

Our Cats

AUTHORITATIVE
INSTRUCTIVE



ENTERTAINING
COMPREHENSIVE



A TRAVELLER TO JAPAN

CHAMPION DON CARLOS, handsome Blue male was Best Longhair three times running at the last autumn shows. Owner Miss Anita Woodthorpe, of Teignmouth, Devon, a few days after our picture was taken, sent Carlos by air to a new home in Kyoto, Japan, with Mr. Takafura Ando:

FEBRUARY 1965

2/6

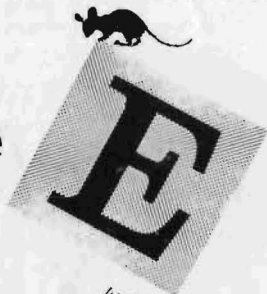


feline



infectious enteritis vaccine

for the



protection

of cats

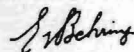


Feline infectious enteritis is a highly infectious and dangerous disease of cats: it kills 9 out of 10 of those that contract it. Treatment is usually unsuccessful. The best protection against this dreadful disease is vaccination with FEV. Choose a time when your cat is fit and healthy then ask your veterinary surgeon about protection with FEV feline infectious enteritis vaccine.

FEV protects your cat



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HOECHST PHARMACEUTICALS LTD., Veterinary Division
Portland House, Stag Place, Victoria, London, S.W.1

Our Cats

AUTHORITATIVE • INSTRUCTIVE • ENTERTAINING

Published every month with the best possible features and illustrations and circulated to Cat Lovers of every kind throughout the world. Our editorial purpose is :

- (1) to spread a wider understanding and a better appreciation of all cats, their care and management;
- (2) to encourage in every way the breeding, handling and showing of pedigree cats ;
- (3) to work for the suppression of every form of cruelty to cats ;
- (4) to act as a link of friendship and common interest between cat lovers in different parts of the world.

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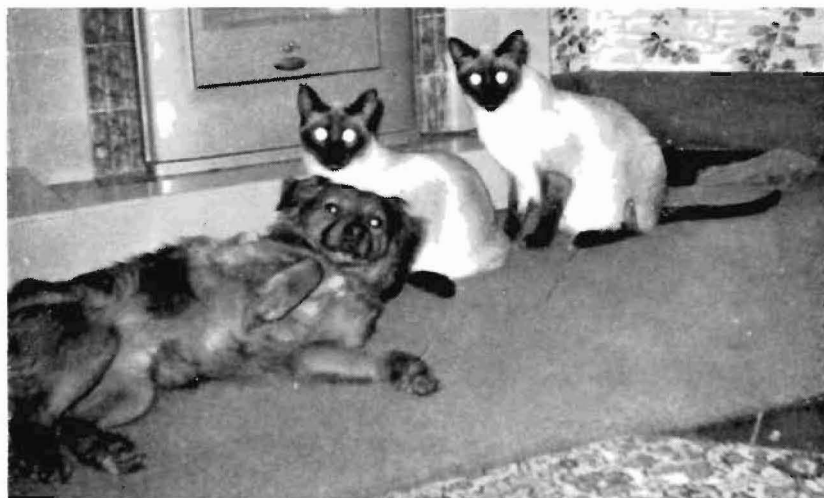
Managing Editor :

ARTHUR E. COWLISHAW
4 CARLTON MANSIONS
CLAPHAM ROAD, LONDON, S.W.9

*Australian and New Zealand
Correspondent :*

MR. F. W. PEARCE, 33 OLD BEROWRA
ROAD, HORNSBY, N S W., AUSTRALIA

THE MAGAZINE THAT SPANS THE WORLD OF CAT LOVERS



The Seal Point Siamese pair with the headlights are CHOOKANOOKY POOZY WOO and LITTLE FOX (7-month-old kittens by Kuala Azure Chakri) bred by Mrs. Joan Lewis, of Dursley, Gloucestershire. Dusty, the dog, seems to be on excellent terms.



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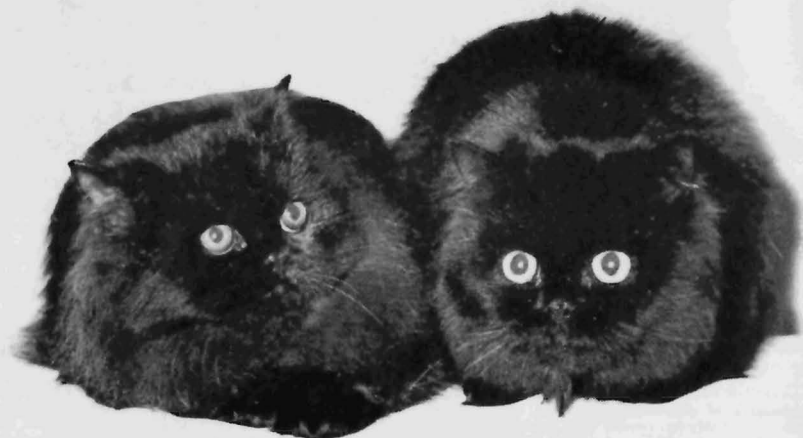
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Hugh Smith

Mrs. H. M. Todd, of Alton, Hampshire, with her home-bred Cream female, CH. AVIARY JANET, by Aviary Cream Puff ex Aviary Sally. This youngster has done splendidly at shows and should prove a great asset to the breed.



