



Lady Marcus Beresford

The 'Windsor Cattery' at Bishopsgate

CAT FANCIER, BREEDER
SOCIALITE & PHILANTHROPIST

BY
JOHN SMITHSON

Composite Selections from 'Rhapsody in Blue' by the same author.

There can be little doubt, that Lady Marcus Beresford, was one of the more colourful of early cat fancy participants. From a simple commoner middle-class background, and with a history of what would have normally been considered by her peers as socially unsavoury incidents involving elopements, she had nevertheless successfully navigated the social dangers of surviving two husbands. The second of was in the process of suing her for divorce when he died, giving her the golden opportunity as a widow, to legalise her relationship with Lord Marcus.

This marriage brought her into the Irish aristocratic family of Lord Marcus Talbot de la Poer Beresford, a son of John Beresford, the 4th Marquess of Waterford. Lord Marcus's elder brother was Lord William de la Poer Beresford, who was a veteran of the Zulu war, and recipient of the Victoria Cross, and who was later stationed in India as a member of staff of the Viceroy.

But it was her involvement with the Cat Fancy that brings her to our attention, and her actions within it, that had a profound effect upon it, both in England and the United States, through her friendship with Mrs. Adele Clinton Locke.

Although Lady Marcus has herself stated that her catteries were established in 1890, she is known to have bred cats long before her marriage to Lord Marcus Beresford, which is intimated in the writings of Helen Winslow who stated in 1900: -

"Lady Marcus Beresford has for the last fifteen years made quite a business of the breeding and rearing of cats. At Bishopsgate, near Egham, she has what is without doubt the finest cattery."

It was writer W.M. Elkington who said of Lady Marcus Beresford: - *"There is no doubt in the mind of anyone,*

that she is the best friend the cat and the cat fancier ever possessed". This opinion is closely endorsed by the description given of her activities by Frances Simpson in 'The Book of the Cat', who introduced her, and her achievements as follows: -

"The National Cat Club reigned alone until 1898, when Lady Marcus Beresford started and founded the Cat Club. This ardent cat lover has done more for pussy than anyone in the fancy. She is most lavish in her generosity and unwearying in her efforts to promote the welfare of the Club. It was Lady Marcus who first started the idea of holding cat shows in aid of charity. The Cat Club's first show, held at St. Stephen's Hall, Westminster, in 1899, was in aid of the Children's Guild of the Deptford Fund.

"In 1900 the families of the soldiers and sailors who had fallen in the Transvaal were benefited to a large extent by the proceeds of the show. In 1901, the Children's Hospital, Great Ormond Street, was the charity selected to receive a handsome donation of £100. The Westminster shows have always been splendidly managed, a noticeable feature being the wonderful array of beautiful special prizes offered for competition."

THE WINDSOR CATTERY AT BISHOPSGATE

From an interview with Lady Marcus, Helen Winslow recorded these interesting quotes from Lady Marcus herself, about her cats and cattery: -

"I have applications from all parts of the world for my cats and kittens, and I may tell you it is largely because of this that I founded the Cat Club, which has for its object the general welfare of the cat and the improvement of the breed. My catteries were established in 1890, and at one time I had as many



LADY MARCUS BERESFORD

Cover Photo from 'Our Cats' Magazine, January 17, 1900. © The Harrison Weir Collection.



Interior view of a living room inside 'BISHOPSGATE COTTAGE' Englefield Green, the Residence of Lord Marcus Beresford.

