

FANCIFUL REFLECTIONS



EIGHTY YEARS OF THE RAT FANCY
BY

NICK MAYS

1901

1981

FOREWORD BY
ROGER EDMONDSON

CONTENTS

AUTHOR'S NOTE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
FOREWORD BY ROGER EDMONDSON	ii
INTRODUCTION - THE BLACK DEATH AND BEYOND	iii
PART ONE - THE RISE OF THE RAT FANCY	1
PART TWO - THE HEYDAY OF THE RAT	13
PART THREE - THE BLEAK YEARS	33
PART FOUR - THE BRIEF REVIVAL	41
PART FIVE - THE RAT RESURGENCE	53
PART SIX - TO THE FUTURE	75
NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF CLUBS/SOCIETIES WHERE FANCY RATS MAY BE SHOWN	77

COPYRIGHT (C) 1984 N.C MAYS/FUR & FEATHER. PRIVATE PUBLICATION. NOT FOR RE-SALE.

COVER ILLUSTRATION COPYRIGHT (C) CORAL EMBURY/NICK MAYS.

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF
WALTER MAXEY AND MARY DOUGLAS,
FOR, WITHOUT WHOM, QUITE LITERALLY,
NONE OF THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE...

To Joy,
With my Best Wishes
and a common love of Rats,

Nick Mays

15/8/84

AUTHOR'S NOTE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Before you commence reading this modest work on the Rat Fancy and the Fancy Rat, I am afraid that I must subject you to a preliminary note to help you as you traverse over 80 years of articles, along with my notes, inserted at points where I felt it necessary.

Nothing happens all at once, nor is it done by any one person, best summed up in the sayings; "Rome wasn't built in a day" and "Many hands make light work". This is true of not only the Rat Fancy, but of this book as well.

As you start at 1901 and progress forward in the years, reading the articles written by Rat Fanciers ancient and modern, you are spanning many years, even more months and countless days; all part of somebody's life. An article, a précis, a biography, no matter how well written cannot convey the passage of the years adequately, the sheer time put into whatever that person has done in their life. Sir Richard Attenborough makes this fact quite clear in his giant of a film about a giant of a man, Ghandi. So then, when you read the articles - especially the pre-World War I articles - please spare a thought for the writer(s). Part of their lives is laid out for you to observe.

When I first visited the British Library in North London in Febraury 1984 and read my first old volume of 'Fur and Feather' - 1890 - I felt exalted and sad at the same time. Exalted because here was what I was looking for, a virtually priceless, well bound, almost mint condition collection of the truly great magazine, and sad because the writers were dead. Not sad in death for it's own sake, as death is sad, I believe, for those left behind, not the departed, but for the fact that I was perhaps the only person to have read their works since the volumes were bound. When I found for instance, the first article by Walter Maxey, or the Aylesbury Show Report of 1901, when Rats were first shown, I was ecstatic... and sad. So, the idea of this volume is two-fold; First, I wish to contribute something of value to the present Rat Fancy, so what better than a reasonably concise history of what has gone before and the National Fancy Rat Society's own formation? Second, and just as important, I wish to share with you the great knowledge that can be gleaned from our forebears' writings and perhaps, in this way, make their works more lasting. Not bound up and gathering dust in a library somewhere, or in an attic, but in your homes, today and make these 'great names' more than just names and these moments in 'Rat history' more than just references in an article; in short - alive.

Before I thank some special people who have been of the utmost help to me in my self-appointed task, I must point out that towards the end of this book, I have deliberately steered away from portraying too much of recent events to do with the N.F.R.S. I hope to deal with this in much more detail in another volume to celebrate the N.F.R.S' first decade of existance. Also, the articles contained herein are just a selection of what I consider to be important ones, for in over eighty years of the Fancy there have been well over 500 articles on Fancy Rats published! Maybe one day I can collate them all!

With the saying of "Many hands make light work" in mind, I have so many people to thank, in particular: Bob Batty, Editor of the current 'Fur & Feather', the staff of the British Library, Colindale, 'Country Life' magazine, Coral Embury for her superb cover design, Roger Edmondson for his invaluable personal recollections of those long ago days, Eric Jukes, Ann Littlefair for giving me some very rare old articles, Ann Storey, the Executive Committees of the National Fancy Rat Society, London and Southern Counties Mouse and Rat Club and, across the Atlantiac, the American Fancy Rat and Mouse Association. Last, but by no means least, my fiancée (at time of writing), Janice Neville for chauffeuring me to Colindale so often and then helping me to wade through all the volumes once there.

My particular thanks to you, dear Reader(s), for taking a chance on me and buying this book. I sincerely hope that you glean as much pleasure from reading it as I did in preparing it. Happy reading!

Nick Mays
May 1984

FOREWORD - by ROGER EDMONDSON

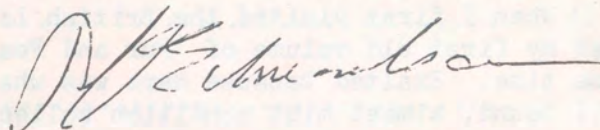
This book, which Nick Mays has created, brings together the past, present and perhaps a glimpse of the future of the Rat Fancy.

Thanks to his researching and delving into the past we are able to obtain some idea of the Fancy of yesteryear. A period which I am afraid many of today's Fanciers have a totally misconceived idea of, especially in relation to the Fancy at that time. It is enough for me to say, if there had been the Fanciers, the Fancy would not have been dead for nearly fifty years.

It is due to Nick Mays and several other enthusiasts that the Rat Fancy has been re-born and a very big "Thank You" is due to this very select band for bringing about the Fancy's re-birth on a stronger basis than ever.

I have known Nick Mays for some time now, and his fanatical enthusiasm is really something. He has built his reputation on the well tried, traditional methods of Housing, Breeding and Feeding etc., but, at the same time he has always listened to others' opinions and, although not afraid to experiment, he has always approached new ideas and methods with caution. At the same time, he has never been against change, especially where it has proved beneficial to the Fancy Rat and Rat Fancy.

I have spent many happy hours in discussion and friendly argument with Nick, and I feel that with this work, "Fanciful Reflections", we have seen the true Fancier: Nick Mays.



Roger Edmondson, June 1984.

Roger Edmondson is a notable Fancier of both Mice, Rabbits and Poultry, having kept and exhibited animals all his long life. Indeed, he and his late brother, Leslie, were exhibiting Mice during the First World War. Roger met the legendary Miss Mary Douglas once, when he was about fifteen and later on, he numbered amongst his friends the late, great Walter Maxey, J. Wilton-Steer, H.C Brooke, G.F Tuck and many others.

Roger Edmondson also has a great memory and was of the utmost help in verification of the facts in this book. He is now retired, and lives with his wife Ethel in Haslemere, Surrey.

INTRODUCTION

THE BLACK DEATH AND BEYOND...

The Black Rat, *Rattus rattus*, also known as the Ship Rat, originated in Asia and spread across the world via traders' vessels in the Middle Ages. It arrived in Britain around the 11th. Century AD at the time of the Crusades. Indeed, it is almost certain that a large number of the species arrived in the Crusaders' own ships. It quickly established itself, first in Ports and Dockland towns, later spreading further inland, and, within a very short time, it was spread in great numbers across Britain. At that time, there was no adequate sewage system in even the most prosperous towns and waste disposal was virtually nil, so the Black Rat had no shortage of food. Thus it was that, very early on, it began living in the most squalid conditions and greatly feared by the Human populace in the area.

The Black Rat's reign in Britain is best illustrated by the dreaded Bubonic Plague that was carried by disease in the Rat's fur - fleas not peculiar to the Rat, but to Humans! The Bubonic Plague ravaged Europe and was named "The Black Death", not because of the colour of the Rats - they are, in fact, dark brown and can be found in quite a variety of colour shades - but because of the colour of the victims' flesh at death. The Plague struck London in 1665 and was finally stamped out by the Great Fire of London the following year, in which only a handful of people died, but many hundreds of Rats perished.

Strange as it may seem, the first experiments conducted on Rats took place during the period 1660 to 1670 by two 'scientists', Hooke and Boyle and they used *Rattus rattus*. However, a 'new' Rat arrived in Britain some thirty years thereafter and it has been used in experiments - and in the wild state, remained a serious nuisance ever since; *Rattus norvegicus*, the Brown or Norway Rat, also from Asia.

The name of 'Norway Rat' is known now to be very inappropriate and the Rat was named thus as it was at one time thought to have arrived in Britain in timber ships from Norway, although there is no evidence that the Brown Rat was present in Norway until the early 1760's, some forty years after it's arrival in Britain. For a time, it had another name, that of the 'Hanoverian Rat', as it's arrival virtually coincided with that of the highly unpopular George I of Hanover. Indeed, many people were convinced that both Rat and Royal arrived in the same ship, in 1714.

Once in Britain, the Brown Rat quickly usurped the position of the Black Rat, being stronger, more adaptable and it's unconcerned at living in colder, damper conditions than the Black. There are many accounts of Black Rats living in the attic and roof areas of houses and Brown Rats living in the colder, damper cellars. There are also accounts of the Brown Rat fighting and killing the Black Rat. By the mid to late 1800's, the Black Rat was only to be found in Ports and Dockland towns, whilst the Brown was found all over Britain.

The occupation of Rat Catcher, if unenviable, was good, steady work. The Royal household of Queen Victoria employed a Rat Catcher around 1850, one Jack Black. Mr. Black, however, took more than just a financial interest in the vermin - he admired the animal itself. During the course of his duties he captured a number of 'freak' rats - Albinos, Blacks, Fawns and so on and bred them together to note the colouration of the offspring. It is very unlikely that he had a definite goal in mind and certain that he knew nothing of Genetics, as Gregor Mendel's papers on his famous Sweet Pea experiments were not discovered until 1900, some years after his (Mendel's) death. It is possible that Black managed to tame at least the successive generations of the 'freak' rats and perhaps these found their way onto the pet market, along with Rabbits, Cavies and Mice. Black retired around 1870 and wrote a book about his life and work and also his breeding experiments. Whether any of the later Rat Fanciers read this book is a matter of conjecture, but the fact remains that some Fancy Rats existed, albeit rarely, towards the end of the 1880's.

However, it was not until the early 1900's that the Fancy Rat came to the fore as a desirable animal. Before that, the equally maligned Mouse was to have it's day - as the Fancy Mouse - with the formation of the Mouse Fancy in 1895...

THE BLACK RAT AND RATS

The Black Rat, *Rattus norvegicus*, is a very common pest of man and his dwellings. It is a very hardy animal, and is able to live in the most crowded and insanitary conditions. It is also a very voracious feeder, and will eat almost anything that is edible. It is a very intelligent animal, and is able to find its way into the most inaccessible places. It is a very common pest of man and his dwellings, and is a very hardy animal, and is able to live in the most crowded and insanitary conditions. It is also a very voracious feeder, and will eat almost anything that is edible. It is a very intelligent animal, and is able to find its way into the most inaccessible places.

The Black Rat, *Rattus norvegicus*, is a very common pest of man and his dwellings. It is a very hardy animal, and is able to live in the most crowded and insanitary conditions. It is also a very voracious feeder, and will eat almost anything that is edible. It is a very intelligent animal, and is able to find its way into the most inaccessible places. It is a very common pest of man and his dwellings, and is a very hardy animal, and is able to live in the most crowded and insanitary conditions. It is also a very voracious feeder, and will eat almost anything that is edible. It is a very intelligent animal, and is able to find its way into the most inaccessible places.