A striking picture of two fine Black Longhairs. On the left Mr. Winfried Rodenstein's SILVER-WYTE JERSEY GEM by Gr. Ch. Vel-Vene Voo Doo, Best Black Longhair at the Paris Show and 1st and C.C. at Munich, 1964. An American-bred cat now living in Germany. On the right Mr. W. Christl's female INT. CH. PASCALE DE COQUAILLE, by Ch. Patrick of Pensford, winner at the Paris and Brussels shows.

Our tribute to a great man

SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL was also a great cat lover

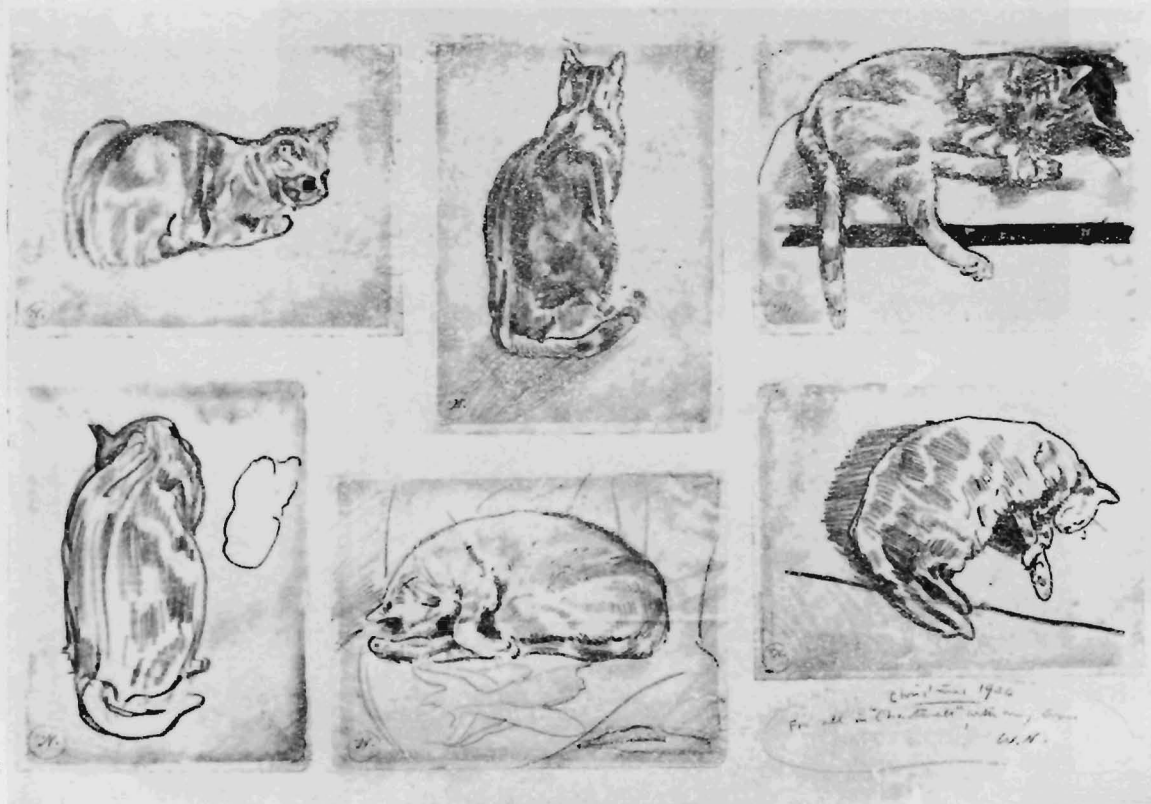


The following appreciation by CHRISTABEL LADY ABERCONWAY, author of "A Dictionary of Cat Lovers", is reprinted as it appeared in our issue of January 1955.

DURING his long life Sir Winston Churchill has been in turn soldier, politician, orator, author, painter, Prime Minister, and finally saviour of his country, and also a devoted husband and father and a wonderful friend. Where animals are concerned he has always been

devoted to cats of all breeds, and to poodles.

Yet the following incident is known only to one or two of his friends. In 1943, when he was convalescing after a severe attack of influenza following his journey to Casablanca, Egypt and Cyprus, he was visited by one of his minis-



Sir William Nicholson's sketches of TANGO

ters who found him resting in bed, with his large black cat Nelson lying at his feet.

During the course of the conversation Mr. Churchill, as he then was, remarked: "This cat does more for the war effort than you do. He acts as a hot water bottle and saves fuel and power".

The minister noted that Mr. Churchill called the cat "My dear", and he was informed by Mr. Churchill that this cat always accompanied him in the car to and from Downing Street.

