

# CAT GOSSIP

Phone : Battersea 4358

No. 2

DECEMBER 15th, 1926

Price 3d., post free

## WHAT CAT-LOVERS WRITE TO US.

"Very pleased indeed to see that you have started another journal and that the Cat Fancy is to have one of its own at last. Wishing you every success."—  
E. L'ESTRANGE WALSH.

"How exciting to think there is to be a real Cat Paper!"—PHYLLIS LEATHERDALE.

"Wish you all good luck."—G. CAMPBELL-FRASER.

"Of course you may rely on my help in every possible way for the new paper!"—HELEN HILL-SHAW.

"'CAT GOSSIP' just arrived, think it seems very nice. Will subscribe and also send stud advert."—  
E. ALLEN-MATURIN.

At a late moment I receive the bad news that my colleague, the lady who is Proprietor and Business Manager of this paper, is seriously ill, having caught cold at the Palace Show. I fear this may result in the paper not being all it should be for a week or two, as the business correspondence being in London and I down in the West country, some delays may result for which I beg your indulgence. If we gain the hoped-for support for this paper, it is my desire presently to come to London to live; purely for the purpose of editing it, and in this case, being at the centre of things I think, as an old journalist, I can promise you a really good Cat paper! The future lies entirely in your hands, dear readers!

In America the plan was adopted of debarring champions from open competition. The *Cat Review* remarked: "When the champions were shunted off into a class by themselves and barred from sharing in the Winner's points several years ago, the results were awaited with speculation and doubt by all thinking fanciers. . . . It was claimed that this rule was the only way to keep the already arrived champions from continually winning and keeping the other cats out of championships they might otherwise win were the better cats out of the way. . . . It is a shame to shelve a good cat after three or four shows, and that is what it amounts to when we graduate him into the Champion Class, where he can compete for only one prize in the show—Best Cat. . . . The champion class, as I have seen it growing, is a more nondescript class than the A.O.C., and cannot be giving satisfaction."

I have an idea that this Yankee fad would suit a grumbler or two here—but I don't think we are likely to have it foisted on us just yet.

## THE CAT OF DICK WHITTINGTON.

By M. Oldfield Howey.

Author of "The Horse in Magic and Myth," "The Encircled Serpent," etc.

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ALTHOUGH history records the names of some seven hundred and thirty Lord Mayors of London, yet such is the spell of the legend of the mayor who owed his position to his famous cat, that of the entire number, not excluding the Lord Mayor who reigns to-day, a large proportion of London's population know only the name of Dick Whittington, who departed this life more than five hundred years ago.

Though doubts have been cast on the veracity of portions of the story, it is certain that Whittington is no myth, and that his success in life was due to his cat, cannot be denied. The legend has been traced back to within a generation of his lifetime, and to authorities whom we cannot suppose either ignorant or untruthful. The date of Dick's birth has been variously given, but he appears to have entered this world about 1359, and was most probably born in Gloucestershire, though various other counties including Shropshire, Staffordshire and Lancashire, claim the honour.

According to old manuscripts in the British Museum, Dick was the fifth and youngest son of Sir William de Whittington—a Gloucestershire knight, descendant of an ancient Warwickshire family, proprietor of the manors of Pauntley in Gloucestershire, and Soler's Hope in Hereford—who lived in the reign of Edward III, and died in 1360. His mother was Joan, daughter of William Mansell, Sheriff of the county. The family possessions passed to William, the first-born son. Dick was only a few years old at the time of his father's death, and was not yet a man, when, in 1373, he lost his mother. He seems to have been the Cinderlad of his people, despised and outcast. So unhappy was the poor child, that, at the age of seven, having heard that the streets of London were paved with gold, he determined to run away from home, and seek his fortune there.

Setting out on foot, he worked his way to the city, enduring many hardships on the road. Arrived there, he was saved from starvation by the kindness of a Mr. Fitzwarren, a rich merchant of Leadenhall Street, who received him into his household in the humble capacity of scullion. He was well treated by his master and his master's daughter, the beautiful Mistress Alice. But "the vile jade of a cook," under whom he worked, abused and ill-used him, and forced him to sleep in a wretched garret swarming with rats and mice. These so disturbed his rest that when a merchant who

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tonic; one patent food and ditto medicine, and Friar's Balsam for ear canker—an absolute specific, two or three drops poured in every second day, will often cure long-standing and most purulent cases. Castor oil is also soothing for this ailment, but I do NOT believe in powders of any kind being placed in the ear: they may have a certain curative action, but are obviously apt to set up a mechanical irritation.