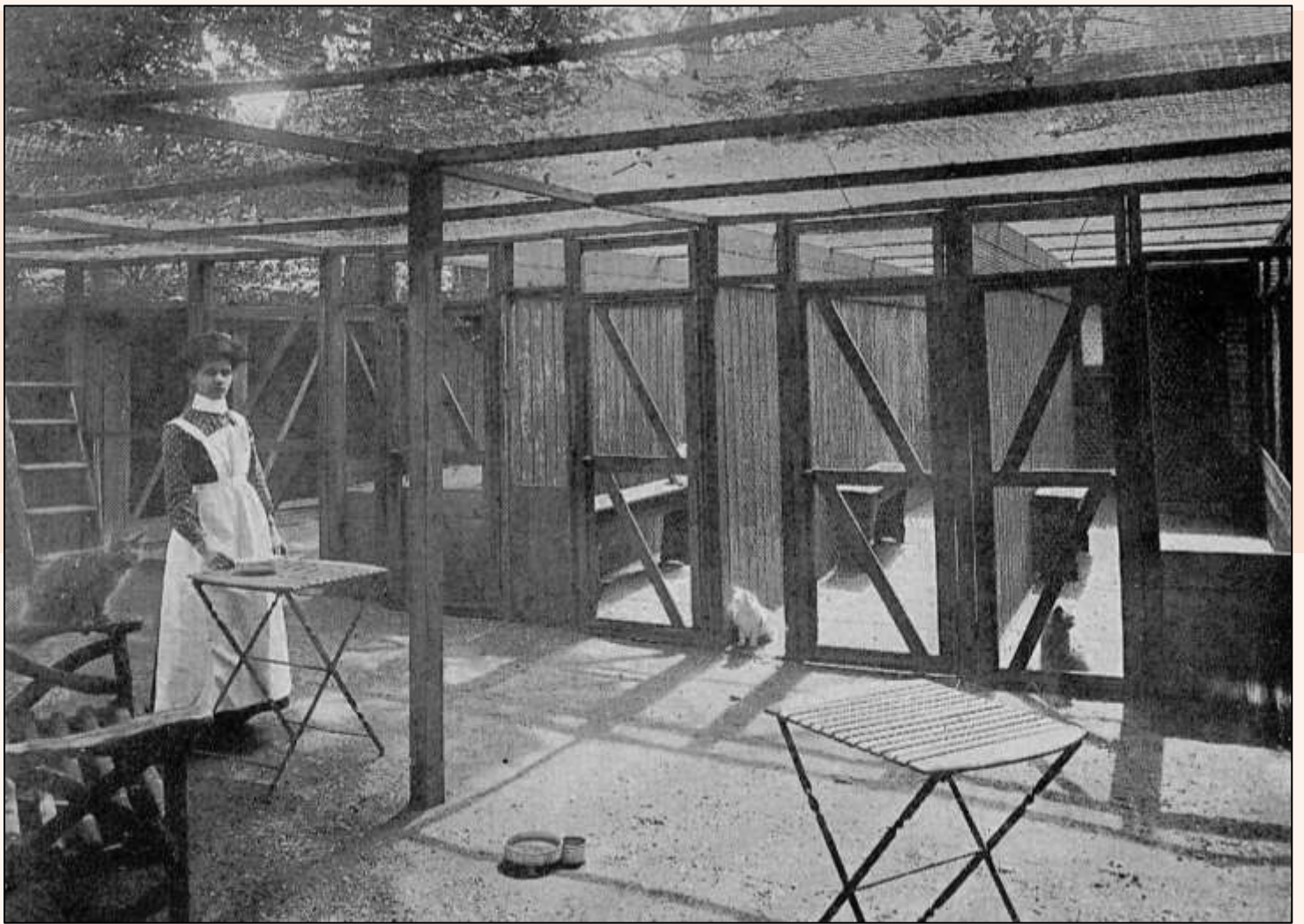
Image: 'The Country Home' (undated circa 1904) courtesy of The Harrison Weir Collection.

as 150 cats and kittens. Some of my pets live in a pretty cottage covered with creepers, which might well be called Cat Cottage. No expense has been spared in the fittings of the rooms, and every provision is made for warmth and ventilation. One room is set apart for the girl who takes entire charge of and feeds the pussies. She has a boy who works with her and performs the rougher tasks. There is a small kitchen for cooking the meals for the cats, and this is fitted with every requisite. On the walls are racks to hold the white enamelled bowls and plates used for the food. There is a medicine chest, which contains everything that is needful for prompt and efficacious treatment in case pussy becomes sick. On the wall are a list of the names and a full description of all the inmates of the cattery, and a set of rules to be observed by both the cats and their attendants. These rules are not ignored, and it is a tribute to the intelligence of the cat to see how carefully pussy can become amenable to discipline, if once given to understand of what that discipline consists.

