

James Read Recalls . . .

The man who was Fancier, Exhibitor, Journalist, Judge, Show Promoter, Philosopher, and then Some! . . . George Townsend's Long Labour of Love . . . Mouse King Who Has Become One of the Greatest Livestock All-Rounders



"Dear Old George; there is something else in this Fancy of ours beside the rabbits . . . It is the human touch . . ."

THE late T. J. Ambrose was a remarkable man, and during a life-time in the Fancy was a dominant character in many ways. He was quite middle-aged when I first got to know him, when he was what we termed a professional judge, travelling tremendous distances by train annually to judge in all parts of the country. Before my time he was on the editorial staff of FUR AND FEATHER and an authority and writer on rabbits, pigeons and other kinds of small live stock. He probably knew personally more fanciers than anyone else of his day.

His letter headings told the story of his life, the specialist clubs he was associated with, the miles he had travelled on the railway lines between shows and lots of other things, an Old Moore's Almanack in miniature. His communications thereon were invariably written in pencil, with the railway compartment as his office, for in the busy season he did several shows weekly.

Judges were never decently paid in those days, so a bit of dealing in live stock had to be incorporated, and though Ambrose always told his customers not to show such purchases under him for three months, it was but rarely the request was honoured. Having bought "the best" they naturally wanted earliest results, and got them, or seemed to do vide reports in our journal and show pen chatter.

His life journey had its ups and downs, but despite all the vicissitudes which befell him he had a big heart and lived courageously to the end. He died six years ago and lived his closing years, I believe, in the very cottage in Bristol in which he was born 80 or more years before.

Many scores of fanciers, with long connection with our hobby, could tell astonishing stories from the life of "T.J.A." as a fancier, exhibitor, journalist, judge, show promoter, horticulturalist, philosopher, etc., embracing the whole gamut of human emotions from deepest sorrow to hilarious laughter. In those pre-war days it was an asset to the professional judge to be able to enjoy the hospitality of fanciers to save hotel expenses, and I often sat up past midnight spellbound by the loquacity of my guest, who could discourse on almost every topic, in characteristic attitude hunched up in the easy chair with finger tips beating time with the opening and closing of the eyelids as his tongue babbled on like Tennyson's brook.

All of us whose privilege it was to meet Ambrose under such circumstances can only think kindly of him. He was a remarkable man who did much to foster our Fancy over a period extending beyond half a century. Mr. George Townsend, who succeeded Ambrose as Dutch Club president, was his greatest contemporary. These two, more than any others, dominated the Fancy as judges for over 40 years or more.

Octogenarian With Innumerable Friends

Now an octogenarian, dear Old George happily is still with us, living in partial retirement at his home near Leeds. He, too, travelled the country and toiled just as hard for the welfare of our Fancy. Luckily he didn't need to tack on a spot of dealing, for he had a side line of his own, running a modest little printing business whose customers included many fanciers who liked to correspond with their own would-be customers in a businesslike manner with letter headings telling the tale of famous successes, with maybe a picture of the old buck in addition. His friends in the Fancy were many, and at innumerable fancier homes he was always welcome on the night before the show. I am sure it was this homely touch that kept the old judges going, for surely the fulfilment of their judging duties must have been a labour of love for the Fancy more so than the wildest possible hope of amassing any personal wealth from the fees.

George was always a welcome visitor to my house. His last such visit was in 1942 when we were co-judges at Rochdale agricultural show. On that Friday night in August he stood with me at the entrance to a little field which I owned and watched the cattle transporter's wagon come over the crest of the hill carrying the first six cows I ever possessed. They had been bought earlier that day to appease the war agricultural expert who had told me these few acres were not being utilised amply so that the war could be won, so we bought the cows to eat up the grass. Neither of us imagined that Friday night that the modest dabble would lead me on to fame and misfortune as a farmer, with three farms and a big herd, together with the multiplicity of trials and tribulations which beset all sons of the soil who go in for



For its efforts during the war the Fancy was awarded the Florence Nightingale Lamp. Sir Richard Hadden made the presentation to Mr. James Read.

this seven-days-a-week job. What a story those ten years could produce, but not of course for the pages of FUR AND FEATHER.