\* \* \* \* \*

My friendly opponent, M. Steens, of Antwerp, has purchased from Miss Dixon the Siamese kitten Princess Bastit, referred to by our reporter at Kentish Town as a beautiful kitten.

\* \* \* \* \*

Miss Perkins, Hon. Sec. of the Neuter Cat Club, points out that Mrs. Aubrey's Chinchilla Ivan could not take the Rapunzel Cup at Kentish Town, he being a L.H. and his owner also not being a Club member. Miss Perkins has sold her Chinchilla kitten, Just Robin, to an American purchaser.

\* \* \* \* \*

We are sorry to say that the lady who promised us a report of the Smokes at Kentish Town has not supplied it.

\* \* \* \* \*

Miss Wakeford's well-known Blue S.H. Ch. Prince Mordkin and his sire, Man Friday, enter our stud columns this week. Miss Wakeford is in China at the moment, but Mrs. Wakeford was in charge of her cats at Kentish Town and very pleased at the successes of kittens sired by these studs. All the awards in Blue classes, by the way, did not give satisfaction, but the light was most unfavourable, shedding, as I noticed, a sort of tawny tinge on the blue-jackets.

\* \* \* \* \*

We are pleased to notice that the Blue Persian queen Blue Ball, which took 1st in adult females at Paris, was bred by our contributor, Mrs. Basnett.

\* \* \* \* \*

Our Belgian contemporary, *Chasse et Peche*, gives almost in its entirety this week Mr. H. C. Brooke's article on the Malay Cat, published in CAT GOSSIP, No. 8. A superbly typical Siamese head occupies the front cover. M. Armand Steens of Antwerp, known to many of my readers, will contribute a weekly cat column to the Brussels paper.

## ORIGIN OF THE SIAMESE CAT.

By LILIAN J. VELEY, D.Sc.

AS the earliest exhibitor of Siamese Cats in this country (Crystal Palace, 1885), I am tempted to join in the interesting discussion as to their possible origin. Any theories must be largely based on conjecture, for, beyond the knowledge that these beautiful animals were well known fifty years ago in practically their present form in Siam, we have no certain data to go upon. Many traditions have grown up around them, some well-founded, some to a biologist like myself amusingly otherwise. It may be worth while to try to dispose of some of the latter.

First, then, as to what characters can fairly be described as ancestral. It is well-established, that a character in any animal which is much more marked at or before birth than at later stages of development may be taken to be a recapitulation of family history, and is not to be regarded as a recent adaptation. Striping and barring on the tail (the latter often marked in *young* Siamese kittens) is an ancestral character common to all the cat tribe. Even lion-cubs show distinct spotting at birth and up to six months old.

(Analogous cases may be found in the distinctly spotted young of the self-coloured Puma: the spotted young of Red Deer and Wild Boar, etc.—ED.)

Another such character is the "kink," usually but not invariably found in the Siamese cat's tail: this if present, is very marked at birth, and is not only ancestral but extremely interesting, as its origin is lost in antiquity. Both the great anatomist Sir Richard Owen, and the late Professor H. N. Moseley were interested in the question; the latter thought the kink might be the relic of a prehensile tail. The assertion often made that the kink is due to intercrossing with the "common" strain is disposed of at once by the fact that there is no other cat known in Siam, "common" or otherwise\*, which has or ever had an original kink! It is therefore, biologically a folly to attempt to breed out the kink, though individual judges at Shows may give the preference to straight tailed cats if they like.

It is far otherwise with the "squint," now so common; this is of quite recent development, is heritable, and is going far towards spoiling the beautiful eyes which are a feature of the Siamese Cat.

SIAMESE CATS AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE.

