

Judges Report – West Midlands and Wales Show

Calf Heath Village Hall **Sunday 10th January 2016**

The first show of 2016 was at the splendid central location of Calf Heath Village Hall, usually the judge for the day can have a leisurely travel to the show and arrive around 10.a.m. refreshed for the day's work ahead. Unfortunately no such luck for me, as I'm the West Midlands Show Manager so as usual I was at the venue before 8.a.m. and begun setting up the hall, at least this would mean I'd be the first to sample my dad's yummy bacon and egg sandwich. I was soon joined by Hannah Mitchell and her partner Oliver who helped get us set up. Before long, it was lovely to see some regular faces turn up to help finish the setting up and this included Jean Beardshaw who'd travelled 300 plus miles (each way) to support the show. Stephen Helmore was on the road early to get there in good time, but sadly had a blow out on the motorway, most importantly he was ok and just needed a tyre replacement but had to wait for the AA. Needless to say once sorted he made excellent time and managed to get the lights up and connected well before the show was due to start.

The turn out for this show was superb, with high entry numbers and novices making up a third of the entries. Sadly Lorraine Prince and her husband Matt had made the long journey to show some lovely animals, only to find that a newly purchased vehicle had broken down at home and needed to be recovered. I managed to look at the animals at lunchtime for them before the RAC turned up, the animals were nice animals, well presented and very useful. I know Lorraine was so disappointed as her and Matt had broken down on the way to the Bugbrooke venue exactly one year previous. Lorraine, hopefully you will attend the next show without any vehicle problems, you have now had more than your share of breakdown bad luck.

Down to business, we colour phased approximately 50 standards in just a few minutes, with minimal fuss and started as usual with the Young Standard females.

Medium darks, no 1st but a 2nd for Heather Boncey for a blocky young female with fine fur, but priming over the hips. The 3rd again from Heather was blocky with a longer more open fur, good belly but salt and peppery, two HC's for reasonable females from Heather and Andrew Lee completed the group.

Sadly the Mediums weren't any better and could only produce a 3rd and HC. The 3rd this time from Andrew was clear in colour, a blocky type with a clean belly but the fur was choppy, lacked density and it was in poor show condition. The HC from Stephen Helmore was also blocky with improved density but the colour was down.

Finally a single dark produced our first 1st of the day for Andrew Lee, a blocky youngster which had good even coverage with a reasonable fur type and clear colour and well prepared.

Nine novice young females gave us a class of 3 medium dark, this was a good class and all 3 entries were useful. Hannah Mitchell came out on top in 1st place with a blocky fine furred blue chinchilla of good density that had been well presented, it wasn't quite in top show condition but still couldn't be denied the Best Young Female group prize, very well done. The 2nd award went to Jean Beardshaw with another nice baby that had good clear colour, clear white belly well presented but not the blueness or density of the winner. The 3rd, this time from Craig and Karly Donkersley, was also a useful female being of excellent size and confirmation with a strong fur but density and show condition needed improvement.

Mediums provided us with the Reserve Young Female award for Jean with a clear, blue and sharp baby that had been very well presented but was a little open furred and needed to fill out. The 2nd, this time from Cameron Holmes was a good blocky shape with strong fur but the colour looked washed out compared to the winner.

Two darks, again from Hannah, were awarded a 1st and 2nd. Both females were useful, blocky, well furred with even veiling and pretty good density; the 1st just having the marginal better colour.

Young Males

Medium Dark Young Males gave a HC for Stephen Helmore for a dense fine furred male that was well covered but sadly off colour.

The Darks produced a 1st ribbon for Heather, which was a blocky long furred chinchilla that badly lacked show condition, this was a shame as he was of good overall quality with lots of guard hair and eye appeal. A well covered baby

achieved a 3rd ribbon for Lorraine Prince, this had good density and veiling coverage, clear colour but was a little narrow in the shoulders.

Again the novice entries gave us the group prizes for Jean Beardshaw. Her 1st ribbon medium dark being big and blocky of very even coverage, clear and bright with a good length of fur and presented in immaculate order with eye appeal. This baby went all the way to Best Young Standard, Reserve Best Standard and was just pipped to Reserve Show Champion. Congratulations to Jean who has worked so hard with her chinchillas. The 2nd to this from Cameron was also very nice, being well covered with a tight fur and a sharp belly. The 3rd from Karly and Craig was also a useful baby that was reasonable in all departments but lacked condition and had a few grooming lines (no excuse for Karly as she is a qualified hair stylist, lol, wink, wink!).

