

## CAVIES

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SOUTHAMPTON REPORTS  
CONTINUOUS PROGRESS

THE first few months of the 70's have shown, in Southampton, how the cavy Fancy is continuing to keep ahead of previous years, by the excellent number of entries being made at all the table shows held to date. The membership of the Southampton Fur Fanciers is a little down on last year, but I feel that this is due to the forgetfulness of a few old members and hope that this will be rectified at our next show on May 16.

On May 16 we are to hold our first open pen show of the year and after penning 136 pure-breds and thirty-seven pets at our last pen show in November 1969, I am hoping to realise one of my ambitions of seeing over 200 cavies penned at our club show. One way of encouraging this figure is a new class we are staging—Champion of Champions. This class is open to all registered cavy champions of any variety, with prize money of 6s, 4s 6d, 3s, 2s, 2s, 2s guaranteed and a special rosette to the winner. This class, which will be judged last of the show, will, I hope, attract some of the cream of the cavy world—and entry fee—is plus entry in the appropriate breed class.

Apart from this class, there are fifty-nine other classes scheduled, and the two judges are Southern Cavy Club judges Mrs E M Elward and Mrs J Partridge, while the juvenile classes will be judged by one of our own successful juvenile members, Miss J de Souza.

We are also staging two other open pen shows, one on August 16, when Keith Bee will judge our young stock show, and a young fanciers show which will include classes for rabbits and cavies and young fanciers points show. At the same time, Mrs Penny Ryan will be judging an all-juvenile show of cavies.

Later, on November 15, we have another open pen show, when the non-Selfs are to be judged by NHCC secretary and SCC judge Eric Gaskin from Ipswich, and juvenile classes by the RVCC secretary, Miss Chrissie McGrath. The Self judge is not yet settled, but an attractive name is being booked.

I look forward to hearing from you all for schedules for any of these shows, at which full specialist club support is offered. REX G BLUNDELL, 34 Florence Road, Woolston, Southampton, SO2 9BS.

## BALLOT FOR JUDGES

THE results of the Durham and Northumberland Cavy Club ballot for judges are—Adult stock show: E Pye 5, J Ridley 4, H Scott 1, V Bailey 3, W Sowerby 0, W Pipe 2. Young stock show: E Pye 4, J Ridley 5, H Scott 1, V Bailey 3, W Sowerby 0, W Pipe 2. T M MORDUE, scrutineer

## Fanciers' library

**CAVIES OR GUINEA PIGS AND HOW TO KEEP THEM.** By successful breeders and exhibitors. Price 3s 4d post paid.

**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.)

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**FROM BOOK DEPARTMENT, FUR AND FEATHER, IDLE, BRADFORD, YORKSHIRE.**

## THE EXHIBITION MOUSE

'SHE CUT OFF THEIR TAILS WITH A CARVING KNIFE'  
—BUT THERE IS NONE OF THESE MICE IN BRITAIN

IT'S FUNNY how the new generation asks questions which the older generation has answered before.

This week, for example, a schoolmaster in Exeter, asks if there is a strain of tailless mice in England, a Birmingham (yes Birmingham) reader asks if it is legal to use cleaning powder (as for Poodle dogs) to prepare mice for show. And the old question of how to improve size and type in Dutch has again cropped up.

Well, would you believe it ALL these questions were answered in one issue of FUR AND FEATHER when dear old Percy Ashley was secretary of the NMC. For good measure he threw in a timely hint about mice and hot weather and wrote:

Now that summer is almost here, special care must be taken when sending mice to the shows.

When it is very hot put only a small amount of paper shavings or hay into the Maxey cage. If you put too much in the mice will perspire and be useless for exhibition. A good idea is to get a small piece of potato about the size of a piece of lump sugar, steep it in cold water, dry it off with a cloth and put it in the Maxey. This will provide the mice with moisture. Carrot will do as well but do not do this to Self whites for it will stain their noses.

'Is there a strain of tailless mice in England?' Mr A W Bassett has sent me the following:

'There is certainly no strain of tailless fancy mouse. Often, the tail may be either longer

than usual or sometimes shorter. This occurs more in the various natural forms of the mice of the genus Mus; and is possibly the reason for so many sub-species. I am inclined to agree with Mr Ashley when he said that the mouse had its tail bitten off at birth. We know of whisker-eaters and I am of opinion that—although this does not occur very often—we also get tail eaters among the Fancy mice.

