

THE EXHIBITION MOUSE

ALL-TIME RECORD OF 1551 FOR NMC ANNUAL AT KNOWLE

THE MORNING of September 26 came warm and sunny, with the exhibitors beginning to converge on the hall at Knowle from quite early, some had stayed overnight in Knowle, our old friend Ernie Higgs turned up in the early evening of Friday and offered his help with the hall, and he was at my home before he had had his breakfast at the hotel he was booked at.

Soon the hall was like an humming hive of bees, Alan Reice our hall stockman was soon on the scene getting the Maxeys in apple-pie order for the judges and stewards; it was soon apparent that no other mouse show had been quite like this, with its 1551 entries, this was an all-time record for any mouse show and will take a lot of beating, but this we all must strive to do and then our Fancy will really be going with a bang.

It was soon evident that the barmen would be kept busy as well as the judges. Ernie brought me a double whisky which I was promised 12 months ago, but each time we were both too busy, but this time he caught me just right.

The farthest travellers on the day were our friends from the North, Alf and Nancy Horne, and Angus Ridley, who had made the journey by road, a good contingent from the London area included the 'double Dutchmen', father and son, Tony and Dan Holland, Tony Jones and Eric Jukes.

Tony did us proud by taking on the job of auctioneer, and this was quite a job, there being 24 trios for sale, and they certainly went down well with the fanciers present.

At this point I must thank every one of the exhibitor-fanciers who entered and made up this magnificent total and I hope that we shall have the pleasure of your stock in our annual trophy show, which takes place on November 21. Make a note of this now. Our schedule will appear in FUR AND FEATHER later.

Our judges, Messrs E N Smith, Don Taylor, John Kellett, Dick Espley and Mrs Doreen Cooper, all excelled themselves and all our thanks must go out to each and every one. It was nice to see Doreen recovered from her recent serious illness and enjoying herself as usual. Dick tells me he has started his grandson in the Fancy now, and he did well on Saturday to take the Juvenile Trophy and other cards. Keep your eye on him Grandad.

Jack Cunningham got the 10s for most entries, but I will not embarrass him by telling you his total. Perhaps a word in his ear, by anyone interested. Let us say this was an handsome effort.

The Mendal Trophy for best type of show went to our NMC secretary, Stuart Smith; best in show and best opposite age went to Jack Hartley. But I will not dwell on the actual results.

We must not forget the ladies in the refreshment bar and kitchen, who kept us well supplied with tea, etc. and a lovely lunch. Thank you to Joan, Edna, Marie, Betty and Audrey for devoted services.

The ladies also thank those members who brought prizes to raffle, Mr Cound, Mrs Wallace, Mrs Bruges, Doreen Cooper, Mr Bowers and Beverley Bruges.

I'm sure everyone concerned will wish me to say thank you to Janine Beach, for doing most of the booking and paper work.

The marathon annual general meeting eventually got under way in the School Main Hall opposite the show hall and this too was soon evident of the lively interest in mousymatters. Thanks to our president, Charlie Beckett and our secretary, Stuart Smith, for keeping order and getting through such a lot of work here. The report of the annual general meeting appeared in FUR AND FEATHER of October 8.

In closing we must not forget the large amount of people other than fanciers who passed through the hall during the day. Thank you for coming and showing such an interest in our Fancy. FRED BEACH, secretary of Central England Mouse Club.

ADULT SELF

Mr E N Smith's classes

Congratulations to the Central England Mouse Club with I believe a record number of entries 1551 for an annual show. Our thanks go to the club and the Beach family in particular for the staging of this show.

To the uninitiated the work involved is tremendous and no words of praise are too high. It was great to meet fanciers from all over the country but when one is judging, time is all too short.

Would it not be possible to arrange the annual general meeting on a day other than a show day? This would give everyone then,

a chance to attend and plenty of time to discuss vital issues.

As it is at present those concerned with the running of the show have no chance to take part in the meeting, and in any case the meeting has to be a rush job.

Can we have this arrangement for next year?

My personal thanks to Alan Reice the Chief Steward and to my helpers, Miss Heape, Mrs Hallett and Mrs Pearce.