The name of *Rattus norvegicus* is known now to be very inappropriate and the rat was named thus as it was at one time thought to have arrived in Britain in timber ships from Norway, although there is no evidence that the Brown Rat was present in Norway until the early 1700's, some forty years after its arrival in Britain. For a time, it had another name, that of the 'Hanoverian Rat', as its arrival virtually coincided with that of the highly unpopular George I of Hanover. Indeed, many people were convinced that both rat and royal arrived in the same ship, in 1714.

Once in Britain, the Brown Rat quickly jumped the position of the Black Rat, being stronger, more adaptable and its descendants as living in colder, damper conditions than the Black. There are many accounts of Black Rats living in the attic and roof spaces of houses and Brown Rats living in the colder, damper cellars. There are also accounts of the Brown Rat fighting and killing the Black Rat, by the mid to late 1800's, the Black Rat was only to be found in ports and dockland towns, whilst the Brown was found all over Britain.

The occupation of Rat Catcher, if unenviable, was good, steady work. The Hoyer household of Queen Victoria employed a Rat Catcher around 1850, one Jack Black. Mr. Black, however, took more than just a financial interest in the vermin - he admired the animal itself. During the course of his duties he acquired a number of 'freak' rats - albino, black, brown and so on and bred them together to note the coloration of the offspring. It is very unlikely that he had a definite goal in mind and certainly that he knew nothing of Genetics, as Gregor Mendel's papers on his famous Swedish experiments were not discovered until 1900, some years after his (Mendel's) death. It is possible that Black noticed at least the suggestive possibilities of the 'freak' rats and perhaps drew them into the vermin. Jack with his rats, and with his eyes on the prize, Black tried to breed a black rat and gave a lead about his life and work. It is his breeding experiments, whether any of the later rat fanciers read this book is a matter for conjecture, but the fact remains that Mendel's work was not known until 1900, and that the fancy rat came to the fore.

However, it was not until the early 1900's that the fancy rat came to the fore as a desirable animal. Before that, the equally unattractive mouse was to have its day as the fancy mouse - with the formation of the Mouse Fancy in 1895.

FANCIFUL REFLECTIONS



"The Rats were a committee, could
add an extra att... including a Rat
class..."
- Walter Ma... & feather"
31st. Octobe

Jack Black 1850

Her Majesty's Rat Catcher

REFLECTIONS
FANCIFUL



Jack Black 1850

Her Majesty's Rat Catcher

PART ONE THE RISE OF THE RAT FANCY 1901-1907

"The Rats were a great attraction... show committees could add an extra attraction to their shows by including a Rat class..."

- Walter Maxey - Aylesbury Show Report, 'Fur & Feather'
31st. October 1901

P A R T 1
THE RISE OF THE RAT FANCY
(1901 - 1907)

In the early 1890's, a handful of would-be Mouse Fanciers began writing articles for the journal of the Fancy world, 'Fur & Feather', in which they asked whether some Rabbit and Cavy clubs would take a chance and stage classes for Fancy Mice at certain of their shows. 'Fur & Feather' (hereafter referred to as 'F & F', as indeed it was known to all Fanciers during its 92 year life), was a specialist magazine written by Fanciers for Fanciers. It was founded by J.E Watmough in the early 1880's as the "Rabbit Keeper and Show Reporter". Its name changed in 1888 to 'Fur and Feather' and, notwithstanding the additions of "Rabbits and Rabbit Keeping" to the title, it remained thus until its untimely demise in February 1981. During its heyday, 'F & F' was an invaluable magazine for all Fanciers, great or small. Many times up to and including the mid 1920's beautiful colour plates and supplements were included at little or no extra cost, the maximum being an extra 1 penny (1 d.)

Fancy Mice had been kept as pets for many, many centuries, records in ancient Japanese culture depict prettily coloured pet mice, and many a grandparent's parents had kept "White Mice" in the mid 1800's. The first real mention of Fancy Mice in 'F & F' is in an advert in the issue of 8th. January 1891:

"Interesting Amusing Pets - Fancy Mice, any colour with breeding cage and Book on Management. 1s 6d the lot, packed - Copeman and Phillips, Charles Street, Monmouthshire."

After a few initial articles had been written, the first classes for Fancy Mice were staged at a Cavy Show in Oxford in 1892 and was won by prominent Cavy - and Mouse - Fancier, William Wild. Wild himself was a great leading light in these pre-Fancy days and took every opportunity to project Fancy Mice in a favourable image within the pages of 'F & F'. One article of his in the issue of 21st. December 1893 has the following thought-provoking passage:

"...As regards exhibiting (of Mice), I think Rabbit and Cavy clubs might do far worse than make themselves acquainted with this latest addition to the show bench..."

More classes for Mice were staged at shows throughout 1893, in particular at the shows of the Abingdon and Tower Hamlets Fanciers' Societies and several advertisements proclaimed that Mouse Fancying was "... the coming Fancy...". So it was, that in 1895 the National Mouse Club was formed and by 1897 their membership had grown greatly and the first 'Mice only' show was staged in Stratford, East London. This show was arranged by one of the Club's founder members, Mr. Walter Maxey, an East-Enders from Poplar, London. He later became the N.M.C second and longest serving Hon. Secretary from 1897 to 1906 inclusive.

But what of the Fancy Rat? The first advert for Fancy Rats appeared in the issue of 30th. January 1896:

"Novelty - Tame, performing Japanese mice, most amusing, soon breed, only 1/- pair; tame, performing Japanese rats, 6d each. Fred Kings, Redditch."

Five years later, in 1901, a Fancier named Miss Mary Douglas - a lady of strange appearance and independent means, pushed for classes for Fancy Rats at the October show staged by the Aylesbury Fanciers Society, based in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire. One class - Rats Any Variety - was duly staged and well supported, the Rats proving to be a great crowd-puller. After this historic event, Miss Douglas joined the National Mouse Club on the 1st. January 1902 and proved herself to be a club activist for Mice as well as Rats. By the 1902 Annual General Meeting she had been voted onto the club Committee and had by that time seen more classes for Rats catered for at N.M.C shows. Whilst Edith Holden was writing her "Country Diary of an Edwardian Lady" in 1906, Mary Douglas was writing "Rambles in Ratland" for 'F & F'. More Rat Fanciers joined over the years and their number grew sporadically, Rats never being as popular as Mice. However, Mary Douglas became Hon. Secretary of the N.M.C in 1907 and the fortunes of the Fancy Rat and the young Rat Fancy took a definite upturn...

AYLESBURY SHOW.

AYLESBURY

12th Annual Open SHOW of POULTRY, PIGEONS, RABBITS, CAGE BIRDS, CATS, CAVIAR, MICE, HATS, & DOGS, ON OCTOBER 23rd and 24th. Dogs one day only, October 24th (U.K.C.L.) Judges—Messrs. J. W. Ludlow, Poultry; A. Lett, Pigeons; J. Irons, Cage Birds; T. B. Mason, Rabbits, Cats, & Caviar; W. Masey, Mice and Rats; W. Nichols, Dogs. Omitted from Schedule—That the N.M.C. silver medal is granted for best Mouse in show exhibited by a member of the N.M.C. Entries extended until Wednesday, October 16th. Last post accepted Schedule, A. C. Locke, Hon. Sec., Aylesbury

October 10, 1901.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

After a predominance of Mouse articles in the preceding nine years, the first genuine reference to Fancy Rats came in October 1901 with an advertisement for the forthcoming Aylesbury Show (above). The next reference, two weeks later was the show report of the Aylesbury Show, in which Rats are mentioned near the end. As the report quotes; "The Rats were a great attraction." Unsurprisingly, the Best Rat was owned by the "Mother of the Fancy", Miss Mary Douglas.

Held October 23rd and 24th Mr. T. B. Mason judged Rabbits, Cats, and Caviar, and supplies the notes. Mr. Irons judged the Cage Birds, and Mr. Masey the Mice and Rats.

BELGIAN BUCK, 12: 1, sp best Belgian, Cross, noted winner, looking better, yet not in the form I should like to see him; 2 Kilby, good shape, rich colour, nice ears and ticking, fails little inside feet, yet a good one; 3 Thornton, the richest in the class, rare feet and good ears, beaten a little in length, and too even in ticking; the Peet; he Ferrell; c Sale; pens 637 Abbott; 647 Crossland, empty. **BELGIAN DOE**, 16: 1 Kilby, one of the richest in colour I have seen, with rare hind feet and good ears, fine length and shape, bit full in coat, a close race for special over the buck, like him not in full coat on sides of body; 2 Peet, lovely shape, rare length, and fine limbs, bit dull in body colour, and fails in ticking; 3 Noble, grand length of limbs and body, deep lacing, and good body ticking, fails in richness of colour on chest and fore and hind feet; r France, the noted young doe, grand colour, but built on a little too small lines, or would have been a good one; the Twessell; he Green and Son; c Hazlewood, a very good lot. **BELGIANS, UNDER 6 MONTHS**, 16: 1 Peet, doe, full of colour, nice shape, ears, and hind feet, will take a lot of beating; 2 S Woodman, 2nd a rattling shaped buck, with the finest of limbs and head, not quite the richest of body colour, yet one of the first order, 3rd, a lovely shaped doe, getting well on to the limit age, a little on the dark side, and not quite so rich in colour on hind feet; r Noble, buck, full of colour, deep ear lacing, and grand hind feet, beaten in length, yet a good one; the Kilby, Smart, Hazlewood, all fit to win; pen 675 Pieves, empty. **SILVER GREYS**, 9: 1, sp Armstrong, neat, nice colour, chest, and feet, going a little into moult on ears, which nearly put it back; 2 Hawker, bit dark on tail, and got a little patch on the top of saddle, good colour, ears, chest, and feet; 3 Lack, lovely body, sound chest, and good feet, dark on cheeks, rattling form; the Gardner; he Stockley; c Calcutt. **DUTCH, BLACK OR BLUE**, 9: 1, sp Malley, black, lovely colour, nice shape and level markings, a good one; 2 Wallis and Son, blue, neat and good colour, not quite so even in cheeks as the first, yet very close up; 3 Moss, black, nice colour and level markings, beaten in type and neatness of ears, in grand trim; the Choules; he Summerfield. **DUTCH, A.O.C.**, 11: 1-Moss, steel grey, the noted winner, not in full coat on blaze, getting into grand trim on body; 2 Malley, steel grey, baby, nice shape, blaze, neck, top collar and stops, fair cut, not quite fit, will be hard to stop when ready; 3 Wallis and Son, steel grey, grand collar and stops, clear neck, beaten in shape, and bit low one cheek; the Demmins and Chappell; he Smart; c Choules; pen 706, Crossland, empty. **DUTCH, A.C., UNDER 4 MONTHS**, 15: 1 Wallis and Son, black, lovely marked baby, bit light in colour of eye, and not quite straight in cut, yet wins well; 2 Emsley and Wilson, tortoise, bit full in neck, other markings good, rather pale in shadings; 3 Barham, blue, sound colour, nice face and collar, one stop runs on the outside, or would be a good one; the Smart; he Gillett and Son; c Benson. **HIMALAYANS**, 8: 1, 2, 3 Awards, a grand lot, clear ahead of any in this class, and not so very easy to separate; the Bull; he West; c Veasey. **A.O.V.**, 7: 1 Cooper, sooty fawn, not the Altrincham winner, 26½ by 7, rare substance of ears, bit pale in shadings, and not the best of shape and carriage, yet wins well in this company; 2 H. Powell, black Lop, 25 by 6½, rich colour, not in the best of coat and condition, or would take beating, nice style and shape; 3 Giles, blue English, rich colour, good nose and saddle, the other markings a bit on the heavy side; the Miss Bird; he Miss Green; c Pipkin. **SELLING, A.V. EXCEPT TANS**, 10s., 10: 1 Catlin; 2 Timber; 3 Poster.

