

Judges Report – Scottish Region Show, Denny, 14 November 2021

Judge – Siân Allcoat

This was my first visit to the Scottish region for a few years and it was lovely to see all the familiar faces. A total of 49 animals were benched, which is extremely close to the numbers in the previous two shows this season, so well done to all the Scottish members for that. On a general note, I was impressed with the quality of the animals at the show and this certainly made the long journey worthwhile.

Young Standard Females

In the Young Standard Females' classes, there were 1 Medium, 2 Medium Darks and 4 Darks. There were two 1st, one for Aileen and David Blakey in the Dark colour phase and one for Wendy French in the Medium Dark. Aileen and David's female went on to take the Best Young Standard female and Wendy was Reserve. The top animal although only 4½ months old had a nice clear colour and fur type with the Reserve from Wendy having reasonable conformation and colour but not quite as bright as the winner. Both these chinchillas were well prepared and in reasonable show condition unlike the 2nd ribbon animals in their classes (from Aileen and David) which were unfortunately held back because they were out of condition on the day.

Young Standard Males

Onto the Young Standard Males, of which there were four (2 Medium Dark, 1 Dark and two Extra Dark). There was no first in the Medium Dark Class, just a 2nd and a 3rd because both chins were somewhat down in colour. There was a 1st for David and Aileen in the Dark colour phase for a very nice animal, with good fur density and colour, however, the fact that it was not in top condition meant it was beaten by the 2nd ribbon winner in the Extra Dark class for the position of Reserve Best Young Standard Male. The 1st ribbon winning Extra Dark Young Standard, again from Aileen and David, went all the way from Best Young Standard Male to Best Young Standard, Best Standard and eventual Grand Show Champion, so congratulations to them both. This animal which I assume was approaching the seven months mark, was a very good size, had nice blocky conformation and a lovely plush dense blue fur type which meant it had bags of eye appeal. A worthy Grand Show Champion! The second to this not only went on to win Reserve Best Young Standard male but also Reserve Best Young Standard. It was again an excellent animal from David and Aileen with very good size and conformation, density of fur and blue in colour. Both chins had been well prepared by David (who apparently had spent about 10 hours grooming the previous day), with both animals presenting themselves nicely at the show.

Adult Standard Females

We then went onto the adults, starting with a class of 5 Dark Standard Females. This resulted in a 1st and 3rd for Kelly Buchan, a 2nd for James Buchan, and Aileen and David getting two HC's for two females who were in poor show condition on the day (despite all of David's grooming). Although a decent female, condition was also responsible for holding back Kelly's 3rd ribbon female in the class. Kelly's 1st in the Dark colour phase, had a balance of qualities with a nice blue colour, decent size, conformation and fur density and went on to win Reserve Best Adult Standard female. James' 2nd to this lost out because although still a good animal, it was not as bright and blue as the 1st. In the Medium Dark Class there was no 1st ribbon winner, just a 2nd and a HC since both chins being well out of condition and their colour looking different degrees of casty. In the Extra Dark class, Kelly's lovely female was given a well-deserved 1st ribbon and went on all the way to Reserve Best

Standard. This animal, which had been well prepared, was blue, with a lovely plushy fur type, and very good veiling. This gave the female loads of eye appeal, a very nice standard!

Adult Standard Males

There were just two Adult Standard Males both in the Dark colour phase and these were awarded a 1st and 3rd. James' 1st ribbon winner and automatic Best Adult Standard Male was a lovely animal with dense silky fur but it could not beat Kelly's Adult Standard Female to become Best Adult Standard, although it did get Reserve.

Novice Standards

In the novice standard classes there was just one animal and this was from Rory McDermott. Rory, had done a good job of preparing the animal, even though under the lights it showed the typical horseshow shaped priming line well down on its back (which you can't really disguise). The animal had good colour, a nice strong fur type but could only achieve a 2nd because it lacked size.

Young Mutations

After a lunch which included Wendy's famous homemade chicken soup, judging moved onto the Young Mutations. We started with a class of 3 Sullivan Violets that were being exhibited by David and Aileen and these were awarded a 2nd, 3rd and HC. The size and conformation of all three was acceptable, but they all suffered to different degrees from soft fur on the sides which made the fur look over long and it had a tendency to lie down.