P/E WHITE or CREAM Ad 15: 1 3 Hallett, best colour in class, a little thin under 2 Reice, beaten by moult on nose **BLACK** Ad 8: 1 2 3 Higgs, wins on colour, some tan hairs, small 2 not such good colour, tan hairs, also small **BLUE** Ad 5: 1 Berry, wins on colour, small 2 3 Bainton, falls under **CHAM** Ad 9: 1 Jones, wins on colour and type, slight moult on nose 2 Hallett, darker top, good type 3 Heape **FAWN** Ad 5: 1 2 3 Bagshaw, best colour, falls type, fat 2 colour too dark, fat **RED** Ad 6: 1 Hartley, perfect colour, top and under, wonderful feet, a young mouse, my best Self 2 Pearce, falls colour 3 Ash **CHOC** 5: 1 Beach, wins on colour, real dark choc, moult on nose 2 Shaw, lighter colour 3 Longbottom **AOC SELF** Ad 3: 1 Goodstock, real good silver, good colour and type 2 Pearce, B/E white, falls colour and size 3 Holmleigh, dark **AC SELF** Chall ad 46: 1 Hartley 2 Goodstock 3 Hallett **JUVENILE** 21: 1 Espley, nice little black, good colour and feet no tan hairs 2 Watson, Cham, good colour and type 3 Pickering, Dutch, little out on saddle and cheeks, but nice **AV CENTRAL ENGLAND CLUB MEMBERS** 88: 1 2 3 Hartley. E N SMITH

EIGHT WEEK SELF

Mr D Taylor's classes

This years NMC Annual show was held at Knowle on September 26, with the Central England Mouse Club.

Many thanks to all exhibitors who helped to make this a success. An entry of 1500 makes work worth while.

My only regret was at not being able to attend the annual general meeting owing to judging being so late.

Many thanks to my stewards, in particular Mrs E Smith who stayed with me all the day.

WHITE or CREAM 10: A very good class which took some sorting out 1 Martin, nice mouse, good type, tail set and colour 2 3 Halletts, both good mice as expected from this stud, winner slightly better under 4 Beckett **BLACK** 9: 1 2 3 4 Higgs, good class all round, winners best under and no tan vents **BLUE** 6: 1 2 Reice, nice mice, good type and condition, little between, winner just has it on under 3 4 Oxenham, both nice but lighter colour **CHAMPAGNE** 24: A good class for numbers. First seven stood out to me 1 4 Halletts, little to say that has not already been said about this stud, 1 was best all round, good colour, type and condition 2 Martin, another good one, lost on head 3 Watson, just a shade darker **FAWN** 9: 1 Horne, good colour, type and carriage, top and under 2 Longbottom, good top, lighter under 3 Bagshaw, not as good colour as first two

4 Goodstock **RED** 6: 1 Hartley, grand youngster, good colour, shown well today 2 4 Ash, failed colour to winner 3 Skipper, slight moult and colour failed this mouse **CHOCOLATE** 3: 1 Longbottom, good all round, best colour 2 3 Beach, colour failed **AOC** 6: Four BEW, two Silvers, 1 4 Beckett, BEW, good mouse, best colour, good under 2 3 Pearce, BEW, little between first and second, could change 3 not as good under **AV** Chall 67: 1 Hartley, Red 2 Horne, Fawn 3 Martin, White 4 Higgs, Black **STUD BUCK** 28: 1 Smith, Argente 2 Cunningham, White 3 Goodstock, Chin 4 Beach, blue Tan **TEAM** 10: 1 Higgs, Black 2 Pearce, BEW 3 Horne, Seal Point 4 Reice Blue **LEICESTER MEMBERS** 31: 1 Martin, White 2 Bagshaw, Fawn 3 4 Beach. DON TAYLOR

MARKED

Mrs D Cooper's classes

It was a delight to see such a large gathering of fanciers at 'the Annual' at Solihull.

Janine Beach, who organised the show, must be admired for the way she kept calm (and looked so chic!) throughout the long day.

I thought it was a terrific task for one so young, and she did it very well.

The pace was non-stop, and hectic at times, but I am sure everybody enjoyed it. I was sorry to learn that Mr Eric Kitchen had been taken ill again. We all wish him a speedy recovery. Many, many thanks to my stewards.

The Dutch were of varying quality. The Brokens were a mixed lot really. Some of them would have made good Evens but, of course, this meant they should have been entered under the AOV Marked.

The Himalayans have deteriorated in body colour, far too creamy and with too much shading at rear, although they retain their wonderful type. I have about fifty in my shed and am aiming to breed some which are 'as white as possible' which is to standard.

The Rump Whites are making good progress.

Going back to the Dutch mice, I can't help feeling that it is a good idea to stick to the dark colours (blues, blacks, chocs, agoutis) because on the lighter colours (argente, dove, fawn) there are usually no foot stops or tail markings in evidence! The standard states that they must be present. The judge has to deduct five points right off for non-existent stops.

In my classes were lighter coloured Dutch with very good cheek and saddle marking but no stops or tail mark, which was a pity. Surely it is better to breed a Dutch dark coloured enough for the stops to show (even if poor) than to breed Dutch without any stops visible because the colouring is so light that they don't show up.

In the written standard for Dutch no mention is made of the marking of the tail, but in the black and white plate it states that the tail must be flesh-coloured halfway. Curious!

