

## THE EXHIBITION MOUSE

### TIM HEATH SAYS OUTCROSSING CAN IMPROVE THE CHOCOLATE TAN

I OFTEN find that when I cease to write for FUR AND FEATHER for a little while, people are very kind and suggest suitable topics for articles.

Recently, Brian Mori suggested that I should write about chocolate Tans since it is a breed of which I have had some experience. When one embarks upon an article about a specific breed it is difficult to know what information one can offer in writing, that will be of value to a prospective breeder of that variety.

I am inclined to avoid the kind of article which goes, "secure the best trio of this you can buy and the best trio of that. Then mate A to B, B to C, C to D and bingo!" This kind of article ultimately means little, because it tries to make definite advice out of facts which may largely be hypothetical.

However, you must pardon me if I slip into such a vein. I have written a similar article myself, and old habits die hard.

The chocolate Tan is an isolated breed. It does not really lend itself to crossing with other breeds. Consequently, the best cross for chocolate Tans is another chocolate Tan. Its general type and size as a breed has suffered accordingly as the number of chocolate Tans available has diminished.

Currently, there are very few indeed available, so the prospective founder of a chocolate Tan stud must rely heavily upon other breeds even though this is not entirely desirable and also a more difficult task.

The black Tan is the most obvious cross for chocolate Tan, though it really has very little to offer by way of colour improvement.

The tan of the black Tan is in the main not so rich as that of chocolates? However, because blacks are currently plentiful they have much to offer by way of size and type.

The blue Tan may sound a rather unusual cross for chocolates, though when you think of it, it is not such a ridiculous suggestion. Black breeders use it. You are going to use black Tans, so why not take a short cut and use blue direct? Indeed, blue has much to offer by way of size, type and tan density in does.

The champagne seems rather risky, and, indeed, as yet I cannot claim to have full knowledge of its effects on chocolates because I am only beginning to use it. However, it is a very attractive prospect as a cross for three reasons.

Firstly, it has such good type and size. Secondly, the does achieve the kind of tan solidity that is rare in chocolate does. Thirdly, the first generation of chocolate by champagne is all chocolate, which makes the job of crossing that much easier, because you are not 'shooting blind'.

So how should one attempt to produce a stud of chocolate Tans? I think it would be best to first buy a trio of chocolates and a few black does. It goes without saying that you should buy the best available.

Make sure the blacks have good size and type.

From these mice you should produce your foundation stud of chocolate Tans. Remember that it is best to back cross with the blacks. Cross the black does to the chocolate buck and then cross the youngsters, which will be all black Tans in appearance, back to other chocolate Tans.

You will get litters containing fifty per cent black, fifty per cent chocolate.

When culling keep all chocolates, although if they must be kept to make up numbers, the blacks will be quite useful if further crossed to chocolate.

Having produced a good basis by this method you can now start evaluating which of the other crosses available will prove the most useful.

Invariably you will be looking for improvements in type and size.

Tan shouldn't be too much of a headache, nor should top colour. Tan density in does and the rate of tan development in bucks may well need improvement. Blue may prove an answer.

I have utilised blue Tans to good effect by this method. First I crossed blue does to a chocolate buck. I used blue does because these are generally larger than chocolate does. The result was one hundred per cent black Tans. From there I treated the cross as a normal black cross, selecting for

size, type and tan density. It matters little whether you keep blacks or chocolates. I kept the best until the chocolate Tans that occurred were of quality and worth exhibiting.

I have never used a champagne Tan as a direct cross. However, I am currently using this line of approach. About six months ago I produced a doe by crossing champagne Tan to blue Tan.

This doe is black. She has very good size and type and a dense though rather pale tan. She also has yellow ears. She has now had two litters by chocolate Tans, the first of which is currently proving its worth in the breeding pen.

These youngsters are chocolate Tan, and have a tan similar in shade to that of champagnes.

Their tops are also rather pale, and, like their mother, they have very pale ears.

I am hoping to see fifty per cent good chocolate Tans in their litters when crossed to normal chocolate Tans, and I also hope that they will have a beneficial effect upon size and type.

Although I am currently experimenting with it, I regard a Self cross as a rather drastic recourse only of serious interest for the breeder who has let feet reach a point of no return. Tan suffers considerably and I shall be watching to see how well it recovers in subsequent generations.

I have mentioned only those crosses of which I have had experience. However, I can foresee the dove Tan being at least as beneficial as the champagne Tan. The best dove Tans do have a very rich tan, and the size which chocolate Tans need. Furthermore, since they are themselves often crossed to champagne Tans, chocolate Tans could well occur in the first generation.

Having discussed the various crosses perhaps I should mention a few points a chocolate Tan breeder must watch when employing outcrosses, and, indeed, in general breeding.

Feet are the perpetual hazard of all Tan breeders. However, there should be no difficulty provided you do not become too worried about tan. Never be tempted to keep all mice with rich tan at the expense of feet or you will soon have mice with glowing paws. Always keep some with good feet even if their tan is poor. The tan can look after itself. The feet need attention.