'Several years ago a young mouse, among a litter which I had, was minus its tail. I examined it closely and could see that it had been eaten right down to the set-on. I did not destroy this youngster. I kept it as a curiosity. It was an agouti buck. Everyone who saw this creature thought it was a Manx mouse! This so-called Manx mouse sired many litters none of which were ever tailless and, tail-eating never occurred again among my stud. From this circumstance I drew the conclusion that tail-eating may occur once in many hundreds of generations.

'A well-known tail-eater is the Spiny mouse (Acomys), especially in captivity. This is possibly due to some form of cannibalism as it will also eat any dead companion in its cage. The shorter tailed species of mice are the small animals which we know as Voles (Microtus, Clethrionomys, Pitymys) but they are only very distantly related to our fancy mice.

'We, therefore, must accept the conclusion that although we get longer, medium or shorter tails in Mus musculus, there is certainly no strain without any tail whatever.'

This letter answers the question with a definite no. There is no breed of tailless mouse.

'Can I use Pink-eyed Whites to improve size and type in Dutch?'

Yes, you can. However, with the Dutch mouse you are up against the fact that it is a marked variety mouse and when you cross with PEW then you will upset the markings. Then by the time you have bred the markings back again you will have lost type and size.

The best way to improve type and size in Dutch is to select the biggest and best type ones from your existing stock and mate these together. Always cull any that are not up to size in your litters. You will have to be drastic to do this. However good in markings a Dutch may be, do not use it for breeding unless it has size, type and stamina.

Another reader asks: 'Is it legal to use powder to clean mice under NMC rules?'

I don't know of any rule that stops one using powder. In fact, in every Fancy I know of the cleaning of animals by various methods are all considered quite legitimate provided no bleach or other preparation is used to interfere with the natural colour of the animal.

The one thing to watch is that you do not leave any powder in the coat of the animal when it goes on the judging tables. Magnesium powder is the best to use. It cleans well and is very easy to get out of the coat. If used on a white coat it will not discolour it as cornflour may do.

## DOWN MEMORY LANE — WITH ERNIE HIGGS

ONE always makes mistakes in life, as did those who are no longer with us. But the biggest mistake of all is to forget those who were part of us. How nice it is to remember the masters—and the master of them all was Walter Maxey, who created the Maxey cage and was one of the founders of the National Mouse Club.

Little did Walter realise the endless pleasure he was to give to rich and poor alike. Not only this, but a bond of friendship has been built around us simply by those who have felt not the slightest embarrassment for having kept the fancy mouse.

For instance, C H Johnson of Driffield, a man of means, deprived himself of many pleasures in life simply because he loved mice, showing mice, visiting shows, and meeting people. At heart he was just an ordinary person.

Mrs Blowers of St Albans was an exceptional person. She was the Lady of the Fancy to those who met her.

The three doctors—Pickard, Kerr, Eyre—how nice it would be to have this sort of people in the Fancy today.

Messrs Wilton, Steer, Sam Etheridge, George Fulbrook, Irons and Horton, Appleyard and Haywood, Mrs Turvey, George Starkey, Fred Plucknett, G Midgley, T Thewlis, Joe Biggs, Rogers and Jones, Billy Turton, Sid Boot, Tom Bamford, Don Campey Middleton Bros, Cunliffe Owen, and others, most of whom were showing before the 30s. All were specialists in the particular breed.

How well I remember Tom Bamford of Diss, who was a cobbler by trade. In 1929 my late brother and I exchanged some mice for tins of boot polish, leather, jars of cream, and all the bag of tricks for repairing shoes and boots. We were in business for about six months. I well remember Mr Horton with his Self Champagnes, and his daughter, Mrs Turvey, showing Dutch. I trust you read this Mr Horton and hope you are keeping well. I still think of your partnership with the late Mr Irons.

I often let my mind wander back to when George Fulbrook was judging mice before the 30s and after. It is a pity I did not keep any records, but what a first class judge he was.

Joe Wood was the master with BE Whites and Tans. I met him on quite a few occasions. It was fitting that he judged the jubilee show at Airedale in the 50s. Robert Clark, another of the old-timers I had the pleasure of meeting and showing under him in the 30s.

I remember Robert Blake and E O Davies judging mice. Although they were really rabbit judges they still had a soft spot for mice. Many were the times we had rabbit judges judging mice, especially at some of the Agricultural shows when there were eight

to ten classes of mice. Surprisingly they seemed to have the necessary understanding and were not far out with their awards.

