

PART TWO

THE HEYDAY OF THE RAT 1908-1922

"... the Rat fancying section... has cause to rejoice... our branch of the hobby is now included in the Club's title..."

- Mary Douglas - "Rat Resume", 'Fur & Feather'
24th. January 1913

P A R T 2
THE HEYDAY OF THE RAT
(1908 - 1922)

The heyday of the Fancy Rat lasted for a good twelve years, although if Rat-orientated features in 'F & F' were to be taken as a marker of the "golden years of Rat keeping", then fourteen would be an appropriate figure. Although the growth of the Rat Fancy from 1901 onwards should not be entirely attributed to the efforts of Mary Douglas, by the same token a very large proportion of the credit in this regard should be accorded to her, and the rest equally to Ralph Blake, H.G Brooke and C.D Cottingham, all prominent Rat Fanciers of the time. At various points throughout the Rat Fancy's life things looked grim, even following the "boom" of 1913/14 but Miss Douglas and the small band of loyal Fanciers strove on and continued to make the Fancy Rat popular. Rats were never as popular as Mice with the ordinary "Man in the Street" kind of Fancier, as they undoubtedly had more than their fair share of the wild cousins of *Rattus norvegicus*. Indeed, at that time, many Rat Fanciers made many introductions of "Wild Stock" into the bloodlines of their studs, a move which would be greatly frowned upon today, although just such an introduction occurred in 1979, albeit by accident, not design. In the heyday, the number of varieties grew steadily and more classes were staged for Fancy Rats at shows, although no where near as many as in the present day Fancy. Although some ambitious Rat Fanciers called for the formation of their own club, as did some Mouse Fanciers who felt that Rats were getting a better deal than Mice, especially when Miss Douglas was Secretary, Mary Douglas argued most strongly against such a move, despite her love for the animals. She knew the limitations of the Rat Fancy as well as its strengths. The Great War of 1914 to 1918 would surely have crushed the Rat Fancy had it stood alone, so her motto for both sets of Fanciers was strength in unity.

Things for the Rat began to pick up when Mary Douglas became Hon. Secretary of the N.M.C for the first time in 1907. She wrote "Mouse and Rat Notes" for 'F & F' and poured time, money and enthusiasm into the club for the good of the whole. In 1912 she began a regular column that was to run for six years; "Rat Resume", partnered by a "surgery column" entitled simply "Rats" in which she answered readers' queries about their Rats. She acted as Hon. Secretary again from 1913 to 1914, then spent the war years co-ordinating Blue Cross Operations in Cornwall. She was instrumental in staging a "Blue Cross Show" in aid of injured war horses in 1915. During this time she still wrote numerous articles for 'F & F' and in which urged Rat Fanciers to "take up the pen" and write, which very few did. Her stock had decreased in numbers somewhat, but she bred more and showed occasionally after the war when she became Hon. Secretary for her third and final time, holding the post from 1919 to 1920, followed by the role of President in 1920. No other Fancier had held the post of Hon. Secretary three times. During her Secretarial role the club had at the 1912 Annual General Meeting become "The National Mouse and Rat Club" and she had seen the rise of such clubs as the Bristol Mouse and Rat Club, the London Mouse and Rat Club and the London and Southern Counties Mouse and Rat Club. Miss Douglas became somewhat less active after her Presidency and her health deteriorated- she was not young - and on 26th. November 1921 she died at her home in Cornwall. Her death was greatly mourned by all members of the N.M.R.C and she was sadly mourned by the Editors of 'F & F' as well as fellow Fanciers. Her death dealt a terrible blow to the rapidly declining Rat Fancy which was now the province a few well-off Fanciers at that time. Ralph Blake, Hon. Secretary from 1921 to 1922 often wrote in his column "Mouse and Rat Mems" that the Rat Fanciers should rally round and support shows, write articles and, above all, not let all Miss Douglas' work go to waste. Foster Hackwood, a notable Mouse Fancier mooted a Mary Douglas Memorial Trophy, but this lacked subscriptions and came to nothing. All their entreaties were to little or no avail and the Rat Fancy died a lingering death, not helped by the fact that around this time 'F & F' underwent a great change, becoming far more Rabbit orientated and became known as 'Fur & Feather, Rabbits & Rabbit Keeping'.

The club reverted to the name of "National Mouse Club" and the heyday of the Fancy Rat was over...

THE INTENTIONS OF A HOBBYIST.

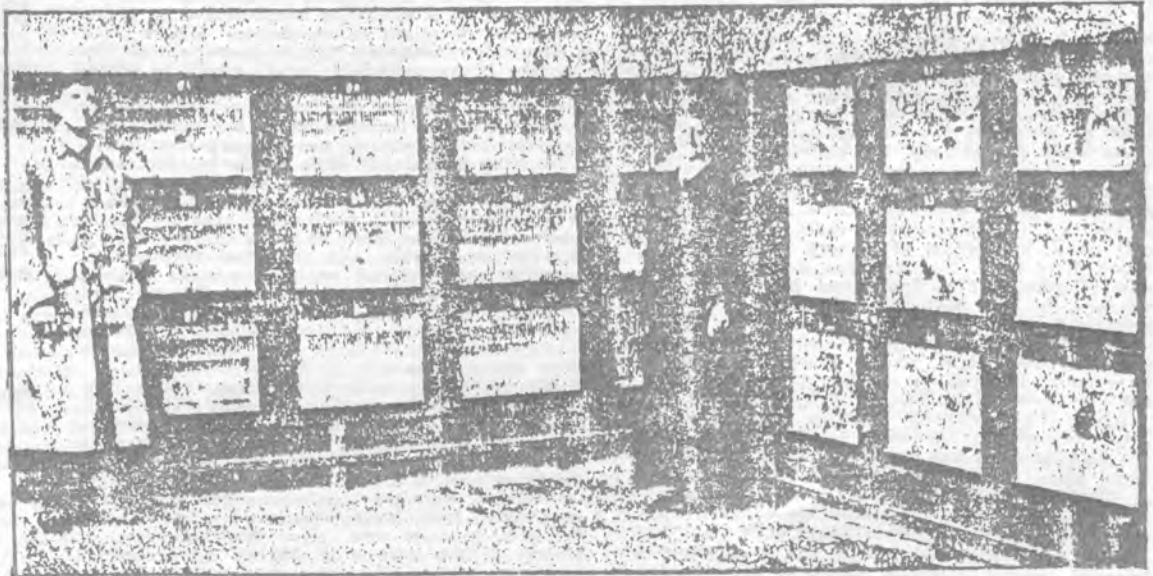
Amongst the latest devotees of the English Rabbit whose enthusiasm has been fired is Miss M. Douglas, of Worcester. Hitherto she has, for want of space, lacked the opportunity to develop her hobby, but of late the Virgonian Rabbitry has been considerably extended, so much so that she has now one of the most extensive and complete rabbitries in the country. Her devotion to the interests of live stock hobbies needs no praise here; her work as secretary of the National Mouse Club and as the friend of the children is the best monument that can be pointed to her credit. The South are, indeed, fortunate in having amongst them such an enthusiast, and we hope the stud of English she is gradually building up may go a long way to make the breed still more popular. She has made arrangements whereby she hopes to establish herself as a breeder of repute, and let us hope that the old cathedral city will not only make a name in the English Fancy, but also do a great deal to popularise the hobby in a district where it is far too apathetic, but where there is abundant scope to make much headway. In this direction we know no one more likely to create the desire, whilst her generous assistance should do much to not only popularise the English Rabbit, but also create a large number of fresh devotees to the Rabbit Fancy.



MISS DOUGLAS AND HER FAVOURITES.

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MISS DOUGLAS' NEW
RABBITRY,
WITH THE FRIEND
OF THE CHILDREN
AND HER RABBIT MAN,
MR. ALBERT CLARK.



THE DECLINE IN THE MOUSE FANCY

I was rather surprised when looking at my "Fur and Feather" not to see amongst the batch of Mouse news any letter supporting that of the worthy secretary of the N.M.C. upon the re-union of the clubs. I entirely endorse all that she has written, and sincerely hope and trust that the members of the committee of both clubs will use their best efforts to bring about the much-desired union. There is a lot to be done before everything will be in readiness to start as one club. I would suggest that the secretary of each club should send a reply post-card to every member to ask them if they are in favour of amalgamation; and if a majority in favour is returned, then the secretary and three other officers of each club shall form the amalgamation committee. These three officers should be elected by the whole of the officers of each club, that is to say the officers of the N.M.C. shall elect three of their number, and these, as well as the N.M.C. secretary, shall form the N.M.C. portion of the amalgamation committee; the M.C. to do the same. When the re-union has been arranged the officers shall vacate their seats, and an election take place to appoint a fresh set of officers for the new club. The membership of both clubs is open to England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, and I would suggest that the name of the new club should be "The International Mouse and Rat Club."

FRED PERRIN.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

Miss Douglas was also a noted fancier of Rabbits and Dogs, although her main interests were Rats and Mice. Watmough again writes about her in glowing terms (Above) and details her extensive (and expensive) Virgonian Rabbitry, which perhaps gives an indication not only of her birthsign, but also her wealth.

Fred Perrin, an ordinary "grass roots" Mouse Fancier writes here on the rift between the two Mouse Clubs; the National Mouse Club and The Mouse Club. (Left). The latter was formed as a breakaway group from the N.M.C very early on in the Fancy's life by Fanciers who had become somewhat disgruntled with the Committee and their running of the Fancy. The Mouse Club was formed circa 1902 and officials of both clubs harangued each other at length in 'F & F'. Eventually, the Mouse Club re-joined with the N.M.C and the long standing rift was healed. Interestingly, this period of the Mouse Fancy's life is not referred to in many of the top Mouse books.