Dear Old George; there is something else in this Fancy of ours besides the rabbits and the show pens. It is the human touch, the greatest blessing of all. You have a book of memories filled with pages of fanciers. May I on their behalf send to you and Mrs. Townsend our warmest greetings and sincere good wishes in the hope that as you turn those pages you will find comfort and happiness and feel life has been worth while.

The Fancys Work For The Red Cross

AT the annual general meeting after the Chesterfield show mentioned in the last chapter, it was decided that Triple Championships be instituted. This was an idea from the late Mr. Joseph Gaunt, who submitted an artistic sample of the proposed certificate and offered to defray costs of the first supply. Also we decided to grant twenty guineas toward the Wartime Agricultural Red Cross Fund.

The year after we gave a further £25 to the British Red Cross Funds, presumably the same body. No wonder that when the war was over the Fancy was presented with a silver lamp from the promoters high up in the agricultural world for the collective efforts of our Fancy.

Incidentally, in passing, I may add this lamp was presented to myself as then time B.R.C. president by Sir Richard Hadden at a Bradford championship show, and should be in possession of the B.R.C. still.

In 1943 our Dutch Club was supporting shows with specials to the tune of over £70 in cash; just about double the annual club income in the years mentioned in my earliest chapters. These were indeed prosperous days for the Fancy, and coming to 1944 we find that the young stock show at Doncaster secured a record entry of 1,276; and the adult stock show at Leicester later that year also boasted a record adult stock entry of 1,195; and at the A.G.M. we had the greatest attendance ever of members. What progress! What work! And what a secretary.

When The Rabbits Went Upstairs

AT the Doncaster young stock show in 1944 with its 1,276 entries, the judges were a bit overworked. There were three of us and it worked out that I was concerned in the placing of 550 entries, with Messrs. Phillips and Harrison but little less employed, so we had a very full day.

The show was marred by protests against a couple of winners, including an exhibit which had been awarded the black cup and best in show under all judges. Up to then I had deemed our system of having an investigation committee a well-nigh certain way of deciding whether rabbits had been

tampered with or otherwise. Since then I have not felt too sure, and especially after subsequent protests at an adult stock show three or four years later.

At the 1944 adult stock show at Leicester we were just as hard worked at the judging table, and especially the stewards, for we discovered the ground floor of the building in which the show was staged had war-time blackout to the windows, so show manager J. W. (Joe) Tivey told us to judge upstairs where the light was good. This meant that all stock had to be first carried up and then down those stairs, and I am sure it was only because it was being done for the Fancy that those stewards stuck it out all that long first day. Jim Eady and Joe Gaunt were my co-judges, and we made the winning blue buck shown by Mr. T. O. Moss, Welling, Kent, best in show to take the Premier cup additional to the blue cup and breeders' cup. It was a lovely exhibit, with grand type, colour and markings, and something to delight the true breeder judge. When a non-breeder judge looks at rabbits like this he merely thinks "this is a nice 'un," but the breeder-judge looks at such specimens differently. To these judges such exhibits are breeders' triumphs and something one can handle and look over for a long time regardless of the pressure of time and the need for urgency to get on with the other classes yet to be judged.

The food situation was bad at the time of that show. When Joe Gaunt and myself reached our hotel after a full day at the judging table, the only thing the menu could offer us was jugged hare. The thought of it made Joe feel ill, and my own attempt to masticate a small portion was a near failure.

Ralph Blake, of "On my way" fame, was my head steward that day and he too was a war-time food producing specialist somewhere in Leicester. I never found out whether it was pickled onions or consolidated dog meat he and his partner "Copperfield" were occupied with, but after the dissolution Ralph reached London to specialise in the judging of rabbits and the breeding of rabbit dogs, or Whippets as they are called in canine circles. Also I believe he runs a line of French Poodles; and altogether is ever a versatile member of our far-flung Fancies and a most likeable representative of the odds and sods who collectively make up what we term the Fancy.

It must be over 30 years since he was the "Mouse King" of Ross-on-Wye, somewhere on the Severn, and we've been the best of friends ever since our first meeting at one of the earliest Bradford championship shows, when we both enjoyed the hospitality of the home of Allan Watson at Idle when Allan was editor of FUR AND FEATHER and hard-working secretary of those early monster shows in the Belle Vue Drill Hall.