DUTCH Ad 12: 1 Maynard, cinnamon, cheeks and blaze good, saddle well up, slightly ragged, good undercut 2 Maynard, agouti, pull on left cheek extends to whisker bed, saddle well up, good colour, very close to winner 3 B Longbottom, black, excellent cheeks, very young adult and a bit wild, jet black and lovely condition 4 Pickering, choc, pull on left cheek, fair saddle and under, fair stops, very fit 8 wk 14: 1 Jukes, cinnamon, good all rounder, only fault cheek mark too far under chin 2 Maynard, cinnamon, saddle perfect under, good cheeks but they extend too far under jaw, top saddle well up 3 Miss Hooper, tiny cinnamon, slip on right side of saddle, good cheeks, good stops and fine blaze 4 Cookes, argente, nice even cheeks, saddle a little wavy, no tail marks, no stops **BROKEN** Ad 7: 1 Cound, nine-spot, very pleasing arrangement of spots, no brindling here 2 Mack, six-spot, lovely shaped patches but more even than broken, needed one more patch to make a super even 3 Maynard, seven-spot, good size and condition, more evenly marked than broken, nice clear patches 4 Slaton, nine-spot, attractive but heavily brindled at rear, good strong mouse 8 wk 7: 1 Heywood, eight-spot, even at ears, nice clear patches, fit and tractable 2 Jukes, twelve-spot, a very near miss, I'll bet the owner jumped when he saw the markings appearing on this one 3 Mrs Mack, six-spot, clear cut spots but a little even in position 4 Maynard, seven-spot, good nose patch, big fit mouse, good colour, clean **AOV MARKED** Ad 10: 1 3 Cunningham, Himalayan, good points, lovely type, strong whippy tail, body colour a little too creamy and shaded 2 Cookes, Himalayan, good all rounder but again body colour a bit too creamy 3 Himalayan, good broad skull and tpy, points good except on back feet 4 Horne, Agouti Rump White, good top and

colour, pull under spoils, big bold eyes 8 wk 5: 1 Mackerill, Himalayan, practically white body and good points, real baby 2 Cunningham, Himalayan, big boned, tpy, good points and fair body colour 3 4 Cookes, Himalayan, points not through properly yet slight moult on back 4 Himalayan, nice tpy fit mouse but too young for points to be clear **AV MARKED** Chall ad 22: 1 Cound 2 3 Maynard 4 B Longbottom, Dutch 8 wk 25: 1 Jukes 2 Miss Hooper 3 Heywood 4 Mackerill **AV** Doe ad 45: 1 S Smith 2 Goodstock 3 Halletts 4 Hartley 8 wk 44: 1 Hartley 2 Jukes 3 4 S Smith Breeders ad 62: 1 S Smith 2 Higgs 3 Goodstock 4 Bainton 8 wk 65: 1 2 Hartley 3 Jukes 4 S Smith Sportsman 81: 1 Hartley 2 Halletts 3 Cound Grand chall ad 121: 1 Hartley 2 S Smith 3 Higgs 4 Jones 8 wk 119: 1 2 Hartley 3 Horne 4 Jukes. D COOPER

BEST IN SHOW AT A GLANCE

The mice brought out for me to find best in show were a Self Red, a dove Tan, a Dutch, and an under eight week Agouti. My first glance through found the winner, this was the Agouti. It had good colour with plenty of ticking, a good eye, nice type and beautiful condition. The only thing I could fault it in was around the vent. This was just a shade lighter than rest of under. It was owned by J Hartley.

Next was the dove Tan, owned by E Higgs, top colour was just a shade too dark. It had a good eye, fair on tan. A good runner-up.

Third was the Dutch, not a flyer by any standard. It had wavy saddle and blaze, stops were good, under was only fair, left cheek runs under jaw, owner E Jukes.

Fourth, Red, J Hartley, top colour I thought too dull, lacks sparkle, fair under, fouled badly colour on back feet. Not a patch on the usual Reds from this stud. C BECKETT

TANS

Mr R Espley's classes

It gave me great pleasure to judge along with Doreen Cooper, Don Taylor, John Kellett also my old friend Eric Smith who I had not seen for a long time.

I was pleased to see both Mrs Smith and Eric looking so well. I feel sure secretary Fred Buck and his committee must have been very pleased with the entry of over 1500.

I would thank fanciers who supported my classes so well, also my two stewards Harry Jowett and a youth whose name I did not get who did a good job the whole day.

The quality of the mice was very good. Two mice which took my eye were a young adult dove of Ernie Higgs, and a cham buck of Tony Jones.

The blue classes were a big surprise both in numbers and quality, thirty-three in two classes and many good mice had to go down.