"Then there is a garden cattery. I think this is the prettiest of all. It is covered with roses and ivy. In this

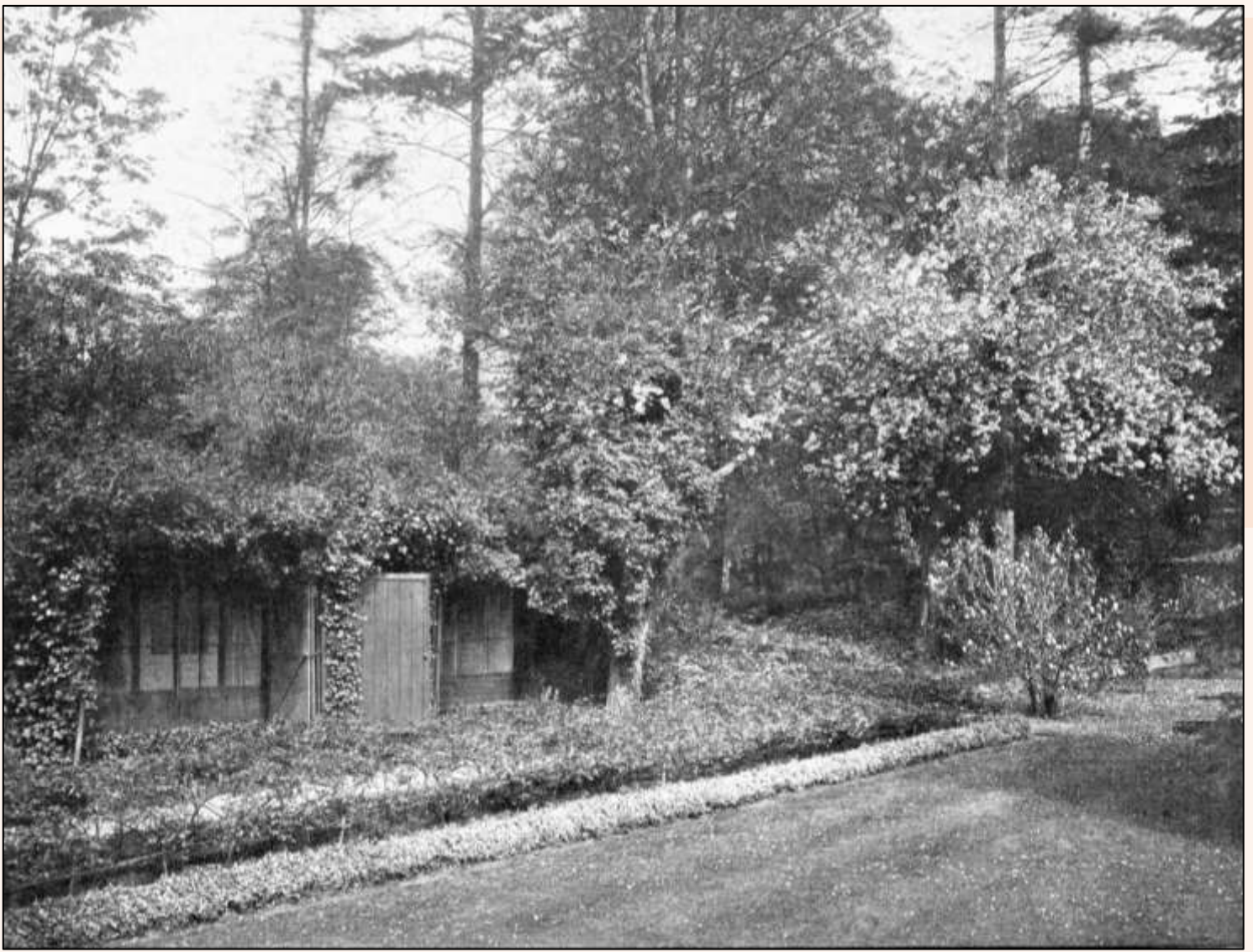
there are three rooms, provided with shelves and all other conveniences which can add to the cats' comfort and amusement. The residences of the male cats are most complete, for I have given them every attention possible. Each male cat has his separate sleeping apartments, closed with wire and with a 'run' attached. Close at hand is a large, square grass 'run,' and in this each gentleman takes his daily but solitary exercise. One of the stringent rules of the cattery is that no two males shall ever be left together, and I know that with my cats if this rule were not observed, both in letter and precept, it would be a case of 'when Greek meets Greek'.

