

The mouse Fancy

ON PROBATION

TONY SHEPPARD DISCUSSES THE NEW VARIETIES

THE LAST two years have seen a marked increase in the production of new varieties. I would doubt that interest in new varieties is widespread, rather that this interest is confined to much fewer than five per cent of the National Mouse Club's membership. This small minority is very active, so much so, that the NMC has never had so many new varieties and prospective new varieties on its books.

The acceptance of these varieties into fully recognised, and probationary status might lead the newcomer into thinking that the mouse Fancy is either lacking in variety or still in a stage of experimental formation. Neither case is true.

The established list of varieties is a galaxy of colours—many of which have stood the tests of a half century, or more. It is just that the Fancy mouse is the ideal subject for the amateur geneticist who may wish to delve into the genetic gaps in the established varieties (viz Argente Creme) or travel along a completely unexplored path (viz Long haired mice).

If the reader will bear with me, perhaps we could take a quick look at the innovations and discoveries of the past two years. Any personal opinions contained herein are of course open to question.

Some six or eight years ago the Argente was revived. It made an immediate impact on the mouse scene, winning best AOV, best in show etc. The Argente is a pink-eyed Agouti. It fits into the natural genetic pattern of the accepted varieties. It had lain dead, but by crossing other varieties to a preconceived plan its 'author' brought it back—a type, large framed, virile strain.

Some four years ago Bert Cooke conceived the idea of introducing the Argente Creme. Again, it fitted into the natural genetic pattern, it is a pink-eyed Chinchilla. So, by crossing Argente and Chin to a preconceived plan the Argente Creme was evolved. How many generations this took I cannot guess.

The NMC committee at first refused the Argente Creme a probationary certificate. I believe the Argente Creme received its probationary certificate at the third time of asking.

The Argente Creme has not had the impact that the Argente had, nor has it the following, indeed I believe there is but one stud of Cremes in the country—that of Dave Skip-pers.

I have a few specimens—though hardly a stud. My aim over the past two years has been to improve the type of the Argente Creme by outcross to the Argente. In this I have succeeded... at the expense of white belly and the delicate top mixture.

In my opinion, the type of the Creme should lie somewhere between that of the Chin and Argente. Its disadvantages are that it does not hold its show coat long enough and it easily runs to fat (as does its Chinchilla forbear).

Next we come to the silver Agouti. There is a slot in the genetic pattern for it to fall into. Is it distinctive? I ask this because this appears to be the criteria upon which new varieties are judged in the unstandardised class and are accepted by the NMC committee. To my mind it is distinctive. I have heard remarks to the effect that it is a

Chin without the white belly. If this is so then the silver Agouti cavy has the same coat as the Chinchilla rabbit, and we all know this to be patently untrue. It would be possible though, to produce a mouse using the silver Agouti, that looks strikingly like the Argente Creme but without the white belly. Please don't do it! geneticists and new variety enthusiasts!

Now the Seal Point Siamese. This was introduced by Doreen Cooper and is surely the most striking new variety seen in many a Wakes week. What they have been bred from I haven't a clue. I suspect the SP Siamese hails from Sables and Silver Foxes.

In the early days Doreen gave trials of this new variety to various fanciers in order to disseminate the breed and so that the type of these mice could be improved quickly and also of course they were a gift to friends. My trio of Seal Points were small but their progeny were smaller and their progeny's progeny were smaller still. It got so that the fleas were using saddles to stay on! Eric Kitchen, at this time, told me to use an outcross. Too late. By the time I'd found an outcross I couldn't find the Seal Points! Meanwhile, Mr Kitchen's and Mr Kellett's Seal Points were gaining in stamina.

At this point I'd like to put in a little moral. The two year probationary year serves to show the mouse Fancy the new variety, its possibilities, improvement and popularity. No damage is done therefore at the preliminary stage and probationary certificates ought to be easy to come by. But the final certificate and standardisation ought to be difficult. The variety should have shown improvement and a measure of popularity.

In this then the Seal Point has passed with honours, though I'm not sure about the Argente Creme.

Next the Long-haired. It has been 'on probation' for a year now. It certainly is distinctive. I predict a future for it. If it can be made as large as a Pink-eyed White and be made to look like a miniature Peruvian cavy.

The Abyssinian. Some three years ago Les Walker exhibited these in the unstandardised class—mice with rosette formations of fur. Here is a variety with a future. The last time I heard from Mr Walker he told me that he had a stud of about sixty. The suspense is killing me. Les. How is it going?