TAN BLACK Ad 8: 1 Heywood, doe, good feet, colour and tan 2 Higgs, buck, good size, colour and tan, just beaten feet 3 Sill, doe, beaten tan and feet 8 wk 6: 1 3 Heywood, buck, nice all round 2 Holmlea, doe, good colour and feet, hardly as good tan 3 doe, beaten feet and tan **BLUE** Ad 21: 1 Heywood, good colour, tan and feet 2 Sill, hardly as good tan and feet 3 Morton, beaten tan and condition 8 wk 12: 1 Bainton, good colour, wonderful tan for blue, good feet 2 Holmlea, another good one, just beaten feet 3 Bainton, beaten feet and tan **CHAM** Ad 5: 1 3 Jones, wonderful buck all round, to be critical slight tan tail root 2 Marriott, beaten tan 8 wk 5: 1 Hartley, nice colour tan and feet 2 Marriott, very close, condition deciding 3 Jones, beaten tan, nice top colour **AOC** Ad 12: 1 best Tan Higgs, young adult dove buck, good colour, tan and feet, hard to fault, said to be the Carlisle winner, my nomination for best in show 2 Sill, choc, nice colour, tan just beaten feet 3 Jukes, silver, beaten top colour 8 wk 12: 1 Higgs, baby dove, very nice all round, should be heard of again 2 Heath, choc, good colour and tan, beaten feet, well up to age 3 Holmlea, silver, nice colour and feet, beaten tan **AC** Chall ad 44: 1 Higgs 2 Jones 3 Heywood 8 wk 35: 1 Hartley 2 Higgs 3 Heywood. R ESLEY

ANY OTHER VARIETY

Mr J Kellett's classes

A very ambitious classification brought a grand total entry of 1550 but oh! those duplicates. Rather too many when the show had to be followed by an auction class and the annual general meeting.

As judging was not completed until 5.40 pm I regret to say that the judges and various stewards saw little or nothing of the annual general meeting.

I judged the AOV section and the quality was good. Chinchillas generally had good top colour and good white unders, even the does.

Some were too fat and all had various moult marks.
Cinnamons were behind the Agoutis on colour and ticking.
Sables are greatly improved, usual faults light nose and shading.

Seal Points were improved for size and type, points were good but most were not shaded. In my opinion the shading was better under the old standard.

Argentees were few but good.
All but two of the Foxes failed on unders.
My young Agouti winner went on to win best in show and was owned by J Hartley.

AGOUTI OR CINNAMON Ad 10: 1 Hartley, Agouti, grand colour, a bit baggy on sides 2 3 Reice, silver Agoutis, good colour and ticking, slight moult 8 wk 5: 1 Hartley, Agouti, best in show, should make a smashing adult 2 Skipper, failed under 3 Longbottom, silver Agouti, also failed under **CHIN OR FOX** Ad 15: 1 Longbottom, Chin, very good, slight moult 2 3 Mack, Chins, second young adult buck, a bit fat 3 failed on moult and under 8 wk 7: 1 2 Davis, black Foxes, good, almost like twins 3 Longbottom, Chin, broken coat **ARGENTE** Ad 4: 1 2 Smith, lovely type and condition 3 Byworth, slight kink tip of tail 8 wk 4: 1 2 Smith, two very good ones 3

BREEDING METHODS

On page 985 we continue our series on Breeding Methods which will be of great value to all small stock exhibitors—mice fanciers included. Read it, digest it, get acquainted, if necessary with a few new words, then keep it for future reference. The series will be continued in our next issue

ON NOVEMBER 5.

If you have news for that issue or the following one on November 19 please post it now.

Byworth, failed on colour **AOV** Ad 12: 1 Horne, Seal Point, had the best feet 2 Ridley, Sable, small, a young adult, usual nose spot 3 Heath, Sable, very close 8 wk 11: 1 Ridley, Sable, excellent youngster 2 3 Shield, Seal Points **CHALL** ad 37: 1 Smith, Argente 2 Hartley, Agouti 3 Horne, Seal Point 8 wk 23: 1 Hartley, Agouti 2 3 Smith, Argentees **UNSTANDARDISED** 9: 1 Ridley, a bonny blue Sable 2 3 I did not get the name, two nice lilac Foxes with lilac feet 4 Byworth, Silver Blue **AV** Ladies 23: 1 2 Mrs Horne, Seal Points 3 Mrs Cook, Himalayan Pet 9: 1 2 Mack 3 Linstead. **J KELLETT**

NMC NOTES

New club: Mr R E Cound of Sheffield is interested in forming a new club in the Sheffield area. The club will start by running its first show on October 17 along with Sheffield Original Fanciers rabbit and cavy show. So it will have had its baptism by the time these notes appear. I hope it was a success and will continue in the future. I am sure Mr Cound will appreciate any help and support he can get.

Eric Kitchen: I would like to correct my statement in the last issue of FUR AND FEATHER, about Eric's health. He did not have a stroke but he suffered a coronary thrombosis. He is now in ward 8 of the Bradford Royal Infirmary and I am sure would appreciate letters from fanciers although he may not feel up to replying to them.

