

Emma Watts

The funeral of Emma Watts will take place privately at Gloucester Crematorium on Monday 15th June but sadly, due to the current circumstances, it is by invitation only. Sean has requested family flowers only but donations in her memory can be sent to the Somali Cat Welfare Trust – details from alison@lyall.uk

It is with great sadness I have to write this tribute to my very close friend. Tributes are always difficult to write as it means we shall not see them again. It is difficult to use words to capture the essence of the person no words can ever do justice to them. This tribute is in two parts firstly I write as Secretary of the Somali Cat Club, and secondly I write as a friend. I have known Emma and worked with her for over thirty years she passed away on 26th May. Emma served on The Somali Cat Club Committee for many years. She was very proactive and worked tirelessly for the breed. Emma raised funds for our welfare work, was heavily involved in our club show always helping on the setting up and taking down. Her prefix Emanan was hugely successful, breeding top class Somalis of excellent type and temperament. She was also on our Welfare Trust and was always supportive. Not only will our club miss her incredible input but also the cat fancy as a whole. She helped me when I ran shows doing the inputting for me, she was a perfectionist the smallest error she would pick up. She helped behind the scenes at many shows, compiling catalogues and working on tables. Many clubs and shows will miss her input but none as much as The Somali Cat Club. Emma was passionate about the breed and only the very best which met her criteria were allowed to be bred from. Our breed has lost one of the most conscientious breeders we have had.

Personally I will miss her greatly. We used to chat nearly every day and throughout the years she was always there for me when life was tough. We shared a passion for our breed and it was through that mutual love of Somalis we became great friends. We went to many shows together when I was judging Household Pets she would steward for me and when she was judging I acted as her steward. Outside of the fancy we spent many girly weekends at the farm and sometimes we let Sean join us! Each summer we had a camp night my lawn resembled a music festival with an array of tents as the whole family camped out because Emma and Sean became part of our extended family. At Christmas it was usual for them both to come and stay over joining in all the family games. Emma was my mentor with the computer, I'm useless with technology but she would talk me through which buttons to press I am certainly going to struggle with that now I have no Emma to help me. Emma always told people the Farm was her second home always willing to pitch in, helping to shear sheep she would put her hand to anything. Her spare pair of boots sits forlornly in my porch. I know I can't speak to her again, but I have wonderful memories mainly of laughter and love and as the pain dims the memories of a very special person will live on.

On behalf of the Club and myself we send our deepest sympathy to Sean, Ann, Nathan. The rest of the family and friends.

Di Taylor

I was very sad to hear of Emma's passing. She was one of the Somali community who encouraged me to become a Somali judge. She would always enter under me at the Abyssinian Cat Club show and appreciated my reasons for my placings on what were always really quality cats, presented in superb show condition. She would also take me to look at her cats that she was showing at other shows. I always felt that her love of her breed was something she wished everyone to experience. My condolences to her family. The Somali has lost a real champion.

Steve Parkin

It was of great sadness that we learned Emma Watts had passed away. Emma was a rock, a close friend and colleague. She helped run the Maidstone & Medway and Somali show

and was always around to assist, as well as coming up with great ideas for future events. Emma never shied away from offering to do work when we were up against it, and we would often collaborate on show paperwork, discussing the ins and outs of ways around problems. Emma will be greatly missed, a much loved person. Our sincere condolences to Sean.

Shelagh & Ketill Game

I heard the news of Emma's death, with a sense of shock as it was so completely unexpected and out of the blue, I have known Emma for many years but nowhere near as well as some of you, her love of her breed was well known.

Indeed, her prefix in many ways synonymous with the breed and was instantly recognisable having bred many famous exhibits. Not least of which was her blue lad Bootstrap Bill

Emma worked tirelessly for the Somali breed and was incredibly protective of it, she was especially proud of whatever her cats achieved at shows and was always keen to pass on any knowledge she had concerning her breed. Her close friends will miss her greatly, many will have anecdotal tales to tell I am sure.

My sincere condolences and that of the Board to her husband Sean, RIP Emma.

John H Hansson Chair GCCF

Whilst not a close friend I had known Emma for a number of years and did class her as a friend. I was shocked and saddened, therefore, to receive the devastating news that she had died. Emma was a larger than life character who endeared herself to all who met her. She oozed enthusiasm for her beloved Somalis, for cats in general, for the GCCF and for life. I spent several years with my cats at the London Pet Show where, along with her husband, Sean, Anne & Brian Gregory, her close friends Di Taylor & Wayne Baxter and others she played a big part in the GCCF World Of Cats section. Emma was also extremely helpful when the firm she worked for printed a charity calendar that I do each year, she would always proof read my submissions and quickly contact me with minor errors or suggestions as to how bits could appear better. As our showing circles were in different parts of the country I met her infrequently but always looked forward to the times we did as her ebullient personality and zest for life always brightened the dullest day. My thoughts and sincere condolences go out to Sean and Emma's family and friends at this awful time.

Carol Walker

What can I say? I loved her and will miss her so very much. She was so kind and gentle to me from the day we met in Anne Gregory's penthouse suite at The Cambridge Belfry. I just warmed to her straight away. She loved her cats and glowed when they won as a very proud Mommy would. I'll miss her laughter and sweet open face. RIP babe, be at peace xxx

Janet Wilshaw

Like so many friends, we are in shock and deeply saddened on hearing of Emma's passing. We have known Emma almost three decades and have many happy memories of times spent together, not least when five of us crazy cat ladies went on a "Cat Cruise" round the Caribbean back in 1996.