Now the question must be, 'What do I mean by good feet?' I don't mean good according to the standard which demands feet to be half tan half chocolate. I mean all chocolate. From my experience this is a reasonable guide.

If by twelve weeks the back feet are beginning to tan the mouse will have completely tan feet by the time it is four or five months old. Its front feet will, of course, be already well on the way. Such a mouse is middle of the road, and acceptable for breeding provided it has a good tan.

If by twelve weeks the back feet are still clear but the front feet are beginning to go, such a mouse will probably not have completely tanned feet until a ripe old age, though its back feet will be on the turn when it is about five or six months old. This is a good working basis for feet in breed stock and the kind of mouse you should look for.

If by twelve to sixteen weeks all feet are still clear, such a mouse may well never have any tan on its feet. This is exceptional, and when such a mouse occurs it is invaluable, because it can be used to more liberally selected partners.

What I have said on the tanning of feet is only a general guide. One cannot be definite about the rate of which feet progressively tan. It changes from stud to stud. What I have stated is largely my own experience.

Type and size is always a problem with chocolate Tans. I have never produced one that entirely satisfied me for size and type, though I have had some quite good ones. This is the principal reason for my current use of champagne Tan. I firmly believe that the chocolate will make little progress in exhibition if it cannot achieve good type.

Top colour can prove a problem and needs watching, especially if you are using champagne Tan. However, it is far easier to gain a well coloured chocolate Tan than it is to gain a good dark Self Chocolate.

The tan of a chocolate Tan is very little trouble. The advantage of chocolate Tans is that the increase of tan richness does not interfere with the top colour as it does with most Tan varieties.

In fact, it seems a general rule that the darker the top the richer the tan. The two are, as it were, in perfect harmony.

The chocolate Tan is currently not very popular which mystifies me, because it is not difficult to achieve a fairly high level of quality. I hope that if anyone is tempted, to take up chocolate Tans they will find what I have written of use.

winner stands out on top and under 2 Jukes, below best today, failed top to winner 3 Heath, top spoiled this mouse 8 wk 5: 1 Heywood, blue, a real baby, good top and tan. I hope this carries on, will be heard of 2 3 Heath, both blues, little between, hard to come up against first 4 Maynard AC Chall ad 19: 1 Heath, choc 2 Davies, cham 3 Jones, cham 4 Robb, blue 8 wk 9: 1 Jones, cham 2 Heywood, blue 3 Todd, black 4 Davies, black. DON TAYLOR

#### GREENWICH

The total of 430 entries was a record. My thanks to Mrs Cook, Bill Coster and Mr Squib for their assistance. Best in show, Cham under 8 weeks, owner Tony Jones. This chap makes a habit of BIS. Very good mouse.

**WHITE or CREAM Ad 10:** 1 Robb, White, best colour in class, fails a little on eyes and under 2 3 Jones, White, beaten on colour and size 3 White, fails colour 8 wk 4: 1 2 Jones, Cream doe, grand type and colour 2 Cream, also good colour and type, fails moult on head 3 Cooke, White, fair, thin under **CHAM or FAWN Ad 2:** 1 Jones, excellent type and colour, slight moult on head 2 Kettle, colour too dark and moult head 8 wk 4: 1 3 Jones, Cham, really stood out, wonderful type, very fit, grand colour, difficult to fault, wins all its classes, best in show 2 Kettle, Cham, colour too dark 3 little dark Cham, moult on head **SELF AOC Ad 8:** 1 Jones, Dove, good colour and size, lighter nose 2 Higgs, Black, could be better colour 3 Jukes, Black, fails colour and tan hairs 8 wk 5: 1 Hartley, Red, really good colour, top and under, fails a little on type 2 3 Higgs, Black, better than adults, few tan hairs, good colour 3 Black, fails colour **AC SELF Chall ad**

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## CURRENT SHOW WINNERS

### AIREDALE

(continued)

I enjoyed judging the Selfs at Airedale. The quality was very good with both best in show and best opposite age coming from my section.

**WHITE/CREAM Ad 9:** 1 2 Hallett, both PEW does of good colour, size and type, winner wins on condition, coat of second not through 3 Beckett, PEW, good colour, fails type to leaders 4 Goodstock, PE doe, good size and type fails thin belly 8 wk 9: 1 Pearce, BE White doe, very good colour, pure white, only young, best 8 weeks in show 2 Hallett, PEW doe, coat not through, lacks condition to winner 3 Beckett, Cream doe, even colour all round but a shade dark 4 Pearce, BEW buck, fails yellow tinge round flanks **BLACK/BLUE Ad 5:** 1 2 3 Wormald, all Blacks, leader a doe of good colour and type 2 black buck, fails on belly as does the third 4 Cooper, Blue buck, colour far too pale 8 wk 5: 1 3 Wormald, Black doe, good colour all round, good condition 2 E Longbottom, Black doe, good top, fails belly colour 3 Black, fails on belly colour and condition 4 Taylor, Blue, poor colour **CHAMPAGNE Ad 17:** 1 2 4 Hallett, young adult, very good colour, condition and type, went on to win best Self and best in show 2 Hallett, also a doe, shade darker than winner, equal otherwise 3 Baker, good coloured doe, fails condition to winners 4 big type doe but again a shade too dark top and pale belly 8 wk 8: 1 4 Holmlea, good coloured top but pale belly 2 Hallett, far too dark top and again pale belly 3 Oxley Stud, too pale in colour 4 same remarks as third, pens 101 and 102 were far too light, almost silver **AOC SELF Ad 9:** 1 2 Goodstock, Silver doe, good size and type, good colour, slight moult on head and belly 2 Silver doe, bigger mouse,