"I vary the food for my cats as much as possible. One day we will have most appetizing bowls of fish and rice. At the proper time you can see these standing in the cat kitchen ready to be distributed. Another day these bowls will be filled with minced meat. In the very hot weather a good deal of vegetable matter is mixed with the food. Swiss milk is given, so there is no fear of its turning sour. For some time I have kept a goat on the premises, the milk from which is given to the delicate or younger kittens.



THE 'WINDSOR' CATTERY AT BISHOPSGATE. ABOVE: STUD'S CATTERY & YARD. BELOW: CATTERY COTTAGE AND KITCHEN.
 Photos: Cassell & Co, 'The Book of The Cat' (1903) by Frances Simpson.





THE GARDEN CATTERY AT BISHOPSGATE

Photo: Cassell and Company Ltd, 'The Book of The Cat' (1903) by Frances Simpson

"I have started many of my poorer friends in cat breeding, and they have proved conclusively how easily an addition to their income can be made, not only by breeding good Persian kittens and selling them, but by exhibiting them at the various shows and taking prizes. But of course there is a fashion in cats, as in everything else. When I started breeding blue Persians about fifteen years ago they were very scarce, and I could easily get twenty-five dollars apiece for my kittens. Now this variety is less sought after, and self-silvers, commonly called chinchillas, are in demand."

Both photographs of excellent quality, and an almost contemporaneous description of the Windsor Cattery at 'Bishopsgate', is provided by Miss Frances Simpson in 'The Book of The Cat' (1903): -

"The Bishopsgate cattery may be said to have won a worldwide renown and those who have been privileged to visit the ideal residence of Lady Marcus Beresford will agree with me that it is impossible to give any idea, either by photography or description

of the delightful dwelling places set apart for the pussies belonging to this true lover and fancier of the feline race.

"There is the cat cottage, where the attendant has her rooms, and where the other apartments are especially fitted up for the cats. Here the Siamese have their quarters, and the sun streams in at the windows, which face due south. Opposite to the cottage, as may be seen in the illustration, are some of the cat houses, and in the centre is the kitchen. The cat attendant stands at the door, and some of the pussies are having their mid-day meal. The celebrated 'Blue Boy II' occupies a house, and in the background is a grass run, securely wired in, which is used as a playground for the pussies. In the hot summer weather, this is shaded by the lovely spreading beech trees of Windsor Park.

"The stud cats' houses are splendidly arranged with sleeping places and nice large runs. The space in the centre in front of these runs is used as an exercise ground for the females and kittens. The garden-house



THE CATS' EXERCISE GROUND AT BISHOPSGATE.

Photo: Cassell and Company Ltd, 'The Book of The Cat' (1903) by Frances Simpson

is, indeed an ideal one, being a bower of roses in the summer-time, and in the winter it's an ivy-clad retreat. This house is divided into two apartments, and these are generally used for the queen mothers and their families. On the shelves along the windows the pussies sit and sun themselves.

"Truly the lives of inmates of the Bishopsgate catteries are spent in peace and plenty, and when their little span of life is over they find a resting place under the shadow of the grand old trees, and a little white tombstone with a loving inscription marks the spot of pussy's last long sleep.