On an earlier occasion, when the late Sir Eric Maclagan, Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, himself a great lover of cats, was having luncheon with Mr. Churchill at Chequers, he found to his delight that the chair next to him was reserved for Nelson, who then proceeded to sit sedately beside him during the meal. It is also interesting to recall that the painter, Sir William Nicholson, made lovely drawings (see opposite page) of another of Sir Winston's cats, a splendid marmalade tom named Tango, also known as "Mr. Kat".

A further instance of Sir Winston's fondness for cats is

recorded in his book "*Scotland Yard*", by Sir Harold Scott, a former Commissioner of Police:

"I remember Sunday, September 7th, 1940", he says, "the day after the big raids began".

"As Chief Administrative Officer of London Region, I conducted the Prime Minister on a tour of the East End so that he might see for himself what was happening. A little black cat, I recall, caught our eye as we were crossing a railway line down in Silvertown, and the Prime Minister interrupted his inspection to spend some minutes talking to it, while I apprehensively wondered where the next bombs were going to fall".

It was said of Sir Thomas Wyatt, the father of the poet, who over four hundred years ago was saved by his cat from starvation when he was imprisoned, that he would ever after "make much of a cat as other men would of their spaniels and hounds".

These same words can certainly be said to-day of Sir Winston Churchill.

"... still he found time to concern himself

with the comfort and companionship of his cats."

By SIDNEY DENHAM

KIT SMART, the eccentric Fellow of Pembroke and friend of Dr. Samuel Johnson, in his remarkable poem on his cat Geoffrey written in Bedlam, says there are only two kinds of people who hate cats—hypocrites because they fear a cat will see through them, and misers because they grudge their food.

Meanness and hypocrisy are qualities of which even his few enemies could never accuse Sir Winston Churchill, and one of the things that endeared him to Britain's millions of cat lovers was that at a time when his days were filled with great affairs on which the fate of Western civilization depended, still he found time to

concern himself with the comfort and companionship of his cats.

Not long after the war when I was arranging an exhibition of paintings of cats by great artists, I heard Sir Winston had a sheet of drawings of his splendid marmalade male made by the distinguished Newark-born portrait painter, Sir William Nicholson, and I asked if I could borrow it.

My odd idea caused amusement but permission was gladly given. The sheet of sketches proved to be beautifully executed, showing the cat in six characteristic poses and signed "For all at Chartwell, Christmas 1934. W.N."

I believe Sir William, himself a great cat lover who had made many pictures of his own "Black," sketched the cat in Sir Winston's studio when he was teaching him painting.

I was asked to take the greatest care of the picture as it was a much-prized memorial of two great friends, Sir William, who had died in 1949, and the cat, who had died at the ripe age of 17 on June 21, 1942.

Sir Winston's daughter, Mrs. Christopher Soames, could tell me the exact date because it was the one on which Tobruk finally fell to Rommel. The loss of Tobruk, which opened the way to Egypt, was a severe blow to Sir Winston, but I gathered that he was not less upset that night by the loss of his cat.

During the blitz

There are many stories of Sir Winston's thoughtfulness for his cats at 10 Downing Street during the blitz.

One night during a heavy raid he was found in the kitchen in his dressing gown. Apparently just as he was getting into bed he had

remembered it was the butler's night off and that his cat might not have had his dinner. Accordingly, he went down, inspected the larder, and helped him with characteristic generosity.

On another occasion during a raid his secretary found the great man on his hands and knees looking under a writing desk. He was talking to his cat Nelson. The voice that had given courage to millions on the radio was heard to say: "Come out, Nelson. You, the bearer of so proud a name, should be ashamed to skulk under this historic relic of the age of Marlborough while England is in peril."

Symbol of freedom

Telling this story, Nat Gubbins, whose famous or notorious cat Sally, and her adventures with the Manhattan mouser brightened the dark days of the war, had a fan in Sir Winston, noted that at that time Hitler was hiding in a steel and concrete cellar a hundred feet deep—and probably feeding Eva.

Mr. Gubbins said that when he was invited to lunch at Chartwell in 1949, Sir Winston talked of little else but cats.

The cat has been a symbol of freedom and independence for centuries and we can guess that it was "the sterling independence and divine irresponsibility of the species" which appealed to one of the greatest of champions of freedom, as well as the challenge of winning the friendship and affection of animals that have no regard for the fame, title or wealth of the humans they live with.

He was also, perhaps, a little persuaded that they brought the good luck without which the

greatest man cannot succeed.

When he gave a Press conference in the Queen Mary on his return from talks with President Truman, he chose to take his seat exactly under a black cat in a painting on a panel.

In later years when he attended that very exclusive dining society "The Other Club", he would say—"Bring me my cat". The Savoy's black ceramic cat, normally kept for the superstitious when there are 13 at table, would be seated on a chair beside him and a napkin placed round its neck.

Like father, like son

Love of cats is probably not so much inherited as passed on in families through children growing up among cat lovers. But I was fascinated to discover Sir Win-

ston's father, Lord Randolph Churchill, who himself might have become premier, was also a great cat lover.