Correction to annual general meeting: In my report of the annual general meeting please read Mr Lomas instead of Lowes; Mr Cound instead of Coard. The reported Walter Money trophy is of course the Walter Maxey trophy.

Tumours in mice: A young member has written to me recently that she has lost several mice which have developed growths or tumours. She asks if these can be cured. Whilst a veterinary surgeon may be able to possibly lance these growths, if the mouse is not a valuable one I would suggest destroying it. These growths seem to crop up at irregular intervals in almost every stud and the only way, in my opinion, to eliminate them is by destroying the affected mouse. **S SMITH, secretary.**

THE FANCY MOUSE. By A C Jude. This book by a former president of the National Mouse Club is the standard work on mice. Every aspect of breeding, showing, management, colour inheritance and simple genetics is fully covered. Price 8s 4d post paid. (Full cloth.) From Book Dept, FUR AND FEATHER, Idle, Bradford, Yorks.

SPACES BETWEEN THE MAXEYS

ALF HORNE

Now I am going to have a go at our secretary. He will probably say I should have written to him privately on the following matter but I know he will take it in the spirit it is meant.

I always make a point of reading the list of new members and if there are any in this area either Angus or I always drop them a line of welcome, but just recently we have only had the name and town published. Please give the full address if possible because maybe some other members follow our practice in other parts of the country. I like to think they will anyway.

Our secretary appeals for items from fanciers. I notice a new fancier in the list included an American address. These fanciers might give us a new slant on things if they would put pen to paper.

My articles are not very constructive but do help to fill up our page. I purposely keep drawing red herrings across the path to try to stimulate a constructive article or two. When Percy Ashley was secretary we were spoilt really because he contributed so much that we came to expect the same contributions from his successors. This is unfair, and I am sure we all appreciate the fact that Percy, being retired, had far more time available than a young man with his work, wife and family and other interests making demands on his leisure, so may I say a personal thank you to Stuart Smith for the

devotion and the time given to his task. No doubt he has had pleasure and satisfaction from carrying out the duties he volunteered to do, but at the same time I am sure an occasion must have arisen when he has thought he could well do without having to reply to that letter, or attend to this, that, or the other, and I think it would be wrong of us to expect him to fill FUR AND FEATHER each week.

I know there are some fanciers who have a wealth of knowledge but who decline to write to FUR AND FEATHER because they think their articles would be in bad English and spelling errors would detract from what they had to say. That's a laugh when you recap on some of the stuff I have sent in in the past. To my way of thinking it would be a sinful waste if this knowledge were never recorded.

I know if a fancier has a problem he can be recommended to write to so and so for a specialist answer, and that he will get a satisfactory answer, but only the questioner and answerer benefit. So I would suggest that if you have any queries ask them through FUR AND FEATHER and I will undertake to contact the fancier I think will supply an answer and will publish his reply. In this way as so often happens some of us who didn't realise we had a problem until someone else brought it up, will be able to take another step forward.

Readers write . . .

THIEVES

WHAT is it like to have your shed broken into, and some of your best mice and show cages stolen in comparison with a few taken at the shows.

This happened to me on Tuesday morning September 15 when I found the door of my mousery had been forced open. Boxes were scattered on the floor. It was a shambles. As luck would have it I had a witness to verify what had happened and I immediately informed the police.

This is what I have to say to whom it may concern. May your fingers never steal anything again because you and yours will not prosper.

I also have this to say to the person or persons concerned. You knew which were some of my best mice, including winners at Guildford and Greenwich. They included Self blacks and Dove Tans.

We hear a lot of talk of trying to better the Fancy. There will soon be quite a few fanciers leaving the Fancy (and that would be a sad day) if this state of affairs keeps happening.

How easy it is to steal mice and win with them. But I warn everyone I shall be on the look out for the so-called slick gentlemen and others until he or they are caught. There will be no peace of mind in anyone's mousery or at any show.

I have been in the Fancy too long for anyone to break my spirit. I say with all sincerity to those who have had mice stolen at shows. Don't let the thief break you with this mean jealous streak, for that's all it is.

In 1953 to 54 I was doing well with Cinnamons. On five occasions I had mice missing from shows, so you see it has happened before and it will keep on happening but to catch the culprit stricter measures must be put forward by the executive committee of the National Mouse Club. This is far more important than burning the candle far into the night at the annual general meeting on rules that can be broken. **ERNIE HIGGS**

INCREASES ARE NECESSARY

FOLLOWING a further increase of twelve per cent on carriage charges for small livestock, making a total of sixty-two per cent in the last eleven months, I would like to see the following changes made, in order to bring the mouse Fancy in line with its rabbit and cavy counterparts.

