

THE EXHIBITION MOUSE

HOW TO MAKE A MOUSE BOX

SEVERAL novices have asked about a suitable kind of box to keep their mice in. It is very difficult to secure wooden boxes from the grocers or greengrocers nowadays as cardboard cartons are mostly used for packing. Some years ago, Percy Ashley, one of the Fancy's outstanding breeders and secretary of the National Mouse Club wrote on this subject. This is what he said:

The boxes should be made from new timber. To make one box, one piece of timber 11ft long x 6in wide x $\frac{3}{4}$ thick will be required. This should be planed all round. The size of the finished box will be 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 7in deep (outside sizes).

To start the job you require a saw, a hammer, a six-inch square, some perforated zinc (sold at any ironmongers) and some $\frac{1}{2}$ in oval nails.

Mark out six pieces of timber 18in long and one piece 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. The remainder cut into four pieces 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ in wide. Two of these cut to 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ in long. Nail the two 18in pieces on to the 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ in x 6in piece (you will find that it

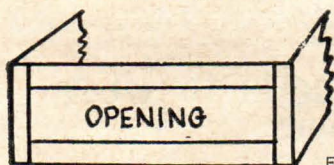


Fig I

measures 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ in after being planed). Then nail the two 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ in x 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ in pieces at the other end, one level with the top, the other level with the bottom. This leaves an opening 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in wide. The front of the box should now look like illustration No 1. Nail two of the 18in pieces on the bottom of the box.

Use your square to make sure the box is true to shape before nailing on the bottom.

DOWN MEMORY LANE - with E N Smith

ALTHOUGH I have kept mice on and off from my schooldays I did not start to show until after the last war. I was then living in Hillingdon and I soon met up with Neil Davidson and Edward Olliffe, both keen mouse fanciers in the district. Both Edward and Neil had some good stock in Dutch, fawns, Tans, Brokens and Astrex. I think Neil had one of the largest studs of Dutch in the country, and these were of all colours, as he did a lot of mixed breeding. He sold stock, mostly Dutch, and some fanciers did a lot of winning from mice bought from this stud.

Edward Olliffe could also turn out some good ones, and his fawns were some of the best I have ever seen.

We were all members of the London Club, and attended the monthly shows which in those days attracted some big entries.

As we were getting a good number of fanciers in our district, we called a meeting and decided to form the Hillingdon Mouse Club. I became its first secretary and my wife treasurer. As I have stated, although the London Club was strong at this time, it held few open shows. We at Hillingdon had the idea to promote so many of these each year. We had the blessing of the London Club, and a good number of the London members joined the Hillingdon Club. In this way we all gave each club any assistance that was required.

The judges at our first show were Fred Plucknett and Mrs Margaret Forbes. Fred was a great mouse fancier and a good judge. We lived near each other and, many was the time I travelled with him and listened to his stories of the men and women who established the mouse fancy. He joined the NMC in 1905 and he knew all the personalities such as Walter Maxey, Miss Douglas, Selby Thomas, Dr Kerr, and Mrs Blowers, to mention just a few.

When I judged at the 1954 annual at Rotherham Mr Plucknett travelled with me to act as my steward and the journey went quickly with Fred in the chair. He was also a craftsman and his Maxeys and travelling boxes are still in use.

Margaret Forbes, who now lives in the district, was also highly rated as a judge. She was also a highly delightful person to know. She was always ready to help and was a regular attendee at club meetings and shows. She had a large stud of mice, mostly Silver Greys. She was in demand as a judge, as

she always took such care and her knowledge of the standards made it a treat to show under her.

Another interesting person was A F Erswell who judged a number of shows and often came along to help with the running of a show. He had a wonderful stud of Self champagnes which did a lot of winning. I think it fair to say that the present day champagnes are not a patch on those shown by A F Erswell. They were tremendous mice with wonderful type and had that pinky tinge.

This stud was taken over by Arthur Day when Mr Erswell gave up showing and Mr Day continued to maintain this high quality, and was not often beaten on the show bench.

G E Fulbrooke, who would always judge when required, was another old timer with lots of tales to tell and very good company. He was always good for a laugh, and a leg pull. Another member was J Nott, who only kept Lilac Dutch. He had these for several years and did a lot of winning.