CATS, LONG-HAIR, 14: 1, 2, 3, sp Mrs. Collingwood, two blues and one brown tabby Persian, a grand trio, fit for the keenest competition, rare shape, lovely eyes, and strong in limbs; r Mrs. Western, silver, 12c best of eyes, shape and expression, beaten in length of frill and body coat; the Harding; he Mrs. Brown; c Bockett. **SHORT-HAIR**, 10: 1, 2, r Mrs. Collingwood, all three orange tabbies, the winner a lovely kitten, not yet cast its teeth, distinct markings, grand eyes, shape, chest, and feet, the second quite equal in markings, and very short, round head, grand eye, not so rich in body colour, the res. good markings, eye, 2nd shape, beaten in colour on chest and head; 3 Mrs. Western, white, rare shape, and lovely blue eyes, casting its body coat, and not so clean as I like to see a white, when it will be hard to put back; the Dymond; he Mrs. Dearing; c Mrs. Zoe. **KITTENS, A.V.**, 8: 1, 2, 3 Mrs. Collingwood, the winner first in open, a grand orange tabby, 2nd a lovely white Persian, strong limbs, short body, and low, with nice eyes,

very promising, the 3rd silver short-hair, good colour, and very grand and distinct markings, I don't care for the colour of eyes; r Goodyear, very promising short-haired black, sound in colour, and short in coat, the eyes not quite deep enough in colour; the Lewis; he Miss Green.

MICE, BLACK OR CHOCOLATE, 10: 1, sp, 3 Steer, 1st black, colour all over very dense; 5rd another good one, with which very little fault could be found; 2 Rev. Soames, another gem, shown in lovely trim; 4 Taylor, large, good black, but has few white hairs on top coat; r Simpson, large chocolate, nice shape, but too light in colour; the Miss Dresser; he Riddle; c Miss Hedderwick; absent 783, McIsaac. **WHITE, FAWN, OR CREAM**, 15: 1, he Major, fawn, nice colour, top, and under, in tip-top trim; 2, c Steer, lovely cream, very level colour, close run for first place; 3 Miss Younger, fawn, nice Mouse, but might be a little deeper in colour; 4 Atlee, good, pink eyed white; r Taylor, neat black eyed white; the Miss Roads. **A.O.C. SELF**, 12: 1, sp Atlee, lovely self silver, beautiful pale colour, best we have yet seen; 2, 3 Hawkins, two really good blues; 4 Miss Roads, nice blue, small; r, the Gillham, blue, nice colour, fails size; he Owen; c Simpson; wrong class, pen 802, Gasking, a chocolate. **DUTCH, OR EVEN-MARKED**, 14: 1 Anderson, fawn Dutch, fair cheeks, moderate saddle, getting too podgy, looks like the Lees cup winner; 2 Brockwell, black Dutch, close run for 1st, nice cheeks, fair saddle, fails to winner in size, will, no doubt, improve and beat winner next time they meet; 3 Shaw, black-and-white even-marked, a really taking Mouse, nice cheeks and saddle, with three patches in centre of back, could win in its own class; 4, the Selleck and Sloman, black Dutch, nice cheeks and saddle, not in best of trim; r Miss Younger, another nice black Dutch; the Miss Grimston. **BROKEN OR VARIEGATED**, 16: 1, sp Mackintosh, Highland Chief, 7-patched cinnamon-and-white, patches nicely placed, very free from white hairs; take care of it, Mr. M., you have a good one, runner up for best in show; 2 Selby-Thomas, one of the new variegated black-and-whites, plenty of work on body, really good specimen; 3 Atlee, 7-patched chocolate-and-white broken, splendid colour, good size, one patch rather large; 4 Singleton, 7-patched grey-and-white, very neat; r Mackintosh, Champion Admiral, 8-patched black-and-white, beaten here; the Miss Younger; he Miss Grimston; c Middleton. **A.O.V.**, 13: 1, sp Atlee, large agouti, good colour, shown "in lovely form, largest Mouse seen for years; 2 Selleck and Sloman, grand medium coloured sable, coat like satin; 3 Miss Younger, another sable, just changing colour; 4 Tappenden, nice agouti, good colour, well ticked, might be larger; r Gasking, sable, changing colour; the Simpson; he Middleton; c Bevan; absent, 855 Riddle, and 846 Grimston. **SELF, UNDER TEN WEEKS**, 17: 1, sp, r, the Riddle, 1st a pretty little self silver, lovely pale colour; reserve a pretty black eyed white; 2nd neat black, good colour; 3 Simpson, nice fawn; 4 Miss Roads, pretty little blue; he Atlee; c Dean; absent 555 McIsaac. **A.O.V., UNDER TEN WEEKS**, 16: 1, sp, N.M.C. silver medal best in show, Brockwell, fawn Dutch, very nicely marked, with care will make a topper; 2 Miss Younger, pretty little black Dutch; 3 Miss Robinson, neat little chocolate Dutch; 4 Simpson, agouti, very neat; r Selby-Thomas, blue-and-white Dutch, one cheek rather heavy, beat we have seen of this colour; the Atlee; he Ferguson; c Gasking. **NOVICE**, 17: 1, sp, he Cocking, lovely chocolate, rich deep colour, cheap at 10s.; 2, sp Watkinson, good black; 3, sp Dean, nice self silver; 4 Miss Robinson, nice fawn, bit dark in coat; r Milner, nice blue; the, c Wickenden. **RATS, ANY VARIETY**, 15: 1, sp for best Rat, Miss Douglas, black-and-white even-marked, good size, shown in lovely trim; 2, sp Bould, another good black-and-white even-marked, not quite so large as winner; 3 Miss Douglas, nice white, might be pure in colour; 4 Fear, black-and-white, even marked, neat specimen; r Vale, Mus Hibernicus, black, good size, falls in colour; the Miss Hastings; he Mrs. May; he Bould; absent, 905, Richardson; the Rats were a great attraction, and as there are no pens to provide, show committees could add an extra attraction to their show by including a Rat class in their schedule.

CAGE BIRDS, NORWICH, CLEAR YELLOW, 7: 1 Ette and French, thick set, A1 colour and quality; 2 Yates, better shape, not as level in colour, loses quality; 3 Dale, good colour, thin in head, lacks chest; the Milne. **BUFF**, 8: 1 Lawrence, nice thick set bird, of rare feather and quality; 2, he Yates, rattling size, but lacks quality and pose; 3 Dale; the Theobald; c Hart. **TICKED, ETC.**, 8: 1 Lawrence, nice shape, colour, and finish; 2 Yates, loses quality of feather, better shape, close on first; 3 Ette and French, good quality, lacks chest, and bit pinched in head, winners all ticks; the Dale; c Young. **CRESTS**, 14: 1, sp, 2 Collins, much the best in size, droop, and radiation, winner rattling green; 3 Calvert, not as good in shape, size, or radiation, still nice one; the Theobald; he Lambert; c Perkins, A.O.V. **OR MULE**, 18: 1 Ette and French, Cinnamon, grand colour, nice shape and feather, good yellow; 2, he Hart, well known Goldfinch-Canary mule; 3 Wright and Lander, Yorkshire, finely drawn, good stand and feather; the Morris; c Sweetman. **SELLING, 20s.**, 12: 1 Mills; 2 Perkins; 3 Lawrence. **SELLING, 10s.**, 8: 1 Ette and French; 2 Theobald; 3 Barnett.

October 31, 1901.

FANCY RATS FOR EXHIBITION.

Now that, thanks to the enterprise of the Aylesbury fanciers' show committee, the admission of Rats to the show bench has become an accomplished fact, the time seems to have come when a move might be made to secure their regular recognition by the Fancy. Since my last letter appeared in your columns a few weeks ago, I have received several communications on the subject from Rat and Mouse fanciers, a good many of whom seem to be of the opinion that we should go forward, and either form a Rat club, or ask the N.M.C. to include Rats in the programme. I am myself in favour of the second proposition, seeing that, as Rats are first cousins to Mice, one club may very reasonably suffice for both. Moreover, one strong club is better than two weaker ones, and the addition of Rat fanciers to the existing club would doubtless considerably strengthen its hands, and increase its resources and sphere of interest. I have written to Mr. Maxey on the subject, and he says: "I do not see why we could not include Rats, providing there were a fair number of fanciers who would take Rats up." That is encouraging. Of course, everything must have a beginning, and no doubt there are many Mouse fanciers who are also interested in Rats. At the same time, many Rat fanciers, who, like myself, are not at present members of the N.M.C., would no doubt join it, were the way opened to them by the inclusion of their own particular Fancy. Is it possible for a resolution to this effect to be brought before the club at the annual meeting at Blackburn, at which show two classes with guaranteed prizes for Rats are provided? I should be glad if any fanciers who are interested would write me personally to St. Paul's Street, Worcester. Time is short if we are to do anything this year, so if we are to succeed, the sooner a move is made, the better it will be.

M. DOUGLAS,

October 31, 1901.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

In the same issue of 'Fur & Feather' as the famous first Rat Show report was the above piece by Miss Douglas. In it she advocates the inclusion of the Rat Fancy within the Mouse Fancy. Harsh words against Rat Fanciers can be found in Walter Maxey's show critique of 28/11/01 and equally harsh words from the Bristol Fanciers Committee against the Mouse Fancy. (Above and Below Right).

EAST HAM SHOW.

The Stratford and East London Fanciers' Society held their fourteenth annual show on December 12th and 13th. Previous shows have always been held at Stratford, and open to all comers, on this occasion, the show was confined to members and fanciers within a twelve miles radius of Stratford. The Public Hall was none too large for the entries, but all exhibits were well staged, and Messrs. Hinkins and Mason, the hon. secretaries, had everything in order. Mr. A. E. Enfield judged Rabbits, Cats, and Cage Birds, and Mr. Maxey Mice.

penden. RATS, SELF OR NEARLY SELF. 13: 1, sp 2nd best Rat, Vale, large white, might be smoother in coat; 2, sp 4th best Rat, Miss Douglas, black, of good colour, rather timid, a youngster; 3 Pows, nice white, falls size to 1st; 4 Miss Douglas, nice white, lovely colour, rather small; r Miss Douglas, neat black; vic Richardson, white, neat, but small; he Master R. Vale; he J. F. Vale; 825 Richardson, nice grey, wrong class; absent, 624, 631, 635. A.O.V., 14: 1, sp best Rat, Miss Douglas, lovely black-and-white even-mark, a real gem, markings almost perfection; 2, sp 3rd best Rat, Hall, black-and-white even-mark, really nice specimen; 3 Miss Douglas, pretty little grey-and-white even, quite a baby; 4 Pows, nice black-white even-mark; r Richardson; vic J. F. Vale, Miss Langford, Hierons; absent, 642, 645, 647, 648.