I was very pleased to see such a good entry of Siamese at the Palace Show on the 1st inst., but more than sorry that at the last minute we had so many empty pens. Personally it was a great disappointment to me not to bring my cats as I had been looking forward to Mrs. Harvey's judging. I heartily congratulate Mrs. Burke on being a splendid sportswoman and taking the loss of the coveted prize, the Championship Certificate without a murmur, and I am proud of numbering her among our Members. I certainly thought Minoh Ming, the best of the four males, and that he deserved his win, but I do not think him a "typical" cat, and on point I congratulate Mrs. Harvey for her straight of mind for withholding the highest honour. I am quite sure it caused her deep regret to do it, more especially as it was her first time in judging. A cat may be worthy of a first prize, but if not typical of its breed, is not necessarily worthy of a championship, because it holds this prize, and to give the Championship to a cat that is not in every way typical of its breed tends to cheapen what should be the highest honour. Since there is a standard to judge by, judges should take the greatest care in keeping to it as near as possible, and I thank Mrs. Harvey for having judged by our standard and for taking each of the seven points into consideration, and not judging by one point only. Continental Boy and Takahata have both badly kinked tails, which by our standard goes against them. The tail of the Siamese should be long and tapering, and a Mr. Bassett, in an article he wrote for "Our Cats" many years ago said, "that any knob, kink or imperfection in this respect shows there has been a cross with a common strain," and in spite of careful breeding in these days, this common strain comes out now and again. The Cat Club of France, although they use our standard, do not take this into consideration, and on the other hand the Belgium Cat Club do.

In the Female open there were only four penned, and I am very pleased that Miss Dixon's Simple won her full Championship, and that at last we have a typical Female Champion. The sensation Kittens of the Siamese Cat Club Show of 1925, Gentle and Simple, whenever they have met Simple has beaten her sister. Gentle is very much on the dark side now, but her eyes are darker than Simple's, but if one can judge both Brood Queens by their progeny, there is no question which is the better cat. Simple's kittens won at the Club Show this year beating Gentle's progeny there, and although Gentle's kittens I do not think have been shown since, Simple's kittens have won all before them. I make no remark on the kittens, as they stood out in their classes, and all deserved their wins. I am most grateful to Mr. Yeates and thank him for his great kindness and the trouble he took in giving the Siamese a Warm corner near the hot pipes, the little darkness was overcome by having the daylight at the end of the room to judge the cats by.

L. C. BUSTEED, Hon. Sec., S.C.C.

In Old London there used to be, in Mutton Lane, south of London Fields, a noted house of call, yecept the "Cat and Mutton." Its signboards, two in number, bore the following effusions by some budding Laureate:

"Pray, Puss, do not tare  
Because the Mutton is so rare."  
"Pray, Puss, do not claw  
Because the Mutton is so raw."

GOSSIP OF THE WEEK.

OUR good friend, Miss H. Hill-Shaw, writes that she fears Miss Kent's Red Tabby Manx Crowan, who was in the money at Croydon, will not live, as he is suffering from a tumour.

Miss Phyllis Leatherdale, who is now living at Dulverton, in the heart of Red-Deer Land, writes of the progeny of her Siamese cat, "Puma": Puma's first litter did very well. "Ami," highly praised by Miss Busteed, has gone to Belgium, where his owner is delighted with him, and his mate, "Prestwick Periwinkle." Another of the family, "Pumalet" and her sister, have been shipped on the ss. "Empress of Scotland" to Mrs. E. E. Stroud of Toronto. Miss Leatherdale continues: "To encourage "Riri" to go to her cat-room I used to put a bone in her basket. She soon learnt to carry a large bone upstairs herself and put it in her sleeping basket to gnaw at. Now I find her daughter, Puma, invariably takes a bone up too. No matter how high the box, or how heavy and large the bone, she never rests until she has got it into her bed. She never does this with a piece of meat."

At the last Cat Show at Vienna a litter was exhibited *said* to be sired by a Civet-cat out of an ordinary cat. My friend, Herr Joe Lesti, the present owner of "Ras Tafari" (who is siring some good stock over there) has been trying to obtain details of such remarkable animals as also of a reported Marten cross—but he can obtain no satisfactory information. Personally, I regard such hybrids as impossible.

Miss Langhorne, of Chard, is anxious to work up a Cat Show in Taunton next year. The chief town of Somerset runs a first-class dog show every year, but is dead as far as cats are concerned. Any western cat-lovers desirous of helping should write to the owner of Shere Khan o' the Combe on the matter.