March 13, 1908.

BY A. SELBY-THOMAS.

(Items of interest for this column may be sent to Mr. A. Selby-Thomas, The Monneries, Gloucester.)

It has frequently occurred to me that the chief reason for "long-tail" lovers having a preference for Mice over their larger brethren is in a great measure due to the fact that the varieties of Rats are so much less in number than the Mice, but that in itself appears to me to offer far more scope and greater opportunities of success to any enthusiastic Rat fancier who may take up the hobby with a determination to "extend the family." Surely what has been done with Mice can be accomplished with Rats, and I have vivid recollections of piebald Rats, which would have laid the foundation of a really good broken-marked variety, though I have to confess it is many years since I have seen anything in the shape of marked specimens, except the hooded and striped even, except, of course, the one or two spotted even of more recent origin.

During the last few days a letter has come into my possession, the writer of which vouches for the actual existence of a blue-grey even of the hooded and striped type, and although it is questionable whether this would not moult to black as the Rat reached maturity, it certainly opens up the possibilities of what might be accomplished by scientific breeding. Rat fanciers are, I know, few in numbers, and the promising boom of a year or two ago has not been maintained, though from what cause I am unable to say. Certainly it has not been for want of encouragement. Several handsome challenge cups are offered for competition in the Rat section, and Rat fanciers are also equally on a par with the supporters of Mice as regards the gold medal at the N.M.C. annual show. If these cups have been monopolised by a certain few, it has been no fault of those who are anxious for the welfare of the Fancy, but merely on account of the limited number of competitors. Amongst the many new members who have recently come into the ranks of the N.M.C., there surely must be some who will avail themselves of a very generous offer which Mrs. E. L. Marshall has made, to give a pair of young white Rats, from her well-known winners, to any novice Rat fancier who will promise to make two entries at any show catering for Rats before the year is out. The conditions are very light, and I trust that I shall have many applications in view of the approaching cup show at Shildon, on Aug. 14th next.

When the discussion relating to whiskerless Mice commenced, I gave it as my opinion that the disfigurement was caused by the Mice pushing their noses through the perforated zinc, and I still hold to that opinion as the correct explanation in many cases. In addition to this, however, there is no shadow of doubt that what has seemed to be an epidemic of the disfigurement amongst several fanciers' stocks is entirely due to vice, and not to any disease whatever. What struck me as peculiar, in considering the many letters I have received upon the subject, was, that whilst five or six Mice running together in one cage would be attacked, another would remain unscathed. This invariably happened in all the cases reported to me, and also has been my own experience.

The letter written by "M.L.," which appeared in this column in the issue of the 2nd inst., set me thinking, and others as well, apparently, and in many instances, on looking at the matter from "M.L.'s" standpoint, fanciers have been able to trace the trouble almost conclusively to its source, and Mr. J. W. Wheatley, a breeder of many years' experience, writes me that he has discovered by observation that the absence of the whiskers is due entirely to mischievous habits, and that he has had many does who were torments at the game, and the only way to keep them from pursuing this troublesome habit is to keep something hard in the cage in the shape of a crust or biscuit, for them to nibble at, or even a bit of round hard wood will suffice. I think we may now dismiss the subject of whiskerless Mice, as a mystery solved, and I thank all those who have furnished me with information, and assisted in clearing up the matter. "Something accomplished, something done."

Saturday, July 31st, will offer a further opportunity for long-tail fanciers to "try their luck," this time at Ebbw and Cainscross Flower Show. No schedules will be issued, but the full classification will appear in the advertisement columns of "Fur and Feather," in accordance with the modern and correct methods of running a show. The N.M.C. medal for best Mouse in show, heads the list of specials, and yours truly has been honoured with the position of adjudicator, so please give me something to do for my trouble when I get there.

Juveniles should watch the advertisement columns for particulars of Kidlington Show, on August 19th, where the Girls' and Boys' Herald Mouse Club are to hold their first annual open show. Mrs. E. L. Marshall is to judge.

BY A. SELBY-THOMAS.

(Items of interest for this column may be sent to Mr. A. Selby-Thomas, The Monneries, Gloucester.)

"I have a white Rat which has a very peculiar ailment. It holds its head all on one side, and when held by its tail twists round and round like a whirligig." So writes a Barnsley Rat fancier, who is anxious to learn the cause of this affection, also whether the Rat is likely to get the better of it, and a probable remedy. Miss Douglas has been good enough to deal with this query, and the following is her reply: "I have seen a good many similar cases, and believe the disorder to be a form of brain mischief, caused, apparently, in some cases at least, by shock or fright. Rats are, I think, much more nervously constituted than Mice, and on several occasions I have seen Rats, youngsters especially, who were perfectly sound when sent to a show, come back with their heads aside; once or twice, indeed, I have known death to be caused, evidently by fright at a show. It was for this reason that the age limit for young Rat classes was raised to three months, as when an earlier limit was tried it was soon found that very young Rats were liable to injury from excitement or shock. In slight cases the Rat carries the head aside, but does not appear to be otherwise inconvenienced. In severe cases I have seen them whirl round and round after the fashion of waltzing Mice, but in larger circles. I do not know of any cure, but it is possible that bromide of potassium, if it could be administered in small enough doses, might be beneficial. I have tried laudanum with no effect. I do not think the disorder is transmissible, but it would be advisable not to use Rats so affected for breeding, as the liability to the disease, if not the disease itself, might be transmitted to the offspring in an extra highly-strung nervous organisation."

Speaking as regards Mice similarly affected, it has been conclusively proved that the so-called "waltzing" Mice are nothing more or less than Mice suffering with a malformation of the brain, which causes them to whirl round and round very rapidly in a circle, and that the complaint is hereditary goes without saying, as some dealers appear to have a constant supply of same, and of which fanciers will do well to fight shy, as with the taint of this disease once introduced into their strain, nothing short of a wholesale clear out could eradicate it.

The following interesting item, which appeared recently in the "Yorkshire Weekly Post," has been forwarded to me by Mr. G. A. Townsend: "Whilst engaged harvesting a few days ago, Mr. James Wrathall, Sherwood House, Bentham, caught a white Mouse. It was a perfect albino, with the blood-shot eyes an ordinary long-tailed field Mouse ('mus sylvaticus'), and being a humane man, Mr. Wrathall gave it liberty. This species of murids often displays slight variations of colour, but perfect albinos are extremely rare." With all due respect to the kindly feelings which prompted Mr. Wrathall giving this Mouse its liberty, I venture to suggest that there are plenty of Mouse fanciers who would have been glad of its possession, nor would they have been lacking in showing every kindness and consideration to this rare specimen. However, the opportunity, like the Mouse, is gone.

September 24, 1909.



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AUTHOR'S NOTE:

A. Selby-Thomas acted as Secretary of the N.M.C temporarily whilst Mary Douglas was ill.

In his regular column, "Mouse and Rat Notes" he urged Rat Fanciers to take more of an interest in the affairs of the Rat Fancy, as well as answering queries from Rat Fanciers about the animals in question.

BY A. SELBY-THOMAS.

Items of interest for this column may be sent to Mr. A. Selby-Thomas, The Mouseries, Gloucester.

In the matter of young classes during 1909, that of young, any variety, naturally takes the lead, and on fourteen occasions all the youngsters have had to fight it out amongst themselves, and although the Dutch-marked easily top the list of first prize winners, with six to their credit, the remaining eight first positions were secured by self colours in the following order: reds three, blacks and blues two each, and white one. Self colours also practically had it all their own way for second places, only one other variety, a blue-and-tan, getting a look in. Blacks, reds, and whites tied with three each, blues had two, and chocolate and cream one each. The success of the selfs was not quite pronounced in the list of third prizes, although they captured eight positions, silvers leading with three, whites and blues being in close attendance with two each, followed by a black with one, the remaining six placings being blue-and-tans and agoutis two each, and dutch and even one each. And now for the Rats. Although small in numbers, the quality of the exhibits has certainly improved during 1909, and Rat exhibitors seem to have overcome the "spiked ear" trouble, and general condition has been better all round. No new varieties have been brought out, though there are whispers of some in the making, which augurs well for the future of the Fancy. In whites greater purity of colour has been apparent, and the few self blacks have certainly been sounder and more like the desired article than those of previous years. Agoutis have maintained their reputation, several very nice spotted ones having been produced. Agoutis and Irish blacks have not been particularly strong and at one cup show there was no competition for the Irish cup. I only know of one attempt at a silver grey, and that left much room for improvement. Still there are better days in store for Rats I am confident, as Miss Douglas, to whom the previous success of the Rat Fancy was due, is again taking an active part with the pets, and the outlook for the present year is much better than that of the past.

In the matter of challenge cups self whites have the breeders' cup (twice) and Loyal cup to their credit. Striped evens was honoured with the breeders' cup once, whilst a spotted even also secured the Loyal cup, and the same trophy was once awarded to an agouti. Irish blacks were successful twice for the Irish cup, there being no competition on the third occasion. The Rat team cup was captured by a trio of evens. Club medals for best in show went to a white, spotted even, and an agouti.