A single Medium received a 3rd for Kayleigh and Jay, it was blocky, well presented and showed blueness over the tips but sadly had a slightly muddy belly.

The single novice Dark, again from Jean, gave us the Reserve Young Standard winner. This was a young baby that had beautiful fine dense fur that was sharp and clear but was light on the hips and slightly narrow in the neck and shoulders, perhaps it will fill out as it matures.

8 main bench Adult Females gave us 4 medium darks, 2 mediums and 2 darks. The 1st ribbon Medium Dark for Denise Oaten was good size, blocky of good density, well presented but slightly down in clarity of colour. The 2 HC's from Andrew showed blueness but the confirmation and density needing much improvement as did the show condition, possible Violet carriers ?

Denise was also awarded a 2nd in the Medium colour phase for a large blocky female that had even coverage but was open furred.

The Darks produced yet again another 1st for Denise for a female of good colour, even veiling coverage, blocky, silky fine fur and guard hair of fair size, she went on to become Best Adult Female and Reserve Adult Standard. The 2nd to this from Heather was a useful female with long strong fur, blocky shape that sadly was out of show condition and choppy over the hips.

The Adult Males produced another 1st and Reserve Best Adult Male for Denise, a big blocky male that has long strong fur of good density in good condition that just failed in veiling over the neck and shoulders. The 2nd from

Paul Spooner was an absolute cracker, one for the judge to take home, good size, blocky, a good length of dense fur, loads of silky guard hair, well veiled and blue but sadly had a sizeable extremely visible fur slip over the one hip. It was plain to see to anyone this was a lovely chin that couldn't progress further.

Extra darks were next and this time a 1st for Paul that was of reasonable size, blocky, very good veiling coverage, fine strong dense fur of good blue colour with eye appeal that went all the way to Grand Show Champion. We found out at the end of the show that this was the litter mate to the cracker from the dark class, what a litter !!! Many congratulations Paul. The 2nd from Siân Allcoat was also a very nice male, good density, clear, good size and shape but sadly show condition was lacking, with the fur choppy over the hips, it was past its best.

A lunch of pulled pork, pizza, crusty bread and chips followed by profiteroles or jam roly poly and custard was enjoyed by all.

We then pressed on with the young mutations of which there were plenty !!! First up were the Wilson Whites which were generally quite a nice group, the first was a really big blocky animal with strong upright fur of good clear colour in fair condition. The 3rd was also a useful chin with good shape and size and a fine dense fur, but a touch dull compared to the winner. The little HC was very much the baby of the group with soft fur but displaying a nice clear colour and shows potential for the future, all were from Heather, well done.

Next a huge class of violets of which all had attributes of quality, the 1st was a lovely chin, blocky shape, fair size for the age and in perfect condition, it couldn't be denied that with a lovely blue colour and sharp belly it was a delight. The 2nd was also a nice example, it was in good condition, beautifully prepared and still with a blue colour but did not have quite the clarity of the winner and wasn't as fine furred, but still a quality chin. These two became Best and Reserve Young mutation with the winner going all the way to RGSC, well done Sandy. The rest of the class from Paul, Andrew, Stephen and Rosemary all had quality in various degrees, some being dense with sheen but lacking blueness. I just wanted to make clear that this was a good class and it makes me think that the Violet chinchilla is in good hands for the future.

The Black Velvets were next and in general were a disappointing bunch. The best a 3rd from Lisa Proctor was clear in colour, with a fine fur but the mutation fur was still quite a narrow band and needed to be more intense.

Similar comments for the 2 HC's from Siân Allcoat and Stephen Helmore, clear but not enough mutation coverage.

An AOC class contained 2 Brown Velvets which were awarded a 2nd and 3rd both belonging to Lisa. The 2nd had even coverage and blocky shape with fine fur, the colour was ok but the condition was poor. The 3rd although in better prime, was darker and sadly showed signs of slight tinge across the tips. For Beige and Browns in particular, damp weather does not help with oxidising, and my goodness it's been damp. Andrew received a 3rd for his Pink White which was clear in colour with a sharp belly, well presented but lacked density and a little in the neck. Denise had the HC which was dense and blocky but more of a custard cream colour.