"Lady Marcus Beresford has had almost every breed of cat under the sun at her catteries, but of recent years she has specially taken up silvers, blues, and Siamese, and a grand specimen of each of these varieties is in the stud at Bishopsgate. Amongst some of the celebrated cats owned by Lady Marcus Beresford I may mention 'Lifeguard,' a grand orange of massive build; 'Tachin' and 'Cambodia,' two imported Siamese with perfect points; and 'Cora,' a

tortoiseshell and white of great beauty, and 'Kismet,' a brown tabby of exquisite shape, both imported; and 'Cossy,' a smoke that has found a home in America. At the present time three of the most notable inmates of the Bishopsgate cattery, representing blues, silvers, and Siamese, are 'Blue Boy II'; 'Beetle,'; and 'King of Siam.'

In an article entitled 'The Cult of the Cat' W.M. Elkington provides another historical overview of Lady Marcus Beresford's activities and the benefits derived from them: -

"Ladies, as I have said, have been pre-eminently successful in their cult of the cat, and none more so than Lady Marcus Beresford, in whom pussy has a devoted friend. Lady Marcus Beresford has long kept cats as pets, but it is only six or seven years since she went in largely for breeding show specimens. She was a prime mover in Cruft's great cat show in 1894. In those days, Lady Marcus went in for nearly every possible colour, chiefly favouring blues, oranges, and tortoiseshells; but nowadays



THE GARDENS AT BISHOPSGATE, ENGLEFIELD GREEN, THE RESIDENCE OF LORD & LADY MARCUS BERESFORD.

The garden abuts on Windsor Forest, which His Majesty the King has on more than one occasion allowed Lady Marcus to enclose portions of the forest. As Master of the Horse, Lord Marcus has often entertained the King at Bishopsgate.

Photo: 'The Country Home' circa 1904.

the Bishopsgate catteries are almost entirely inhabited by blues, silvers, and Siamese. Lady Marcus keeps a cat-girl, whose whole time is devoted to the care of the cats and their houses, but their mistress personally superintends all the arrangements. There are usually between twenty and thirty cats at Bishopsgate; but of course, when the kittens begin to arrive their numbers are greatly augmented. The cats are fed almost entirely on meat; no milk is given, and of late no artificial heat has been used in the houses, with the result that the health of the inmates is found to be much improved.

"In January, 1898, Lady Marcus Beresford started a club called the Cat Club, and this has proved a brilliant success; for, owing to the untiring energy and generosity of Lady Marcus, the club has been able to offer at its shows an absolutely unequalled list of prizes; and at the first show in January, 1899, there were more cats shown than at any show before. The club now boasts a very large membership and an excellent financial position, so that Lady Marcus Beresford has just cause to be proud of her work. There is no doubt that she is the best friend the cat and the cat fancier ever possessed.

"Lady Marcus does not breed cats solely to sell and to win prizes; her cats are pets, and their lives are truly happy. The two Siamese beauties, Tachin and Cambodia, whose portraits are reproduced (here) were sent home by Lord William Beresford when he was in India, together with a number of beautiful Persians."

Over the years, Lady Marcus has owned and bred a very long list of notable Blue and Silver Persians. Living so near to H.R.H. Princess Victoria of Schleswig Holstein, whose cattery at Cumberland Lodge also bordered Windsor Forest; she was in an excellent position to act as a mentor to the young royal in her acquired hobby.

In the latter part of the 19th century and the opening years of the new century, Princess Victoria is known to have used Lady Marcus's studs and to have acquired silver Persians from Lady Marcus's local strains. The Princess's grand silver male 'PUCK III' was bred by Lady Marcus, sired by Miss Snell's 'Silver Starlight' by 'Silver Laddie' and out of Lady Marcus Beresford's lovely chinchilla female, 'Windsor Dimity', a daughter of the then world famous 'Lord Southampton' by 'Silver Lambkin'.



ANOTHER VIEW OF THE GARDENS AT BISHOPSGATE, ENGLEFIELD GREEN, RESIDENCE OF LORD & LADY MARCUS BERESFORD.
Windsor Forest is seen behind the railings. Many birds find nesting places in the holes in trunks and branches,
while in other places Lady Marcus has put up nesting boxes.