There were six classes provided for selfs any colour during 1909, in which the whites proved their strength, winning four first prizes as against one to the credit of the blacks, the other being withheld, whites had four and blacks two second prizes, and in thirds the blacks only scored a single, the other five going to whites. Four classes for any variety except selfs, produced the following results: striped evens two firsts, one second, and four thirds; spotted evens, one first and two seconds; agouti one second; one first prize was withheld. There were two classes for evens only, and the striped and spotted specimens had it all their own way. One class for any variety except selfs and evens left an agouti on top, and an Irish black third, the second being withheld.

Young, any variety were three times in competition, a white and a spotted even sharing the two firsts awarded, striped evens had two seconds, and whites one, whilst white and striped even had one third each, the other being withheld. On two occasions Rats of any variety had to settle differences, and selfs captured both first prizes, a white and a black respectively, white and even divided the seconds, and black and even the thirds.

March 11, 1910.

BY A. SELBY-THOMAS.

(Items of interest for this column may be sent to Mr. A. Selby-Thomas, The Mouseries, Gloucester).

Now that the number of Rat fanciers is on the increase, and doubtless many will be going in for experimental breeding, with a view to increasing the number of varieties of the Rat family, the following notes by the late Mr. Telford, of Gateshead, may be of interest.

"I tried," said Mr. Telford, "to breed Rats for colour; have had some black and white also white and black. What I mean by white and black is, there was more white than black. My first attempt was with a large white male, and a very dark female, about as dark as I have seen. I took her to be a specimen of the Old English black, now about extinct. She was fearfully wild, and I never could get her to be tractable. I mated her with the white male, with the result she had some curious marked youngsters, some like herself, others almost spotted, some hooded, others a proper mixture. This Rat of mine bred any amount of black Rats with a white spot on the chest, even when she was crossed with the large white male. My idea was to get size, as he was a very large one. I then tried to breed back to get blacks, and I have not the least doubt would have succeeded had I had time to carry my hobby on. I feel confident that all the black, or dark brown Rats of to-day are bred from the Old English, the shape of the animal, the texture of his hide, are the same everywhere as the Old English. Even the white Japanese has a slightly different coat, and as for the common brown or farmyard Rat, he is quite another animal altogether. You will notice his hide or pelt, they have a sort of fine undercoat, while upmost the coat is ranker or coarser. He has a coarse head covered with long hairs or feelers. This is not so in the Old English, and does not appear to such an extent in the everyday black and white. The Old English is a much finer Rat, he lacks this undercoat of the brown, also the quantity of feelers on his nose and head, so everything points that originally the tame Rats of to-day have been bred from the Old English crossed with the Chinese or Japanese Rat. I have no doubt the cross could be made to breed any marking of black and white, even slate or dirty white, while a light coloured female, mated with a white male, might throw creams; at least, they would be called creams. My hobby was to see what sort of peculiar marked youngsters would come from mis-marked parents. I have had them patched. I fancy I had two almost spotted, while one had a white blaze."

Writing with reference to these notes by Mr. Telford, Miss Douglas says:—"It is noteworthy in this connection that foreign varieties of *Mus Rattus* differ considerably in colour. I once obtained from the Government Rat-catcher at Deptford, a litter of youngsters just able to leave the nest, which he had caught in a ship recently arrived from the West Indies, where they are, I believe, known as the Banana Rat. He described the old doe, whom he was unable to catch, as being of a dark green colour. Several of the youngsters were of a somewhat greenish black hue, while the remainder were a sort of light fawn agouti, white on the under parts. All had the usual *Rattus* build and characteristic large ears and eyes, and long delicate tail. They were terribly shy, but I got one or two litters from them, and also from some English caught specimens of *Mus Rattus* which I was fortunate enough to procure. But I cannot say I was really successful with them, and eventually gave up keeping the variety. It is, however, well worth the attention of fanciers who desire new colours and markings, as well as for its own intrinsic grace and beauty."

Miss Douglas also makes an appeal on behalf of the wild Rat, as follows:—"Emphatically he is not the savage worthless brute that he is frequently represented to be. That he will fight is true, but usually to defend his nest or himself. He has been hunted until he regards the whole world as his enemy. But he will quickly respond to a little kindness; once gain his confidence, it is easy to do, and he will become tame and gentle. Naturally there are, I think, few animals more affectionate than the Rat. A few years ago a fresh caught adult *Decumanus* doe was brought to me in a wire trap. At first she screamed with terror when I approached, but after I had given her a few tit-bits, and stood beside her for a time talking quietly to her, she apparently recognised that I did not intend to hunt her. This step gained, she rapidly acquired confidence, and within 24 hours I was able to handle her, and she would take food from my hand."

April 1, 1910.

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AUTHOR'S NOTE:

Selby-Thomas went into great technical detail in his articles, as we can see here, with his review of the Rat Fancy in 1909 (Far left) and his compilation of notes by the late Mr. Telford (Left).

In the article dated 1st. April, Miss Douglas makes a strong defence for the Wild Rat, as well as making interesting reading about her procurement of some Banana Rats.

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BY M. DOUGLAS.

I am pleased to say I hear from our president that his health is improving. But it is easier to run down hill than to climb up again, and I fear it will be some time before he is as strong as he—and we—could wish.

"Is the Mouse and Rat Fancy declining?" No, certainly not whilst there are such fanciers about as Mr. W. Turton, the latest recruit of the N.M.C. He writes: "Some twelve months ago I joined the Ilkeston and Dis. Fanciers' Society. I kept a few Rabbits, also a few Mice, and I gave several fanciers a start with a pair of Mice, and I am pleased to say we have a class or two for Mice at our monthly table shows. I have been proposed and accepted as a member of the Poultry and Rabbit section of the Ilkeston Agricultural Society, and at a meeting last night I got the committee, with a bit of persuasion, to put on five classes for Mice, which I have guaranteed. The date of show is Sept. 15th, and the judge appointed is Mr. Radford. Last year there was a loss on the Poultry and Rabbits. This year I want the Mouse and Rat sections to show the others what they can do."

It is not often that a new member comes along with, so to speak, a show in his hand—the classes moreover, guaranteed by himself. Good old Ilkeston!

Another good fancier, Mr. H. G. Wharton, writes me offering to guarantee Rat classes in the near future at Burnley if there is a reasonable chance of getting a fair entry. There ought to be. Rally up, fanciers, and let us make things hum a bit. And do write me a line sometimes; my permanent address is Wadebridge, Cornwall, and I shall be back there for good in another fortnight. The Rat Fancy has livened up a bit lately; let us all pull together—a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether—and we shall do the trick. I was told the other day that the Rat Fancy depended largely on me to keep it going—I should be very sorry to believe this to be the case, or to think the Rat Fancy was in any sense a "one man show." And if it has depended a bit on me in the past, please try and make it self-supporting in the future; the Rats deserve better of us than to let their future as a Fancy depend on the efforts of one humble individual. Apart from their many desirable qualities as pets, I often wonder that those who are interested in scientific or experimental breeding to obtain new colours and markings do not devote more time and attention to Rats. Very little in this way has so far been accomplished, but enough has been done to prove the possibility of doing much more.

Those who were in the Mouse and Rat Fancy some seven or eight years ago, will remember the intense interest which was excited by the promulgation of Mendel's theory of Colour Heredity in Mice and Rats. For the benefit of others let me give a brief sketch of this:—

Gregor Johann Mendel was an American monk who, during the second half of the 19th century conducted a number of experiments, both botanical and zoological, with the view of discovering the laws which govern the transmission of colour from parent to offspring when the colours of the parents are not identical. The botanical section of his work was chiefly carried on among garden peas, and he crossed wrinkled varieties with smooth ones, and green peas with yellow ones, with the result that after a number of experiments he discovered that certain colours and characteristics are more persistent than others. Those stronger colours and characteristics he termed "dominant," and the weaker ones "recessive."

Similar experiments among Mice and Rats gave corresponding results; some colours were dominant, others recessive. That is to say, when specimens of two different colours are mated together one of these colours will predominate in the offspring. It has further been discovered that in the case of crosses of two individuals of the same species but of different colours, the male parent influences the colour of the offspring. Thus if a black-and-white buck be mated to an agouti-and-white doe, the offspring, in all probability, will be chiefly black-and-white, and vice versa. I am referring to Rats only. In my own rabbitry at the present time there is a case in point. I mated a black-and-white even buck, with an agouti-and-white even doe. The resulting litter included half-a-dozen black-and-white youngsters and one solitary agouti-and-white.

Von Fischer, another German scientist, says "that piebald Rats crossed with albino varieties of their species give piebald young if the father only is piebald, white young if the mother only is piebald." I feel that it is presumptuous for me, a mere fancier, to differ from a scientific experimenter, but in my own breeding experience I have found that the litters resulting from the above-named cross, made either way, usually include both piebald and white youngsters, though piebald or white individuals may preponderate according to the colour of the father. Von Fischer further states that, pursuing his experiments, he mated a number of white bucks with grey or agouti does; from these he bred 2,017 pure albinos, or whites. From the same colours reversed, i.e., agouti bucks and white does, he bred 2,830 agoutis. "Not a single individual," he says, "varied in any respect or was in any way intermediate."

This appears to be a complete statement, but experience shows that it must be taken with the proverbial "grain of salt." That is to say, the laws of heredity must be taken into account, and if either of the parents, though individually pure in colour, be of mixed ancestry, colour variations may, and probably will, occur in the offspring. Thus we get so-called "sports" or "freaks." These "sports" are either the re-appearance of the colour or marking of some, perhaps, far back ancestor, or the unusual action of some colour pigment on another in the case of an individual resulting in the production of a new colour. It is to these sports, carefully mated and cherished, that we must look for new varieties in colour if not in marking.