Finally, the Himalayan. These were made by Eric Kitchen from SP Siamese. A newer variety from a new variety. A few years ago Tom Robinson tried to make Himalayans without much success. All other Himalayans (rabbits and cavies) are born albinos and colour up on their extremities some weeks after birth. The Himalayan gene gives rise to coloration due to subtle temperature differences at the nose, feet and ears of an animal. In fact, scientists have caused patches of colour to appear on Himalayans by applying continuous cold compresses. I understand that Eric's chocolate Himalayans are born without colour. If I remember rightly my Seal Point Siamese coloured up some weeks after birth, too.

If Himalayans can be produced with good dark feet, then this surely is a variety, long needed, to fill the gap left by the demise of the variegated.

Blue Fox wins best in show at HARINGEY

I enjoyed judging the Marked and AOV sections at Haringey show on August 3. The entry was around 450 which I considered quite good.

The quality of most mice was very good. Dutch were excellent. The Foxes would have done well in any competition.

Eric Jukes had a good show on his hands. He worked very hard all day.

I thank my stewards for their help during the day. Well done fanciers! JH

Mr J Hartley's classes

DUTCH Ad 8: 1 Coster, Argente, very good saddle and cheeks 2 Cooke, fawn, good cheeks and stops, shade out under 3 Knight, Agouti, nice saddle, pity odd stops r Hobson, chocolate, pull on cheeks, fails stops 8 wk 3: 1 2 3 Cooke, Argente doe, good condition, saddle well up 2 Agouti, good top, odd stops 3 Argente, fails saddle and undercut. I enjoyed judging these Dutch. The condition of all these mice was excellent. The first two mice in the adult class could do plenty of winning this year, as could the winning eight weeker **AO MARKED** Ad 5: 1 2 Kitchen, Broken, wonderful condition, nine spot 2 Kitchen, as number one, spots not as well placed, 10 spot 3 Cooke, clear spots, level at rear, six spot r Turner, good

spots, but shade of tan under, six spot 8 wk 3: 1 Carter, nine spot, shade brindling 2 3 Jukes, five spot, not clear on face 3 four spot, not clear on face, level at rear **MARKED** Chall Ad 12: 1 r Kitchen, Broken, best marked 2 Coster, Argente Dutch 3 Cooke, fawn Dutch 4 Broken 8 wk 6: 1 3 r Cooke, Argente 2 Carter, Broken 3 Agouti Dutch r Argente Dutch **AGOUTI/CINNAMON** Ad 3: 1 Cooper, Cinnamon, best coloured mouse in this poor light 2 Jones, Cinnamon, better type, dark 3 Holland, Agouti buck, rough under, fails condition 8 wk 2: 1 B Longbottom, silver Agouti, well ticked, good condition 2 Holland, Agouti, very young, colour just coming through **CHINCHILLA/FOX** Ad 6: 1 3 r Holland, blue Fox, good all round, best in show 2 B Longbottom, Chinchilla, again excellent quality against it today 3 black Fox, well conditioned, fails white hairs on back r blue Fox, fails sides 8 wk 5: 1 B Longbottom, Chinchilla, good mixture, head could be better 2 Holland, black Fox, again good but white hairs on back 3 r Knight, chocolate Fox, nice condition, fails ticking r black Fox, fails top colour **LONG HAIR** Ad 6: 1 3 Jones, white, nice type with a quality of hair 2 r Jukes, white, only young, it should be very good 3 Argente, good type but fails length of hair r white, not really good enough, fails tail set, hair and type

AOV Ad 6: 1 r S Smith, Seal Point, good type, colour and shading 2 Funnell, Sable, good top, nice under, fails nose 3 Cooper, Seal Point, good mouse with plenty of shading r Argente, in two coats 8 wks 5: 1 S Smith, Argente buck, good type and colour 2 E Longbottom, Sable, as adult 3 J Kellett, silver grey, moulted head and shoulders r Funnell, Sable, colour not through **AOV** Chall Ad 12: 1 Holland, blue Fox, best in show 2 B Longbottom, Chinchilla 3 S Smith, Seal Point r Holland, black Fox 8 wk 11: 1 S Smith, Argente 2 B Longbottom, Chinchilla 3 J Kellett, silver grey r Holland, black Fox **AV** stud, buck 17: 1 Jones, white, big, well boned, plenty of type 2 R Welch, chocolate Tan 3 B Longbottom, Chinchilla r Cooke, blue Fox, all these three mice were very close to winner with good top colours and unders with colour where it should be Doe 8 wk 11: 1 Cooke, Dutch Argente 2 Collings, cream 3 Holland, champagne Tan r Knight, black. J HARTLEY

Mr Dan Holland's classes

A most enjoyable day with my co-judges Jack Hartley and Ken Morton. The total entry was 474. Many thanks to my hard-working stewards, Mr and Mrs Cooke.