Photo: 'The Country Home' Circa 1904.

The Princess also bred her two most famous blue males from her own 'Duschar' by 'Fulmer Roy' bred to Lady Marcus Beresford's 'Blue Boy II'; namely Mrs. Gotwalts 'Bagdad Amesh' and Mrs. Collingwood's 'Royal Bobs'.

Among the blue males Lady Marcus is known to have placed at stud are: 'AZURE' (aka 'Windsor Azure') (CCR: v1), by 'Blue Robin' ex 'Myosotis', a daughter of 'Ch. Woolloomooloo. Also, 'NEMOPHYLA' (Refs:CCR) from the same parentage; (both showing in the stud advertisement for Bishopsgate, from Volume Two of the Cat Club Stud-book and Register on this page) and of course, 'BLUE BOY II' (NCC:3045) by 'Diavolo' ex 'Blue Lady'. Other studs available, but not showing would have included 'GOLIATH' (CCR: v1) and his son 'GOLIATH II' (CCR: v4).

There are far too many blue females either purchased and owned by Lady Marcus Beresford, or bred by her, and either retained or sold for breeding to list here, but Mrs. MacKenzie Stewart's 'Ayrshire Bluebell' is but one example.

Lady Marcus Beresford's overall influence on the Cat Fancy between the mid 1890's and 1903 is enormous,

and in many ways, it is distinctly possible that her personal motives and actions may have been largely misunderstood.

LINKS WITH MRS. CLINTON LOCKE

Lady Marcus Beresford's father-in-law, was John Beresford, who was not only a Peer of the Realm and the Marquess of Waterford, but also a Church of Ireland Minister, an autonomous province of the Anglican Communion. She therefore would have shared much in common with American cat fancier, Mrs. (Adele) Clinton Locke, whose husband was the Rector of the Grace Episcopal Church, in Chicago.

Despite being a busy Rector's wife, Mrs. Adele (Clinton) Locke of Chicago, still managed to find time to pursue an extremely active interest in her hobby of cat keeping and breeding, including being one of the most active importers living on the American continent, and certainly one of the earliest.

Records show that she imported a white cat 'Wendell' from the United Kingdom, possibly as early as 1876. 'Wendell' is recorded in the register of the National Cat Club with the number 1823, and the distinctive notation that he was brought by a noted



Above left: Mrs. Clinton Locke with 'Wendell' (aka 'American Wendell' NCC:1823) Photo: 'Concerning Cats' (1900) by Helen M. Winslow. Above right: Mrs. Clinton Locke, with her two Siamese kittens, namely 'Calif' and 'Bangkok' Photo: 'The Book of The Cat' (1903) by Frances Simpson.

traveller, (Dr Prime), from Persia. So, this cat, amongst Mrs Locke's very first, was a cat that had come indirectly all the way from the Persian Gulf, via England, into the United States. The author Helen M. Winslow, in 'Concerning Cats' (1900), further enlightens us: -

"It is a full twenty-five years since Mrs. Locke began to turn her attention to fine cats, and when she imported her first cat to Chicago there was only one other in the United States. That one, was Mrs. Edwin Brainard's 'Madam', a wonderful black, imported from Spain. Her first long-haired cat was 'Wendell', named for the friend who brought him from Persia, and his descendants are now in the Lockhaven Cattery."

As far as may be verifiably ascertained, the first *registered* Blue Persians in America, included both 'American Doc' (NCC:1827) born in 1884, and his daughter, 'American Vashti' (NCC:1828) born in 1886. 'American Doc' was imported from Turkey, via the agency of Ward Wilkinson, and 'American Vashti' was

bred by Mrs. Clinton Locke, out of 'American Nera', a black female also bred by Mrs. Locke, born in 1884.

Thus does Mrs. Clinton Locke qualify as one of the few 'Pre-Registry' American breeders of Persians, and possibly the first to own and breed Blues.