Next week I hope to pursue this subject with a few notes of my own experience as a breeder. I shall be more than pleased if other breeders will send me notes of their observations. Letters reaching me on Sunday morning will be in time. My present address is Lawes Villa, Bath Road, Thatcham.

I shall be glad to receive further applications for the venue of our club show from societies whose fixtures occur in the late autumn. Several subscriptions are still outstanding. That is the drawback to our "date to date" system. Somebody is sure to be in arrears. Do please, good friends, let me have the cash in. Also will any members having propositions which they wish included in the annual voting papers kindly send them in at once?

I shall also be glad to receive promises of specials for the cup show at Shildon next month. We have sadly few promised at present.

Mr. H. Haywood (Barnesley) and Mr. W. Turton (Ilkeston) have joined the N.M.C.

July 15, 1910.

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RAILWAY SERVANTS AND EXHIBITS.

May I be permitted to add another protest to the list that has already appeared in your columns? On Thursday morning last, my four months' old Blue-and-Tan buck, winner first Holmfirth, second Meltham and Howdon-le-Wear, third Langley Park, etc., arrived home dead, from Durham Show, where he was awarded reserve; thus a promising career was cut short by the carelessness of railway servants. The secretary of the show informs me that the Rabbit was in good order when boxed, after the show, and that it was handed in at Durham Station, before 8 o'clock. I have ascertained that the exhibit did not leave Durham Station till 11 o'clock. The box was a roomy one, and perfectly ventilated. Can nothing be done to awaken railway officials to a sense of their responsibilities? If not from a financial standpoint, then from a humane point of view. It is very disheartening for a young exhibitor to lose so promising an exhibit, but that is nothing to the uncertainty into which one is thrown as to whether one's other exhibits will arrive back safely from the show, or, like this one, be delivered dead; and all caused by the, if not wilful, then thoughtless carelessness of railway servants. F. C. HAMPSHIRE. Park Cottage, Holmfirth.

RAILWAY SERVANTS AND EXHIBITS.

May I, as a railway servant and a Rabbit fancier, add a word to Mr. Hampshire's letter. I am an engine driver, and see a lot of stock travelling up and down the country. I often see the rough usage it receives at the hands of the parcel porters, and often tell them my mind. The L. and N.W. Railway are continually issuing notices about the rough usage of live stock. Of course the company do not like one class of servants interfering with another, but I have made up my mind that I will report them to their superintendent, and call his attention to the loss that it is to a fancier, especially when he is a working man. I should advise fanciers when they are travelling to keep a sharp lookout, and if they see any of this rough work, no matter who the stock belongs to, to take the porter's number and report him to the station-master, and also tell that official that you require the district superintendent's name and address, and then write to him, and there is not much fear but that he will take the matter up and deal with the offender. J. WHITE.

IS THIS A RECORD?

Kindly note that my exhibits were too late for competition at Newport (Salop) show. The Moonward states they arrived 7 p.m., Saturday, & this is so, they were "only" thirty hours doing the journey from London to Newport. W. MALEY.

MOUSE AND RAT NOTES

BY M. DOUGLAS.

Queries and contributions for this column should be sent to Miss M. Douglas, Wadebridge, Cornwall.

I am receiving a good many queries from novice Rat fanciers as to how they should feed and tend their pets. The following notes are contributed by Mr. C. D. Cottingham, who, though he has not exhibited recently, was formerly very successful on the show bench:—"I feed twice a day, morning with a soft mash, generally boiled vegetables mixed with barley meal or middlings, varying this with rice pudding, Quaker Oats, or any table scraps that are left. In the evening I give corn, either oats, wheat or maize. As a rule I look through stock at midday, when I give a piece of raw potato, carrot, turnip, or green stuff, lettuce, dandelion, etc. In each cage I place a bone, or failing this a piece of stick, this keeps the Rats' teeth down and helps to keep them from gnawing the cage sides. Having plenty of time I handle each Rat every time I feed, as this keeps them perfectly tame—I grasp the Rat round the body and not by the tail as do most fanciers. For cages I use Tate sugar boxes, with wire-netting fronts; these are a handy size and cheap. A shelf about half way up along the back affords plenty of exercise and amusement. I never use nest boxes, letting the doe litter in a corner of the cage floor. I let each breeding doe have two litters quick and then a rest. This is managed by leaving the buck and doe together after the first litter is born, and when the doe shows in young for the second time take the buck away. As an exercise cage for youngsters a Quaker Oats cage with a few shelves in it is ideal."

MOUSE AND RAT NOTES

BY M. DOUGLAS.

Queries and contributions for this column should be sent to Miss M. Douglas, Wadebridge, Cornwall.

A correspondent asks for advice on the treatment of a Rat suffering from what appears "to be a bad cold in the head, with continual sneezing, chattering of the teeth, and scratching of the nose with the fore paws. The disease seems to be infectious, but the Rats affected keep fat and in good coat."

We are beginning with medical queries to-day. Here is another from Mr. Perry:—"The Rats arrived at noon to-day. They are nice and venly marked as far as colour goes, but whatever is the matter with their ears? All round the edges is a mass of tiny wartlike excrescences. I never saw Rats with ears like these; is it a peculiarity of that kind of Rat or a bluish, or defect, or what? There is also a small wartlike excrescence on the tip of the nose, giving them such a queer appearance."

Both the above are matters on which a discussion would be of great value to fanciers. If we can arrive at the cause of both these ailments—which are of far too common occurrence—we shall have done good work. The second, fortunately, is easily cured by a few applications of Emsley's Ointment. The former is far more difficult to cure so far as my own knowledge goes. For it I have found warmth, not overheat, with as even a temperature as possible the best cure. I have also tried butter and sugar, and Scott's Emulsion with more or less good effect, but must confess that so far I have not hit on anything really satisfactory as a remedy. If anyone has anything to suggest that has given good results it will be of immense benefit to the Fancy to let us have the advantage of the knowledge.

I may mention that the Mouse and Rat Book is in the press, and if a satisfactory remedy for mufles or asthma—which ever this complaint really is—could be suggested it might advantageously be included in the book. Please let us have your views on this or the treatment of any other complaint, such as loss of fur, or becesses.

But "prevention is better than cure." What is the cause of these disorders, or of any of them? The rough ears, etc., are caused, I think, by errors of diet, possibly overheating of the food by too much dry food. If so, the diet suggested a week or two ago by Mr. Cottingham could be a preventative. I very much doubt if trouble being caused either by giving potatoes water, as some people consider. Anyway, let us try and thrash the matter out, as, apart from the discomfort of the affected individuals, everyone will agree that the best specimens are spoiled by these unsightly excrescences.

Those who find the mid-day feed impracticable can, of course, adjust matters by adding the green meat to the morning or evening meal.

Another point on which I am often asked for information is whether buck Rats will live peaceably together. The answer is "yes," in fact I think they are as a rule less disposed to quarrel than the does. But in re-arranging the stock I find it a good plan, when Rats from two different cages are to live together, to house them in a third cage not previously tenanted by either lot. Apparently this avoids jealousy, as neither feel any right of possession in the unfamiliar cage. A little flowers of sulphur dusted into the coat of each individual also makes for peace, apparently by imparting the same odour to all.

It is perhaps a little early to begin talking about Ilkeston show on September 15th, but there is nothing like "taking time by the forelock." I hope every Mouse and Rat fancier will do his or her level best to send a rattling good entry. Mr. Turton, who is in charge of our section there, is on the point of going into the hospital to undergo a serious operation, but notwithstanding his illness he is working hard at preparations for the show so that all may be in trim. I am sure all N.M.C. members will join with me in wishing our Club-mate a speedy and good recovery, and also that all will do their best to gratify him and show their appreciation of his pluck and usefulness by sending an entry which will rejoice his heart.

Will Mouse and Rat fanciers please remember the old saying that one "can't make bricks without straw?" Neither can we hope to make our column useful and interesting unless fanciers will give us the benefit of their experience in the Fancy. So please send along any items of news connected with Fancy matters, and let us open discussions in which we may all join to our mutual benefit and interest.

I am delighted to hear that after all entries at Ilkeston turned up fairly well—82 in six classes. The next show booked is Monkwearmouth, October 15th. Please make a note and send our Northern friends a bumper, so that we may secure Monkwearmouth as an annual fixture.

We seem to be moving in the direction of Dutch-marked Rats. Mrs. T. Collins, Thatcham, writes:—"I have got a nice litter of eleven from one of my even Rats, about a month old now, and there is one quite different. It has a black hood, with a white strip down the forehead, similar to a Dutch Rabbit, the back and body are all white except a black spot just below the middle of back and at the root of tail. A new variety, isn't it?"

A few Rats somewhat similar to this were bred a few years ago. The blaze down face is of course, a good step towards Dutch-marking. If this can be increased and the black spot eliminated, the trick will be practically done, though even then a good saddle will take some getting. Good luck to you, Mrs. C.

Fanciers will be delighted to hear that Mr. Turton is making good progress towards recovery.

Mr. Bromley writes:—"As I am very much interested in the discussion on the influence of the buck on the colour of the young, I am writing to tell you my experience in mating opposite colours. Some time ago I mated two does, one white and the other a mismarked black and white Dutch. From these in due course I got ten young, and every one was the same colour as the buck, which was black, except two from the Dutch doe, which had pied tails. I then mated the two pied tailed ones together and got six young, five black and one black and white. I also mated two blue does with another black buck, and got five young from each doe, once again all black. I do not say that the above proves conclusively that the buck does influence the colour of the young, but I think it is significant. I may state that the above Mice have all been pure bred for several generations, with, perhaps, the exception of the black and white doe, which I bought purely for experimental purposes."