December 26, 1901.

This, the seventh annual event, was held in conjunction with the Blackburn and District Fanciers' Society's show. Entries totalled 247 in 21 classes, a result which is very poor support indeed, and it was surprising that N.M.C. members did not respond more freely, considering the grand array of special prizes and cups that were offered for competition, to say nothing of the good classification provided. N.M.C. members must, therefore, not be surprised to see the classification cut down somewhat at the next annual show. Mr. J. C. Mackintosh won the Woodiwiss £10 10s. challenge bowl, also the Lees' £6 6s. Breeders' challenge cup, with a grandly marked cinnamon-and-white brook, a very popular win. Well done, Scotland! Mr. Wm. Cocking, of Morecambe, secured the new £8 8s. silver cup with a lovely, rich-coloured fawn, the best we have seen for some time, quickly claimed at catalogue price, 10s., and honestly worth £5. The Blackburn fanciers are a very warm-hearted and enthusiastic body of fanciers, and did all in their power to make the show a success. The weather, however, was against them, rain being much in evidence nearly the whole of the time the show was open. This, we are afraid, made the gate a very bad one. Mr. Maxey judged, and supplies our notes.

RATS.—If Rat exhibitors wish their Fancy to make headway they must send their Rats out in suitable show cages, so that they can be easily got at by the judge, and seen by the public. Several good Rats were shown in bird cages, and could not be seen or got at. Exhibitors will also do well to send out very tame specimens, that will not object to being handled, and keep those at home that are liable to bite. RATS, s. OR NEARLY SELF, 10: 1, 2, r, s. Miss Douglas; 1st lovely large white, shown in grand form; 2nd black, with white feet; r baby black, good colour, white patch under; 3 Mrs. May, lovely large white, in an unsuitable cage; 4 Vale, large black, in bad cage; vic Vale; he Pows, lovely white, tame it, it will go higher; c Bould; pen 1 Miss Hastings, Rat could not be seen at all, so was not judged. A.O.C., 13: 1, sp for best Rat Miss Douglas, lovely large black and white even, a topper; 2 Bould, another really nice even marked, very little difference between 1st and 2nd; 3 Vale, large grey, cheap at 5s.; 4 Bould, nice black-and-white, even mark; r Miss Douglas; vic Pows; he Hall; c Miss Douglas; absent, 4 and 7, Miss Douglas; 8, Miss Langford; 11, Vale. Blackburn Members' classes: Mice, Selsa, 4: 1, 3, r Major; 2 Simpson. A.O.V., 2: 1 Simpson; 2 Major.

November 28, 1901.

BRISTOL SHOW.

Held Nov. 20th and 21st. Mr. Geo. Trickett judged Rabbits, Cavies, and Cats, and Mr. G. E. Russell Cage Birds.

The committee of this important Western event chose the Victoria Rooms for the rendezvous for this year's fixture. Owing, no doubt, to the clashing of so many shows this year's fixture of the Bristol F.A. was, in comparison with previous years, a failure, as far as our sections are concerned. This, as far as the schedule is concerned, is unaccountable, as the specials, especially for Cage Birds, comprised some of the best, if not the best, offered this year. Many classes were cancelled, and some were amalgamated, so that competition for the various challenge cups might not resolve itself into a farce. We think the committee is somewhat to blame in adopting a parsimonious policy in relation to advertising this show. It is no doubt an admirable inducement to issue an attractive schedule, but if the multitude of exhibitors know little about it, the advantages of an extended classification, liberal prizes, and a grand lot of specials is lost. This must have contributed largely to the meagre support extended to such a liberal feast, and during such a busy show season it is an absolute necessity to do everything possible to bring shows well before those who so largely contribute to their success.

The management, as usual, was everything to be desired, the secretaries of the various sections each doing well, whilst Mr. Grice had all the general arrangements in capital order. All the Mice classes were cancelled, and despite the fact that the event clashed with Wolverhampton and the Mouse Club show, the support extended to committees of shows by exhibitors of the Long-tails does not augur well for the future. Mice classes must yield a profit to claim a permanency in our schedules, and unless they do, we fear the future for Mouse exhibitors is a gloomy one. It, however, depends entirely upon those who engineer the section, and on these the responsibility lays.

FANCY RATS FOR EXHIBITION.

At the annual meeting of the National Mouse Club held at Blackburn, in November, it was resolved "That the hon. sec. when writing for Mouse classes to the various shows, should try and get a couple of Rat classes provided, and, if these failed, to increase the classification, and that any specials collected by the hon. sec. for these classes should be confined to the members of the N.M.C." The future of the Fancy Rat is thus secured if only fanciers would rally up, and do their level best to ensure good classes by sending as many Rats as possible to all shows which provide Rat classes. We want, however, more than this. Fanciers will note that most, if not all, of the Rat specials will in future be confined to members of the N.M.C. This being the case, it is, of course, to the interest of Rat fanciers to join the club at once, and send their names and subscriptions (3s. 6d. per annum) to the hon. sec., Mr. W. Maxey, 16, James Place, North Street, Poplar, E., at the earliest possible date, stating, at the same time, that they join as Rat fanciers. By this means, too, a strong representation of the Fancy will be gained, and we may reasonably hope that increased benefits will be secured. It is a far cry to Aucterarder, N.B., where the next show, giving Rat classes, will be held, but I hope that a good many Southern as well as Northern fanciers will send exhibits.

M. DOUGLAS.

January 16, 1902.

Remember the black beetles, and be sure to tell cook to well sprinkle the floor near the fire-place last thing at night with KEATING'S POWDER, the unrivalled killer of Fleas, Beetles, Moths; also Nits in children's heads. Harmless to animals. Sold only in tins, 3d., 6d., and 1s. Filled tin bellows ready for use, 9d.

(5)

FANCY RATS FOR EXHIBITION.

I should be pleased if Mr. Maxey would give us a few points on Rats, so that we may know how to buy them for stock and exhibition. I know two or three dealers in Nottingham that sell for profit only, so, if we learn a few points we should know when we were buying a good or a bad one.

J. HARSTON.

April 18, 1902.

FANCY RATS FOR EXHIBITION.

I was pleased to see Mr. Maxey's letter last week, and not less pleased to see Mr. Harston's enquiry to-day. It is less than a year since I first wrote Mr. Maxey on the subject of getting Rats taken up, and catered for by the N.M.C. He responded most kindly, and, thanks to the interest which he took in the new venture, the infant Fancy began to take shape, and prosper. So far, it is quite true I have been trying almost single handed to work the thing up, and while I am more than willing to do all in my power, it is, I think, obvious that I cannot do everything myself. I shall be exceedingly glad if other fanciers will lend a hand, not only in providing specials, or guaranteeing classes,—though both these would be valuable ways of helping—but by joining the N.M.C. themselves, and getting their friends to do likewise; also by coming forward with plenty of exhibits when the show season again comes round. In the short time we have been at work, I have seen enough to make me feel sure that the Rat Fancy has life in it, and that a little interest shown, and exertion made by Rat fanciers, will establish our position, and bring Rats to the front, to stay. Can we not get a cup for competition?

M. DOUGLAS.

St. Paul's Street, Worcester.

In answer to Mr. Harston's query, I have pleasure in giving a few notes as to what I think constitutes an exhibition specimen. In whites, the Rats should be of good size, nice shape; not a fat, podgy specimen, but nice long slim body. The ears should be of a nice tulip shape, not too small, and should be free from wrinkles. Tail long, in proportion to the length of the body; it should be thick at the set-on, or root, taper to a fine point, and be free from knots or kinks. Head similar in shape to a peg-top, and the eyes should be large, and hold in appearance. Whites are usually of a creamy hue, the whitest coated specimens being the most valuable. These remarks as to size, shape, etc., apply to all varieties. Self blacks have usually a bronze tinge, and the deeper the colour is, the greater absence of the bronze hue, which enhances the value of the specimen. In selfs, the tail should be the same colour as the body, pied tails being a bad fault. The feet should also be the same colour as the body. In broken, or even-marked specimens, those which are well broken in colour, with patches nicely placed would be the ones to select for exhibition. Even marks are of various kinds, the usual markings are a coloured head and hindquarters, with a streak of colour running down the centre of the back. Those with the prettiest, and most even marks would be the best to purchase. There are other varieties than these mentioned. When purchasing, colour, shape, and size are the principal points to be taken into consideration.

W. MAXEY.

April 15, 1902

SNUFFLES

IN RABBITS.

Price 1s.

DR. NICHOLS' SNUFFLE POWDER

"Worth its weight in gold, and don't intend to be without it."

ALFRED KEEBLE.

"Wishing your remedies were known to all fanciers; they are marvellous and rapid in curing the very worst cases of snuffles and sore eyes without any pain, and easily administered."

J. E. SMITH.

"I am pleased to say your Snuffle Powder has completely cured my Belgian Doe. Thanking you very much."

ARTHUR CHADWICK.

DR. NICHOLS'

SNUFFLE CURE APPARATUS.

The best results can be obtained by this instrument, as it enables the SNUFFLE POWDER to be blown right up the nostrils without any difficulty or loss, and places the remedy in close contact with the disease.

Price 1s. 6d.

DR. NICHOLS'

SORE EYE CURE

FOR

RABBITS, CATS, &C.

With instrument, 1s.

"The Sore Eye Cure I had from you did the Rabbit a great amount of good. It was a long-standing case."

E. J. W. MATTHEWS.

DR. NICHOLS' ANTISEPTIC EMULSION.

The IDEAL CURE for BRONCHIAL and LUNG AFFECTIONS.

Post free 2s. 6d.

Sample bottle sent for 7d.

FANCY RATS.

Read the following testimonial from the largest Fancy Rat breeder in the country!—

"I find the Antiseptic Emulsion a most valuable remedy for all forms of cold in Fancy Rats. It has effected numerous cures among my stock, and I should be sorry to be without a supply."

"M. DOUGLAS, M.N.M.C."

Dr. NICHOLS has for some considerable time been studying the Ailments, Treatment, and Diet of Fancy Rats, and will be pleased to give advice re the treatment and care of these interesting animals. Consulting fee, 1/-.

The ANTISEPTIC EMULSION is a grand remedy for them, and is no trouble to administer, as they drink it readily, and thrive well on it, rapidly increasing in weight and substance, lessened coughing and chattering, and decided improvement in general condition.

DR. NICHOLS,

Horsley Fields,

WOLVERHAMPTON.

January 25, 1902.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

As well as extolling the virtues of Fancy Rats, Mary Douglas also recommended Dr. Nichol's famous Antiseptic Emulsion. (Above).

NATIONAL MOUSE CLUB.