Emma touched the heart of anyone who met her, either meeting physically or just online asking for advice – she was kind, helpful, funny, compassionate, devoted to her Somali breed and one of the cat world's “doers” – always ready to do any job at a show or event.

Over the years there have been so many people who were supported by her as they trained to become full Somali judges and I know that they will all be grateful for her help and advice. She would always try to put her cats under probationer/trainee judges to give them the opportunity to judge Somalis in classes and I know that this was appreciated.

We send our heartfelt condolences to Sean, Ann, Nathan, her friends and the Somali Cat Club members. Our lives have been brightened by having her there and we feel honoured to be able to call her a friend for so long.

Daphne & Steve Butters

I met Emma at a Somali Seminar where I went to learn about Somali cats. The wonderful Pots was there and we had a long conversation about these beautiful cats. I learnt a lot from Emma and will miss her terribly. She was a great help with all of the shows that I managed, would always go the extra mile to make sure the show went smoothly. RIP Emma, hopefully you are up there with your good friend Anne Gregory putting the world to rights.

Barbara Prowse

It has taken me a while to write this tribute to Emma as I still cannot get to grips that she left us all so suddenly. I was deeply saddened to hear such devastating news. I had known Emma for many years, not only from my position as a judge but also as a competitor. I never heard Emma say a bad word about anyone, always happy and smiling and such a kind and gentle person, always so willing to help others. The Somali breed and Its Club were her passion and she worked tirelessly to promote the breed she loved. She bred some wonderful Somalis and I loved being able to handle and judge her cats, especially her beloved 'Boots'. She was one of the people who encouraged me to become an FJ(P) j and was always willing to offer advice when needed. The Cat World has lost another great character and it will not be the same without her. My thoughts and sincere condolences go to Sean, her family and friends.

Sleep well my friend.

Teresa Cole

I was saddened to hear about Emma's passing. I connected with Emma through the UK Somali Cat Club online and although I never had the privilege to meet Emma in person, we enjoyed chatting to each other through messages and I really enjoyed our exchanges.

Emma's passion for Somali cats was wonderful and I always heard how helpful she was in shows and that she made a wonderful judge. I will miss our chats as will so many people, but her legacy will live on through the great work that she did for the Somali Cat Club Committee.

Know that we are never alone and that God walks beside us even through times of sorrow. I pray that Sean and the family find comfort and send my sincere condolences. May Emma rest in peace and rise in glory.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted”

~ Matthew 5:4

Elaine Müller

There is an old fashioned phrase...Salt of the earth, a very good and honest person. This is my friend Emma, kind, never too busy to help or to listen I shall miss her so very much...sleep tight Em xxx

Lots of love to Sean and family

Sue Wilkinson

When I heard of Emma's passing here in Australia I was both shocked and saddened. The love and work that she had for her beloved Somalis was well known over here in our Somali community. I was so honoured to meet Emma at the GCCF Supreme show in 2015. I had flown over for my Mum's funeral having just lost my dad three months previously. Emma was so kind and full of enthusiasm. For those few short hours we laughed and shared many stories together. As you make your final journey today I will be thinking of you as it is also the day that my dad passed away 5 years ago. My thoughts and sincere condolences go out to Sean and Emma's family and friends. Another angel has her wings.

Lynne Moorman

It has taken me till now to write this about a very dear friend. Since that dreaded day that I had the call from another Somali friend to say that Emma was gravely ill in hospital and that things weren't in her favour I think time stood still till a phone call later in the day confirmed all our fears that Emma had passed away, I held my breath and hoped I had heard wrong but alas sadly it wasn't so.

Emma was the most level headed person I knew she put me back on my feet more than once over the years whether it was cats, life in general or health she always had a hug and a smile to say it will be ok. I had only spoke to Emma via messenger a week before where she had said she was still not herself but was doing all she could to get back to full strength.

I will never forget her passion for her cats but most of all the Somali breed she would speak to anyone and everyone about her love for the breed. I can't count the number of times I've been talked into taking cats to a seminar, the pet shows or just on exhibition, don't think I've got enough digits to be fair. I will never forget the pet shows both in London and at the NEC without fail we were in attendance talking cats to anyone that listened. The number of times I had a call to say don't forget your white coat as you will probably have to steward.

Or other occasions of the countless tales of mishaps and misadventures that happened at Brizlincoat Farm usually with coffee in hand for me and Emma and Di sharing a bottle of blue. We have laughed and talked genetics and shows so many times over the years I have so many fond memories of times spent in Emma's company I can't just describe one.

Over the years my friendship grew just as close with Emma's husband Sean and speaking to him days after Emma's passing and knowing I couldn't be there in body to support him at such a tragic time was just as painful.

All I can say is Emma I am glad I shared the Somali journey with you when I showed your boy Geronimo's final litter in the shorthair girl who helped the shorthair Somali achieve champion status and that girl was to become the first Somali shorthair champion in Champion Brizlincoat Desiree aka Dizzie or as you referred to her more often than not Spud. Your legacy within the Somali will live on within the breed to come. Sleep peacefully my dear friend I am going to miss you and even now I still can't comprehend you're not going to be at the end of a phone or message or in your company at a show.

Wayne Baxter The Cats Of Elmarlay