Old fanciers will remember that some seven or eight years ago colour heredity in Mice and Rats became the subject of deep scientific investigation at Cambridge. We have not heard much on the subject for some years from this quarter, but the investigation has been going on quietly, and Mr. Wilton Steer, who has taken the deepest interest in the experiments from

(19)

What has happened to the Fancy north of Trowel? Is it quite dead in the "Land o' Cakes"? Can anyone suggest means by which it can be revived there? When I first joined the N.M.C. we used to get several Scotch shows in the course of the year; now it is years since we had one at all. Yet our membership in the North of England is stronger than ever before, and shows in Scotland should meet with good support; that is if there were some.

The members will very shortly be asked to elect a new hon. secretary, and I would earnestly ask all, by a little forethought, to lighten his labours. Those overdue subscriptional "Whip-up" post cards! What a lot of needless work they make. It might all be avoided. Won't members see to it in future?

Then there are the new members, many of them juveniles. We might help them a lot if we would take a little trouble. A few notes for this column on different varieties, how to breed them, or even on the details of daily work in the mousery or ratery, methods of feeding, and so forth, all would be helpful. The long and short of it all is, let us wake up, and let us help one another all we can. There will then be no fear of the Mouse and Rat Fancy declining.

Kidlington Show is again giving us Mouse classes under club rules and patronage. Mrs. Marshall judges, and the bronze medal will be competed for. I am sorry Rats are not catered for this year. Mouse fanciers, please send in a liberal entry, a bumper! We have not been overworked with shows lately; now do let us respond generously, so that other committees arranging their schedules may be anxious to cater for us. Let us not need a "whip up" this time, please.

The beginning, writes me:—"The experiments relative to colour heredity have practically come to an end so far as Mice are concerned, but the final deductions are only now going to the press, and I shall not have copies for some few weeks. I have been in communication with Cambridge on the matter, and have been promised them as soon as ever possible. I do not think it advisable to commit anything to paper until I have had a full opportunity of reading and digesting Professor Bateson's final conclusions, but directly I have done so I shall be only too pleased to write a full series of articles on the subject of colour heredity in Mice."

I trust Rats will also be included in Mr. Steer's articles. I asked Mr. Wilton Steer for his views on lilacs and silver Mice, which it will be remembered was a vexed question a few months ago. This is his reply:—"There is no question, by the way, re your query about lilacs and silvers. There are only four distinct colours, and lilac is lilac (diluted blue); blue (diluted black); while silver is silver (diluted chocolate) only. But I will explain all this in my articles."

Perhaps the difficulty in distinguishing between these nearly related shades lies with the observers. Some of us are born with a much keener eye and more power of discrimination between colour than others. Thus, speaking for myself, while I can distinguish, say, red from blue, there are many shades of blues, greens, and greys which I am utterly unable to distinguish, and I should often find it difficult to tell a very dark blue from a black. Lilacs and silvers would be altogether too much for me. I have, therefore, gratefully declined several invitations to stand for election as a club judge, there would be such an awful uproar over my awards in the self classes. But those who have a keen eye for colour can discriminate between shades so nearly akin as to be almost indistinguishable from one another by those not having this keen sense of sight—our misfortune, not our fault. Hence, probably, the correspondence some time ago on the subject of lilacs. We have no standard for this variety, but if one is drawn up and submitted to the committee there is no reason whatever why it should not be included in our list.

Another colour point is fawns and reds. Fawn is not red, red is not fawn, yet our winning fawns—so called—have developed into reds. Why should we not recognise both varieties? Keep our old-fashioned fawns, which were a lovely colour, and strike out a new standard for the more recently developed red hot ones. Opinions, please.

Messrs. J. and R. Nunn, Shildon, have joined the N.M.C.

'F & F.'s" to see if anyone but yourself contributed articles on Rats. I think in over 50 'F & F.'s I found about 25 articles on cuts; half of these were show reports. In every 'F & F.' we get a large amount of useful notes on the feeding and general management of Fancy Mice, but—where are the Rat fanciers? Why don't they also give articles on Rats? The fawn Rat is in perfect condition, and is getting more docile. I have also now a self white I purchased from Mr. Patterson Riddle. She has our young. I read your notes in 'F. & F.' and also your letters re feeding, and also breeding for lawns. I am feeding my Rats as stated in your letter, and one of the questions I want to ask you is this: You state in your letter, and also in 'F. & F.', the best way to get a fawn stud would be by mating the fawn to an agouti, one caught in the same place where the fawn was caught, as you think there will be a certain percentage of fawn blood in the agoutis. Now an agouti Rat does not appeal to me; in fact, I do not like to see one in a cage, it reminds me of a caged bear continually trying to get free. The fact is, if the fawn had kept continually jumping at the bars and biting them, I should have given it its liberty. Do you think it is possible to get a fawn by the use of black or white specimens, say by continually in-breeding with the young? What do you think would be the result if mated to a marked specimen? Is it possible to get a tame black or white Rat bred from agouti parents? Do you think if the fawn were mated to a black and the young from the fawn and black cross (the nearest approach to fawn, as you state I surmise they would be dark) were mated to a white, they would be the right shade of fawn? Where shall I be able to purchase a show cage, and what size should a breeding cage, and also a stock cage be? The last question is: Do any shows provide young classes for Rats, as they do for Mice, etc.? I should thank you if you could answer me some of the questions, as I am only a novice in the Rat Fancy."

As I wrote my own views privately to Mr. Robinson, I will leave the matter now to others. Please don't leave me to be, as Mr. Robinson suggests, almost the only Rat fancier to contribute Rat notes and queries. If all will let us have notes, questions, and answers on Ratty matters, it will do much to help forward our hobby and build up the Rat section of the N.M.C. This matter of the fawn Rat is one of the most interesting that has arisen for some time past, and any suggestions for perpetuating the variety will be welcomed.

December 2, 1910.

We may also hope shortly to see a tri-colour strain of Rats established. Mr. G. W. Oliver, who I am glad to hear is about to start afresh in the Fancy, has recently sent me a pair of even-marked Rats, the buck having a black hood and stripe half way down back, and a small chocolate spot at the root of the tail. The doe is similarly marked. With good luck these ought to breed something worth having. I have had in times past several black even marks, which showed chocolate shading on the throat and shoulders, also self blacks—or what passed as such—which shaded off to quite a decent chocolate on the lower part of the body. There seems therefore, no reason to doubt the feasibility of establishing a self chocolate, chocolate even, or tri-colour strain.

Mr. H. Broughton writes: "As I am a novice in the Mouse Fancy, and do not yet understand the diet to give them, I should be so much obliged if you will kindly give me a few hints on feeding. Pink-eyed whites are my favourites, and as I thought there might be a special diet for them I thought I would be on the safe side and ask you how to manage them."

Will some of those who make a speciality of whites kindly come to Mr. Broughton's assistance and give him a helping hand, or, rather, a few helping words of advice?

On colour heredity in Mice Mr. A. E. Baker writes: "In 'F. & F.' Sept. 2nd last, I wrote an account of a white doe's escapade, and the resultant wild litter. Well, I have been experimenting with the latter, and I thought that the Fancy would be interested to know the result. I paired a buck from the white doe and wild buck to a blue doe (blue-fawn bred), the result is two blacks, one sable light, and three agouti-and-tan, or wild Mouse colour top, with sides and under fawn or tan. I shall be showing these at Stratford, I expect, so then, perhaps, we shall be able to get at what they are. Just one last word. I do hope everyone will do their best at the coming shows, if only to repay our secretary for his excellent fixture list he has got together for us."

Re establishing a broken marked strain of Rats, Mr. Hollingshead sends an enquiry. "I notice among my young Rats two which have the streak only half way down the back, one also has a spot on the rump as well as a broken streak. If I mated these two together should I be likely to establish a broken strain like the Mice we have now?"

So far as my own experiments have gone I have never succeeded in getting anywhere near a broken marked specimen by breeding with badly marked evens. I think there would be more chance of success by crossing and re-crossing self blacks and self whites, and then in-breeding with the resulting litters. This, however, is theory only. Will someone else kindly express an opinion or let us hear what measure of success they have attained by this or other method of breeding?

Mr. W. A. Stewart writes: "Please excuse me writing this to you, but as I am a breeder of Mice, and want a little information, I thought that I would write and ask you to put in 'F. & F.' a little more about them. There are a lot of us novices would like to know how to enter for the shows and what sort of cage you have to have, and what is the meaning of '23 limit' and how to get them up to show. You know that there are very few shows take place anywhere near here, and the only time that you can meet anyone who goes in for Mice is on Sunday morning down in club row, and it is more for them that I am writing than for myself, because I have some good Mice, and am doing all I can to help others along. I have taken 'F. & F.' in, and this week there was just what I have been trying to find out viz., how to breed Dutch-marked Mice, and will try and see what I can do, and I will let you know how I go on. But just now I am deep in love with black-eyed whites, and I have just put a black-eyed white buck with a blue fawn doe. I have had some trouble with some of my does, just about eight or nine days after they have had a litter, and the young ones have just got their eyes open, the mother has died, but in both cases I have managed to rear the young ones with only losing one out of both litters. I fed the young ones with warm milk every night, and now they are a fine lot, and going well. This is all at present, hoping to see some good news about Mice in 'F. & F.' and I wish it all the good that it deserves."