The Worth Of The Area Clubs

IT would be negligence on my part if I did not pay a tribute to the great value of the Area Dutch Clubs which mostly sprang up during the war years. For over 60 years the old United Kingdom Dutch Rabbit Club had been able to fully cope with the requirements of Dutch rabbit breeders. One or two Area Dutch clubs had existed pre-war in a comparatively small way, but it was during the war years that the idea was developed. Travelling long distances was far from easy after total war was begun about 1940, so Area clubs became the vogue. It was very rare that Harry Tarbox's judgment was at fault, but in this instance his fears that Area clubs would appreciably reduce mem-

bership of his own U.K.D.R.C. were unfounded.

As his chief officer of the club I took the view that Area clubs would bring in a great influx of fanciers, most of whom would eventually expand and join the old parent club, and for once, at least, I was right. When Harry saw the trend of things he was naturally delighted and thenceforth always gave his blessing to the Area clubs.

In the main the Area clubs have been blessed with good officers who are mostly members of the United Kingdom Dutch Rabbit Club, and look upon the latter as the parent organisation, with the Area club as the faithful offspring. Perhaps the Midlands Area Club and the Greater London Dutch Club are the biggest and probably the strongest of these Area organisations, by virtue of their location and drawing capacities. The Yorkshire Club, the Lancashire Club, the North Eastern Counties Club, the Southern Club and the Devon and Cornwall Club, are also run by enthusiastic fanciers and are mostly progressing.

Then in areas none too thickly populated with fanciers and where it was not practicable to form a club, a little circle of Dutch fanciers was created for meetings and occasional shows.

The Norwich Dutch Circle immediately comes to mind, and also there is one in Kent and another in Notts. So long that these organisations command the interest of good and enthusiastic breeders they are bound to succeed. Area club secretaries such as Bill Wood, Ron Stone, Eddie Ward, Charlie Hoopes and company are well known and need no puff.

These Area clubs, in the main, run their own young and adult stock shows and, broadly speaking, support for them has been quite good. One problem is the prevention of clashing of show dates, and another I think is educating the rank and file breeders that Area club shows are open to all.

Maybe a day will come when money will get tighter than it has been for some years past. Then there may be a testing time for all rabbit clubs, including Area clubs. But with all clubs fostering our variety wholly united, ways and means can be devised whereby any storm can be weathered. If we have to come to such bridges we shall cross them all right. Meantime the best of luck to all Area clubs and Dutch Circles, and thanks for their wonderful support to the old parent club.

American Investigation

(Continued from page 285)

cessive shots. A convenient schedule is 6 and 10 a.m. and 2, 6 and 10 p.m.

In recent years penicillin in oil has become economical, and in this form the injections need be given only each 24 hours. Practice varies, but 50,000 units on each of two successive days, or 30-40,000 units on each of three successive days is satisfactory. Except that additional time is involved, the use of the crystalline penicillin has been slightly preferred. Some preparations now combine the two types, to give the quick action of the crystalline penicillin with the convenience of the other.

If infected vents are present at the time of treatment, these too can usually be expected to respond to the penicillin treatment.

During the two or three day period of treatment, little improvement is observed, but by the fourth day some of the thinner scales will have fallen, exposing beneath a fresh, pink area of healthy skin. Heavy growths dry at the base, and may fall off from the fourth to the eighth day. Ten days following the first injection of penicillin most cases will have cleared completely, and new hair may be seen cropping out on denuded areas. Recurrent cases can occur, either because of a local predominance of germs not susceptible of penicillin, or by reinfection with resistant germs in stnus drainage. Such cases have been reported to have appeared as late as 14 days after treatment. Further use of penicillin is not recommended for these, as it is ineffectual.

Shirley (Birmingham) F.F. will stage the Midrex young stock show on 5 July. The club will hold its adult stock show on 29 Nov. when it will also entertain the Midland Counties Havana Club's A.S.S.



Ralph Blake "Ever a versatile member of our far-flung Fancies and a most likeable representative . . ."

NATIONAL MOUSE CLUB SPRING CUP SHOW HAPPY AND SUCCESSFUL EVENT

MOUSE SHOW CALENDAR
10 May, Hillingdon.
17 May, Airedale.
24 May, Shirebrook.

N.M.C. SPRING CUP SHOW A HAPPY AND SUCCESSFUL EVENT.

In a Fancy noted for its friendliness and Good-Samaritanism, it is difficult to believe that anything which has taken place in the past could be excelled, but I rather think it was on Saturday, 19 April, at Rotherham where the National Mouse Club held its 1952 Spring Cup show. I am referring, of course, to atmosphere and not to records.