Miss H. Hill-Shaw's grand Manx "Katzenjammer's Ghost"—so-called because of his resemblance as a kitten to the great champion, Katzenjammer—has won a number of championships. He is Island bred and was sent by Mr. J. Killip, of Douglas, to the writer of these lines, as a baby kitten. He is at stud in these columns, and has sired some good stock, including Kelpie, one of the longest hind-legged, best-rumped Manx I've known.

I want to ask subscribers to help us through our early struggle for existence by prompt payment of subscriptions, and by giving us their advertising. We want to increase the size of the paper and have numerous features in view, but as yet we are pounds out of pocket every week in our efforts to run your paper.

I think the article on Whittington and his Cat by that well-known author, M. Oldfield Howey, will interest our readers. Referring to this legend, the naturalist, Bell, wrote in 1837: "The true foundation of the story is involved in much obscurity. It is remarkable that a similar narrative is found in most of the countries of Europe and in some Asiatic nations, particularly Persia; and there are many who are disposed to believe that the venture from which the fortune of that immortalised chief magistrate sprung was in truth nothing more than the freight of a vessel of that kind which in former times was called catta or gatta."



### MANX CATS.

The following letter, which appeared in the *Isle of Man Weekly Times*, will interest many of our readers :

#### Manx Cats.

A correspondent living in the West of the Island draws attention to the dwindling numbers of the pure bred Manx cat. He states that in his young days, forty or fifty years ago, every farmhouse and nearly every cottage had its tailless cat, while the common or garden variety, i.e., the cat with a tail, was almost unknown. Now the latter is the predominant species, with mixed, stumpy tailed animals in every part of the Island. Cats may not be accounted important domestic animals, as compared with cattle, but they have their uses. If it were not for the domestic cat, this and other countries would be over-run with mice and with rats. Apart from their actual use, however, the Manx, or rumpy, cats have a special interest to Manxpeople. This particular species of cat has for a long period been associated with the Isle of Man. Where the Manx cat came from originally does not matter. It is looked upon as indigenous to the Island. We have few wild animals here; far fewer than either England or Scotland, but the Manx cat is one that neither of these countries can claim. It certainly forms one of the outstanding characteristics of our Island. It is said to have been introduced from a foreign vessel wrecked off Spanish Head, and for a time it bred rapidly and spread all over our little country. The Isle of Man has certain features of its own, and those Manxmen who are patriotic enough are very jealous lest those features should be allowed to disappear. The language has already gone; the tailless cockerel is so rare as to be a negligible matter; and there is danger lest the Manx cat should be swallowed up in the indiscriminate importation of other varieties. The mischief was done a generation or more ago in allowing such animals to be brought in. They ought to be prohibited by law from coming in. When a country has a characteristic animal, that is not bred anywhere else, it is the duty of the people of that country to protect the insular breed. Wherever the Isle of Man is referred to, in ancient or modern books, one of the characteristics that is sure to be mentioned is its species of cats, for which the Island has long been famous. Some means ought to be taken of keeping the species from becoming extinct, or merged into others, as has been the case with so many valuable and rare animals in other countries. In many cases the spread of civilization has naturally carried in its wake the extermination of certain animals and birds; but with regard to our Manx cat this certainly cannot apply. There is always a demand for such cats, and it would pay private individuals to breed the pure species for sale, for there is always a demand for them if only from sentimental reasons. Every encouragement should be given towards keeping in existence the one thing that is so peculiar to this Island, while the other varieties should be discouraged, if not prohibited by law.

My friend "Wayfarer," of the *Somerset County Gazette*, is fond of cats and often devotes a paragraph to them. Recently he instanced a cat belonging to one of his friends, who will not drink from a saucer, but only from a tap in the scullery. When thirsty this cat sits on the edge of the sink and waits for someone to turn the water on, which it drinks as it falls from the tap. A queer fad!

### LETTERS FROM CORRESPONDENTS.

To the Editor.—"Cat Gossip."

Dear Sir,

I have received with pleasure the preliminary copy of "Cat Gossip," and I hasten to wish all concerned in the endeavour every success.

My wife and I will do all in our power to further the object in view, which should be the desire of everyone interested in cats.

There will be many difficulties to overcome, and it will be hard to please all, but such obstacles appear in the initial stages of any undertaking, even in life itself. If Fanciers, Breeders, and all interested in cats will only support an endeavour which is about to be made to supply them with a paper which they all say they require, then such a paper will be successfully published according to their requirements.