I hope to receive a nice long useful set of notes in answer to these queries next week. So in the meantime, will only answer a few. First entering for shows. Many secretaries send entry forms; on these it is only necessary to put the number of the class in which the specimen is to be exhibited, and the price for which you are willing to sell, enclose P.O. for the entry fee (in Mouse and Rat classes usually 1s. per entry), and put name and address in the space provided for the purpose. Care must be taken to enter each specimen in the correct class from the list in the schedule, i.e., if a class is provided of "black blue, or chocolate" Mice, and another for "Self A.O.C.," a white or fawn Mouse must be entered in the A.O.C. (any other colour) class, and so forth. All Mice and Rats entered at shows under N.M.C. rules must be exhibited in Maxey pattern cages. These may be obtained from the inventor, Mr. W. Maxey, 16, James Place, Poplar E., at a very moderate cost. Limit shows, etc. or otherwise, mean that the selling price of any exhibit must not exceed the amount of the limit mentioned, though it may be any lesser figure. In shows where no limit is mentioned the price asked may, of course, be set at any figure—fancy or prohibitive one if the exhibitor does not desire to sell. On the other points raised, not being a Mouse fancier, I do not feel competent to advise, so will someone else kindly attend to them, please? I hope to receive several answers so as to get a lot of really helpful advice.

STRATFORD MOUSE SHOW.

CORONATION CUP COMPETITION.

Held at Workman's Hall, Stratford, E., on May 11th. Owing to the illness of a colleague, Mr. T. Patterson Riddle was unable to fulfil his engagement to judge, and his place was taken by Mr. J. Wilton Stear. Entries came up well, there being 181 exhibits in 14 classes, an average of 13 per class, and the quality was, on the whole, very good.

RATS, SELF, A.C. 9: 1 Miss Stow, one albino, nice substance, good colour and perfect trim; 2 Singleton, very fair black, little rough 1 thought; 3, r. he Marriott, good albino, not so nice colour as the winner; vhc, c Turton and Henshaw. A.O.V., 12: 1, Loyal cup, best Rat in show, and N.M.C. bronze medal, he Miss Douglas, winner a nice black-and-white, a distinct advance towards a broken, usual stripe, well broken up into quite distinct patches, very taking Rat; 2 Nunn Bros., an excellent agouti; 3, vhc, Irish cup, he, c, winner, a nice black, good head, clear stripe; cup winner a very nice Irish, good triangle, fair colour; r Miss Stow, nice agouti. A.V., UNBRED 12 WEEKS, 13: 1, Rat breeders' cup, Clattingham, another black even, with broken up stripes, sweetly, pretty; 2, 3, c Selby Thomas, black hood, one spot and black on tail, Dyth next, I suppose, oh! What? 3rd, very pretty albino; r Miss Stow, one of the black stripe kind, nicely balanced; vhc Turton and Henshaw; vhc, he Nunn Brothers.

TEAM PRIZES. MICE: Mouse Team cup for best three Mice in any one class, Mr. Singleton; pens

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

By late 1910, the Rat Fancy was enjoying almost equal popularity with the Mouse Fancy, as the above notes of December 2nd, 1910 show, with many enquiries and contributions from Fanciers of both animals. There were several new Rat prize winners by 1911. (Left). Whereas Miss Douglas used to do all the winning in the early days of the Rat Fancy, there were names such as Vale, Singleton and Stow taking high places.

BY M. DOUGLAS.

Queries and contributions for this column should be sent to Miss M. Douglas, Wadebridge.

To all Mouse and Rat fanciers, a Happy New Year! Our hobby has certainly made progress during 1910, and though entries at some shows lately have fallen short of what could have been wished, on the whole I think we may congratulate ourselves on a prosperous year. Let us each and all start the New Year with a resolution to do our level best during the coming year to put the Mouse and Rat Fancy on a level second to none. Good luck to all!

I note my friend Mr. Townsend is referring in feeling terms to the absence of helpful correspondents. They do make a deal of difference when one has to evolve a weekly column, and I hereby heartily thank the many fanciers whose notes, week by week, have made Mouse and Rat Notes not only interesting, but, I believe, really useful to our hobby. Please let us have lots more notes!

Mr. F. Plant, 84, Vincent St., Macclesfield, writes me about a rather curious white Rat now in his possession. It has, he says, a very good head, bold eyes, good ears and body; the only fault is pinhead tail.

Now a pinhead tail is a distinct novelty in a self white Rat, and though, of course, a bad blemish from an exhibition point of view, it is possible that a specimen so marked might be useful for breeding, say, black-eyed whites, as it evidently contains some undeveloped black blood. The question is: Can the black be transferred from the tail to the eyes? As "extremes meet," the experiment might be worth trying.

Mr. C. D. Cottingham, 4a, Chatham St., Bulwell, writes asking for the address of Mr. H. Wood, Colnor. I am sorry that I have not kept a note of the exact address. Will Mr. Wood kindly communicate with Mr. Cottingham?

Mr. T. Robinson, Leyland, sends further news of the fawn and silver grey Rats now in Mr. Borrow's possession. He says: "I see in 'F. and P.' Mr. Cottingham asks for more notes about the fawn Rats. Mr. Borrow and Mr. Alcock, of Liverpool, came over to Leyland, to see my fawn Rat, Dec. 24th, and Mr. Borrow brought both his fawn and his silver grey Rat for my inspection. In the following notes I will try to describe, as far as is in my power, both the fawn and the silver grey. The fawn is about three parts grown, very deep, rich red colour, both top and under, rich red feet, good ears, fawn to the tips, A1 condition, coat like silk, and extraordinary length of tail—I have never seen a Rat with longer tail. In shape the Rat is built on the same lines as the exhibition Mouse, being long and racy. The Rat is not very large, as stated in 'F. and P.', Dec. 15th, but is medium built, and, in my opinion, is a descendant of 'Mus Rattus', the black Rat, which do not grow to the same size as the descendants of the brown Rat (*Mus Decumanus*). The fawn is a real gem, the finest Rat I have ever seen, and any exhibitor of Rats would be proud of her. She is very tame, and I hope she will soon be placed on the show bench, and then we shall see the opinions of other fanciers about her. I will now describe the silver grey. In build she is the same as the fawn, and also, in my opinion, a descendant of *Mus Rattus*. She is about three months old, a rich black, beautifully silvered with the exception of a small black patch on the middle of the back, which, as she gets older, I feel assured, will silver. She has good chest and feet, and a beautifully silvered head; she is a medium silver, racy build, and good long tail (the tail is not so long as that of the fawn). Like the fawn, she is a gem of the first water, and from an exhibition point of view I think she is of greater value than the fawn. Perhaps Mr. Borrow will give the readers of 'F. and P.' his opinion of my fawn, which is not as rich as his, but is larger, being a descendant of the brown Rat (*Mus Decumanus*). I thank you for your notes in 'F. and P.' on the management of Rats, and think if we had more of these we should soon have a strong army of Rat fanciers. I also thank all friends for their suggestions re mating fawn, and hope I shall see more notes on Rats. Wishing you and all fanciers a Happy New Year."

"Long looked for, come at last!" And at last he long looked for book on Fancy Mice and Rats is ready. I hope all Mouse and Rat fanciers have noted this, and written to "F. and P." free for a copy.

January 6, 1911.

BY M. DOUGLAS.

Queries and Contributions for this column should be sent to Miss M. Douglas, Wadebridge, Cornwall.

Respecting the standards for even and broken marked Rats, Mr. F. W. Nunn, Shildon, writes:—"If belly spots are ignored, you spoil the chances of 'broken' in Rats. Rightly placed, these are an attractive addition, and broken are unlikely to be bred if the under spots are bred out. What you want is to try and work them up from the belly to the sides. I think judges (some, of course), don't pay the attention to Rats in examining for 'spots.' Personally, I never saw a more 'keen 'un' for finding them than friend Selby-Thomas, and if they are placed in the most unlikely places he'll find them. This is what we want if broken are to become an accomplished fact. I consider (and I have had 30 odd years in breeding to line marks and broken—English and Dutch, that such take far more getting than 'silvers' or 'selfs.' Let fanciers use less black and more white and agouti, and keep the lightest shade and cross and re-cross then see what they get to eventually. That is of course, for new varieties. But for any variety pertaining to tan marks I should certainly lean to blacks and agoutis. Further, if ever a black-eyed white shows itself, I predict it will accrue from the white and agouti-and-white cross, not from the white and black, as some think. From the black and white, one may, eventually, obtain bad black, termed by some 'silvers.' Whilst on that subject, they are not silvers. Silvers show shades on the single hairs, but these bad blacks show distinct white hairs. They may, which I fully think they will, lead to silvers, but they're not silvers yet. Now, my contention is, judges, to encourage experiments must appreciate the efforts of breeders, so these bad blacks, I suppose, must come under that category; they must examine the Rats for 'fresh markings'—not being satisfied with the old run of things. For example, see result of pair class at Lincoln—"Havana 3rd." To encourage breeders experimenting, etc., judges must "allow for the wind"—to use a football phrase I have known a Rat shown with almost an inch of saddle like a Dutch Rabbit; it received fourth at Club show. Here, then, is a move in the right direction, one must encourage these specimens, or you'll get no further up. It's high time new varieties were introduced among Rats, and I trust, with the aid of the alteration in the standard—"must be free from belly marks" and substituting "must show belly marks rightly placed, say five, one close to each leg and one, or two, centre," we shall soon have broken as good as the best broken Mice exhibited. Some time ago a suggestion was made that those wishful of holding office in the N.M.C. would be required to forward their names to the secretary, but I greatly disapprove of this—modesty, I fear, will stop a lot of our most enthusiastic from doing so."