When I arrived round about 1 p.m. I was met by an array of happy faces, and, yes, a bevy of beauties. From what I can see, the Rotherham Mouse Fanciers have been particularly fortunate in their choice of women-folk. Are all the Rotherham girls so charming, attentive and courteous? The schedule said they would look after the inner man, but in addition, they looked after our comfort and by their efforts, did much to make us feel at home, and thereby ensured the complete success of the show.

Rotherham mouse fanciers know how to stage a show, the room was airy and light, and the organisation was all that could be desired. I came away without the total entry, but I was given to understand that it was in the region of 700. A 700 entry seems to be our average nowadays. Mr. Percy Ashley did indeed top 1,000 entries at Fells-worth, but this in the main was due to the 6d. duplicate classes. I am inclined to think that the Rotherham Mouse Club would drop a few pounds, for it does not do things by halves. Every class was fully guaranteed, and the array of specials was tempting and attractive in the extreme. I am confident, however, that whatever the show cost, not a hair would be turned. The Rotherham mouse fanciers had set out to give us a royal show, and they certainly succeeded.

Visitors came from far and near, by road, by rail, and what a happy crowd they were. I cannot pretend to go over the names. There were far too many. Let it be noted, however, that I have never seen a more representative collection of mouse fanciers

at any show, and everybody enjoyed themselves thoroughly.

I suppose I should consider it a good show, for did I not obtain best mouse? When I picked out the young Silver which won the award, I said to my man, Henry, "I think this mouse should win," but never in my wildest flight of imagination did I think I would obtain best in show. When I arrived at the show, I could only find the odd first and third, my winning Blacks at Fells-worth had failed, and I was forming the impression that it was not my day. I had, however, I thought, an outside chance of premier honours with my Chinchilla buck, and right enough, it won its class and secured best A.O.V. With that, I thought I should have to be content, and then someone said, "Your young Silver is being judged for Best in Show." "No," I said, "it did not, as far as I know, win its class." The position was, however, as stated, my mouse was being judged for best in show. The judges differed and other opinions were sought. Three outside judges were brought in before the coveted honour fell to me. What a thrill. I have now been keeping mice for over 20 years, but from the satisfaction I obtained, I might have been a complete novice. But more to me were the warm-hearted congratulations which I received from one and all, proving once again the generous spirit and sportsmanship of the mouse fancy. I would commiserate with Mr. Gregory, for it was with his young Dutch that my mouse had to compete for the premier award.

If I appear to have dwelt too much on this win, I would beg the indulgence of our members, for, although I have obtained best in show on many occasions, it was the first time at a N.M.C. Cup show.

Packing time arrived, farewells made and, as we turned homewards, there can only have been one verdict; a really wonderful show—a show to be remembered. On behalf of the N.M.C., I would register a very big vote of thanks to Mr. C. B. Peters, show secretary, Messrs. C. and R. Lockwood, E. L. Tindle, J. Foulds, W. Baldwin and others, not forgetting once again the women, for putting on such a grand show and giving their services so spontaneously and generously.

One would not expect such a show from so few fanciers, but that is the mouse fancy. All our local mouse clubs hinge on a few stalwarts. What we lack in quantity we certainly make up for in quality; quality of character, quality of true fanciership, and the aptitude for hard work. I can, in fact, say that the harder the job the better we like it. In a recent article Mr. Percy Ashley commented on the way we set about running our own shows. Of course we can run our own shows, and, what is of greater importance, we can make a success of them. Another thing which Mr. Ashley referred to was the amazement of the rabbit fanciers at Fells-worth at the way in which our members supported a show, and particularly the duplicate classes.

I can only trust that rabbit and cavy fanciers read our club notes, when they will see what a happy band we are. I am really surprised that more rabbit and cavy fanciers, and, yes, for that matter, cat and pigeon fanciers, do not join our ranks. Remember our oft-repeated advertisement for mice, "low initial cost, small upkeep charges, a lot in a small room, quick breeding results, all the fun of breeding and showing, and, again quoting Mr. Ashley, prize money of 6/-, 4/-, 2/-, 1/- for the humble 1/- entry fee. I say to fanciers in other spheres, you could not do better than take up fancy mice, and in the mouse fancy a real welcome awaits you.