Annual meeting held at Cheltenham Nov. 20th. Present, Mr. A. Selby Thomas in the chair, Miss M. Y. Newall, Miss M. Douglas, Miss K. Hay, Miss W. K. Whshaw, Messrs. Wm. Hall, J. Pitchford, J. Wilton Steer, J. F. Vale, W. G. Richards, and the hon. secretary, Mr. W. Maxey. Miss Douglas then spoke as to the Rat Fancy, and thanked all those who had helped to bring it to the front. The secretary then read the copy of address that had been sent to His Majesty King Edward, and the copy of the reply received from the Home Secretary in acknowledgment of same. The secretary also brought forward the copy of the letter of condolence sent to Miss Grimston, on the loss of her mother. The chairman then called upon the hon. secretary to read the copy of amended rules and standards. These were unanimously agreed to by those present. After a little discussion Mr. Steer proposed, and Mr. Pitchford seconded, that standards be drawn up for Cinnamon, carried. Mr. Maxey brought forward the proposal to add 1s. to the usual prize money at all shows held under club patronage, at same time pointing out that in 1901 there were about 26 shows held under the club's patronage; these shows gave about 197 classes, and had a 1s. been added to every class, this would have amounted to £9 17s. It was not possible for the club to do this, as the balance in hand would be quickly exhausted, and the members would not benefit by the extra 1s. being given. It was unanimously decided by those present that the extra 1s. be not given. Mr. Maxey then mentioned that Miss Grimston had written to say that she could not act as scrutineer for next election. Mr. A. Selby Thomas proposed, Mr. Steer seconded that Miss Grimston be asked to reconsider her decision not to act as scrutineer; carried unanimously. Mr. Maxey then read a letter from Mr. Chorley, stating he was sorry he could not attend the meeting, but business prevented him doing so; he would, however, like the following proposition placed before the meeting: That in future two judges be engaged to judge the Club Show, one to take section 1, and the other to take section 2, or one to take even numbers, the other to take the odd ones. The proposition received no support from those present, no seconder being forthcoming the matter dropped. Mr. Thomas then proposed a very hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Maxey, for his untiring labour and energy in connection with the N.M.C. Mr. Steer seconded in a very interesting speech for the welfare of the Club. Mr. Maxey, in reply, thanked Mr. Thomas and Mr. Steer for their kind remarks, and stated that whilst he was secretary he would continue to do all in his power to further the interests of the Club and its members. Mr. Steer then mentioned that having won one of the cups presented to the show by himself, he would give another cup to winner of 2nd highest number of points. Points to count in both Rats and Mice. Mr. Maxey then mentioned there was still some cash owing for the coronation cup. Mr. Steer at once promised 2s., Mr. A. S. Thomas 2s., Miss Newall 2s., Miss Hay 2s., Mr. Hall 2s., Mr. Pitchford 2s., Mr. Vale 1s. This cleared off the deficit, paying expenses, carriage, etc., of sample cups. It was then proposed by Mr. Steer, seconded by Mr. Pitchford, that the secretary take £1 from the Club funds towards his expenses in discharging secretarial duties at Club Show, carried by all present. A hearty vote of thanks to the Cheltenham Society, and to Mr. A. S. Thomas for presiding, brought the meeting to a close.

CORONATION CUP.

Amount previously acknowledged, £7 19s., Miss Kate Hay 1s., Mr. C. E. Ashton 1s. 6d., amount promised at Club Show, 13s., total £8 14s. 6d.

W. MAXEY, Hon. Sec.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

Just over a year after the first Rat Show it becomes apparent from the 1902 N.M.C. A.G.M. that the Rat Fancy was growing in strength under the aegis of the Mouse Fancy. (Above). The anonymous(e) columnist of long-tail notes, "Strebor" is seen to advise the further taming of Rats for exhibition. (Below Right). By 1904, Mary Douglas had a position on the N.M.C. Committee, from which she was later to aspire to even greater heights. (Above Right).

NATIONAL MOUSE CLUB ELECTION.

I beg to report the following result:—

President.—Mr. S. Woodiwiss, 57.

Committee.—Area 1, Messrs. H. Simpson (64), J. Broxup (57). 2, Miss H. Douglas (62), J. Pitchford (58). 3, Simonds (59), Hawkins (58). 4, Newall (57), Richards (37). 5, Steer (50), Slaughter (42). 6, Hally (62), Anderson (58).

Hon. Secretary and Treasurer.—Messrs. Maxey (58), Thomas (15).

Judges.—Area 1, Messrs. Mason (64), Simpson (54). 2, Pitchford (61), Reynolds (54). 3, Ashton (60), Simonds (51). 4, Thomas (43), Wishaw (29). 5, Maxey (60), Steer (55). 6, Hally (64), Anderson 57.

Vice-Presidents.—Messrs. Mason (66), Reynolds (63), Vickery, Singleton (62), Middleton (55), Wishaw (60), Hawkins (59), Grimston (60), Hay (64), McIsaac (61), Mackintosh (63).

Judge for Club Show, 1904.—Mr. Maxey, 60; against, 10.

74 papers received.

Club Show, 1904.—Cheltenham, 29; Nottingham, 24; Cambridge, 20.

1. Proposition: That the United Kingdom be divided into districts or areas for the purposes of electing officers. For, 56; against, 13.

2. Proposition: That on and after 1st Jan., 1905, exhibits at all shows held under N.M.C. rules or patronage must be shown in "Maxey" pattern show cages. For, 41; against, 29.

3. Proposition: That all cages be uniformly coloured (Selling, Novice, and Rat classes excepted). For, 48; against, 20.

4. Proposition: The colours shall be: For green and red, 31; for black and grey, 14; for black and blue, 4.

5. Proposition: That when two or more members of one family, or fanciers in partnership, are members, subscription be reduced to 2s. 6d. per member. For, 50; against, 23.

6. Proposition: That the secretary order badges, to be sold to members. For, 53; against, 15.

7. Proposition: That all shows giving 10 or more classes, a silver and a bronze medal be given. For, 71; against, 0.

8. Proposition: That members of the National Mouse Club only shall be allowed to compete for specials, etc., at shows when held under the rules and patronage of the N.M.C. For, 32; against, 40.

9. Proposition: That Mr. W. J. Sloman be allowed to again become a member. For, 28; against, 38.

I also received the following letter with reference to the election:

August 30th, 1904.

Dear Sir,—I hope you, as scrutineer of the votes on the N.M.C. election this year, will seal the papers and affix your stamp on them after—

September 9, 1904.

THE MOUSERY.

BY STREBOR.

A Rat fancier writes:—"I think the reason why some judges have trouble with Rats at shows is that they do not know how to handle them. The best way is to get them by the tail—not too near the tip or the skin may strip—lift them out and at once put them to stand on the arm, the table, or the knee—still, of course, holding the tail. In this way they can be seen well and there is scarcely one chance in a hundred either of being bitten or losing the Rat. It is well to remember that a Rat will frequently give a nip to fingers poked into his bedding. If it sits up in a corner facing one it is best to move it with a pencil or something, so that its tail can be grasped from behind; sitting up in a corner is the Rat's sparring attitude. By following these suggestions no difficulty will be found in handling Rats much wilder than are likely to be seen at any show." These few hints should be welcomed by our poor judges who might, unthinkingly, be engaged to judge them. I have a vivid recollection of nerve-wrecking experience whilst judging Rats myself a year or so ago. Whilst a well known judge told me only a few days ago that he will not attempt to handle them in future—he also has "had some." I think Rat fanciers should begin with a reformation at home, and give regular daily lessons in good behaviour and etiquette, otherwise the best will not always win.

STRATFORD SHOW.

August 5, 1904.

(7)

This show was held at the temporary Workman's Hall on Thursday, July 21st, and was a great success in every respect. Entries totalled 226 in 15 classes, and the quality was quite up to the average all round. The secretaries, Messrs. Mason and Glaugter, are to be congratulated on the splendid array of specials got together, and we trust this show may become an annual fixture. Several well-known exhibitors visited the show, including Mr., Mrs., and Miss Webb, Mr. and Mrs. Parkes, Mrs. Steer, Messrs. Riddle, Fielder, Botting, Thompson, Birley, junr., Cottingham, Copeland, Burgess, Smith, Hamlin, Marks, etc. Mr. Maxey acted as steward. I am indebted to his assistance all through a long day's work. Mr. J. Wilton Steer judged and supplies our notes.

RATS. These came up well, numbering 43 in three classes. I am pleased to report a great improvement in condition since I last judged Rats at Guilford, cankered ears, and bad tails were few and far between; unfortunately they are still very difficult to handle, especially the agouti, and I am sorry to say that Mr. Maxey received a very nasty bite on his thumb while acting as steward for me. Judges will be compelled to pass specimens unless they can be handled with safety. Several Rats jumped clean out of their cages directly the door was opened—we had quite an exciting time. **SELF, A.C., 13:** 1, sp, sp best self, 3, ex 4, r Douglas and Vale, the winner a rather small black, but by far the best colour I have yet seen; 3rd a nice white, tip-top form, lovely coat, grand eye, the other two a white and a black in order named; 2, hc, c Hawkins, the winner a beautiful white, short close coat, blazing eye, in the usual perfect condition from this stud; 4 Miss Forbes, with a nice white, rather small; vhc, sp Wickenden; pens 161 to 181c absent. **EVEN-MARKED, A.C., 15:** 1, sp Pease Cup, bronze medal for best Rat in show, vhc, sp Douglas and Vale, a black, with a beautifully defined stripe, quite clear, good hood, fine condition, grand shape; 2, 3, 4 Cottingham, the former another black, stripe a little broad, but whole good hood, nice form; 3rd agouti, stripe just a wee bit broken near tail; 4th black, level stripe; ex 4 Nale, agouti, stripe broken, grand colour, pity stripe fails; r, hc, c Hawkins. **A.O.V., 16:** 1, sp, sp, Loyal cup for 2nd best Rat in show, 3, 4, r Hawkins, the winner a grand agouti, in splendid form, and can't be jump, the other three all agoutis of a nice type, but not equal to richness of the winner; ex 4 Fielder, another good agouti, but oh, so wild! vhc, sp Miss Forbes; hc, c Douglas and Vale; pen 190, Nale, a white, wrong class.

HAS ENTIRELY GONE

R.F. of Weybridge, writes:—"I bought a box yesterday, and after I had taken the second two I felt better than I had done for over four years. The pain in my back has entirely gone."

Holdroyd's Gravel Pills are a positive cure for Gravel, and Pains in the Back, Dropsy, Diseases of the Kidneys, Gout, Sciatica. If not satisfied, money returned. 1s. 1/6d., all chemists. Post free, 12 stamps.—HOLDROYD'S MEDICAL HALL, Clockheaton, Yorks.

THE RABBIT'S CUTE ANSWER.



TEACHER: "Now, hands up those who know what these figures stand for."

BRIGHT SCHOLAR: "Please, teacher, 1s. 3d. stands for the price of a box of Wilson's Snuffle Cure, which cleanses the blood and drives the disease from the system."—**ALSO 2s. 4d., 4s. 6d., 10s. 6d., 21s. TINS, POST FREE. W. J. WILSON & CO., RABBIT SPECIALISTS, ASHFORD, MIDDLESEX. WRITE FOR SOME TO-DAY.**

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

The N.M.C held many shows in the Workman's Hall in Stratford (East London), in fact their first ever show was staged there in 1897. Unfortunately, as can be seen in the report of 5/8/04 (Left), Rats were still far from tame, as Mr. J. Wilton-Steer notes with his characteristic dry wit.

There is no mention of wildness in the Malvern Show report of 10/2/05 (Below). It is highly likely that Miss Douglas found this venue for the Club, as she was living in Worcestershire at the time. Again, Miss Douglas gets Best In Show for her Rat.

MALVERN SHOW.

February 10, 1905.