Them's my sentiments to a T. friend 'Shildonite'—especially as to spots and the encouragement of new varieties. We can't rot the latter perfect all of a heap, but as the wise man says, "line up line; stone upon stone, here a little and there a little." If judges will look out for the best attempts at new varieties and markings, they will do much to encourage experimental breeding. A little recognition of one's attempts is very inspiring, and to be in the money with a notice in the report of the "novelty" would, I am sure, be very helpful. Even if the specimen be low on the ladder that leads to perfection, the fact that it exists at all may be the result of much patient endeavour, which might well be recognised and rewarded. Such recognition would also let fanciers know what others are attempting, and maybe encourage them to try and do likewise.

On the question of how Rats should be fed, the following notes, from the 'British Medical Journal,' a series of experiments conducted by Professor Leonard Hill, M.B., F.R.S., may be of interest. The Professor writes:—

"Considering the public interest excited in this matter (i.e. bread reform) and the paucity of exact experimental evidence, Mr. Martin Flank and I have carried out a research on Rats. We chose Rats because they are carnivorous animals, and like man in this respect. We obtained as many young tame Rats as we could and fed them for three weeks, some on white and some on standard bread, and for a second three weeks on white or standard flour. Both the bread and flour were obtained in a country town, from shops that supplied most of the inhabitants. The flours used for the bread were not the same as the flours we obtained from the corn merchant. The Rats were divided into

two lots of twenty-five each, and were kept under exactly the same conditions. The total weights of each lot were almost exactly the same at the start. The Rats were given bread or flour and water and no other food. At the end of three weeks we changed from bread to flour to see if the baking had anything to do with the result we were obtaining, but found this made no difference. The result is astonishing. From first to last the Rats fed on white bread or flour have done far the worse. Ten of them have died, and five of these were eaten by the others before we could remove their bodies. Five of those fed on standard bread or flour have died, and two have been eaten. The weather was very cold at first, and this partly explains the heavy mortality. The white lot stood the cold worse. The tables show the great difference in the putting on of weight in fifteen Rats of each lot. The standard have increased 27 1/2 per cent., against 12 per cent. for the white in the last three weeks. At the end of the period the white fifteen are nearly all losing weight. The white-fed Rats are far less lively and less sleek in appearance.

The present spell of hot weather is probably causing some of us a good deal of worry on the subject of ventilation. Self praise, I am aware, is no recommendation, but I have lately evolved a simple method of ventilating a shed and at the same time excluding rain, which seems to be entirely satisfactory. My ratery is a small weather-board shed with corrugated iron roof, wood lined, and is inclined to be terribly hot. The ventilator I mention is constructed by the simple expedient of making the top board at the back swing on hinges and fixing a couple of stays inside the shed so that the board can be pushed back to admit a free current of air above the cages. To prevent rain drifting in another board about twice the width of the hinged one is nailed above it at an angle of 45 degrees or thereabouts and boxed in at each end. No wet can drift in and as the ventilator can remain open night and day, the difference in the temperature of the shed since the arrangement was fixed up is astonishing.

January 20, 1911

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

Mary Douglas was constantly on the lookout for interesting Rat topics to write about. In her article of January 6th, 1911 (Far Left), we read of the Fawn Rat, the probable fore-runner of the present-day Silver Fawn. A fascinating experiment on the feeding of Rats is one of the subjects in her article of 20th. January 1911. (Left and Above).

Rat Resume.

Communications for this column should be sent to Miss M. Douglas, Wadebridge, Cornwall.

"Mus Rattus" writes:—

I think the tail-less Rat is genuine. I cannot even see what they call a "wee, rumpy, stumpy" in Co. Donegal. Moreover a doe in the same litter has a semi-tail—not bitten off, as it tapers at about half the normal length. At any rate, I'll try him to see if he can inflict his offspring with a missing link. The prettiest part about a Rat is his hood, and to do away with it seems inartistic.

I believe the evolution of a strain of tail-less Rats would be within the range of things possible. Some years ago I had a doe entirely devoid of tail, but she did not transmit her deficiency to her offspring. Now the freak re-appears! But except as a curiosity is it desirable to perpetuate a "Mans" breed? I doubt it. There are people, I know, who do not admire a Rat's tail, but to me a Rat minus tail suggests the idea of the historic performance of "Hamlet" with the part of Hamlet omitted.

As for the hood, certainly this marking is a characteristic of the pied or marked Rat as the tail is of the race of "Mans." It is a strange thing that—so far as I can remember—this particular marking is confined to the Rat; it certainly never occurs in Mice, Rabbits, or Oaries, the nearest approach to it being the cheeks of the Dutch-marked varieties—and they are a long way off being hoods. In Rats, however, the hood seems invariably to appear in the second cross of any self or agouti Rat with a white. The first cross produces self or agoutis with more or less white on the belly; but mate these youngsters back to the white parent, and the result will be that some, at least, of the resulting offspring will be hooded. Why this should be so I cannot say, and I don't think the exponents of the science of heredity have as yet done anything to throw light on the problem.

But characteristic as this marking is, it is necessary if we are to evolve new markings, such as Dutch and broken-marked, that the hood should be broken up. I own that at first it looks very funny, as I have at the present time a Rat with a big blaze down his face—a distinct advance towards broken-marks.

In this connection Mr. Lyon writes:—

My latest addition to the Irish I was producing is one with a white nose, which looks rather funny. Now with regard to the broken, you could not say it was a broken without the hood was split up or broken up somehow or another. I have bred scores of patched Rats, not spotted even, but irregular patches about the body, but, of course, with the hood. I have some now with small hood and streak going from back of head towards nose, but not right through, and vice versa with patches unevenly placed on the



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I am glad to say that recent accounts of Mr. F. W. Kerr record slight improvement, though he is still terrible weak. The last report to hand says that he is going on well; very slow but satisfactory. Bristol schedules are out. Please, one and all and a liberal entry. If you have not sent your strikes please do so at once. If you have done so, and had you can possibly send another or two, and them along so that we may have every class well filled. Mr. Kings is still accepting.

The Liskard fanciers are to be congratulated on the success of their first endeavour with Mouse and Cat classes. It was a nice little show, and a great pleasure to be once more among the longhairs. Further, I had the pleasure of stewarding for our old friend, Mr. Sheehan, and also of making personal acquaintance with Mr. E. F. Tilling who, I was glad to see, looked very well, though still a little unwell as the result of his recent severe accident. The only drawback, which I am sorry to say, was that at the time of judging the light was so bad that Mr. W. E. Marriott's beautiful self cream Rat was then for a bad white, and in consequence did not do the place it must otherwise have taken. Later in the day the light improved and the cream revealed itself—but too late, as the awards were made. Anyway, I heartily congratulate Mr. Marriott on his new colour.

The following notes from Mr. Wm. Kerr will be read with interest. The ideas he suggests are quite new to me, but if they can be brought into the field of practical politics, I foresee great things in the future. He writes:—

I cannot express how deeply interested I have been in the quotation from Mr. Duboisson's letter, regarding a cross between a Mouse and a Rat. I also have long contemplated the thought, and wondered if it could possibly be brought about, and I prophesy this, that if hybrids were

body. But to produce the broken I am starting on an altogether different method. Now that I have got them with a clear body and only a little hood, and this in one litter in nest, they have white right up throat, hood not going under. When I get out of hood then I think I can go on putting the patches on. I have tried with the broken-faced, but don't seem to progress as I should like.

No, it takes doing; but "Rome was not built in a day," and the progress already made, I think, promises well for further advance. So don't be discouraged, friend!

New colours, as well as new markings, are in the making. Mr. Lyon reports progress with chocolate, and "Mus Rattus" tells me of a buck whose nest fur was blue, and who afterwards moulted out chocolate brown. He has been mated with several does, and one litter of twelve contains five chocolates with white under, six b-and-w's, and one white. I hope we may see some chocolates on the show bench ere long.

Dutch-marked Rats, too, are looming in sight. Mr. D. Brown writes:—

I heard of a case the other day of a man owning a very fair specimen of a Dutch Rat. I did not see the Rat, but the source from which my information came could leave no doubt as to the authenticity of the statement. I do not think it had been bred for, but was a "flake."

Someone wrote me the other day objecting to Rats because they had not enough colour! That reproach looks like being removed in the near future if all goes well.

Re the black-eyed white Rat caught at Liverpool Mr. Cottingham writes:—

I was very pleased to see the picture and account of the black-eyed whites, but would be more pleased to hear some fancier had bred some, for if they are similar to the others caught it will be almost hopeless to get a strain. Those six I had from Borrowa bred me three litters, but I never reared one to above three or four months old: they went on all right until that age, when they died off one by one. I have now only one of the original six left, also the one from Dr. Sexton, and these are together with the young wild one you sent. I have had any number of tame Rats with them, but never got any results, except the three litters of wild ones, all of which are now dead.

If, as I believe, Mr. Borrowa's Rats were a foreign variety of the black Rat, I know they are ferocious in captivity. It seems impossible to tame them, and they are terribly shy breeders. But they are so pretty they are worth taking trouble for; if they can be tamed and propagated they will be eye-openers on the show bench.

Once again—please let me have plenty of interesting notes for our column. I want all Rat fanciers and breeders to contribute; don't leave it to two or three to do all the work. Everyone can find something interesting to tell if they will.