The class of Black Velvets produced a 1st for James, a 2nd for Aileen and David and a HC for Wendy. James' little Black Velvet although only 4½ months old went all the way to become Reserve Grand Show Champion, a particularly unusual achievement for a Black Velvet so young! The animal had good conformation, it was small but an appropriate size for its age, but what was very unusual for such a young Velvet the veiling was almost complete, with no signs of grey in the neck and the veiling came right down the sides. Even though it was so young, it had the strong fur and was very well presented. The colour was good, the mutation fur being bluish and the belly a crisp white. It will be very interesting to see this chinchilla as an adult. The 2nd to this had good size and conformation and was actually marginally bluer, but the fur was not as strong, however, it was still good enough to go on to win Reserve Best Young Mutation. The veiling of the HC animal, although black, was not a desirable blue-black.

The purchased Black Velvet from Rory achieved a 2nd, although a decent chinchilla it could not achieve a 1st because the mutation fur needed to be a bit bluer and for a 5½ month old chinchilla it really needed to bulk out. As we all know, sometimes you can put a Black Velvet "away" and then months later go back to it and wonder when it started to look so good! Some are "slow burners", so I always try to hold onto them for as long as possible before making up my mind whether to keep them or not.

The AOC young mutations resulted in a further 3 firsts, one for James (a Pink White) and two for Aileen and David (a Dark Ebony and a Wilson White). James' Pink White had an acceptable amount of Beige influence while not being overly creamy, thereby, giving it good clarity of colour. Aileen and David's Wilson White was very well presented and had reasonable fur strength and clarity of colour, while the 1st Ebony which was the darker of the two ebony's entered and had better clarity of colour, although the 2nd to this had a marginally better fur type.

Adult Mutations

We then went onto the Adult Mutations starting with a class of three Homo Beige from James that got a 1st, 2nd and 3rd. On the day, the 1st in the class was on balance, the best of the three. It had decent fur strength and good colour and was good enough to achieve Best Adult Mutation. The 2nd was a lovely, big blocky animal which, had it not already started to oxidise, would have probably been at the top in this class of good animals. The 3rd ribbon Homo- Beige although the colour was good, it was just an acceptable size and the conformation was leaning towards being wedgy. James, also had a Beige in the AOC class which had good size, conformation and sufficient blueness and fur strength to achieve a 1st ribbon. There were two adult Black Velvets, with Kelly achieving a 1st for a chin which, although smaller than the 2nd ribbon animal from Aileen and David, was a brighter colour and in better show condition. Aileen and David animal although big and blocky, also had evidence of grey fur in the neck. Kelly's chinchilla went on to become Reserve Best Adult Mutation. There was a 2nd for Kelly for a Brown Velvet which sadly had gone over and was more "chocolate" brown than blue brown, and two 2nds for Wendy for a Pink White that was both big and blocky but lacked clarity of colour and an Ebony that also needed to be clearer to achieve a 1st.

Rory took to the show 3 other purchased mutations, a Blue Diamond (3rd); a White Violet Angora (1st) and a Beige Angora (2nd). This is the 2nd show Rory has attended and he had prepared the animals well before the show and then had received some help with grooming from James on the day (with James later commenting that Rory had done a very good job of removing all the dead fur from the animals prior to the show). The Beige Angora had good fur length, an attractive mane and tufts of fur on the ears, it was clear in colour but typical for this mutation was on the small size. Although it had been prepared well, there was a couple of places where the fur on the back was slightly uneven in length which meant it could only be awarded a 2nd. I later found out that this male had previously been in breeding with an aggressive female who had inflicted damage to the fur and this had not fully grown back so, given those circumstances, it did very well! The Violet White Angora was also an attractive animal that was in excellent show condition and presented very well. It was mainly white with a small amount of violet fur visible towards the tail (which as per the mutation guide meets the criteria for it being judged as a White Violet!). The fur was of good length, with reasonable strength and the clarity of colour was very good meaning it achieved a 1st. This was despite it again being on the small size. As an example of an Angora, it was a good one and it was a chinchilla with lots of eye appeal.

Rory's remaining purchased animal was a Blue Diamond (he obviously likes a challenge by focusing on some of the more difficult mutations!). Although the colour was good, the weakness was that the fur was choppy and different lengths over the back (whether that was how it was priming is difficult to say). This meant it could only be awarded a third.

At the end of the show, Aileen and David's young standard male became the clear GSC and then there was a close call between Kelly's Adult Standard Female and James very young Black Velvet. This was quite a difficult decision especially since James' Velvet was so young. However, its age and size could not hold it back and it became Reserve.

Congratulations to everyone who attended, there was a nice spread of awards amongst the exhibitors and also thank you for making me so welcome..