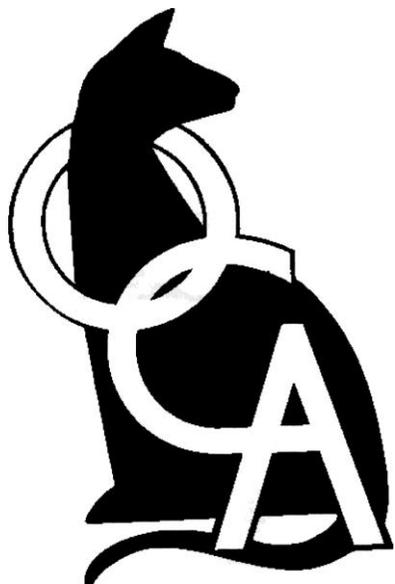


ORIENTAL CAT ASSOCIATION



Why the O.C.A.?

A telephone call to Pat Turner one afternoon in 1970 set the scene for the development of a completely new range of Oriental Shorthair cats and the inauguration and growth of the Oriental Cat Association (OCA). The call alerted Pat to the plight of five or six cats and two kittens whose owner had threatened that, unless they were found new homes immediately, she would have all of them euthanased. Pat was told that two of the queens were Chinchilla and that the kittens were silvery coloured hybrids from an accidental mating with one of the Siamese in the group.

Obviously, the first priority was to re-home the cats while arrangements could be made for more permanent accommodation, and as Pat was recovering from a series of operations, the cats were all taken to Jean Munro at Farnham, while Pat found new owners for the Siamese.

The hybrid kittens resulting from the mating between the Chinchilla and the Siamese cats were reported to be silver in colour. For several years Pat had been attempting to get data on such a mating in order to prove or disprove her conviction that the gene producing Silver was not, as was then generally believed, a recessive gene at the same locus as Siamese, but a dominant gene at a different locus. She discussed the matter with Roy Robinson and they agreed that the hybrid kittens must be bred from, and the two Chinchilla queens test mated.

Before any firm decisions could be made Pat and Roy had to be certain that the kittens were Silver so they were taken to Mary Dunnill for her opinion. Mary confirmed that they were Silver and the die was cast! The two Chinchilla queens were Marisarni Retara and Marisarni Cindy, and Pat registered the kittens as Scinta Celeste and Scintasilva Sue. The breeding programme began when Cindy was mated to a black shorthair and Retara mated to a Lilac Pointed Siamese.

Of the kittens, Celeste was given to June Matthews but never bred, while Sue was successfully mated to a Red Point Siamese carrying blue. It was on the day of the birth of Sue's first litter in 1971 (the first second-generation litter of the breeding programme) that the Oriental Cat Association was founded at Withyham in Sussex, with Roy Robinson, Pat Turner, Sylvia Scott, Alice Law and Ann White-Law as founder members. A list of the colour varieties expected in the breeding programme was drawn up and other breeders keen to help became involved.

The objects of the newly formed club were to promote and develop these new varieties in the Cat Fancy and, by so doing, to produce the breeding data necessary to solve the problems of Silver and Smoke colour genetics. It was not long before it became clear that other aspects of Chinchilla genetics were important to the new club membership and needed to be studied. The varieties listed were Black, Blue, Havana, Lilac, Red, Cream, all colours of Tortoiseshell (Tortie), all colours of Smoke, all colours of Tabby (including all colours of Silver Tabby) and in all patterns, all colours of Pastel and all the foregoing colour varieties in Siamese. The cats described as Pastel were those now known as Shaded Silvers and it was only later that the Standard Shaded and Tippeds were recognised. These have since been amalgamated into one variety - Oriental Shaded. The Cinnamon varieties were added later and, more recently, the Caramel, Apricot and Fawn varieties.

The first Chairman of the OCA was Sylvia Scott, later to be followed by Pat Turner, June Parley, Pat Turner (for a second term), Mary Dunnill (who was Chairman for 12 years until her death in 1990), and currently Carol Ward. Roy Robinson served for many years as the club President and after his death was succeeded by Mrs Betty Harrison. After Betty's death in 2009 her son John Harrison became President.

The OCA held its first show in Rye in 1975 with Mary Dunnill as Show Manager and Pat Turner and Monica Buttery as her assistants. Affiliation to the Governing Council of the Cat Fancy (GCCF) was granted in the same year and shortly afterwards the '29 Society' was amalgamated with the OCA

Since its formation in 1971 the OCA has changed its name 3 times! It started life as the Oriental Pastel and Smoke Group, became the Oriental Cat Association and then, when the Foreign Blacks were recognised by the GCCF as 'Foreign' rather than as 'Oriental' a further change was made to Havana Foreign & Oriental Cat Association. This was to reflect the permission granted by the GCCF for the club to cater for the Havana within our breed groups. In 1990 the GCCF allowed the designation of all our varieties as Orientals, but with the Whites retaining the name Foreign White, and the final name change was made back to the Oriental Cat Association.

Since its formation the OCA has successfully applied for Championship Status for Oriental Blacks, Oriental Blues, Oriental Reds, Oriental Creams/Apricots, Oriental Torties, Oriental Spotted Tabbies, Oriental Ticked Tabbies, Oriental

Classic Tabbies, Oriental Smokes and Oriental Shadedds in all colours. In 2003 it achieved Provisional Status for Oriental Caramels.

Together with the Havana & Oriental Lilac Cat Club an application was made for Championship Status for the Oriental Lilac breed, and the OCA supported the Oriental Cinnamon & Fawn Group to gain Championship Status for Oriental Cinnamons and Provisional Status for Oriental Fawns.

The GCCF proposal to allow amalgamation of breeds enabled all other colours (AOC) Tabbies of all patterns to gain Championship Status from June 1996.

In June 1997 the club successfully applied for recognition of the colour Apricot in all varieties.

The OCA was a founder member of the Consultative Committee for Foreign Shorthairs of Siamese Type, which was re-named in 1984 the Foreign & Oriental Joint Committee (FOJC). This was an advisory committee formed by the Siamese type shorthair clubs to deal with matters pertaining to standards of points and judging lists. In compliance with new rulings from GCCF in 1988 this joint committee has now been disbanded to reform as the Oriental Joint Breed Advisory Committee (OJBAC).

From its modest beginnings the OCA has progressed a long way and acknowledgement has to be given to all those who have helped, for their hard work and dedication. The enthusiasm and commitment of the Officers, committee members and breeding members still continues.

So returning to the question asked in the title of this paper - WHY THE OCA? The answer is simple - the club exists to fill a need and do a job - to monitor the progress of the Orientals, both the development of new breeds and the well-established breeds, and to provide advice, information and help to its members.

For more information about the OCA and the services it offers to members contact the OCA Secretary.

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