Held January 19th. A splendid hall for a show, plenty of light, and good staging, held under the National Mouse Club rules, and a splendid entry in both Rats and Mice, totalling 116 entries. Miss Douglas and Mr. Vale acted as stewards, and did their part right well. Exhibits were well fed, and plenty of bedding put back after judging. Our Fancy looks like becoming popular out Malvern way, and our section was quite an interesting show in itself. Mr. Jack Pitchford judged.

MICE. BLACK, BLUE, OR CHOCOLATE, 11: 1, sp blue, grand level colour, nice shape, eye, and condition; 2 Slaughter, chocolate, nice shape and colour, bold eye, grand condition; 3rd Black, looks like Cannock winner, bit rough in coat; 4 Richards, a grand coloured chocolate, nice eye, very rough in coat; vhc Johnson; hc Taylor; c Riddle; a grand class for quality. **SELF, A.O.C., 13:** 1, sp Maynard, grand coloured fawn, capital condition, bold eye and shape; 2 Miss K. Hay, silver, nice size and colour, bit too fat; 3 Riddle, lovely white, nice eye and shape; 4 Slaughter, fawn, nice eye and shape, not so good as winner for colour; plenty of 1st prize winners in this class; vhc Simmonds, Taylor; hc Singleton; c Miss K. Hay; Miss E. Firth, wrong class. **DUTCH OR EVEN-MARKED, 11:** 1, sp Tomlinson, nice cobby Dutch, nice condition and undercut, rather pale in colour under; 2 Richards, nice Dutch, grand checks, and lovely condition; 3 Hackwood, even marked, five-patched, even, old style, good colour, not the best of condition; 4 Selby-Thomas, black-and-white Dutch-marked, nice, lovely cheeks, saddle not quite straight, looked starred; vhc Fowler, Slaughter; hc Riddle; c Shaw. **BROKEN OR VARIEGATED:** 1, sp best in show, Richards, nice nine-patched black-and-white, patches nicely placed, lovely condition, looks like the Cheltenham winner; 2 Johnson, seven-patched, black-and-white patches, well placed, wants more colour; 3 Hackwood, nice nine-patched agouti-and-white, wants nose markings, and then would be a certain front ranker; hc Tomlinson; broken breeders had better look up, or we shall be left behind other varieties. **A.O.V., 9:** 1, sp, 2, 4 Singleton, sabb'e leading lovely shape, colour, and condition; 2nd agouti, grand colour, nice and racy, good ears and shape; 4th another agouti, splendid condition, a team to be proud of; 3 Perrin, tri-colour, nice shade, good bold eye, splendid condition; vhc Plum, vhc, hc Riddle; c Heath. **A.V., 10 WEEKS.** 1, sp Hamblin, silver, nice shade and condition; 2 Slaughter, grand fawn, should make up well; 3 Shaw, nice baby Dutch, nice colour and cheeks, ought to make a good one; 4th a nice little black, good colour; vhc Singleton, Slaughter; hc, c Riddle.

RATS. SELF: 1, sp best in show, Douglas and Vale, black, good eye and condition, steady; 2 Hawkins, lovely white, nice shape and eye, bit wild; 3 Vale, white, nice exhibit, good colour and eye; 4 Smith, white, good eye and condition; vhc Forbes; vhc, hc, c Douglas and Vale. **EVEN:** 1 Hawkins, black-and-white, nice colour, eye, and condition; 2, 3 Cottingham, agouti-and-white, even, bit wild, nice colour; 3rd black-and-white, even, nice stripe, looks like the old one, Mr. C., getting on; 4 Douglas and Vale, black-and-white, nice shape and stripe; vhc Vale. **A.O.V., 16:** 1 Hawkins, agouti, grand colour,

THE RAT FANCY.

BY M. DOUGLAS.

How I became a Rat fancier is really more than I can say: "I 'spects I grewed." Anyway, in my juvenile days—a good many years ago now—we lived in the country, and at the further side of a five-acre field was a square pool, the home of sundry coarse fish, and likewise a flourishing colony of water-voles—water-rats we called them. In attempting to catch the former I naturally made acquaintance with the latter, and one fine morning saw a beautiful doe with a fine youngster in her mouth swimming leisurely close past me. Here was a chance! Quick as thought I grabbed the doe, who, without loss of time, dropped the youngster, and drove her teeth into my finger—I've got the mark now. Rather startled, I loosed her, but she held on for all she was worth, so I thought better of it, and held on too, took her home, and deposited her, safely, as I innocently thought, in a hamper, and indulged in rosy visions of taming her. But next morning my "rat" was gone and so ended my first attempt at Rat fancying. After that I caught a good many water voles, but never succeeded in taming one.

Years passed; I came to Worcester, and more years passed. I kept up a love for Rats but never kept any until one day a friend gave me two black-and-whites. The first two died—killed by kindness, I think—but once started I got some more, and soon had more youngsters than I knew what to do with. Then I advertised some, and thus got into communication with other Rat keepers. Very soon someone mooted the question, "Why should we not start a Rat Club and get classes at shows?" Probably we should have done so, but about this time I read of the National Mouse Club, and found the address of its former secretary, Mr. Welburn. Mice and Rats, we reflected, were first cousins—perhaps the N.M.C. would find a corner for Rat fanciers. So before founding a club of our own, we wrote to Mr. Welburn, who referred us on to Mr. Maxey, and he, as usual, entered warmly into the interests of others. Aylesbury Show (1904) was coming on; he made arrangements with the secretary to include a Rat class. This filled well, and Mr. Maxey's next act of kindness was to promote our interests at the club show, held that year at Burnley. It was decided that Rat fanciers should be admitted to membership and other advantages of the club. Who, after this, will say that the N.M.C. does not know how to keep up to the times?

At that date we had but few varieties, and with the exception of albinos, pink-eyed whites, very few specimens came up to the present standard. Beside the albinos we had, I think, only Irish blacks and black-and-whites, more or less even marked.

Agoutis came next. A friend in the North sent me three young *Mus Decumanus*—English brown Rats—which he had taken at an early age from the nest, and fostered onto a tame doe. These became fairly tame, though never tame enough for the show bench, but their offspring did better. They became perfectly tame and gentle, their coats greatly improved, and my original three were the ancestors of many, if not all, of the agoutis which now appear on the show bench. A cross with white produced, in due course, agouti-and-white even-marks, while a more complicated cross with Irish blacks resulted in the fancy bred blacks, now fairly abundant. Thus far we went, and then for some time, in spite of many attempts, no further varieties were evolved. Now, however, the ball is set rolling again, and two or three new colours seem to be in course of evolution.

Judging by shape and build, eyes, ears, tail, and character, all the above named varieties appear to belong to the family *Decumanus*. *Decumanus*, however, has a cousin, *Mus Rattus*—the old English black Rat, and the most beautiful member of the Rat tribe. *Rattus* was commonly supposed to have been driven out altogether from these Islands by the brown Rat, but he still abounds in other parts of the world, and a little research revealed the fact that, though very rare, he still exists in England. It was reported that he had found a home in the Zoo, and after sundry ineffectual attempts to obtain specimens elsewhere, thither I repaired. A cage of fine black Rats, duly labelled as old English black Rats, was in evidence. I was again assured that there were a good many in the gardens, and having made arrangements to obtain a specimen, I departed. One reached me in due course, and a few days later presented me with a fine litter of youngsters as black as herself. These I loved and cherished, and prided myself on until a year or so later I received from a correspondent in another part of the country a pair of real genuine *Rattus*. Then, lo, and behold, I found that my "Zoo" Rats—handsome fellows, the size and build of *Decumanus*, but with dense black coats, the same colour all over—were not *Rattus* at all. The genuine article was not more than two-thirds the size, had much larger eyes and ears, while the tail was finer, and

June 2, 1905.

half as long again, the fur was longer, black on the upper parts of the body, and dark ash grey below, and, as for agility, *Decumanus* was not to be named on the same day with the new comers. Could one only show them, these Rats would put everything else into the shade—but, oh dear! what would our judges say? They are gentle enough, but, oh! so shy and frightened!

Since that time a good many specimens of *Mus Rattus*, some English and some foreign, have come into my hands. That *Rattus* is by no means extinct in this country is well ascertained, as colonies are now known to exist in various parts of England, but so far attempts to domesticate these Rats have met with but little success. They are terribly shy breeders in captivity, and even if one does get a litter the youngsters seem as shy and frightened as their parents. Still there is hope, and now that the existence of *Rattus* as a British quadruped is well ascertained, other fanciers may be encouraged to try their luck. Someone surely will succeed—and the attempt is well worth the trouble, for whatever fancy varieties we may evolve, I doubt if in grace and beauty any of them will excel, or even come near, the old English Black Rat. Let us persevere, and hope for success ere long.

RAMBLES IN RATLAND.

BY M. DOUGLAS.

Worcester Show has come and gone. There was a very fair representative entry of Rats, including a few really fine specimens. Most of the exhibits, however, were small, and some in the adult classes might, I should say, have been included in the young class. Three months seems rather a high age limit, but a lower one is evidently not suitable for Rats, as on several occasions, small youngsters have died, probably of fright or over-strain, at shows. We have to remember that Rats do not mature as early as Mice, and, therefore, that the age limit suitable for the latter is too low for the former.

A great deal of interest was excited by both the Rats and Mice at Worcester, where neither have ever before been exhibited.

The belated N.M.C. election has taken place, and the results have been announced. I should like to take this opportunity of thanking my club mates for the honour they have done me in electing me to office. Fifty-three members voted for a second judge at club shows, and Rat fanciers especially will benefit by this alteration, inasmuch as the Rat classes follow the Mouse classes, and hitherto have been judged in a bad light by a fagged out judge. Under the new arrangement, this drawback will disappear, and it would be a graceful act on the part of Rat fanciers if each and all would send a small subscription to the fund started some time ago, to meet the extra expense. I shall be very pleased to receive any donations for this purpose. Please note that my address now and for the future is Vigornian Rattery, Worcester.

The novice cup fund for Rats is also hanging fire sadly. The club show is only about six weeks off, and we have not half enough to buy a cup. Will not our Mouse-fancying club-mates who have a cup given outright for their novices, help us to buy ours? We should be grateful. I shall be glad to receive a few donations for this fund.

Is anyone troubled by a cold or draughty Rattery? A simple cure is to nail thin laths on the walls and roof, and to these, tack thick brown paper so as to leave an air space between wall and paper. This is an inexpensive and very effectual remedy. I write from practical experience.

Many men—many manners, also many forms of Rattery. An indoor one is undoubtedly preferable, as Rats cannot stand damp or draughts. If an outdoor Rattery is adopted, it must be damp proof, free from draughts, and at the same time, properly ventilated, or the stock will suffer from asthma and other complaints. A moderate degree of cold is not injurious provided that the Rats are supplied with plenty of dry straw, hay, or shavings for their nests. Care must be taken to change the bedding whenever the slightest dampness is perceptible, or sore ears will result. Rats being larger than Mice, will require a change of bedding more frequently than is needed by the smaller long-tails.

November 24, 1905.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

Despite her strange and rather austere features, (see page 12), Mary Douglas had a sense of humour which was noticeable in her articles, such as "The Rat Fancy" 2/6/05 (Far right), in which she says of herself; "I 'spects I grewed". Also her remarks on Judges being "fagged out" in her "Rambles in Ratland" 24/11/05 (Near right). Although unintentional, the advertisement below was badly placed to say the least.

