

## The Fancy Mouse in Great Britain

BY A. C. JUDE

During the last half century the Mouse Fancy in Great Britain has made great strides. It now ranks as one of the most popular sections of the small livestock Fancy.

As a hobby, the breeding and exhibiting of fancy mice has gained popularity because it is inexpensive, and needs only a minimum of time for proper management. Further, there is a wide range of varieties from which to choose. But the success of the mouse fancy can be traced back to the formation of the "National Mouse Club" in 1895. The founder was Mr. Walter Maxey who only recently passed away at the age of 82.

By drawing up standards of perfection for the varieties, by supervising the election of Judges, by providing Club shows and supporting local club shows, the "N. M. C." brings fanciers together, and fosters the mouse fancy to best advantage.

The Club has collected an exceptionally fine array of Cups which are competed for by members only. The chief cup is the Mendel Gold Cup valued at £150 and awarded twice a year to the best typed mouse amongst first prize winners.

The officials of the "N. M. C." are made up by a President, four Vice-President, Hon: Secretary and Treasurer; Assistant Hon: Secretary and Cup Secretary; Hon: Press Secre-

tary; and 12 Members of Committee. Officers are elected annually, as are the 32 Club Judges.

Four Club Shows are held each year; "Spring" Cup Show, "Summer" Cup Show, "Bradford" Cup Show, and the "Annual" Cup Show. The "A. G. M." is held in conjunction with the "Annual" Show, which is held in the North, Midlands, and South, in rotation. In normal times, the local Club shows are run once a week at least, and in the summer months these are added to by the large number of Agricultural Shows staged in various parts of the Country. During war time, almost all mouse shows were arranged and run by the "N. M. C." By this means the Fancy was kept alive during the difficult period, and although all districts were heavily bombed, only one show had to be postponed, through air activity.

This speaks well for the enthusiasm and courage of all concerned, and we are now reaping the benefit of the unbroken activities of the parent Club. During war time entries varied between five and six hundred per show. The record entry for an English mouse show was just over 1,700, but there have been other entries running very close. I quote these figures in order that readers may know

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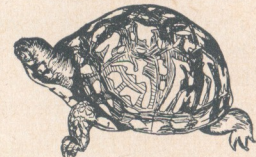
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### The Fancy Mouse

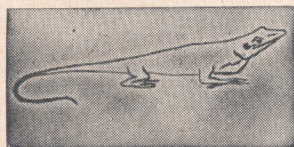
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how really popular the mouse fancy is in our Islands, and I am sure if similar lead was given in other Countries success would be assured.

Until a few years ago most fanciers, and indeed most Judges, were all-rounders, but with the gradual improvement in the quality of stock the fancier was forced to specialize. This all helped towards improvement, and today on the show bench we see each variety of mouse almost to perfection. The result is that competition becomes increasingly keen, which is to the good of Fancy and fancier alike.

An interesting point about the Mouse Fancy in Great Britain is the large number of varieties recognized. From one point of view this is a favorable feature, for it offers a very wide choice for every possible taste. But on the other hand there is disadvantage. To cater for all varieties means a big classification which splits up the entries. If the membership is not a large one the entries per class will be small, and the show promoters will be faced with a difficult financial position. If other Countries contemplate forging ahead with the Mouse Fancy I would strongly advise that the number of varieties to be recognized should be restricted at first, and only increased as the Fancy proportionately grows.

The National Mouse Club takes no active means to foster the production of mice for research purposes, feeling that from the Fancy point of view, it could adversely affect the stock produced. But it does of course recognize the very great necessity



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for mice of this type in order that the needs of the research workers can be met. In point of fact almost all "N.M.C.C." members help to supply the need, and rations of feeding stuff are only given when mice for research are bred.

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