A year or two after the formation of the Hillingdon Club we were lucky enough to find a new venue, the Community Centre, Ickenham. This was ideal being a large country house with rooms for shows, meetings, and a large kitchen, with dining rooms. We had club shows on Sundays, and we were able to cater for large open shows. Although we held other cup shows, I think our biggest achievement

was the annual staged in 1953. We had elected for judging Joe Wood, Arthur Day, Ezra Skinner and Ron Beard. The entry was just under 1000, and the mouse fancy did us proud with their support.

Judging was held in two large rooms both with good lighting and were nice and warm. Friday was spent getting the show ready. All the tables were covered with white cloths and printed cards showed the various varieties. Judges names were on each judging table, and we had large banners made to advertise our show. One of these was stretched across the road near the show venue.

Lunch was served to a large gathering in the dining room, and the annual general meeting at the end of the show was in the library. The late G H Jameson won best in show and the pleasure it gave him, one would have thought he had won a million. He was a great supporter of our shows always with a large entry. Percy Ashley won the Mendel Gold Cup and was another happy fancier. Percy was a personal friend of my family and he stayed with us on a number of occasions. He would keep us entertained into the early hours with his stories and experiences. He would arrive on his motor bike looking fresh, and full of beans, as if he had just come from around the corner, instead of a journey of nearly 200 miles. Any variety he took up he perfected, but his PE Whites were, I think, his greatest.

Birmingham's winners

Judge for mice and gerbils was H Smith and for rats B J Cooke.

PE SELF/BE CREAM Ad: 1 Skipper 2 Mrs Jodrell 3 Wallace 8 wk: 1 Skipper AO BE SELF Ad: 1 2 Jodrell 3 Greaves 8 wk: 1 2 3 D Jodrell Self chall: 1 2 3 D Jodrell TAN Ad: 1 Mrs Morton 2 Cashmore 3 Whitehouse 8 wk: 1 2 Mrs Morton 3 K Morton Chall: 1 Mrs Morton 2 Cashmore 3 Whitehouse AOV Ad: 1 2 Moxon 3 Cavandale 8 wk: 1 Moxon 2 Greaves Chall: 1 2 Moxon 3 Greaves AV Grand chall ad: 1 Mrs Morton 2 Moxon 3 Cashmore 8 wk: 1 2 D Jodrell 3 Moxon Ladies: 1 2 3 Mrs Morton Juvenile: 1 3 D Jodrell 2 Moxon Pet: 1 2 Cain 3 Cross RAT HOODED: 1 Wallace 2 Mrs Lane 3 Skipper AOV: 1 Mrs Lane MONGOLIAN GERBIL: 1 Gardner 2 Cavandale 3 Moxon. Total entry 173. B J COOKE (Publicity Officer, West Midlands and Birmingham Mouse Clubs).

Rhona Welch's enthusiasm in evidence at Chard

On February 2 I had the pleasure of judging the mouse section at the South Western Fanciers Society's spring table show at Tatworth, near Chard, Somerset. It was the first time that I had ever been to Somerset, a county, it is said, renowned for its cider.

The show hall was already quite crowded when I arrived as rabbits, cavies and hamsters were also being exhibited.

The majority of the mouse section was exhibited in assorted biscuit tins, cake tins and divers other receptacles. One container, shaped suspiciously like a meat safe, bore the printed message 'please mind the mouse's head when shutting the lid, thank you'. I realise that this must make some die-hard fanciers' minds boggle at the thought of it.

Most of the exhibitors at this show were local children who have gained their interest from that Somerset lass, Rhona Welch, who was show secretary of the mouse section at the show and worked very hard. For years the South West of England has been as dead as a door nail as far as mouse breeding was concerned. Now, thanks to the enthusiasm of Miss Welch it seems that the area is at last waking up. The fanciers are all young but they are the fanciers of tomorrow.

I was pleased to meet Alan Reice for the first time at the show. I understand that he had travelled some 90 miles to be there.