One fancier to whom I send my best wishes is Mr Harry Booth, the oldest member of the National Mouse Club. He has been a member for fifty-six years—congratulations. Perhaps it is love of the fancy mouse and the Fancy in general which has kept him active.

Talking of ages, my mother is 83, never kept mice but has always been interested in my welfare. I leave you to guess my age, but I am no chicken but have a soft spot for the elderly.

I well remember the Edmondson Bros showing in the 30s. You don't see many brothers showing as partners today. Len Marriott, or should I say, Mr and Mrs Marriott, must be the oldest exhibitors in the Fancy and still going strong today. What do you do with your prize cards Len? I bet they would stretch end to end from Boston to Langwith Junctions. I remember the Boston shows in the 30s and the Kirpton and Frampton shows in the 50s. Great days. I always keep my fingers crossed for Len hoping he will pull off that best in show at the annual which has eluded him all these years. 1970 may be the year.

When I think of the seaside beaches I naturally have one fancier in mind—Fred Beach, secretary of the newly founded Central England Mouse Club, Solihull. Remember the 30s Fred? I am sure you do—when FUR AND FEATHER was twopence and enclosed was a coloured picture of a rabbit.

At that particular time our own club was called the National Mouse and Rat Club. Tom Harding of Cardiff remembers it as he mentioned in FUR AND FEATHER quite recently.

It was surprising how many fanciers advertised mice and rats in the columns of FUR AND FEATHER. Not so today, why?

The tame rat is not as popular today as it was in the 30s but a few fanciers are interested, especially the Beach family who cater for rats at their shows at Solihull. In particular, Janine Beach who at the age of 14 years is quite fitted to judge any breed of rat.

When I visited the London show in 1969 I saw quite a few rats on show, but I was not surprised. The fanciers down south have always outnumbered those north, east and west. This goes back to the 30s when the Londoners were a hot bed for the tame rat. They are very docile creatures and easily handled, but I am afraid they have lost size, especially the Self PE White rat who is a far more dominant creature than the other breeds of rats especially the Hooded.

I wonder why some of our younger fanciers don't take on these fascinating creatures.

Fred Plucknett had a soft spot for them years ago. What say you Eric Smith being a very close friend of the late Fred.

How I enjoyed the mouse shows when Eric Smith was secretary of the Hillingdon Mouse Club along with his wife in the 50s. C H Johnson, best in show, with a Chin and Percy Ashley won the Mendel Gold Cup the time when Arthur Day, Ezra Skinner, Charlie Simpkin, Jack Tunnicliffe and a host of others were around. How nice it would be to turn the clock back.

How well I remember Goerge Starkey from Heckmondwike with his Self Blues, a specialist with this particular breed. Also Ezra Skinner winning the Happy Days Cup with a Self Blue at the old Crystal Palace and it changing hands to the late Doctor Kerr.

I seemed to get a kick out of visiting shows in the early years, more so than today. Perhaps by having seen so many it becomes second nature and reduces the same thrill in winning as I did years ago. Perhaps it is that I am getting older and as C H Johnson once said one does not have the urge to do things.

Which reminds me, that in conversation with my old friend Dick Ward at the East Midland Mouse Club show held at Nottingham on March 28 Dick said he felt very tired after judging these days and I can understand this, he being seventy years of age. To me Dick Ward is a shining example of a judge and fancier, and this goes for Charlie Beckett. I have in all sincerity thought well of them, judged alongside them and it was fitting that they, along with my old friend Harry Jowett judged the East Midlands Mouse Club's first show in memory of my late brother Tommy Higgs.

I trust you have enjoyed reading my memories as much as I have enjoyed writing them.

## GREAT HARWOOD STOCK

TOM and Jean Hallett will again care for all rail stock sent to Great Harwood for the show on May 25. It will be kept at 68 St Huberts Street, and railed home as soon as possible.

## ARE THERE ANY CLASSES FOR RATS?

I HAVE recently acquired a pair of fancy rats and have had a pure albino from them. I hoped to show this rat to find out just how good or bad it is, and would be grateful for any information as to shows where classes for rats are put on. JOHN THORPE, 20 Lively Street, Rochdale, Lancashire.

[See reference to Fred Beach and the Central England Show in Memory Lane above.—Editor]