Her breeding philosophy, and opinion on where the best stock was likely to be obtained is also clarified for us by Helen M. Winslow: -

"Mrs. Locke's cats are all imported. She has sometimes purchased cats from Maine or elsewhere for people who did not care to pay the price demanded for her fine kittens, but she has never had in her own cattery any cats of American origin. Her stock, therefore, is probably the choicest in America."

After the establishment of the National Cat Club in 1887 and then its decision to create the first stud-book for cats, she became a member and began registering her cats with the National Cat Club in the UK, the first entry being her beloved 'American Wendell' and others, which can be found in Volume Three.



Above left: Mrs. Robert Locke, with 'Calif' (centre), 'Siam' (on her lap), and 'Bangkok' (on her shoulder). Photo: by S.S. Finlay, Chicago. 'The Book of The Cat' (1903) by Frances Simpson. Above right: A presentation Sterling Silver notepad holder with pencil, an inscribed gift from Lady Marcus Beresford. Image: Courtesy of The Harrison Weir Collection.

Mrs. Clinton Locke's passion for importing inevitably lead to her and her daughter-in-law Mrs. Robert Locke travelling to England and France in search of new bloodstock, firstly for Blue Persians and again later for Siamese.

During her English stays she would visit major shows and spend time with Lady Beresford, whose husband Lord Marcus Beresford was at the time, jointly a President of the National Cat Club with the Duchess of Bedford.

It was in 1894 that Mrs Locke took the decision to import a pair of Blues, that would have a significant impact on the advancement of this colour variety back in the United States. These were a male, '**Lockehaven The Beadle**', (BCC:125) born March 18th 1894, bred by Mrs Dean, of Hawthorndene, of Slough and a female, '**Rosalys**'(BCC:105), born in August 1894, bred by Mrs Foote, of Palace Gardens, London.

Both Mrs. Locke and Lady Marcus shared common charitable interests, not the least among which was a conviction that the raising of cats provided women of

modest means with an opportunity to establish an additional stream of income.

This is witnessed by statements about both women by Winslow in 'Concerning Cats' from observations of Mrs. Locke and from quotes by Lady Marcus: -

"One of the first American women to start a 'cattery' in this country was Mrs. Clinton Locke, wife of the rector of Grace Church, Chicago. As a clergyman's wife she has done a great deal of good among the various charities of her city simply from income derived from her kennels.

"She has been very generous in gifts of her kittens to other women who have made the raising of fine cats a means to add to a slender income, and has sent beautiful cats all over the United States, to Mexico, and even to Germany."

She then quotes directly from Lady Marcus: -

"I have started many of my poorer friends in cat breeding, and they have proved conclusively how easily an addition to their income can be made, not



DETAIL: ENGRAVED INSCRIPTION OF LADY MARCUS BERESFORD ON PRESENTATION STERLING SILVER NOTE-PAD HOLDER

Image: Courtesy of The Harrison Weir Collection

only by breeding good Persian kittens and selling them, but by exhibiting them at various shows and taking prizes."

Mrs. Clinton Locke had over time, formed a lasting and committed friendship with Lady Marcus Beresford, in whose honour she would later choose to form and name her new Chicago-based Cat Club the '**Beresford Cat Club**.' Not only was it one of the earliest registered feline societies formed in the USA, it is now the oldest surviving club in the United States!

The sterling silver engraved notepad holder and pencil, shown here was probably gifted to Mrs. Clinton Locke by Lady Marcus Beresford during one of Mrs. Clinton Locke's trips to England in 1895. It was purchased from an estate sale in the eastern United States and is now held in the archives of the Harrison Weir Collection. It is engraved as follows: -

**"A LITTLE SOUVENIR FROM
Lady Marcus Beresford
1895"**

**'THE CAT CLUB' UK &
'THE BERESFORD CAT CLUB' (USA)**

In 1898, came an inevitable rift in the National Cat Club, with Lady Marcus Beresford breaking away to form an alternative National Body and Registry, to be known as 'The Cat Club', and well within a year of that, Mrs. Locke had founded her Chicago-based Cat Club. On the formation of the American clubs, Helen Winslow reported on the creation of a club in New York in 1896,

as a result, and on the back of the successful show held at Madison Square Garden in 1895.