A magazine of 60 years ago recorded that Lord Randolph's "last days and failing powers were greatly cheered by the companionship of the beautiful grey cat imported from India for the purpose, the kitten of a trained Indian watch cat and as intelligent as she was beautiful.

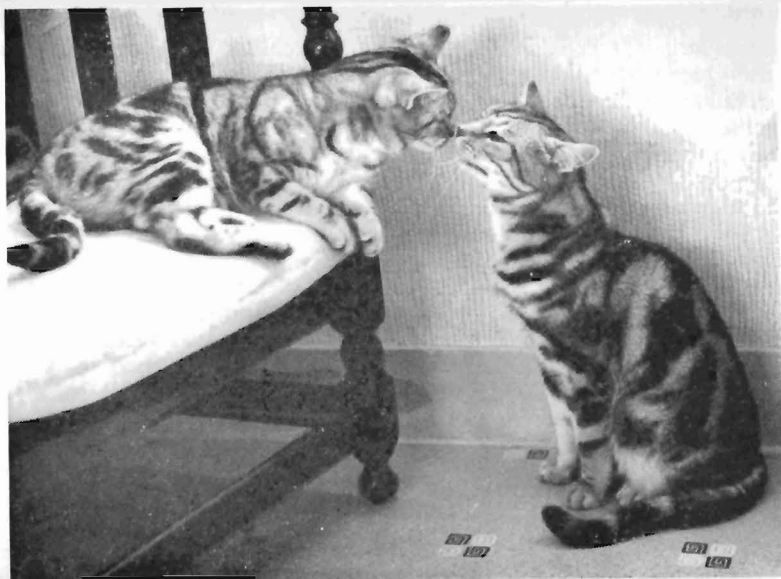
"She soon learned to pose for her picture, play the piano and perform many other tricks at command, and was unfailingly affectionate, graceful and interesting in her natural behaviour".

Newspapers reported that Sir Winston's last days were also comforted by his favourite cat Ginger who was his constant companion and spent most of the time curled up on the blankets of his bed.

A tribute from the Governing Council of the Cat Fancy . . .

Miss Kathleen Yorke, Chairman, writes on behalf of the members of the Council and all the affiliated clubs and associations: "We would like to place on record our sense of sorrow and great loss at the passing of that great cat lover Sir Winston Churchill and to convey our sympathy and condolences to Lady Churchill and the members of her family. We are remembering the indomitable courage displayed by Sir Winston during the most critical period of this island's history. We must never forget that his leadership and example won for us the victory which enables us today to follow our daily interests and hobbies in peace and with hopes for the future".





"Where have you been all this time? Let me smell your breath."



"That's to remind you to stay away from that milk bar round the corner in future!"

We have made up these captions to suit ourselves. Actually, the cat on the floor is CH. MILLSTAR ALEXANDER, a lovely Silver Tabby 3½ year-old stud, winner of nine C.C.'s and many other awards. The cat on the chair is his 2 year-old daughter MILLSTAR SILVER BEAUTY. Both belong to Miss H. M. Harris, of S.W. London, and the credit for this amusing piece of photography goes to Mr. Derek Thompson, Thundersley, Essex.

Squatters

By LORA FAVRE

EXPERTS on Eastern habits maintain that the most noticeable characteristic of the Chinese is their great and persistent good manners. No negotiations will begin before a number of compliments have been exchanged.

According to one story, the overcrowding in some Chinese towns is so excessive owing to refugees, that if you lived there, it would be most likely that you would discover squatters on your roof. With the utmost discretion these temporarily homeless families settle above your head, while you, below, suspect the slight noises to come from rats.

If you had the folly of not ignoring the sounds and went to investigate, you'd probably be tempted to help these unfortunates by offering an item of food or a blanket or a cooking implement.

These offerings would transform themselves in mysterious ways into obligations on your part. A process that would find you subtly indebted to the squatters, forcing you wordlessly into more and more unwilling generosity. Without being aware of this alchemy you would now be owned by them, acting not only as benefactor from the standpoint of your comparative wealth, but also as mentor and adviser.

Such tactics by the uninvited guests are said to be purely racial and unintentional, just a matter of inborn custom.

Curiously enough in this country we experience the same "take-over" by those charming,

polite and often inscrutable animals, the cats.

Mrs. Hughes was imprudent enough to take notice of a cat living in her little garden. By the same process just described, she now has a cat who owns herself, her home, her food, her leisure. Her fall into submission was hastened by polite preliminaries on the part of the cat. Instead of snatching bits of food from her hand, the titbits were disregarded for a while in favour of great head-thrusts against the hand holding it. Next followed the slanting stance with tail erect in dainty undulations against her legs.

Within a few days, each time she ventured into the garden, the cat came ostentatiously out of hiding, purring loudly at the pleasure of seeing such a wonderful human being.

Those cast out

This show of growing attachment started Mrs. Hughes to wonder why this cat had no home. Local enquiries indicated that the cat was probably a victim of the modern disaster for many animals, rehousing. In her town at least, all rehoused families went to live in council houses where pets are barred.