Increase entry fees for breed classes to 2s but keep the 1s entry fee for all duplicate classes including section challenges. Prize money for all classes to be 10s, 6s, 4s, and 2s (optional).

As I am unable to attend many shows I have to send by rail. These increased charges probably won't deter the keen supporter, who does relatively well. They will certainly affect the novice, who can't be expected to do well right from the start and so a few shows costing him 30s to £2 a time will soon put him off. Perhaps these changes might give him greater incentive. At least I hope so.

Another point I would like to raise is that of postal charges. These will soon be going up quite substantially and unless regional

clubs put up their subscriptions they will be unable to afford to send out newsletters etc.

The same of course applies to the NMC and so I can see nothing for it but to increase club subscriptions to at least 5s with preferably reductions for senior citizens and genuine juveniles.

Perhaps someone who has a working knowledge of running a club and shows could give their opinion on whether these ideas should and, above all, could be put into practice.

One final question, what has happened to the West Midlands MC?

Would the writer of this letter please communicate with us as unfortunately his signature was indecipherable.

SHORTAGE OF ENTRIES

THE Carlisle secretary, in his list of awards, bemoans the lack of entries. He asks, why did we keep the mice at home?

It would be interesting to know how many of the exhibits came by rail. This show was in an area where almost everyone was on an equal footing and those who wished to support had no option but to send by rail. Hence the low entry.

Those who are lucky enough to live near the shows get by with just a short bus or train ride on the morning of a show. So this time, having to rail their stock, they did not exhibit.

Our two exhibits cost 18s in rail charges, and as we are old-age pensioners we cannot afford such a heavy charge.

Our kind of people and the juveniles will just have to stop exhibiting. We supported all four mouse shows during September with the following balance sheet: Entry fees 33s, prize money 32s, rail charges 80s, which showed a loss of 81s.

Why the mouse, rabbit, cavy, pigeon and cage bird fanciers have sat down to a sixty-two-and-a-half per cent rise in charges over the last ten months without one word of protest is beyond me.

Is it too late to do something now? The National Mouse Club annual show at Birmingham on September 26 had an entry of 1 500 and it would be nice to know how many exhibits came by rail. Perhaps Mr Beach will let us know.

At the annual meeting of the NMC, with an agenda as long as your arm—mostly trivialities—no mention was made of even discussing what could be done, if anything, about rail charges. They are sounding the death knell of the mouse Fancy. **LEONARD MARRIOTT, Boston.**

FROM THE MOUTHS OF . . .

I AM a novice mouse fancier, aged 11. Perhaps I can give an answer to Mr D Montgomery's problem about his does eating young (FUR AND FEATHER, September 10).

He states he feeds them 'flaked meat', whereas most mouse books advise not to feed meat as it causes cannibalism in the stock causing parents to eat young.

My main breed is black and Tans of which I do a bit of showing and breeding. **PHILIP PEARCE, Axminster, Devon**

AFFABLE HAMSTERS
N WALLACE

JUST about the most popular small pet these days is the Syrian hamster. More commonly known as the golden hamster, this name is not strictly correct as the hamster is no longer found solely in its golden form.

There are now white, cinnamon, cream, fawn, sepia, honey, yellow and, our latest colour, grey hamsters. There are patterned hamsters such as piebald, tortoiseshell and banded.

A superb new coat type has recently been introduced to the Fancy. This is the satin coated hamster, a most attractive fellow with a glorious silky coat having a high gloss finish which gives the appearance of shiny satin.

When one considers that all the pet hamsters living today in all the various colours and their combinations stem from one golden female and her litter which were captured on being dug out of their burrow in the sands of Aleppo one realises what fantastic progress has been made in the hamster fancy.

New mutations are constantly being established. This is one of the factors which I, personally, find so very interesting in hamster breeding. Amazing progress is still being made at the present time. This is a comparatively young fancy and now is the time to join in.

The hamster is an affable little animal and will thrive even on the minimum of attention. In our hamstery, the hamsters are housed, separately of course, in simple wooden cages 12 in x 12 in. Each cage is 8 in high at the back sloping to 4 in at the front and with a hinged lid of twiweld mesh. The cages are stacked on wooden racks and it is simplicity itself to attend to the needs of the occupants.

Hamsters are very easy to feed. Food in the form of a dry mixture need only be provided every other day—water should always be available. Water bottles can be used to advantage when economising on labour.

Green food is very much appreciated and should be fed regularly when obtainable. Carrots are particularly relished and can be given to the stock at least once a week. The hamster stores food near to his nest and for this reason an animal who has been fed well can exist for several days without fresh food by living on the stores in his 'larder'.

A great attribute in favour of hamster keeping is the almost total absence of any offensive odour in the hamstery. The cages should be cleaned out weekly by removing the soiled litter in the corner used by the hamster for a toilet. A complete clear out is recommended every two or three weeks, when the bedding (soft hay or tissue paper) should be renewed.