RATS

EXTERMINATED BY DANYSZ VIRUS

DISCOVERED AND PREPARED BY

DR. DANYSZ, OF THE PASTEUR INSTITUTE, PARIS.

When affected by the Virus the Vermin leave their usual haunts and die in the open. The remedy is harmless to other animals and human beings and may be used everywhere with absolute safety.

Tubes 2/6 each; 3 Tubes 5/-

Post Free with full Particulars and Testimonials from

DANYSZ VIRUS Ltd.,

62, Leadenhall Street, London, E.C.

PLEASE MENTION THIS PAPER.

BY M. DOUGLAS.

January 12, 1906.

In considering the question of cages, I am supposing that "strict attention to business" is the order of the day, and this being the case, the only materials needed for a supply of cages are some fairly strong boxes, which can easily be obtained from the grocer's, and a few feet of wire netting. For ordinary living cages, after various experiments, I have come to the conclusion that about 22 to 24 inches long, 16 to 20 inches wide, and about 15 inches high, is a convenient size—a Quaker oats' box is of fair average dimensions, and this should be fitted with a nest box, some perches, a couple of doors, and front either of wire netting or steel wire, and a strip of wood nailed along the bottom to prevent sawdust, etc., from falling out. The nest box is an important item. It should be of good size; in fact, may occupy the whole of one end of the cage. For an ordinary living cage I prefer to have it raised above the floor, so as not to encroach on the space for exercise. It should not be less than six inches deep, and nine or ten inches across, and should be fixed so as to leave sufficient space—say three inches—between the top of the nest box and the roof of the cage, so as to allow of ventilation, and also for the Rats to get in and out—they seem to prefer this method of ingress and egress. A hole may also be cut in the front of the nest box as an additional convenience, and a step or platform, two or three inches wide, should project from the bottom of the nest box, and extend from back to front of the cage. There is no need to provide any kind of ladder—to a raised nest so contrived; the wire front meets every requirement in this respect.

If, however, the cage is to be used for breeding, or for a sick or weakly Rat, it is better to sacrifice some of the run, and fix the nest box on the floor, then there is no fear of youngsters falling out, or of invalids being unable to get up and down, as sometimes happens when raised nests are used.

Perches.—Plenty of them seem to be much appreciated. These should be flat, say one-and-a-half or two inches wide, and should run both lengthways and from back to front. This plan gives a good deal of extra scope for exercise, but care should be taken not to fix any of the long perches so near to the front wires, as to prevent the Rats from climbing up and down. In a cage of the size I have suggested, three or four good perches suffice—say two long ones near the top, and one or two crossing the cage lower down. If the perches are too close together, it is often difficult to get at the Rats when one wants to catch them; if fixed too near the floor they come in the way of cleaning. Two good sized doors should be provided, one to communicate with the nest, should be cut in the top of the cage, if the nest is raised, or in the end if the nest is on the floor. The other door, for communicating with the run is useful for cleaning, feeding, etc. It should be large enough to admit the hand and arm conveniently, and allow one to pass in food, vessels, etc., and should open as near the floor as possible. A raised door is the cause of a good deal of useless trouble, both in feeding and cleaning. I have used hinged doors, fastening with a button or small hook and staple, also sliding doors running in slots. Either serves the purpose, but if the latter be adopted, the slide should be considerably larger than the doorway, and should fit fairly close in the slots, or the Rats soon learn to push it back.

Fronts of steel wire, made to measure, can be obtained at a trifling cost, from any wire-worker. These cost a little more to begin with than wire netting, but in the long run are decidedly more economical, as one good steel wire front will outlast several cages, and can easily be transferred from one to another, also no Rat can gnaw through it. The wires should not be more than half-an-inch apart. If wire netting is used, the half-inch mesh is the proper size; this is suitable for either a breeding or ordinary cage. Young Rats just out of the nest can get through a larger mesh. Before the front is nailed on the inside of the cage should receive a good coat of lime-wash. This helps to keep the cage clean and sweet, and also shows up the colour of the Rats.

Though such a cage as I have described is suitable for most Rats, anyone intending to keep wild-caught specimens will be well advised to line his cages throughout either with zinc or with wire netting (half-inch mesh). The wire should be secured to the wood with American carpet nails or small staples, and then an efficient protection against the most vigorous gnawing. A cage of this description should always be provided with a steel wire front. For breeding purposes a cage considerably smaller than those suggested above will suffice. We have used a variety, but none has proved more satisfactory than a box about 18 or 20 inches long, 11 or 12 inches wide, and 9

inches high. One end of this is partitioned off to form a nest, the partition reaching to about four inches from the top, and being provided with a flat perch nailed on to the top of it. A hole should also be cut in the bottom of the partition for the convenience of the youngsters when old enough to run about. To provide light and air that portion of the lid which covers the run should be cut out, and fine wire netting nailed over the aperture. A good plan is to nail a thin strip of wood over the rough edges of the netting, so as to prevent the Rats from being injured by sharp points of wire.

MOUSERY NEWS AND NOTES.

FROM HERE, THERE, AND EVERYWHERE.

BY W. MAXEY.

Black-and-Tans.—I have quite recently had enquiries from several fanciers as to whether there are any real black-and-tans, as in several reports on Mouse classes they have noticed remarks as to sable or black tan, the reporter not being quite certain what variety to call them. My opinion is there are not any black-and-tans in the true sense of the word, the so-called black-and-tans being nothing more than very dark sables. Eventually black-and-tans will be evolved from these, but it will be many a long day before this comes to pass. These very dark sables are very attractive and look A1, especially if they have rich golden tan on sides and underneath, but those that have come under my notice lately, have nearly all had very cloudy or muddy tan, and this spoils an otherwise good Mouse. How are these dark sables bred? Well, every fancier has his own formula. My way is to pair blacks bred from sables to sables, selecting the richest and darkest sables to pair with the blacks. With care and judicious selection, a good strain of these very dark sables or black-and-tans could soon be founded. Proceeding a start was made with suitable and well bred stock.

Grey Agoutis.—Recently "Strebber" in his column mentioned the fact that Mr. Hackwood in his report of the Wolverhampton show stated there were several grey agoutis exhibited, and queried if this was not a mistake. Yes, it was! There was not a single grey agouti exhibited. The agoutis reported upon were golden ones, and very good ones, too. I am sure I don't know how Mr. Hackwood came to make such a mistake.

Whilst on the subject of grey agoutis, I may say there is the foundation of real good ones in the so-called silver browns, owned and bred by several well-known fanciers who breed the brown Eagle out, and there you are! Cross judiciously, and enhance the silvering, and grey agoutis are an accomplished fact. I have been experimenting with this colour, and have obtained some very passable results. Remember that, all you who have so-called silver browns, and go and do likewise! They are grey agoutis in embryo.

I was indeed truly sorry to hear of the death of Mr. G. E. Sellock's father, and I am sure both he and his brother have the sincere sympathy of the whole of the Fancy in their bereavement.

Whispers reach me that there is to be a Specialist Mouse and Rat show in Birmingham some time in March, so all you fanciers had better be getting ready for the fray. The N.M.C. cups will, I believe, be put up for competition, and there will be specialist Judges for the Rats and Mice. Further particulars will be given later.

In No. 1 of "Sports and Hobbies" for January, there is a most interesting article with illustrations of Miss M. Douglas, her Rats and Rattery. It is very interesting, and ought to entice many persons to take up Rats as a hobby.

Whilst on the subject of Rats, they are indeed an interesting and clever pet. I am much surprised that there are not more fanciers take up the hobby of Rat keeping and exhibiting, where one has not room to keep Rabbits or other larger pets. Several pairs of Rats could be kept comfortably, and as pets pure and simple they are most amusing and clever. They will run about the house like a dog, and learn all manner of tricks. Then there is the Fancy side of the question. A great many shows now provide classes for Rats, and a good Rat is always saleable at a good figure. Therefore any person who wishes to start with a hobby that is an interesting and paying one, they cannot do better than take up with Fancy Rats. Rats, too, are odourless, or if not odourless, almost free from any objectionable smell, and this is a great point in their favour, for they can be kept in a spare room in the house without their presence being detected.



**Overlooking
A Good Thing**

is what you are doing if you have neglected to come in and look over

**The SWAN
FOUNTAIN PEN**

Made of the very best material; fitted with the world's most famous gold pen, and the only perfect ink fountain pen, and the only perfect ink fountain pen, and the only perfect ink fountain pen, and the only perfect ink fountain pen. Get one on trial!

UMABIE, TODD & BARD
79 & 80, High Holborn London, W.C.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

Mary Douglas again writing under the banner of "Rambles In Ratland" goes into great detail about the housing of Fancy Rats. (Far Left).

Walter Maxey, although no Rat keeper himself, writes in glowing terms about the Pet-worthiness of Fancy Rats. He also makes mention of Mary Douglas' appearance in the January 1906 issue of "Sports and Hobbies" (Left). Although I was able to see a later issue (May 1906) wherein Rat keeping was mentioned, I was unable to obtain the issue referred to by Maxey.

BY M. DOUGLAS.

The first part of this contribution appeared some time ago, but owing to pressure on our space the concluding portion has been held over.

She had had Rats about four months when one day as she and Tom were going home from school, they saw a big poster, giving notice of a show which was to be held in the neighbouring town. They stopped to read it.

"Look, Tom," exclaimed Winnie, "there are to be classes for Rats. I wish we could send ours!" "So do I," said Tom, "why should we not? We'll ask dad about it." "That's a good idea," answered Winnie. "So we will; let's make haste home."

They ran on as fast as they could and found Mr. Jackson. "Oh dad," they exclaimed, both talking together, "there's going to be a Rat show." "What?" he said laughing. "If you both talk together I can't understand you. Suppose you tell me, Winnie."

So Winnie told her tale and Mr. Jackson promised to make enquiries when he went to market next day. Meanwhile Tom and Winnie did not know how to contain their impatience and on the following evening they went to meet their father.

"What have you found out," they shouted, as soon as they saw him. "Oh, I saw the secretary; he's a Mouse fancier it seems and doesn't keep Rats himself, but some of his friends do, so he could tell me a bit about them. There are to be three classes for Rats. I told him what sort yours are. He says the fanciers call that colour *Portul*, and you must enter them in the A.O.V. class."

"A.O.V.! what does that mean?" broke in Winnie. "Any Other Variety. There's a class for whites, that is Rats the same colour all over like whites, another for 'even marks,' black, or Agouti-and-white, with coloured head and shoulders and stripe down the back. The third class is for any other sort, so the Agoutis must go in that. He lent me one of his Mouse show cages, too, so that we could make some like it," and Mr. Jackson held up a pretty little cage enamelled green outside and red inside. "That isn't big enough, of course, for the Rats, they want a cage about nine inches square," went on Mr. Jackson.

Winnie and Tom were delighted with the pretty cage, and I'm afraid their kind father had very little peace until he set to work to make a couple of cages, like the Maxey pattern Mouse cage, which the secretary had lent him.

At last the great day came and Tom and Winnie got up very early to get their Rats ready for show. They put plenty of clean sawdust and a handful or two of hay, cut into short lengths, into each cage, so that the Rats should be warm and comfortable without being able to hide themselves, and you may be sure they did not forget a supply of corn and a raw potato for each Rat. Then they picked out two beautiful Rats with lovely ruddy brown coats, well ticked with black, stroked them till their fur shone like silk, put them into the cages and tied on the labels with the numbers of the class and the pens. The Rats had to be at the show by nine o'clock, so Mr. Jackson said that one of his men might take them in, and Winnie and Tom go later.