To the horror of true animal lovers, it was discovered that many cats and dogs were simply left behind to fend for themselves as best they could.

The particular cat in this story was lucky to find a home. It took about four weeks of im-

perceptible gentle advances by the animal. When the conquest was made and the cat was finally picked up and hugged, Mrs. Hughes thought she'd got a female who had recently had kittens. The skin hung quite loosely around the cat and the ribs could be clearly felt. Closer examination revealed that it was a young tom simply emaciated from lack of food. For his size

he weighed next to nothing, yet his mild and patient approach never varied.

Clearly it is fortunate for us all that our cats are mostly tame and of affectionate disposition. One shudders to think what could happen if the abandoned animals, like bandits, took to running in packs, and terrorised the human beings who rewarded affection with thoughtless cruelty.



JUNGLE CAT

Your domestic pet may be descended from an ancestor of this Jungle Cat at Chessington Zoo in Surrey. Zoologists believe that the domestic cat derives from an African species, probably either the Jungle Cat (*Felis chaus*) or the African Wild Cat (*Felis lybica*), and not from the European wild cat.

In its wild state to-day the Jungle Cat ranges from North East Africa and the Caucasus through India and Ceylon as far as China. It lives in jungle, brush, tall grass, and in arid regions. It feeds on small mammals and on birds up to the size of a peacock. They have been found with the quills of a porcupine in their feet so it would appear that they sometimes rashly attack them. The Jungle Cat is the size of a large house cat, grey or tawny in colour. Its legs are long, and it is very strong for its size.

E. L. KEMP

Looking at the breeds

No. 22 - WHITE LONGHAIRS

By HUGH SMITH

IN these days of detergent whiteness any animal that is both furry and white makes instant appeal, be it fox, ermine or rabbit. White cats are no exception to the rule. They receive admiring attention at every show and justly so.

There are two kinds of White Longhairs — Blue-eyed and Orange-eyed. Of these it is thought that the Blue-eyed is the older breed and that it probably originated in the Middle East. Blue-eyed Whites were known in France two hundred years ago and may have come from Persia. They were first named Angoras. France was probably the source of the long-haired cats introduced into England in the early part of the last century.

It is, of course, well known that most—but not all—the Blue-eyed Whites are deaf. This may have accounted for their somewhat limited popularity in modern times. They are more likely to become casualties on the road in built-up areas in consequence of their deafness.

The Orange-eyed White resulted from crossing of Blue-eyed Whites with other breeds to improve type. It is in fact generally recognized that the Blue-eyed White tends not to be of such good type as the Orange-eyed.

The Governing Council of the Cat Fancy recognized the Orange-eyed White as a separate breed just before the Second World War. It lays down the following Standard of Points:

BLUE-EYED WHITE LONGHAIRS

Colour—Pure white without mark or shade of any kind.

Coat—Long and flowing on body, full frill and brush, which should be short and broad; the coat should be close and soft and silky, not woolly in texture.

Body—Cobby and massive, without being coarse, with plenty of bone and substance, and low on the leg.

Head—Round and broad, with plenty of space between the ears, which should be small, neat and well covered, short nose, full cheeks and broad muzzle.

Eyes—Large, round and wide open, deep blue in colour.

ORANGE-EYED WHITE LONGHAIRS

Points as above except for eye-colour which should be orange or copper.

N.B.—Whites are very liable to get yellow stains on their tails from accumulated dust, etc. This very damaging peculiarity should be carefully attended to and stains removed before showing.

SCALE OF POINTS

Colour	25
Coat	20
Body	20
Head	20
Eyes	15

—
100

Some faults

In the Blue-eyed White the nose and the head tend to be too narrow and too long. The ears also are apt to be too long. Outcrosses have been used to improve type, but when this is done it is necessary to restore eye colour and this may not be easy.

To maintain pure white cats with no marking or shading is also not easy. When it is achieved, careful grooming of

the coat is necessary if appearance is to be maintained, since grease from the skin tends to combine with dust and also the tail becomes yellow. This may require a weekly wash with soap and water and the application of powder when dry.

The texture of the coat of the Blue-eyed White is often superb and better than that of the Orange-eyed. White cats with green eyes, although plentiful, are not recognized as a separate breed. Cats with one eye blue and the other orange are not unknown.

It has been noted that mating perfect colour to perfect eye colour does not

necessarily ensure good eye colour in the litter. There will be variability both within the litter and between litters.

The breeding of Orange-eyed Whites presents possibly fewer problems. The breed is more prolific than the Blue-eyed, for which a litter of four is large. The kittens, too, seem less delicate.

In Britain there used to be excellent types of the Blue-eyed White but nowadays alas! few are bred.

The Club for the breed is the Black and White Cat Club, Hon. Secretary, Mrs. P. Cattermole, 96 Dalberg Road, Brixton, London S.W.2.