PE WHITE and CREAM Ad 15: 1 3 Collings, creams, good colour, type and condition 3 fails under 2 Cooke, PE White, another good mouse but just beaten today r T Holland, PE White, fails colour to leading white 8 wk 5: 1 3 Jones, PE White, good colour, type and condition, my nomination for best under eight week 3 fails under, moult on nose 2 Collings, cream, thin under r Cooper, fails under and condition **BLACK/BLUE** Ad 5: 1 2 Wood, good top and under, light front feet 2 light feet, fails under 3 Kellett, short tail, light front feet r Knight, light front feet, poor tail set, fails under, all blacks 8 wk 5: 1 2 3 r Knight, 1 light front feet 2 light feet and vent 3 white toes r tan hairs on flank, poor tail set **CHAMPAGNE/FAWN** Ad 9: five champagnes, four fawns 1 T Holland, fawn, good mouse, even colour top and under, good type and condition, wins best self 2 Jones, champagne, another good mouse, good top colour but fails under 3 Greenwood, fails colour to leader r Turner, light tail root, fails condition 8 wk 2: 1 Jones, light under 2 Greenwood, poor colour and condition **AOC SELF** Ad 6: 1 Green-



Jack Hartley who enjoyed his day of judging the marked and AOV breeds at Haringey show

wood, Silver, good colour and condition 2 r Heath, chocolate, fails feet 3 Jones, dove, moult on head r chocolate, fails under and light feet 8 wk 2: 1 Jones, silver, fails condition 2 T Holland, chocolate, fails feet and vent **SELF** Chall ad 25: 1 T Holland, 1st fawn 2 Collings, 1st cream 3 Jones, 2nd champagne r Cookes, 2nd PE White 8 wk 14: 1 2 Jones, 1st PE White 2 1st champagne 3 Collings, 2nd cream r Knight, 1st black **JUVENILE** 3: 1 Carter, Broken 2 3 Warren, PE Whites **AV** Pairs 4: 1 Heath, blue Tans 2 3 Dobson, champagne Tans r Warren, PE White Grand chall ad 55: 1 3 T Holland, winning blue Fox, best in show, best AOV 2 Espley, winning silver Tan, best Tan 3 winning fawn, best self r Collings, winning cream 8 wk 40: 1 E Longbottom, winning chocolate Tan, best opposite age to best in show 2 Cooke, winning Dutch 3 Jones, winning PE White r Smith, winning Argente. DAN HOLLAND

The NMC secretary writes . . .

PREFIX

Bert Cooke has registered the prefix Cavandale. Will members and secretaries please note his new address: 98 Oscott School Lane, Great Barr, Birmingham 2a.

SUMMER SHOWS

The summer agricultural shows have been well supported this year and great interest has been shown in our hobby by the public. I have had several inquiries about the National Mouse Club from people who have seen the mice at the agricultural shows.

Several members have remarked to me recently about the lack of news, views and space allotted to the mouse section of **FUR AND FEATHER**. The answer lies in members' hands. If there are not any letters or articles to print then the editor cannot do anything about it. I try to write regularly, but to think up something new every week is difficult. So, come on mousers, old and new, let's have some news or ideas from you.

NEGLECTED VARIETIES

Mr Ridley's article in **FUR AND FEATHER**, August 15, read very well and was most interesting. He listed the varieties which have been neglected or have lost popularity over the last few years.

My opinion on this is that they have been neglected because (a) they are more difficult to breed to exhibition standard than other varieties; (b) they lack fancier appeal; and (c) there are only forty or, at the most, fifty regular exhibitors out of 300 members and with all the varieties we have some are bound to be neglected.

I do not agree that Mr Ridley's table of championships gained by the 'neglected' varieties proves his point. I know of several

fanciers who do not bother to claim championships. Therefore, Mr Ridley's list only shows championships which have been claimed.

Most breeds today are in the hands of only one or two exhibitors and not many have large studs. Therefore, if one member drops out or his stud is hit by disease or accident then we have another rare or neglected variety.

I do not think money prizes will bring back the popularity of these breeds. Two or three years ago the Airedale Club scheduled special classes for neglected varieties but no real interest was aroused.

The mouse Fancy is not alone in having rare breeds, it also applies to rabbits, cavies pigeons, etc. Either fanciers like a variety and keep it or they don't like it and it becomes neglected.

I would like to add that the above is my personal opinion and has nothing to do with any official view of the NMC. I will put Mr Ridley's views before the next committee meeting.

LAPEL BADGES

I have received an interesting idea from new member Mr Reece, of Bristol. His idea is that members, or at least officials, should wear lapel badges, showing their names, at the annual show at Walsall. He thinks this will help newer members to discover who's who. I will also put this before the next committee meeting.

AGM AGENDA

Will anyone who has any motions he wishes to be put before the annual general meeting at Walsall on October 5 please let me have them now. See Rule 8, paragraph (c). S SMITH (sec)

Ellingham a moderate success

With a total entry of 117 for Rhona Welch to judge, Ellingham show on August 10 was a moderate success for a first show.