They got to the hall just as the Judge was finishing the Mice and was going to begin the Rats.

"Lucky again," remarked Winnie, and the two worked their way among the fanciers who stood around to a place where they could watch the judging. They saw some lovely Rats, big black fellows, with black eyes, sleek white ones with eyes like rubies, and Winnie was specially pleased with the huge silky black which took "First and special for best black in show." Then came the even marks, some black-and-white, some agouti-and-white—prettier, thought Tom, than anything he had ever seen before. This was a big class, and several of the Rats were so handsome that the Judge had some trouble in choosing the best, but at last he gave the first prize to an agouti-and-white doe which Tom particularly admired. Then came the A.O.V. class, and Tom and Winnie watched with breathless interest, and when the first prize was awarded to their big buck, and the second to their doe, they almost jumped for joy.

"I wish I could give both those Rats a first," said the Judge, "I never saw such beauties, and they're so tame and gentle." "They're ours, sir," said Winnie shyly.

"Are they really?" he answered kindly, "well, they're two beauties, and I can see you think a lot of them. Did you ever show before?" "No, sir," replied Winnie. "Well you ought to join the National Mouse Club, and then you might win one of the cups. Here's a paper that will tell you all about it," and he handed her a printed slip, which told a great many things about the National Mouse Club, and pointed out why Mouse and Rat fanciers ought to belong to it.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

Mary Douglas was known in the Fancy World as "The Children's Friend". Indeed, she was a leading light in the "Fur & Feather Young Fancier's Club", formed around 1905. Here, in "Winnie's Rats", she shows a softer side to her nature in an article which is both amusing, enjoyable and informative. Again, I was unable to trace the first part, but I think that Part 2 is perfectly adequate in itself. Note the very staid language of the children, which I can only assume was typical of upper middle class children of the times. However, it is an article which could still "stand up" today.

While Winnie and Tom were reading the paper their father came up, and was almost as pleased as they were to see that their Rats had won. They showed him the paper. "Cups, eh!" he said, "didn't know before that there was a Mouse and Rat Club, much less that there were cups to be won. Would you like to join, Winnie?" "Yes, dad, ever so much." "Well, I know you are really fond of your Rats, and it's a nice hobby for any girl or boy, so if you would like to belong to the N.M.C. I'll pay for you, and you can write the secretary as soon as you like. Now let's go and have a good look at the Rats. I might buy you a winner or two to give you a good start."

Winnie had never expected this, and she felt so full of joy she could hardly speak, but she squeezed her father's hand, and I think he understood what she meant just as well as if she had talked for an hour. "Which do you like best," he asked, when they had had a good look at all the Rats. "That big black I think, dad," she said. "Jim—let's see what's asked for him—a pound. All right. It's a good while since I gave you a present," and he went straight off to the secretary's office, and claimed the black. You can fancy how delighted Winnie was! She made up her mind to become a real good fancier, and the very next day she wrote to the secretary of the National Mouse Club saying she wished to be a member, and enclosing a P.O. for her subscription. In return he sent her a kind letter, telling her how pleased he was she had joined the club, and advising her to write to a certain fancier, who was always ready to help beginners in the Rat Fancy. Winnie did so, and as this good friend sent her a few handsome Rats, and gave her some useful hints, which she carefully followed, she soon got together a stock of which she felt justly proud. She now began to exhibit at every show where Rat classes were provided, and it was rare indeed for her Rats to come back without having won a prize or two. Tom became as much interested as she was, and as in a few months he also joined the club, the brother and sister were able to exhibit as partners, which, as Winnie said, "Was much jollier than working alone." "And it all came about out of that morning's rattling," remarked Tom. "Yes," answered Winnie, "great oaks from little acorns grow you know, and this seems to be a case in point."

I am a Mouse fancier, but seem to think I should like to start with Rats. Oh dear! the fearful things! The long and short of it is I am nervous. I should be glad if some fancier would enlighten me on the matter a little. What is the best treatment? If one gets a bite? What is the best food? What is a good size for a breeding cage? Do they require a nest box like Mice? If so, what size, and how large the hole for entrance? What is the ideal markings of an even? I understand they are not marked like Mice. When I commenced with Mice, I never thought I should keep them long, so I expect it will be the same with Rats. If some experienced fancier would give a little explanation I should be glad. I have kept Mice for two or three years. It is very seldom I get to a show, but I managed to get to Heanor. I was very pleased to see Mr. Harrison's eight-patched broken Mouse, but was more surprised to see that it is shown and wins as a broken. I may be wrong, but I consider it a very good even. Is it a broken or an even? In connection with Rats, what is the period of gestation? Is there any particular time when Rats are most vicious? for I am

A NERVOUS ONE.

September 21, 1906.

RATS AND THEIR TREATMENT.

In "F. and F." for Sept. 21st, I see "A Nervous One" asking for information about Rats. I will do my best to enlighten him on the subject. First, what is best treatment for a bite? Prevention is better than cure. If he is careful he need never be bitten. During the three years I have kept Rats I have been bitten twice, once at a show and once through disturbing a doe which had just kindled. Both bites bled freely for a time; I tied a piece of rag round, and they soon healed up without leaving any evil effects behind. Food—Rats will eat almost anything; mine get boiled rice, mixed corn, potatoes (cooked and raw), carrots, turnips, bread, both dry and soaked, with any house scraps added. Cages—I make mine out of Tate's sugar boxes; knock one end out, and make a wire netting door. These I find a suitable size for a buck and two does, which, as a rule, I run together for three litters, then take the buck away to give the does a rest. Nest boxes—Most fanciers use these placed on a shelf at the back of cage, but I seldom use them; my does kindle in a corner of cage. I think the youngsters learn to run about sooner and come on better. The period of gestation varies, the average time being about 28 days. The most common marked Rats are those with a hood and stripes. The hood marking should cover the head and shoulders, across which it should be cut level, similar to a Dutch Rabbit's saddle. It should also go down front legs, leaving the feet white. The stripe should go from hood to tail, and be as straight and even in thickness as possible. I have seen a few specimens with spots each side the stripe; of course, any kind of markings that were fairly even would stand a chance of winning. If "A Nervous One" would send his name I would let him have a photo of an even Rat, which would show him better than words what an even Rat should be like. All Rats should have something to gnaw, a piece of wood or bone. During the last three months I have not been able to see to my stock, and have lost about 30 youngsters through not having any bones; their teeth grew to such a length that they could not eat. I am sure anyone taking up the Rat Fancy will find them amusing and intelligent. I have spent many happy hours, when I have been ill and miserable, watching the antics of the youngsters.

C. D. COTTINGHAM.

Bulwell, Nottingham.

September 26, 1906.

A full reply concerning Rats would, I fear, take up more space than the editor could afford with so many shows agate, and I trouble to think of the havoc his blue pencil might work in my remarks. I will, therefore, reply in the fewest possible words. A Rat's bite is not any more venomous than an ordinary slight cut, and if treated "as sich" won't give any trouble. A Rat is seldom bad tempered, though a doe with youngsters is sometimes disposed to bite. The proper way to handle a Rat is to take him by the tail, not too near the tip, and raise him in such a manner that his feet at once rest on the hand or wrist. As to food, the best staple diet is oats and wheat, with stale bread, cold vegetables, nuts, raw carrots, etc., as a change; water or milk to drink. Rats need drink, but milk is not necessary. Good breeding and living cages can be made from Tate's sugar boxes, Watson's Matchless Cleanser, or Sunlight soap boxes, such as may be obtained for a few pence from any grocer. A good sized nest box is a necessity, and two or three flat perches add greatly to the Rat's comfort. The entrance hole to nest should be at least 2½ inches square, and the sides of box should not reach the top of the cage. The ideal "even mark" has coloured hood, covering head and shoulders, cutting straight across just behind shoulders, with coloured stripe extending straight and unbroken, without brindling, from hood to tail, which may be parti-coloured. There should be no spots on belly. The period of gestation is about 21 days. This is but an incomplete reply, but if "A Nervous One" will write me direct I shall be pleased to answer any questions fully, and also to give him or her a start in the Fancy.

Worcester.

W. DOUGLAS.

THE MOUSE CLUB.

No doubt "Lancastrian" has read the Mouse Club notice in last week's "F. and F.," and if he, or any Mouse fancier will forward 2s. 6d. subscription, I shall be very glad to add them to our growing list of members. I certainly am in favour of helping on the Rat Fancy, and will do all I can. I, however, do not profess to be a judge of Rats. Will members please write me on the matter? The following members have joined the Mouse Club: Miss O. Trudgill, Messrs. J. T. Marshall, F. Green, D. Collins, Curno and Damerall, F. Herbert. MONTAGUE CHORLEY, Hon. Sec. pro tem. 10, Arboratum St., Derby.

IF YOU REQUIRE



PRINTING

Of Any Description write us! we can do it for you. Our work is of the best, and our

PRICES LOW.

Mr. JAS REDFEARN WRITES:—

"Please find enclosed in payment of my account for printing memos, etc. I thank you for quick despatch, also for the excellent manner in which you have executed my order; and even though I had several other offers for the work, I am pleased to say you have pleased me well, both in price and quality."

ESTIMATES GIVEN

Address:—Printing Manager, "Fur and Feather" Office, Idle, Bradford.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

A rather rare occurrence in the issue of 28th, September 1906 (Above). Not only does Mary Douglas reply to the letter by 'A Nervous One' (September 21st 1906 - Above), but so too does another Rat Fancier, C.D Cottingham. Miss Douglas was always entreating other Rat Fanciers to pen articles for 'F & F' and in this rare instance, one does.



CHALLENGE CUPS OF THE N.M.C.

NATIONAL MOUSE CLUB.

Few specialist clubs, if any, can place such a tempting bill of fare before its members as the National Mouse Club can do, and the grand array of cups in the above picture must be very encouraging to those who have devoted their time and trouble in building up this popular and well established club, the benefits to be derived by becoming a member of which are very numerous and far reaching. Founded some twelve years ago by a few enthusiastic Mouse fanciers (the names of five of whom are still to be found on the members' list, including the popular president, Mr. Sam Woodiwise), this, the parent club of the Mouse and Rat Fancy, by dint of much hard work and devotion to its welfare on the part of the officers and members (most prominent amongst whom being the veteran Mr. W. Maxey) has brought the "long-tails" to the proud position they now hold in the fancying world, and those now coming new into its fold can enjoy for the small sum of 3s. 6d. per annum all the good things provided. With one or two exceptions the club's challenge cups can be won outright; in fact, several have been so secured, and replaced, and the club's gold, silver, and bronze medals are well worth winning, the new enamelled design recently introduced being very effective. In Miss M. Douglas the National Mouse Club have,

fortunately, secured a worthy successor to Mr. Maxey, who for so many years ably filled the post of secretary and treasurer, and since taking office Miss Douglas has proved herself an ideal secretary, and the Mouse and Rat Fancy is already indebted to her in no small degree.

FUR AND FEATHER.

December 13, 1907.

Miss Douglas has purchased and presented to the N.M.C. a handsome silver cup, to be competed for by Irish Rats, both black and agouti, so I hope to see plenty of this variety



MISS DOUGLAS,
The Hon. Secretary
of the
National Mouse Club,
and the
Children's Friend.