We offer no apologies for giving you all a second look at Mrs. Jean Hogan's outstanding Orange-eyed White Longhair female CH. SNOWWHITE GISELLE, who has been described as "perfection in a lovely variety". Giselle was Best Exhibit at Olympia last December after being four times Best Longhair and collecting 80 first prizes. She was bred from Ch. Snowcloud Crispin ex Camber Suzanne, a Blue Longhair. She has merited the title "Cat of the Year".

SHOWS FOR THE 1964/5 SEASON

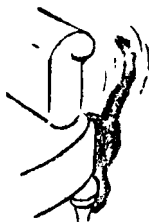
Brief details of the remaining show fixtures for the present season are provided below for the information and guidance of readers. A list giving fuller information may be obtained (price 6d.) from the Secretary of the Governing Council of the Cat Fancy, Mrs. S. Berliner, 146 Western Avenue, East Acton, London W.3

1965	Promoted by	Venue
6 March	Northern Counties Cat Club	Newcastle-on-Tyne
13 "	Suffolk & Norfolk Cat Club	Ipswich
27 "	Ulster Siamese Cat Club	Belfast, N. Ireland



Tailpieces

*A regular newsy feature
with a selection of the best
items from home and overseas*



AT a recent sale at Sotheby's famous rooms in London, a pair of solid agate figures of cats, 5in. high, sold for £250.

A lady in Portsmouth had the following letter published in one of the national newspapers: "People always talk as though mother love is universally instinctive among animals. It is not. They can be neglectful as human mothers. My sister's two cats, Dusty and Delilah, had kittens within a day of each other. Dusty was obviously disgusted with her three, dumped them with Delilah's four, and went out hunting. When she returned she found that Delilah was happily purring over the whole lot. So Dusty had a meal and went out again. Now Delilah is bringing up all seven as though they were her own".

The East Coast Himalayan Society (America) was founded in March last year. It was originally intended to limit membership geographically but this proved impractical. The Society now has a membership of 70 breeders and owners of Himalayans (Colourpoints) in 21 American states, England, Canada, Holland, France and the Philippines. This show season sixteen rosettes have been sent to English shows, others are destined for Rhodesia and France. A monthly bulletin is published with articles of interest by breeders in different parts of the world. Many ECHS members have imported English-bred cats and these are taking top wins at American shows. Information may be obtained from the Secretary-Treasurer Miss E. C. Smith, 1536 Morris Place, Hillside 5, New Jersey, U.S.A.

It is regretted that the picture of the two Rex kittens on page 12 of our January issue was allowed to appear with a "twisted" caption. It was Annelida Calidor who emigrated to Canada, *not* Annelida Pixie Poppet. Poppet is still in England, having been purchased by Mrs. May Knight, of Truro, Cornwall. Mrs. Knight is naturally concerned over the error because she has had enquiries for Poppet's kittens when they come along.

Does Ming-Ling hold the secret of the missing £3,000 diamond-and-ruby ring? Mrs. Dorothy Hambledon, 75-year-old novelist of Windlesham, Surrey, would like to know and an insurance detective is doing his best to help her—and his employers! Mrs. Hambledon took the ring off because it was hurting her and laid it on the side of the bowl in which she was preparing a meal for Ming-Ling, her cream longhair pet. She fetched the cat in from another room and on her return to the kitchen added a little more fish to the bowl. About an hour later she remembered the ring. But it had disappeared—and so had Ming-Ling's dinner. Sorry I cannot give you the sequel to the story. I only know that her movements are being closely watched!

Peter Black, popular TV critic and great cat lover, writes in the *Daily Mail* on the subject of performing animals. The House of Lords is to debate a Bill which could put an end to all wild animal acts and travelling menageries. "I once went backstage to talk to a woman who ran a troop of performing cats", he writes. "The animals were shut up on a kind of



Nothing but

TIBS for me!

No nonsense about this promising youngster – Beauvale Galahad. Owned by Mrs. Christine Coley of Halesowen, Worcestershire, Beauvale Galahad has already been Best Long Hair Kitten in Show—at three consecutive shows. Like all Mrs. Coley's stock, Beauvale Galahad is a Tibs cat. "...and all the cats and kittens are in fine condition, as our show success this season will show," comments Mrs. Coley. Tibs Condition Tablets contain vitamins and minerals essential to a cat's good health. They promote lithe limbs, strong bones and a beautifully glossy coat. All good reasons why every cat should have Tibs regularly. Is your cat a Tibs cat yet?

Famous breeders say, OUR CATS ARE TIBS CATS

TIBS CONDITION TABLETS FOR CATS ARE A BOB MARTIN PRODUCT

shelf against the dressing-room wall, in boxes about as long as a cat's body. They would be there until the second performance. By the smell of the room, they had been there for years. I could go on to describe how all the qualities that make cats such amusing companions good looks, liveliness, consciousness of grace and superb confidence had gone. Whatever is the equivalent of dehumanization had been suffered by these cats. This is why all animal acts are intolerably sad".

