

ANGELA SAYER at the

1972 "NATIONAL"

Damp and dismal London was considerably brightened on 25th November, 1972, when the 76th Annual Show of the National Cat Club was staged in the Empire Hall at Olympia.

On two floors, almost two thousand cats and kittens were penned in four separate sections: Longhaired, Shorthaired, Siamese and Household Pets. Many cat clubs and welfare societies had gaily decorated stands and stalls promoting their activities and selling all manner of wares suitable as Christmas gifts or kitty gifts.

In the Longhaired section, managed by Mrs. Blanche Barron, 458 cats and kittens, powdered, primped and perfumed awaited the attentions of twentyfour judges.

Among the first prize Open Winners were Mrs. Shephard's Black female, *WillowZen Gaiety Girl*; a heavenly Smoke male, *Sonata Chiaroscuro*, owned and bred by Mrs. Roden; Mrs. R. Silverman's superb Orange-eyed White male, *Champion Camber Valiant*; and a striking Turkish male, *Van Sayan*, owned by Mrs. Glen-West.

Longhaired kittens which particularly took my eye were Mr. Wickham-Ruffle's home-bred Chinchilla male, *Silvermist Ballerion*; Mrs. E. Cordell's *Chatbleu Angelique*, a Blue-Cream; and Miss N. Woodfield's beautiful little Tortie-and-White, *Pathfinders Hideaway*.

The exhibition section included a wonderful display of **Colourpoints** staged by Mrs. S. Harding, as well as other notable and famous cats. Eleven litters were exhibited, an excellent showing for the time of year.

Eleven judges tackled the ninety-two British Shorthairs while thirteen coped with the 314 Foreign Shorthairs in the section managed by Mrs. Hilda Philpot. Unfortunately, this Section was benched on the first floor in very bad lighting conditions, making it very difficult to assess coat and eye colour. Three British litters and eight Foreign litters all helped to enchant visitors. A magnificent display of 'exhibition only' Foreign Shorthairs proved to be a perfect shop window for these varieties, especially the Foreign Shorthair Cat Club's section featuring Foreign Lavenders, Egyptian Mau, White and Black 'Russian*' and Foreign Black Shorthairs which was designed to educate the public about the newly-developed 'foreign' breeds.

Prominent among the winners in this section were Si-Rex, *Marisarni Voodoo*, a female owned by Mrs. Finnegan; Mrs. J. Green's superb **Blue** Burmese female, *Pikko Silver Lady*; *Nemophila Meadowlark*, a Red Abyssinian female owned by Mrs. BM. Kay; Spotted Shorthair male, *Zephyr Hyllus*, owned by Miss I. Smith; and a wonderful six-year-old British Blue neuter, *Jezebel Jokyl*, which won the Premier of Premiers award, owned by Mr. Moon.



Mrs. Sayer with her Havana male **CH. DANDY-CAT ZUU WARRIOR**, Best ♂ in Show, 1970 National.

Kittens I wanted to carry off included **Cox's** White Devon Rex, *Berilleon Kwan-Yin*; Absalom's Brown Tabby boy, *Brynbuboo Bosselot*, and *Contented Ishtar*, a Red Abyssinian female owned by Mr. Kiernan.

Of the 328 Siamese in competition, many were, on the whole, rather disappointing, although the winners were of the high standard expected at this show. This section, ably managed by Mrs. M. Wilson, needed twenty-four judges to get through the large classes. Four litters of kittens were exhibited and Britain's first Grand Champion Siamese, Mrs. Aslin's *Gr. Champion Seremban Liger*, an elegant Seal Tabby Point, held court to the throngs of admirers all day.

Deservedly winning coveted Open awards were Mrs. Abbey's Lilac Point male, *Quintral Pirata*; *Rimmer's* lovely Red Point, *Ch. Darling Dream Angus*; and a **Tortie** Point of outstanding type, Haggard's *Sharlooi Phaedra*.

Among the many kittens of extreme promise, I fancied, Mrs. Gregory's Seal Point female, *Scimitar Sedelia*, would have fitted nicely into my pocket, along with another little female, this time a Blue Point, *Holden's Calendo Carousel*.

There was one Siamese at the show known by practically everybody in the United Kingdom, *Plain-song Jason*, star of the television programme, "Blue Peter". *Jason*, undoubtedly the main draw of the National, was penned in the Pet Section run by Mrs. Warde, catering only for unregistered, non-pedigree cats and kittens. A grand total of 437 pet cats and kittens competed in the many and varied classes and the judges had a very difficult time judging the large numbers entered into each class, especially the classes for "Blue Peter" viewers, one of which, judged by this writer, had an entry of ninety-eight cats, surely a world record class? The winners of the "Blue Peter"

classes were privileged to appear on this children's TV programme the following Monday to receive special awards from the stars of the show.

A series of untoward events almost stopped the 1972 production of the National, world's largest cat show, and show organizer Grace Pond had to use all her resources in order to be ready for the great day. When the committee arrived to start work on the hall, masses of heavy machinery blocked the way preventing the benching from being erected as required. This was eventually moved and screened off. Next a fire broke out in the neighbouring hall causing soot falls in the 'Empire'. Ordered prize cards failed to arrive in time and some cats had to have altered cards instead of their deserved ones.

"Best In Show" was discontinued after the 1970 show and many exhibitors now feel the end of the day at Olympia to be something of an anti-climax. However, the entry gets higher and higher every year, causing more and more problems, and it is possibly only a question of time when the 'National' will be on a par with the 'Cruft's' of the dog world and cats will have to satisfy qualifying conditions before being accepted into competition.

Love it or loathe it, the whole of the cat world and half of London flock to the 'National' every year, plus interested folk from many other lands, drawn together by the love of the cat. 🐱🐱🐱