This is all that is needed to keep the cages clean and fresh—a great deal simpler than keeping rabbits, cavies, etc.

Hamsters are very easy to breed and have, in fact, one of the shortest known gestation periods of all mammals. From mating to the birth of a litter it takes the female a mere sixteen days!!

The youngsters are weaned at four weeks old and can safely be used for breeding at twelve weeks of age. So one can see that hamsters are ideal for the livestock breeder seeking quick results.

I recommend that the more serious breeder, and those who wish to exhibit, should join one of the hamster clubs. At the present time there are three clubs which between them cater for hamster owners throughout England, Scotland and Wales. If anyone requires further information on joining these clubs, or in fact on any facet of hamster keeping, I should be happy to help, but please send a stamped addressed envelope. My address is: 16 Denbigh Road, Up Hatherley, Cheltenham, Glos.

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METHODS FOR THE PRACTICAL BREEDER

NUMBER 2 OF A NEW SERIES

by R G SILSON

FERTILISATION. Fertilisation occurs when a sperm meets an ovum under the correct conditions. The **ZYGOTE** so formed can then grow into an adult.

F1, F2 etc. An F1 is the progeny of mating two parent lines differing in one or more genetic factors. An F2 results when two F1 individuals are mated (or perhaps self fertilised in plants). F3 means progeny of two F2 mated together and so on. The F1 individuals are often very much alike but F2 and later can be very different, especially if many genes are involved. They can be and often are effectively 'mongrels' as opposed to backcrosses which can be effectively purebreds.

GAMETE. This is a cell which contains a half set of chromosomes ie a sperm or an ovum.

GENE. From the practical breeders point of view a gene is the smallest part of a **CHROMOSOME**. It will be discussed in greater detail in a special section. The position of a gene on a chromosome is known as its **LOCUS** (plural **LOCI**). At each locus several alternate genes, **ALLELES**, may be possible. Since chromosomes are in pairs **TWO** alleles are possible in each individual at each locus. These two may be alike or different. If different the effect of only one allele may be seen. This allele is then said to be **DOMINANT** over the other. The one which does not show is **RECESSIVE**.

If several alleles exist they may be arranged in a dominance series. **ONE** dominant to all the others, **TWO** recessive to **ONE** but dominant to the remainder and so on. Some alleles may have similar dominance so that an unlike pair may show an effect intermediate between two like alleles of one kind or the other.

DOMINANT and **RECESSIVE** describe alleles at **ONE** locus. If genes, at different loci, interact the effect is called **EPISTASIS**. Recessive epistasis is often named **HYPOSTASIS** and **EPISTASIS** used for the dominant effect.

If the effect of two genes add, at the same or different loci, they are said to be **ADDITIVE**. Strictly the effect of all genes is probably additive but if a very weak gene acts with a very strong one it may be difficult to see the effect of the weak one which is, thereby, **RECESSIVE**.

GENE POOL. A single individual carries only two **ALLELES** at each **LOCUS** of its **CHROMOSOMES**. These alleles may be similar or different. The total of all the individuals in the species may carry many different alleles. A breeding programme may suffer because too many unwanted alleles and too few wanted alleles are included in the population being selected. The breeders aim is to eliminate unwanted alleles without losing wanted ones.

The sum of all the alleles available is called the gene pool. Cross-

ing breeds, within a species, will normally increase the pool of both useful and useless genes. Inbreeding will decrease the gene pool ultimately to only one allele per locus. The main theme of this series is to ensure that the final gene pool is the right one.

GENOTYPE. The way an individual looks and behaves, is called its **PHENOTYPE**. However the qualities of its progeny depend on its **GENOTYPE** and the **GENOTYPE** of its mate. Many champions produce mediocre progeny and many mediocre parents produce champion progeny. Genotype is the total of all genes carried by an individual many of which are recessive and hidden behind the phenotype. There are also other aspects which will be discussed in detail later.

GRADING see **BACK CROSS**.

GROUP. This word is used here to mean a group of **FAMILIES** which share one or more common **grandparents**. See also **PROGENY TEST**. **HAPLOID.** The sex cells, ova and sperm are haploid. They contain half the **DIPLOID** total, **ONE** of **EACH** pair of **CHROMOSOMES**. However, especially in plants, it is possible to have individuals with all cells haploid. These individuals can be a useful breeding tool.

HEMIZYGOUS see **ZYGOTE**.

HETEROZYGOUS see **ZYGOTE**.

HOMOLOGOUS CHROMOSOME. Homo means 'same'. Thus the two chromosomes of a pair are homologous and also similar pairs in other individuals. Homologous chromosomes are not identical since they will usually contain many different alleles.

HOMOZYGOUS see **ZYGOTE**.