PINK EYED WHITE Ad 1: 1 White, poor tail set on and condition CHOCOLATE Ad 5: 1 2 3 r Chedren Stud AOC SELF Ad 2: 1 Reice, black, usual fault, tan hairs on vent, otherwise good 2 Chedren Stud, black, tan hairs, poor condition and rather small ears SELF AC 8 wk 6: 1 2 Reice, 1 black, 2 chocolate, good colour but fails tail set on, these two seemed to me to be the only genuine under eight weekers in the class 3 Fowler, chocolate, good colour but weedy tail r Chedren Stud, pink-eyed White, a giant, rather a long coat, could it have been bred from a long-haired? Chall 8: 1 3 Chedren Stud, chocolates 2 r Reice, chocolate r black TAN CHOCOLATE Ad 2: 1 White, pretty good 2 Ambrose, tan not so strong and throat spot ANY OTHER COLOUR Ad 2: 1 Jones, champagne, large mouse, good top colour and tan, wonderful condition Chall 3: 1 Jones, champagne 2 3 Ambrose DUTCH Ad 1: 1 Ambrose, black, fairly good saddle, left cheek slipping and shaky blaze ANY OTHER VARIETY MARKED Ad 6: All the entries in this class were Himalayan 1 2 Chedren Stud, 1 good size and type 2 very weedy tail 3 Trout, not to standard of leader r Sparks, good size but rather patchy 8 wk 2: 1 2 Chedren Stud, 1 Himalayan 2 nose point not so clear as leader Chall 6: 1 2 3 r Chedren Stud AGOUTI/CINNAMON/FOX Ad 7: 1 3 r Reice, 1 silver Agouti, very good, colour level 2 Chedren Stud, black Fox, pretty good but white feet 3 silver Agouti, colour not so good as leader r silver Agouti, a nice big fellow, good stud buck LONGHAIRD 7: 1 should think that this was the largest entry of longhaired mice, a comparatively new variety, in any show. A class that I enjoyed judging very much. All the entries in this class were Pink-eyed White longhaired. Other colours are of course easy to make but I do not think that this should be the goal until suitable size and type have been achieved 1 Jones, very good big mouse, nice coat, the tail is much improved but still has the falling of shade small ears 2 3 Chedren Stud, fur not quite up to that of latter and not so typey 3 this exhibit has seen better days r Fowler, quite good but not up to standard of leader. The remainder of the class fell behind on type. The main failings were thin tails and small ears. The entry that was awarded vhc would have been in the first three had it not been for a rusty nose, caused by the condition of the bars of the cage. It is no good carefully grooming an exhibit and then putting it in a dirty cage. I thought the exhibit was a good attempt at a Himalayan at first ANY OTHER VARIETY Ad 1: Chedren Stud, Seal point Siamese, nothing to rave over, rather patchy 8 wk 5: 1 3 r Reice, all silver Agoutis, good colour 2 Chedren Stud, black Fox Chall 11: 1 r Reice, silver Agouti adult 2 Jones, Longhaired 3 Chedren Stud, black Fox r silver Agouti AV Grand chall 20: 1 Jones, champagne TAN 2 r hc c Chedren Stud, chocolate 3 Reice, silver Agouti r Himalayan vhc Jones, Longhaired hc black Fox c chocolate JUNIOR PURE BRED (Exhibitor under 18 years) 6: 1 Sparks, Himalayan 2 3 Ambrose, chocolate Tan 3 blue Tan r Trout, Himalayan PET 7: 1 judged this class on condition only 1 Trout 2 r White 3 Ambrose STUD BUCK: 1 Jones, longhaired 2 Reice, silver Agouti 3 r Chedren, chocolate r Longhaired BROOD DOE 10: 1 Jones, champagne TAN 2 r Chedren, chocolate 3 Reice, silver Agouti r Himalayan. ERIC JUKES

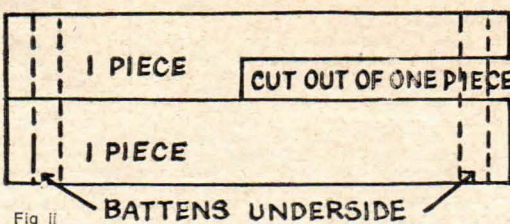


Fig II

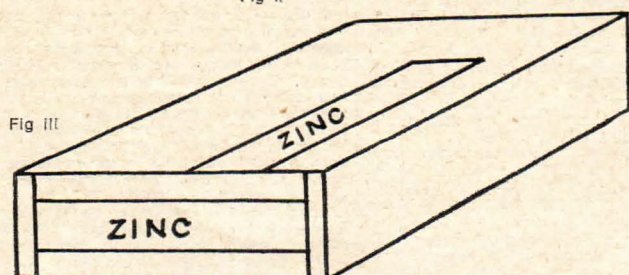


Fig III