good colour but rough on head and moult mark on belly 3 Pearce, Red buck, good belly colour, slightly shady top 4 Holmlea, Silver doe, good colour, rough in coat 8 wk 3: 1 Beckett, Silver doe, good colour and type, very pleasing exhibit 2 3 E Longbottom, Fawn doe, slightly pale in colour but one of the best coated mice I have seen 3 Chocolate buck, good colour but fails tan vent and light feet **AC SELF Chall ad 24:** 1 2 3 Hallett 4 Wormald 8 wk 23: 1 Pearce 2 Beckett 3 Wormald 4 Longbottom Doe ad 25: 1 3 4 Hallett 2 Byworth 8 wk 17: 1 Beckett 2 Byworth 3 Cooper 4 Wormald Breeders ad 25: 1 3 Hallett 2 Byworth 3 Pickering 8 wk 29: 1 4 Byworth 2 Kellett 3 Beckett **AV Cup class 40:** 1 Hallett 2 4 Byworth 3 Kellett Grand chall ad 63: 1 Hallett 2 Byworth 3 Ridley 4 Easley 8 wk 53: 1 Pearce 2 Byworth 3 Kellett 4 Beckett, S SMITH

### GUILDFORD

(continued)

Many thanks to my stewards, Tim Heath, and J W Robb, for attending to my wants. Stock in tan section was not too outstanding, feet on most exhibits was not too good.

**TAN BLACK/CHOC Ad 8:** 1 Heath, choc, grand mouse, good top and under, went on to win best tan 2 4 Heywood, both blacks, good top colour, good tan but spreading 3 Higgs, black, failed under to 2nd 8 wk 3: 1 Todd, black, best all round 2 Davies, nice mouse failed feet and ears 3 Heywood, rough on neck **CHAM Ad 4:** 1 Davis, doe, good all round, wins on top colour with me 2 Jones, buck, little between these two 3 4 Marriott, 3 best top, tan not so hot 8 wk 2: 1 Jones, nice type and condition, good top and under 2 Marriott, another nice one, top colour split them **AOC Ad 8:** Nice to see so many blues about 1 4 Robb, both blues,

19: 1 2 Jones 3 Kettle r Robb 8 wk 12: 1 2 r Jones 3 Hartley **DUTCH Ad 7:** 1 Maynard, Agouti, best all round, old mouse but still a good one 2 3 Cooke, Fawn, nice but saddle slipping 3 Fawn, fair, usual small faults 8 wk 4: 1 3 Maynard, Agouti, well balanced, rather difficult to handle 2 Cooke, Fawn, fails cheeks and undercut 3 pretty, fair markings but fails weak eyes **AOV MARKED Ad 10:** 1 3 Maynard, Broken six spot, not well balanced 2 Heywood, Broken five spot, fails balance and brindled 3 Broken six spot, looked rather rough 8 wk 4: 1 3 Maynard, six spot Broken, best of the Broken, good colour, would like more spots 2 Jukes, eight spot Broken, uneven, not balanced, brindled 3 Broken six spot, brindled **AV MARKED Chall ad 15:** 1 Maynard 2 3 Cooke 8 wk 8: 1 3 Maynard 2 Cooke **AV Stud buck 15:** 1 Jones 2 Davis 3 Robb Juvenile 6: 1 2 Robb 3 Pugsley Pet 3: 1 2 3 Blott Doe 27: 1 3 Jones, Cham, best in show 2 Hartley London members 33: 1 2 Jones 3 Holland Grand chall ad 50: 1 Hartley 2 3 Jones r Heywood 8 wk 36: 1 2 Jones 3 Holland r Higgs. E N SMITH

### FANCY RATS

I WRITE in support of the Rat Fancy. Occasionally a brief mention of rats is made in FUR AND FEATHER, possibly by some devotee trying to arouse enthusiasm.

Having been a breeder of rats and mice and other furred and feathered stock I feel that encouragement should be given to these people who breed rats.

Consider the attractive colours of mice and think how attractive rats would be in similar colours.

I would like the NMC, of which I am a member, to give all the help possible to stimulate interest in the Fancy Rat.

Perhaps eventually the club could be known as the National Mouse and Rat Club. PETER LYON, Preston, Lancs.