A report from Coblenz, Germany, tells of a fantastic happening when salvage teams pulled up a sunken Dutch river barge from the Rhine. They found Peter, the 3-year-old ship's cat, still alive in an air bubble in which he had survived under water for eight days. When the barge emerged from the water poor Peter pawed weakly at his rescuers and then was passed on to a veterinarian. A later report disclosed that Peter died a little later on.

News comes that last year's Fenth Anniversary Show of the Montreal Cat Fanciers' Association was a big success. Wish I had a picture or two to show you. One of the top winners was Miss Margaret Ewin's imported Cream Longhair female Hendias Gossamer of Tahma, who is now a Double Champion C.F.A. and A.C.A., both American associations. It is interesting to note that Gossamer's picture, with her litter brother Adonis, appeared in *Our Cats* during 1963 before she was sent to Canada. In a letter Miss Ewin's comments: "These English cats are great travellers".

A traveller to the Middle East took to frequenting one particular cafe in the town where he was staying. After a while he noticed that a very handsome cat would stroll past his table every evening at exactly the same time, climb the wall of the adjoining open-air cinema and sit there for a while. The cat would retrace his steps and vanish only to reappear the next night. When the traveller asked one of the waiters if he



This amusing snapshot of her 2-year-old Chinchilla JO-JO was submitted by Mrs. Dorothy Henman, of Gt. Missenden, Bucks. Jo-Jo was bred by Mrs. Mollie Turney.

could explain this behaviour, he was told: "Oh, he just comes to watch the Mickey Mouse!"

You may have read the reference in last month's issue to the activities in New Zealand of Mrs. C. L. Kerr to establish the Red Point Siamese. There was also a supporting picture showing some of the kittens produced during the experimental stages. Now I hear that the New Zealand Governing Council of Cat Fanciers has given them recognition and Red Points are therefore eligible to compete in challenge classes at the shows. Mrs. Kerr, who resides in Dunedin, is reported to have said that six years and about £1,000 have been spent in perfecting the new variety. Congratulations are certainly due to this patient and enthusiastic fancier.

A number of veterinarians in New York have combined to provide health insurance for pets at an annual fee of 20 dollars, which is roughly £7.

A reader in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, sends a local news item which underlines the danger to pets when careless people leave fishing tackle lying around the house. A large white cat posed a problem for the casualty staff at the local hospital when he was brought in with a large fish hook embedded in his paw. A vet. had said that he couldn't attend to the operation until the next day. The hospital staff acted with commendable promptitude. The paw was frozen and the hook eventually removed. Said a nurse: "The cat was obviously in pain and we just couldn't let him go home like that."

Ugo, the ship's cat on the submarine depot ship H.M.S. *Cyclops*, was so named because she came from Yugoslavia. It was her habit, when the ship was anchored in the warm, calm waters of the Mediterranean, to walk down the gangway and board a submarine. There he would walk aft to where the sub's stern dipped into the sea. Flicking her paw into the shoals of minnow-like fish which swam near the surface she would have them on deck for breakfast in no time at all. Unfortunately, this habit led to her untimely end. She fell into the sea during a hard winter at Portsmouth and died from the after effects.

DON'T LET YOUR PET SUFFER!

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Practical cats—

T. S. ELIOT'S ARE PERSONALITIES — NOT "POOR PUSSIES"

The recent death of the famous American-born poet occasioned this article by N. B. MEGGS on the book that will be treasured by cat lovers for generations to come. Eliot, it has been said, "made unparalleled music out of the grimy speech of the 20th century".

T S. ELIOT may well be remembered by the ordinary people of future generations as the author of a book about cats. The literary minority will read and admire his serious poetry, but many will meet and be attracted by the characters in *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*, to be found, as are so many others worthy of adult attention, in the junior section of libraries.

The names themselves are memorable, and, once one has met Growltiger, Macavity, Skimbleshanks and the others, they, together with phrases and lines (if not the whole of many of the delightfully humorous verses) will remain permanent possessions. For these cats, although they may represent human types we know only too well, are personalities whose doings we want to read about.

Growltiger, for instance, we can see without the help of an illustration, his torn coat and missing ear in evidence as he terrorizes bird and beast. We follow his story as he is defeated in that unguarded hour given over to love so that he changes from aggressor into victim, and we see him ignominiously walking the plank.

Macavity, too, has this same ability to capture and keep our interest. Again, he looks and is a rogue, with his neglected coat, uncombed whiskers and miscreant deeds—stealing, breaking and entering and even murder, with the added attraction of being clever enough to get away with his crimes.

Instead of one "baddie", Mungojerrie and Rumpelteazer are a pair of fiendish felines. Far from lying peacefully on

their own hearth-rug, they rove—always considered a wayward trait in cats—and when they are at home they do their best to create havoc there, ruining the furniture and stealing the Sunday joint from out of the oven. Somehow we can imagine them having the audacity to go up to a policeman and get in conversation with him.