A committee meeting took place at Rotherham, which I shall report next week.

In conclusion, Hillingdon, Middlesex, will stage a show on Saturday, 10 May. There are no less than 28 classes, all fully guaranteed. We know the Southern mouse fanciers do not patronise Northern shows as we would like them to, but this mainly is because there are not so many of them. Let us set an example by patronising the Southern shows, and, by so doing, encourage more Southerners to take up mice. The secretary is Mr. E. N. Smith, 133, Windsor Avenue, Hillingdon, Middlesex. Will fanciers who have not received a schedule send their entries this week-end?—C. H. JOHNSON.

ROTHERHAM

N.M.C. SPRING CUP SHOW

I had a very hard day at the National Mouse Club's spring cup show at Rotherham on 9 April, but I enjoyed every minute for I had two wonderful stewards in Mr. C. Becket and Mr. J. Hunter. I took the marked and A.O.V.s, which was a good share of the 722 entries. I am very pleased with the way

marked silver fawns and variegated turned up. I have never seen so many at once before. Agoutis are too dark, which makes them lose that sparkle. Dutch were well to the fore but please remember—no trimming. —J.P.

Mr. J. Patchett's Classes

DUTCH—8: 1, best marked, Dutch cup, 3 Gregory, 4 walk over; 2 Peters, choc. buck, falls saddle; 3 close, 8 WKS., 19: 1 Plant, best balanced in this class; 2 Longbottom, loses colour and flesh ears; 3 Watts, rather heavy head. **BROKEN OR EVEN**—12: 1 Garwood, 10 spots 2 Moore, six good coloured patches; 3 Steele, even, well placed patches, but too heavy, not my idea. 8 WKS., 9: 1 Cape, clean spots, not enough; 2 Ingham, even buck, two spots spoils it; 3 Garwood, not pleasing. **VARIEGATED**—8: 1 Hardman, evenly splashed; 2, 3 Cole and Son, very close; 3 not as good as leaders. 8 WKS., 6: 1 Hurst, best in fair lot; 2 Hardman, close; 3 Cole and Son, requires time. **MARKED CHALL.** 18: 1 Gregory, 2 Cole and Son; 3 Garwood. 8 WKS., 2: 1 Hardman; 2 Plant; 3 Longbottom. **AGOUTI OR CINNAMON**—16: 1 Ashley, cinnamon doe, brightest; 2 Watts, Agouti doe, tippy; 3 Baldwin, doe, close. 8 WKS., 13: 1 Lockwood, best cinnamon; 2 Johnson, cinnamon, close; 3 Mullins, good colour. **CHINCHILLA OR FOX**—9: 1 Johnson, good Chin.; 2 Watts, best Fox, good ticking; 3 Carr; Fox buck, close. 8 WKS., 6: 1 Carr, Fox, good ticking and colour; 2, 3 Johnson, good Chin.; 3 Fox, not quite as good as winner. A.O.V., 18: 1 Coles and Heywood, a very good pearly; 2 Ridley, good sable, falls nose; 3 Coles and Heywood, lovely silver fawn. 8 WKS., 9: 1 Kellett, silver grey, good under colour; 2 Coles and Heywood, good pearly, falls vent; 3 Hurst, sable. A.O.V. **CHALL.** 32: 1 Johnson; 2 Ashley; 3 Coles and Heywood. 8 WKS., 22: 1 Lockwood; 2 Carr; 3 Kellett, Best Agouti, Watts; best Fox, Carr; best Chinchilla, Johnson; best Cinnamon, Ashley; best Silver (other than grey), Coles and Heywood; best Silver Grey, Kellett; best Sable, Ridley; best Sable, 8 wks., Hurst; best Even, Steele; third best Broken, Holland; best Marked, Gregory; best A.O.V., Johnson; Louise cup, Hardman; Dutch cup, Gregory; Sable Challenge Bowl, Ridley.—J. PATCHETT.

(To be continued)

Mr. W. Crawford, Mr. J. T. Hushwaite and Mr. G. S. Watson will judge the rabbit section at Newbald Agricultural Society's show on 12 July.

Mr. F. Maynard and Mrs. F. C. Natrass will judge at Windsor on 13 July.

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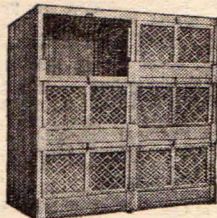
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