HYBRID. This word is used very loosely. Originally it meant a cross between two species but now commercial breeders of maize and poultry have used it to mean strain crosses, especially when the strains are inbred. Some fanciers even use it to describe single gene differences but this is somewhat extreme.

HYPOSTASIS see **GENE**.

LETHAL. Some gene **ALLELES** produce effects which kill an individual at an early age. They are usually recessive but may be dominant if they kill after reproduction or if new **MUTATIONS**.

SEMI-LETHALS do not kill but may reduce growth rate, fertility etc, so that the individual is much less efficient than normal.

LINE. Related individuals are often called a line or a strain. The relationship may be very close as in an inbred line or be merely the result of breeding for several generations within a population of restricted size, a few dozens rather than a few thousands, with few or no outcrosses.

LINKAGE see also **CROSSING**

OVER. One of the main problems of breeding is linkage. Suppose we have 100 red beads and 100 blue beads mixed 100 on each of two strings with a red always opposite a blue. If now we want to get all reds on one string and all blues on the other and can do it **ONLY** by breaking both strings at the same point and crossing them over and rejoining opposite strings we have the same problem as the breeder only he cannot see his genes on his chromosomes. The problem isn't as difficult as it might seem and it will be discussed fully later.

LOCUS see **GENE**.

MAMMAL. The group of animals that includes most domestic species as well as man himself. They are all warm blooded and feed their newborn young on milk produced by the mother. See **ANIMAL**.

MENDEL. Gregor Mendel lived from 1822 to 1884. He was the first person to realise that heredity is controlled by individual particles, now called **GENES**, and that these did **not** blend but reappeared in later generations completely unaltered. His experiments were published in 1865. Modern genetics is based on the principles he discovered, which have been extended to cover all aspects of inheritance.

MULTIPLE ALLELES see **ALLELES**.

MULTIPLE CROSS. A cross of several breeds or lines is often useful eg to form a **GENE POOL** or to produce commercial crossbred progeny. Two crosses AB and CD can be combined to give ABCD or AB can be crossed with C to give AB/C. For best results it is sometimes important to use a special order of crossing.

MUTATION. Most **GENES** are reproduced exactly in new ova or sperm. However occasionally, about once in 100,000 or so, an error occurs which gives a new **ALLELE**. This allele may be completely new or may be a repeat of one already existing elsewhere. Mutations are usually disadvantageous, some may be **LETHAL**.

NUCLEIC ACIDS. There are **FOUR** nucleic acids. They are the building blocks of **GENES**.

OPTIMUM. This is an important concept which has suffered from neglect by breeders and geneticists. The very best individual is one that has optimum values for all its component parts. It must be in balance. These optimum values will usually be at an intermediate level amongst all possible values. In general terms the best individual is one that is **average** in all respects including those components of its biochemistry which are invisible. This argument appears to be a contradiction in terms but as the

story unfolds it will be seen to be true. This concept explains many of the problems found by breeders.

P, P1, P2. These titles are used as abbreviations for parent lines in a breeding programme, especially in relation to F1, F2 etc.

PHENOTYPE. The appearance of an individual as opposed to its breeding qualities. See **GENOTYPE**.

PLANT see **ANIMAL**.

POLYGENES. Simple **MENDELIAN** genetics describes genes of strong individual effect. Most aspects of living things require a much more delicate control. This sensitivity is achieved by several genes, each of small effect, controlling each detail of the organisms requirement. These genes are usually **ADDITIVE** and they are called **POLYGENES**. (poly = many). They are the main theme of this story.

POLYPLOID. Normal cells contain two of each kind of chromosome. They are **DIPLOID**. Ova and sperm contain one of each. They are **HAPLOID**. Under some circumstances cells may contain more than two of each kind of chromosome. Those with three of each are called **TRIPLOIDS**. Those with four **TETRAPLOIDS** and so on. The general name for these is **POLYPLOID**. Most polyploids have difficulty in reproduction since the genetic system is designed to give half to each sperm or ova and can't decide which chromosomes make the half. However in plants, rarely in animals, tetraploids and hexaploids (six) are not uncommon. The process is as follows. A sterile hybrid is formed between two species which is otherwise healthy. It grows normally but cannot produce seed. However as it grows a cell fails to divide and becomes a tetraploid. However since the plant was a species hybrid it is really a diploid of a new species. It grows further and produces seed and a new species begins which is separate from either parent. A triploid can be produced by the fertilisation of a parent. This again will usually be sterile but doubling due to faulty division and a fertile hexaploid starts. The method has been used artificially by breeders and happens in nature on rare occasions.

POPULATION. A population is a number of individuals which have no natural barriers to interbreeding eg a flock of domestic animals or a wild species on an island. A very large population can have barriers due to distance. If no new individuals are introduced the population is said to be **closed**. Most populations are not fully closed as happens when the breeder introduces an outcross.

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(To be continued)