Gus, the theatre cat, is a recognizable type and yet memorable. As his human counterparts, now that he is old, he reminisces about his glamorous youth, exaggerating it to the younger generation and bemoaning the changes that have taken place. He has stardom, or so he maintains, behind him and starvation in front, and takes the opportunity of cashing in on his story from anyone who will listen to it.

The old man

One of the briefest sketches and yet one of the most effective is that of Great Rumpuscat. His size and features are such that he has only to appear, still yawning from sleep, on the scene of the dog-fight to strike such fear into the participants that they all flee in terror.

Again there is economy in the description of Old Deuteronomy. We see him through the attitude of the villagers who let him stay in the middle of the road even if their vehicles have to mount the pavement. They creep out the back of the local inn rather than disturb him and the oldest human inhabitant shows deference to him. We are told little of him except that he is extremely old and

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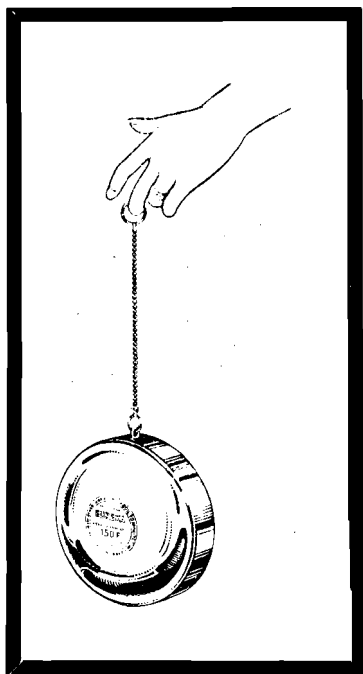
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Joan Thompson's "Just Fancy" will be resumed in next month's issue and will cover the Southern Counties Show and other show news. We regret that the "copy" from Mr. Richard Gebhardt dealing with the second half of his Continental judging tour has not arrived in time for inclusion in this issue.



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that he has had nearer ninety-nine than nine lives, but we can see him sunning himself on that mellow wall.

Then there is that delightful picture of Jennyanydots, the Gumbie Cat, organizing delinquent beatles into boy-scouts. Here is a thoroughly respectable cat, a proud housewife who enjoys cooking such delicacies as mouse-cake for the mice

Night rider

Skimbleshanks, too, although up and doing, in fact travelling vast distances rather than vegetating in one place, is smug in his virtue as he makes his tour of inspection on his regular nightly train. He plays the role of the manager of a luxury hotel, never failing to see that his guests have every comfort. As such he sips his whisky, but as a cat he pauses occasionally to scratch because of fleas

Bustopher Jones, typifying the man about town through the cat about town, is easy enough to visualize. An aristocrat by nature if not by birth, he strolls, immaculately dressed, from one well-known club to another, wineing and

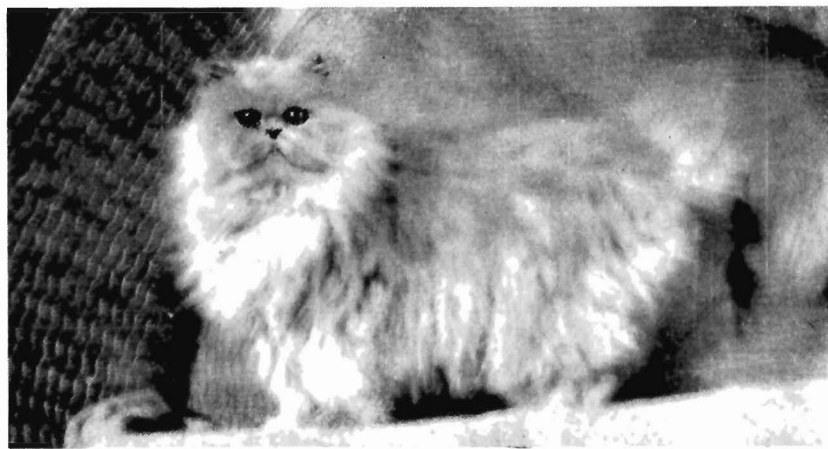
dining himself at whichever ones he selects.

Throughout there is this clever mixing of human and cat characteristics. The Rum Tum Tugger is a familiar cat in his perverseness, although, fortunately for cat-owners, his is a more than ordinary obstinacy. We all know the cat who will let a perfectly good and receptive lap go begging until just that moment when its owner wants to use it for needlework, and who is never likely to want what is offered when it is offered

Conjuring trick

Two of the most effective names are left Mr. Mistoffelees and the Jellicle cats. From the repetition of the latter much of the poem's happy sound is obtained, and in the latter the use of the long words in several consecutive lines is outstandingly successful. At the end of this we are left with the picture of Mr. Mistoffelees making seven kittens appear out of a hat.

Cat lovers, however much they boggle at sentimental lines about pets, will find no mawkish feeling here, and, if they like verse at all will enjoy meeting *Practical Cats*



AVERNOLL BEAUTY, Blue Longhair female by Sheepfold Muffin ex Magyar Lilani, bred by Mrs. E. Brine, of Wickford, Essex, was on view at the recent Southern Counties C.C. Show.

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