but was well out of condition and somewhat down on colour.

With no 1st ribbon winners among the 4 Adult Standards, there was no Best or Reserve Adult Standard.

We then took a break for lunch, and I particularly enjoyed the lovely soup made by Wendy and the chocolate cake made by Natalie Buchan.

After lunch, we started with a very good class of 5 Wilson Whites. The top 3 all bred by James stood out for clarity of colour. Looking at the dates of birth on the back of the cards of these three chinchillas, it became apparent they were likely to be litter mates. As I described it on the day, a “dream” litter of 3 Wilson Whites, but James put me right after the show, all three were male that’s chin breeding for you! All three were well prepared and had great clarity of colour and good fur density for 4-month-old chinchillas, there was little sign on any of them of having fur lying down on the sides. The 1st ribbon winner was not the biggest of chinchillas, just acceptable in size but was the clearest of the trio and the white fur demonstrated lovely clarity and the standard grey fur that was present was blue. The 2nd ribbon winning animal appeared to have had the best of the milk from mum and the conformation and size was the best of the three, but it was not quite as clear as the winner nor the 3rd ribbon winner in the class. However, still a nice Wilson White. The 3rd had marginally better colour and fur than the 2nd, but was really badly let down by size, it had to be put in 3rd position because of this. Hopefully, as it gets older it will catch up.

The HC in the class went to David and Aileen for a well-prepared animal that showed good size and conformation and reasonable density, however, looking over the tips on the fur on its back it showed creaminess. The HC, again from David and Aileen, had decent fur strength but lacked clarity and blueness.

We then moved on to a very good class of 5 young Black Velvets. The 1st ribbon animal went on to become the Reserve Best Young Mutation and Reserve Mutation and was bred by James. It was a chin with lovely dense blue-black fur, decent conformation, it was well prepared and had the intensity of colour we look for in Black Velvets. A close 2nd to this was from David and Aileen, again good size and conformation, a lovely clear belly but it did not have quite the intense black of the winner. The 3rd in the class was again from James, a very young animal at just 4½ months old. For a Black Velvet of that age it was very well covered with excellent veiling. The fur density was good although it still had some

soft baby fur. A chin with lots of potential. The two HC's in the class needed more intense black coverage and the clarity was not as good as the others in the class.

Next was an AOC class. Once more, a 1st for James for a 4½ month old Beige with acceptable size, colour and conformation. It had good fur strength, hence, deserved its 1st ribbon. A 3rd was given for a Sullivan Violet bred by Aileen and David. It had good size and conformation, but the fur was weak and lying down on the sides, it was also somewhat lacking in blueness. Next in the AOC was two Self Blacks, both bred by David and Aileen. The 1st ribbon winner was an exceptional example of this mutation, it was well prepared and in great show condition. It had good, strong, dense upright fur and was of good size. The exceptional feature of this chinchilla was the intense blue-black colour of the fur, so much so that when judging for the special awards the intensity of the black and blueness of the fur was at least as good as the Black Velvets it came up against. This chin went all the way to win Best Young Mutation, Best Mutation and ultimately Reserve Grand Show Champion. A VERY good animal. The 2nd Self Black was also a good example, with strong upright fur but when looking over the tip of the fur, it had a slight brown tinge.

A class of three very well-prepared Pink Whites from Wendy was next up on the bench. The best animal in the class was awarded a 2nd, it had dense fur and was the clearest of the three, unfortunately, it was just too small to be able to achieve the top ribbon. The 3rd ribbon winner was again on the small side, it had reasonable fur but the clarity could have been better. The HC was again very well presented, it had acceptable fur strength but sadly, was down on colour.

The Adult AOC class consisted of five animals. There were 2 good Black Velvets achieving a 1st for James and a 2nd for Kelly Buchan. Kelly was not present on the day, but James had kindly brought the animal along to the show for her. These two picked up the honours of Best Adult Mutation and Reserve Best Adult Mutation. The 1st was well prepared, had excellent veiling and a nice intense black colour, the size was just acceptable. The close 2nd to this from Kelly, had decent size and conformation, good veiling and probably just edged it in terms of clarity over the 1st ribbon winning animal. However, it was not in top show condition on the day, showing signs of some staining on the belly and under its chin. Still, a good breeding animal.

One Wilson White was put on the bench by Aileen and David. This realised a 3rd ribbon because although the fur density was quite good, the size and conformation could have been better and comparing it to the top young Wilson Whites, it was creamy. James achieved a 2nd with a nice adult Beige with lovely dense fur, good size and conformation, however, as is a particular problem with this Beiges, it was just starting to go over and showing signs of oxidisation, hence why it was unable to achieve a 1st. Wendy, achieved a 3rd with a large big blocky Homo-Beige. Although she had done her very best to prepare it, it was not in show condition, it had started to oxidise and the fur was lying down on the sides.

James young female was the well-deserved Grand Show Champion and Aileen and David's Self Black became Reserve, beating their own Young Standard Male, whose condition had unfortunately deteriorated as the day had gone on. However, their Self Black, was a really excellent animal and thoroughly deserved its position.

I would like to take the opportunity of thanking all the Scottish members and others attending the show for making me feel so welcome and making every effort to boost the number of animals' present. I thoroughly enjoyed the day and well done to everyone for all the awards.