

Judges Report – Northern Show - Bilsborrow 25/01/201

Judge Georgie Busher

I was pleased to be asked to judge the North Region show and even more pleased to get there, after a two hour detour because the A34 was closed. After a comfortable night in a local inn I arrived at the hall to see several familiar faces from the North, including Scotland, and a reasonable number of animals. With several judges on hand to assist, the standards were rapidly colour phased, and as usual we started with the young standard females. I say “we” because at the last minute Barry Thornton (NCS Show member) and I agreed to Chris Galt being JUI for the day.

There was only one Medium animal, which gained a third ribbon for Paul Spooner, as it was lacking in fur quality, blueness and finish. Crutchleys two Medium/darks were better, getting a first and a third. They both had good conformation and fur but the first was a better colour and in better show condition. The Crutchleys also produced an excellent Dark animal, a good size for age, nice clear blue colour, with lovely flowing strong fur. Sandy King’s female had a third ribbon, it was not as good as the first all round, but still a good young female which needed to develop coverage and size.

The Dark was Best Young Female and the Medium Dark Reserve.

There were also five young standard males and again no first for the Medium top animal. It had good fur but was light on the hips and lacked coverage. There was also a third for the Crutchleys, the animal tended to have open fur and was down in colour, lacking clarity. In the Medium/dark class Sandy took a second for a good animal which unfortunately was not as sharp for colour as it could have been. Richard again took a first with his Dark young male, which was big and a good colour and conformation, but could have done with better coverage down the flanks. There was also a Highly Commended for Wendy French which was a reasonable size, but with soft, fluffy fur, which was slightly marked, and rather off colour. The Dark made Best Young Standard Male, and was Reserve Young Standard to the Dark Young female.

There were only two Adult Standard females, both the Crutchleys and they took first and second ribbons. The first had very good size and conformation and lots of good strong fur which was marginally duller than the second, which was very sharp for colour and had nice tight fur but was too small for an adult. There were also two adult standard males, both Crutchleys’, a medium dark and a dark, which both got first ribbons. The medium dark was small, with bright colour, strong fur with good silky guard fur, and a nice white under belly. The Dark was still smallish (I didn’t know their dates of birth but imagine they were both only just over the seven months), with tight fur and good even finish. It had excellent coverage and a lovely sharply contrasting white belly and was best Adult Standard Male and Best Adult Standard with the Medium Dark male as Reserve. But the Young Female took Best Standard animal with the dark adult male in Reserve. So congratulations to the Crutchleys for producing such a level, high quality, desirable bunch of animals, all well prepared (except for a bit of loose fur here and there!) and all in good condition.

The mutation classes were much more competitive and the ribbons were distributed more widely. There was a class of five young beiges, which Richard won with a big animal, a darker

colour than we are used to seeing these days, which will have to be watched for tinge, closely followed by a second and third for Wendy French, the second was bluer than the first ribbon winner, but didn't have the coverage or the size. The third was another step down as the colour was not as clear or as blue as either of the top two and it lacked coverage. There were some really nice Wilson/whites and Richard's first was lovely, big, blocky and blue, with good strong fur and excellent conformation. Wendy's second was also big, but the fur was weak on the hips and a little loose, and it was a little dull compared to the first. There was also an H/C for Crutchley's animal with good quality fur, but a slight yellow tinge. In the AOC class Wendy won a well-earned first with a very good Brown Velvet animal which was a little weak on the hips but had good colour and very good coverage. Richard's self/brown also got a first, a good quality animal with good wrap around fur of clear colour. There was a third and an H/C for Wendy's two Pink Whites. The third had weakfish fur which tended to lie flat and was not a clear colour, and the H/C was small, with rather weak fur and even more down in colour.

Finally Richard took his revenge on all show judges by facing us with a class of five ebonies, all as alike as two peas in a pod, which he subsequently confessed was not surprising as they all had the same sire. It takes one's eyes a while to adjust to so much blackness and to sort out the differences but we got there in the end. The first ribbon winner was a good blue/black colour, dense when you looked down into the fur, with good coverage, and a nice silky movement of the fur when the animal moved. The second was also a very good example of the colour phase, perhaps not with such density of colour but nice fur, particularly good over the hips. The third was a good size for its age, again another reduction in the depth of the blue black colour but it had also inherited the good quality fur, and the two H/Cs were also good, perhaps not such good conformation being rather too wide in the hips compared to the neck area, but still good quality chins. There were three Novice AOCs, Claire Johnson. There was second for a Self Brown, which was small but of reasonable for quality, a third for another self brown which did not have the required depth of colour in the wrap around fur, and an H/C for a Self Black which was simply not dark enough and had weaker fur on the flanks. But well done for a good effort with a difficult mutation to breed. The Best Young Mutation was the Wilson/White and the Reserve was the Beige, both belonging to Eddie and Richard.

There were thirteen Adult mutations and first up were four beiges. The class was won by Sandy King with a first for a big animal, nice and blocky, with good clear colour but slightly weak fur. There was a second for Richard for an animals with more open fur, which was not such a good blue beige colour as the first, and there were two H/Cs for French, for two smaller animals, both of acceptable beige colour, but both lacking finish and show condition. There were five Pink Whites, a first and second and two H/Cs for Crutchley and a third for Wendy. The first was a good animal, big with good conformation, a nice pure colour and reasonable fur strength. The second was a smaller animal, slightly yellow in colour, and it lacked the fur strength of the first. The third had a slightly blotchy appearance and was not so evenly finished, it was also more creamy in colour. Both the H/C's lacked the clear colour and fur strength of the first animal.

There were four AOCs, all Richard's. He got a first for a Deutsch Violet, a first for a Black Velvet, and a first for a Brown Velvet. There was also a third for another Deutsch violet. The Black was a lovely animal, big with good clear solid colour, but the coverage needs to develop further down the sides. The Brown Velvet was smaller, well covered with mutated fur which was good and tight. The Deutsch again was very large, had nice colour and good coverage, but rather weaker fur, and the third was too small for an adult, but had good coverage and good colour.

The Best Adult Mutation was Richard's Pink White and the Reserve was the Black Velvet. The young Wilson /White beat the adult for Best mutation and A1, the young standard female, was certainly correctly named as Grand Show Champion with the Wilson White in Reserve.

So well done to the Crutchleys, who had a field day, but also well done to the other ribbon winners, you came up against very strong competition and did well. Thanks to Barry for keeping the score, to everyone in the kitchen for a very good lunch, to the stewards and to Richard for show manager, and finally to Chris. I hope he enjoyed his day. I know it was a bit of a culture shock to find that judges have different ways of assessing the animals, but everyone has their own methods. I think he will make a good judge once he has had more training and experience, he has a good eye. He just needs to take it more slowly and not jump to conclusions, I hope he enjoyed it.

Georgie