The President of that Club was veterinarian Dr. Rush S. Huidekoper. But it seems that the New York club may not have lasted, judging by the following commentary excerpts: -

"More successful than this club, however, is the Beresford Cat Club formed in Chicago in the winter of 1899. The president is Mrs. Clinton Locke, who is a member of the English cat clubs, and whose kennel in Chicago contains some of the finest cats in America.

"The Beresford Cat Club has the sanction of John G. Shortall of the American Humane Society, and on its honorary list are Miss Agnes Repplier, Madame Ronner, Lady Marcus Beresford, Miss Helen Winslow, and Mr. Louis Wain. At their cat shows, which are held annually, prizes are offered for all classes of cats, from the common feline of the back alley up to the aristocratic resident of milady's boudoir.

"The Beresford Cat shows are the most successful of any yet given in America. One hundred and seventy-eight prizes were awarded in the show of January 1900, and some magnificent cats were shown.

"This club numbers one and seventy members and has a social position and consequent strength second to none in America."



Left: **LOCKEHAVEN SIAM (Imp. Siam) via France.** Centre: **The Locke Haven Challenge Cup of the Beresford Cat Club.**
Right: **NETHERLANDS MA, imported from Lady Marcus Beresford.** Photos: (in order) 'Concerning Cats' (1900),
'Captain Kidd & Sinbad the Sailor' (1906), and 'Harmsworth' Magazine, (1900).

The rift in the National Cat Club that had led to the formation of 'The Cat Club' as an alternative National Body was in itself a catalyst of further change that ultimately brought about the demise of both as sole bodies in control of a National Registry under one set of rules.

November 1899, witnessed the arrival of the very first independent magazine published solely with the interests of cats and cat fanciers in mind, in the form of 'Our Cats'; in which, very public debates, fears and frustrations were aired by fanciers finding themselves falling victim or foul of the whims of one or the other organisation.

1901 marked two significant milestones in England. On one hand fanciers joined to celebrate the 30th year since Harrison Weir had established the first organised show at the Crystal Palace, firstly by promoting and contributing to a Testimonial to the now aged artist, through the auspices of 'Our Cats' magazine.

On the other hand, having two National Associations with similar but opposing rules and where no common ground could seem to be reached over a prolonged period, had its own novel consequence – which was that in 1901, independent specialist clubs began to proliferate – largely to promote their own special interests but also dividing the political landscape into many more smaller portions. All were in a desperate bid to wrestle back and maintain a measure of control over the cat fancy's future destiny.

Although 'The Cat Club' ultimately fell out of favour and was abandoned with the sudden retirement from the cat world by Lady Marcus Beresford in 1903, this did not mean a win for the National Cat Club.

Lady Marcus had been the power behind the popular Westminster Shows, where she had created attractive prize lists and espoused running of shows to support specific charities. These ideas were simultaneously espoused and achieved in alignment with Lady Marcus, by Mrs Clinton Locke with the Beresford Cat Club, based in Chicago.

Instead, the failings of National Cat Club to serve the needs of its members and clubs, were ultimately exposed in a two-year coup de tat that began in 1908, when several of its largest member clubs pulled away, starting their own Register, and sanctioning their own shows, which were at that time, among the largest held in the country. By 1910 The National Cat Club was finally forced to meet with representatives of all the English Clubs, and an agreement was reached whereby it would hand over its control of the Registry and all its governance of the Fancy in return for four seats on a newly formed Governing Council. (GCCF).

Between 1895 and 1902, Mrs. Clinton Locke continued to buy Siamese cats from Lady Marcus and to import Siamese from France. From France came '**Lockhaven Siam**' shown above, while from Lady Marcus she purchased '**Netherlands Tilu**' (formerly 'Windsor He') and '**Netherlands Ma.**'

JGS