There were five exhibitors apart from myself, namely Tony Jones, Bill Carter, Ron Knight, Mr and Mrs A J Cooke and Mr A Bright, who was the only northern exhibitor. Many thanks for your support, Mr Bright.

Tony Jones won best in show and best self with a very nice champagne buck, and best opposite age with a baby chocolate Fox. The champagne buck also won the WMMC members class and the CVMC members class. Quite a scoop for one day!

Best Marked and best AOV went to Ron Knight, Dutch and a chocolate Fox respectively. Best Tan went to Purbeck Stud.

Many thanks to all exhibitors for their support and to our judge for such a creditable performance. T HEATH (show sec)

PE SELF/BE CREAM Ad 4: 1 r Jones 2 3 Cooke 8 wk 2: 1 2 Jones PE DOVE/AO BE **SELF** Ad 3: 1 2 Knight 3 Purbeck Stud 8 wk 3: 1 2 3 Knight Self chall ad 7: 1 r Jones 2 3 Cooke 8 wk 5: 1 3 Jones 2 r Knight **TANS** **BLACK/CHOC/CHAM** Ad 5: 1 Purbeck Stud 2 Jones 3 r Bright **AOC** Ad 1: 1 Purbeck Stud Tan chall ad 6: 1 Purbeck Stud 2 Jones 3 r Bright **DUTCH** AA 7: 1 Knight 2 3 r Carter Marked chall ad 5: 1 Knight 2 3 r Carter 8 wk 2: 1 2 Purbeck Stud **AGOUTI/CINN/FOX** Ad 2: 1 Knight 2 Purbeck Stud 8 wk 2: 1 Jones 2 Purbeck Stud. **AOV** Ad 1: 1 Knight **AOV** chall ad 2: 1 Purbeck Stud 2 Knight 8 wk 2: 1 Jones 2 Purbeck Stud **AV** Stud buck 9: 1 2 Jones 3 r Purbeck Stud Brood doe 6: 1 Purbeck Stud 2 Cooke 3 Jones r Bright West Midland Members 8: 1 2 3 r Jones CVMC Members: Repeat Grand Chall ad 18: 1 Jones 2 r Cooke 3 Purbeck Stud 8 wk 9: 1 2 Jones 3 Purbeck Stud r Knight.

CAVIES—continued

GUILDFORD SHOW

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 1968.
 Entries close on Tuesday, Sept 3.
 SEE FUR AND FEATHER, AUG 15,
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MICE—OPEN SHOW (under NMC rules)

Entry Fee 1s. Guaranteed Prize Money: 1st 7s, 2nd 5s, 3rd 3s, 4th 1s.
 * Denotes Duplicate Classes.

FRIDAY ONLY
 MARKED, TAN & AOV SECTION
 Judge: Mr J Watts (New Moston,
 Manchester). Judging 10 am.
 CLASSIFICATION
 343—Black or Chocolate and Tan
 Ad. 344—AOC Tan Ad. 345—Dutch
 Ad. 346—Even, Broken or Vari Ad.
 347—Cinnamon or Agouti Ad. 348—
 Chin or Fox Ad. 349—AOV Ad. 350
 —Black or Chocolate and Tan 8
 wks. 351—AOC Tan 8 wks. 352—
 Dutch or Broken, Even or Vari 8
 wks. 353—Cinnamon or Agouti, 8
 wks. 354—Chin or Fox 8 wks. 355—
 AOV 8 wks. *356—Challenge AV bar
 Self Ad. *357—Challenge AV bar
 Self 8 wks. *358—Doe AV bar Self
 Ad. *359—Doe AV bar Self 8 wks.
 360—Stud Buck AA.

Specials—Mr T Robinson, 5s Best
 Exhibit in Show, Rosette, per Mr J
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SATURDAY ONLY
 SELF SECTION
 Judge: Mr J Wormald (Luddenden
 Foot, Halifax).
 Judging 10 am.
 CLASSIFICATION
 361—White Ad. 362—Black or Blue
 Ad. 363—Champagne or Fawn Ad.
 364—Cream or Silver Ad. 365—AOC
 Ad. 366—White 8 wks. 367—Black
 or Blue 8 wks. 368—Champagne or
 Fawn 8 wks. 369—Cream or Silver
 8 wks. 370—AOC Self 8 wks. *371—
 Self Challenge Ad. *372—Self
 Challenge 8 wks. *373—Doe Self
 Ad. *374—Doe Self 8 wks. 375—
 Stud Buck AA.

Specials—Mr T Robinson, 5s Best
 Exhibit in Show, Rosette, per Mr
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 Opposite Age to Best in Show.
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CATS—continued

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