It is hoped that all those holding office among the clubs of the fancy will show that spirit of sportsmanship (or should I say sportswomanship) which is half the battle in life. Many hold office also in the Governing Body, whose benevolent attitude to the paper would be so highly esteemed by those making this effort.

HAROLD W. BASNETT.

Editor, CAT GOSSIP.

Dear Sir,

I observed in a periodical recently that the statement was made that the writer in question had his attention drawn to another case of simultaneous conception in a cat, the facts of which he related.

As I believe simultaneous conception to be impossible, I should appreciate guidance from anyone who may have made a study of this matter.—Yours faithfully,

HAROLD W. BASNETT.

Editor, CAT GOSSIP.

Sir,

#### N.C.C. Palace Show.

Please see page 3, col. 2, L.H. classes. I think you will find that the Ch. Cup and Victory Cup (Spl. 54, 56), were not won by John of Bedale, No. 66, but by Marise, No. 86.

According to the cards on pens at closing time, No. 66 won four Firsts and 12 Specials, viz. :—1, 4, 12, 17, 24, 27, 61, 81, 114, 117, 122, 197.

No. 86 won five First Prizes and 16 Specials, viz. :—5, 13, 54, 56, 66, 75, 82, 85, 94, 97, 105, 108, 113, 116, 124, 198.—Yours, etc.

J. DONOVAN TURNER.

63, Downton Avenue, Streatham.

I am very sorry to learn that though Miss Busteed had made a heavy entry for the Palace, she was not able to exhibit, having lost a Siamese after the Croydon Show, within the fourteen days necessary for her cattery to show a clean bill of health. From the symptoms—refusal of food in the morning, and death at night—the cause of death was apparently this terrible scourge enteritis. In exactly the same way I lost my Leopard Cat a year ago, and Mr. Henry Gray, who made a P.M., attributed my irreparable loss to this cause.

**CAT'S 17 DAYS IN A WELL.**

After being imprisoned in a pit for over a fortnight a cat has been rescued at Exeter.

The animal had been missing for some days, when porters at the railway goods yard near by heard its cries.

The cries came from the direction of an iron signal post, which had sunk into the ground about 8 ft., and round the bottom of which water had accumulated. The porters found "Jumbo," the cat, at the foot of the post.

Finally, a sack was lowered, and with his remaining strength "Jumbo" clung to it and was drawn to the surface in an exhausted state.

The cat was given some milk, and soon recovered. It had apparently had no sustenance except the water it fell into.

The action of the porters has been brought to the notice of the local committee of the R.S.P.C.A.

**ADVERTISING RATES AND SUBSCRIPTIONS**

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**ADVERTISEMENTS.** Displayed Adverts., Stud or others, 3/6 per inch, cash, up to 4 insertions; 4 to 13 insertions 3/4 inch; 13 and upwards 2/9 inch. Standing Advs. of Cat Clubs, 35 words, 2/6 Sales, Wants, &c., 1d. per word, minimum 1/6

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All Editorial matters to be sent to the Editor, H. C. BROOKE, BISHOPS HULL, TAUNTON

All other matters to: Proprietor, CAT GOSSIP, Phone: Battersea 4353. 11, TUNLEY ROAD, LONDON, S.W 17

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Winner of 4 Championships and 12 Firsts. Sire of Winning Litters at Siamese C.C. Shows, 1925 and 1926. Best Siamese Kittens at Reading and Croydon Siamese Shows, 1926. Male Champion at Siamese and Reading Shows, 1926, etc., etc. Fee 30/- and rail charges. Queens met.

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**ALSO BLUE.**

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Fine young son of Barry Bluejohn. Massive wide head, small ears, short nose, orange eyes. Sires lovely kittens.

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**TWO GRAND MANX AT STUD**

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Brown Tabby Manx, very typical, sire of typical kittens, including **KELPIE**, 1st prize winning kitten, 1925; Fee 25s. Also Miss A. Kent's "**EUBONIUS**," Tabby and White, Fee 21s. both typical and proved Stock-getter. Miss H. Hill-Shaw, 15, Elgin-road. Addiscombe, Croydon.

**SIAMESE AT STUD**

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