Novice mutations kicked off with another good class of Violets with Jean taking 1st and 2nd. The 1st was big blocky and blue but the fur although strong, was open. The 2nd was sadly small for its age but still clear and denser than the 1st. Cameron took 3rd with another big blocky Violet that was well furred but clarity was down to both the 1st and 2nd. Two HC's completed a good class for two reasonable young violets from Kayleigh and Jay and again Jean, my notes say both were fair all rounders.

A 2nd ribbon Black Velvet from Kayleigh and Jay was just a snippet off a 1st - being good clear colour, reasonable coverage for the age with a good width of mutation fur. It just lacked a little in fur strength as on close inspection the fur just tended to flop on the top of the hips and over the flanks, maybe a good cold spell will help. A 3rd ribbon Beige from Jean was blocky, fine furred and well presented but the clarity was slightly down showing slight tinge over the tips. The final novice young mutation was an ultra for Hannah Mitchell that was well furred and blocky, well presented but slightly muddy over the tips.

Adult mutations first group was the Black Velvets and again I was disappointed. The best a 3rd from Siân was a nice chin with sharp clear colour and reasonable coverage but size and confirmation were a little off what's needed to be in the higher ribbons and sadly the animal was very choppy and out of condition - what a shame. The HC's from Sian and Denise were both of good size and confirmation, good density but both looked to be past their best and very out of prime, probably bought along to help with numbers.

Violets again were an impressive bunch with a full house of ribbons. The 1st from Paul was of good stamp, big, blocky, blue with strong fur in fairly good condition. The 2nd from Stephen was very dense with a beautiful sheen but the

confirmation was a little narrow and sadly the animal was down in clarity which could be cage stain. We all know how difficult it is to keep adult chinchillas looking at their best, it's a shame as the animal had lots of quality. Andrew Lee took the rest of the ribbons for good all round Violets, generally blocky, generally clear in colour of decent fur strength. Again a good class.

AOC gave us 2 Brown Velvets of which Siân came out on top with a blocky fine furred brown that was a pale chocolate colour, the colour although paler was indeed even and finished at a clear sharp belly line. The 2nd from Denise was the deeper darker colour showing blueness below the tips but which had sadly oxidised, both were ok for size and shape with Denise's 2nd being slightly denser.

Denise took the Best Adult Mutation award on the day with a very good Beige, excellent size and shape with even veiling coverage of good clarity but just a fraction open furred. Paul Spooner's Adult Violet was a deserving Reserve Adult Mutation.

5 novice AOC Adult Mutations were the final group. Jean received a 2nd for a good Self Black with plenty of quality in all departments but just too small for an adult. Jean again won a 2nd, this time for a Violet of good clear colour and fine fur. Cameron's 3rd ribbon Violet was of good confirmation and well prepared but just down in clarity to the 2nd. Another ribbon for Cameron this time a 2nd ribbon for his Black Velvet that was of good size and confirmation, with a strong fine fur but needing better coverage and intensity. Finally a 2nd for Kayleigh and Jay's Ultra that was of fair size but a little narrow in confirmation, the fur was strong but a little coarse and open but the colour was clear with a good belly.

When judging for Best at the end of the show, the adult standard although not quite in the condition of the young Violet couldn't be denied, being superior in his density, strength and volume of fur he was a deserving winner and I'm sure a delight to Paul who hasn't done too much showing for a while. Let's hope this means we will see him more frequently! Sandy's young Violet was a deserving Reserve with its lovely blue colour and prepared to perfection. Jean's Reserve Standard in show was extremely close which I'm sure made the incredibly long journey home a little more bearable.

The show was a real triumph, I would like to thank Siân for her hard work in the kitchen and superb lunch that was enjoyed by all, also thank you Sandy for The

food contributions, very kind of you. There were plenty of smiling faces and everyone seemed to enjoy the day, the particular delight for me is that the novice entries made up over 1/3rd of all entries at this event. Even more impressive is that the quality and PREPARATION of these exhibits was wonderful to see and gives me hope for the future. I would just like to remind everyone if we could all stay just 5 minutes longer at the end of the show and help tidy up it wouldn't mean that the same folk are always left to do it. I think people sometimes just don't think, it's not meant with any malice, it's just everyone wants to get home. I'm just hoping this gentle reminder will bring it to the forefront of people's mind for the remaining shows regardless of region.

Thanks for a fun day.

Kerry Bradburn
Senior Judge