April 12, 1912.

produced the Rat Fancy would be revolutionised in a most startling degree. A great many, I have not the slightest doubt, will scoff at the idea of a Mouse-Rat hybrid, but I firmly believe that such could be produced. Some again will say that hybrids in the great majority of cases are sterile and do not reproduce themselves, and so we would gain nothing by the cross. This, however, is not my point, for the subject of biological interest for us centres not so much in the hybrid itself—which I do not think would prove fertile—as in the mother which gave birth to it. I am supposing, of course, that the cross is between a female Rat and a male coloured Mouse, say a red or a blue, or a chocolate or a cream, etc., etc. Every one knows, and many a one to his cost, what havoc is wrought if a good pedigree bitch accidentally mates with some cur dog and how every succeeding litter she gives birth to is tainted, even although the sire of the succeeding progeny is of the purest pedigree. Well now, could not these mysterious influences be turned into fruitful channels with regard to a female Rat which has young, say, to a huge red male Mouse? I have a friend who keeps Pigeons, and who indulges in a lot of experimental crossing for colour, not with the view of producing show specimens, but simply for the sport of the thing. He had a number of Flying Homers of various colours, but none of them were white. Desiring to get a white specimen he mated a red Homer hen, to a white Fantail cock (an odd bird which he happened to have at the time), destroyed the eggs which she laid, and then mated her back to a red Homer cock. As a result of this experiment, he got two whites, a cock and a hen, one in the first nest, and the other in the third nest. This is a subject of great biological interest, and one which has always had a great fascination for me, especially as a student of medicine. I have seen many a curious hybrid and read about a great many more, and if any readers of the good old "F. and F." follow up the doings of the Zoological Gardens, London, they will remember how every year unexpected matings take place among different kinds of birds in the aviaries. The horticulturist knows also what wonderful and beautiful hybrids can sometimes be obtained, but when it comes to the animal kingdom people begin to get sceptical regarding your results and treat you to an incredulous smile. The dog-wolf hybrid is exceedingly common in the Arctic regions, and I have seen the photo of a dog-fox. In notes written by a traveller in Peru, I read that some of the Indians in the



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Mr. H. Smith, Walsall, writes:—

After a lot of careful breeding, I have bred a blue-and-white doe Rat of grey colour. Underneath her jaws she is marked similar to a Mouse with good cheek markings, and has a streak of white running half way down its head. In the same litter I have bred a buck very much inclined to a blue, with markings similar to the above doe.

Heartily congratulations Mr. S. I. The age of the blue-and-white is not mentioned. I am hoping they have moulted out as I have previously seen blue youngsters, which on shedding their nest coats have come out a good blue. This is disappointing, and I hope will not occur in this case. But anyway, Mr. S. is clearly the right track, and I hope it will not be long before some of his blue-and-whites make their appearance on the show bench.

Talking of shedding coats, I am wondering whether a cure for that old trouble of ivory brown tinged fur in adult white or even-marked Rats, is not to be found in careful grooming. The other day I was handling my big spotted even cup winner—who now wins no longer owing to the discolouration of his coat—when I found that much of his discoloured fur was loose.

Removed this, with the result that below it found a much shorter, softer coat, not pure white, but of much better colour than the long fur. I doubt if the Rats can lick this old off, and it does not come off with stroking. A very gentle pull removes it, and the Rats appear to appreciate being relieved of this superfluous coat, which is probably detached from the skin, and merely held by the closer fur beneath. This theory would account for its discolouration, as being dead hair no longer fed by the hair sacs.

Fanciers will doubtless remember that last year a Rat guarantee fund was formed. This is in need of more support. We are getting more classes given us, but so far they have not filled properly and some heavy calls have been made on the guarantee fund. Please help liberally, and remember that many hands make light work. The more guarantors there are the lighter the calls will be. Mr. Selby Thomas will be pleased to hear from anyone willing to subscribe. I have already promised my mite. We need really to put our shoulders to the wheel for a bit, we do this, and make a real effort we shall see the Rat Fancy booming. We have got to start, and more encouragement and recognition than we ever had before. I notice that a Rat appears in the new title-heading of *Fur and Feather*, which I greatly appreciate. It remains for us to do our best, and make a real effort to interest our friends and to fill the classes we get. Don't keep your stock at home all the time. Give them a little change of air at as many shows as possible. Don't be backward in coming forward, please!

Mr. W. Hinds promises to make two entries all three-class shows this year. Who will likewise?

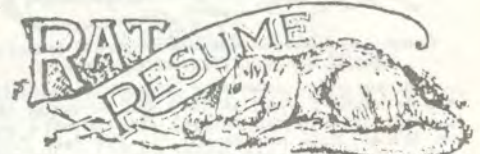
hilly regions have actually herds of sheep-goats which as far as the traveller could ascertain, were capable of reproducing themselves for an indefinite number of generations. Coming nearer home we have common enough fertile hybrids between the Rabbit and Hare, Pigeon and King-dove. One of the most curious hybrids I have seen was a cross between a leopard and an American lion (puma). I mention the above few examples to show that there is every possibility of a Mouse-Rat being produced, and especially so if the size of the Rat were reduced to something like the size of the four which Mr. Duboisson bred. Well done, friend Duboisson—Rats 7 1/2 inches long from tip to tip of ears, and I regret you have been obliged to give up your Rats. I sincerely trust that all Rat-lovers will thank you Mr. Duboisson's idea, and try the experiment which I firmly believe would meet with success. I feel strongly tempted to take up Rats again and try the experiment myself, even although lack of accommodation compels me to keep them in my study. Perhaps Mr. Duboisson would be so good as to give us a few hints on how to reduce the size of Rats?



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Mr. Cottingham sends me a further interesting letter on the correct points of Japanese Rats. I fear I failed to make my own meaning on the point clear. Our standard must be high and our aim perfection—not imperfection. We are all, I presume, agreed that a perfect Japanese has a perfect saddle, but are the "imperfect" specimens, i.e., those in which the saddle ends short of the tail, "Japanese" or "Even-marked"? It resolves itself really into a question for exhibitors. No one would wish to lower the standard for Japanese, but we do want to decide, before the standards are printed, to which variety a specimen having a saddle which extends, say, half or three-quarters of the way to the tail, belongs. Unless this is clearly stated, the opinions of both breeders and judges on this point are bound to vary, and at shows catering separately for Japanese and A.O.V. we shall find "wrong class" in the report instead of the coveted prize. Mr. Cottingham's remarks are useful, and help to clear up the point. He writes:—

Do you consider a specimen with saddle stopping anywhere short of tail an even? Yes, it's even, but not Japanese! A comparison with an English Rabbit is hardly fair, for in English there are so many points that count, that if one bred a specimen perfect but for a break in saddle it would soon be a champion. In Japanese we have practically only two points to breed for, viz., hood and saddle, and if broken saddles are allowed to come in, why not one with just hood and, say, 1/4 inch of saddle? This is an extreme, of course. Such an one would be even, but not Japanese, and as such it should go in even class, and personally, as far as I'm concerned, would stand little chance against a decent spotted even, for, in my opinion, they are mis-marked specimens pure and simple, and as such ought not to be encouraged on the show bench. Briefly, my contention is that a specimen with complete stripes, if somewhat irregular, should beat a broken stripe, however straight, for the first-named is the more difficult to breed. We don't as you suggest, want to allow for broken stripes in the standard. The standard should be for a perfect specimen, something that is difficult to attain, but which we stand a sporting chance of reaching by careful and judicious mating. Even the old winners were not perfect and would not score 100 points, but we used to get good classes of all stripes. I think the breed has suffered owing to the craze for spotted and fawn-and-whites. If fanciers will only keep the varieties separate and peg away we shall soon have some like we had five or six years ago.

The proposed testimonial to Mr. T. J. Ambrose, on the occasion of his silver wedding, is now known to all fanciers. As a judge "T.J.A." has not had very much to do with our Fancy, but as Editor of FUR AND FEATHER he has been our good friend and helper from the beginning, and I venture to hope that many Rat fanciers will take the opportunity of showing in a practical way that we recognise, and are grateful for, the help he has given us in working up our hobby.

January 10, 1913.

BIRMINGHAM MOUSE & RAT SHOW.

At the kind invitation of Mr. W. Russell, the Spring Cup Show of the N. M. and R. Club was held at the headquarters of the Birmingham Fur Fanciers' Society, Criterion Hotel, Pershore Street, Birmingham on April 20th. Excellent arrangements prevailed in the spacious club room. Mr. Russell made a most genial and painstaking Hon. Sec. He was ably supported by his son, and Messrs. Foulds, Spies, Evans and Moore, whose combined energies contributed largely to a most successful show. Mr. A. Selby-Thomas, judge:

RATS, SELF, 16: 1 Rat Breeders' cup and spl best Birmingham Rat, Foulds, large, shapely white, fine coat, clean ears and tail; 2, 3, he, c Leo Bros., pure coloured white, backs size of winner; 4th white, hardly so pure in colour; 3, spl, the Douglas and Nunn, white, nice coat, ears and tail, tails little in shape; r, spl best other than white Mrs. Collins. **JAPANESE, 9:** 1, spl, loyal cup and Child's silver medal, 2 Cottingham, very nice agouti and whites, under very level in stripe, sound colour and short ears not much between them; 3, r White, black and white, but irregular stripe; good colour and shape; 4, he Douglas and Nunn, agouti, stripe irregular and better colour; the Leo Bros.; c and spl best juvenile Rat Walton, A.O.V., 12; 1, 4 Cottingham, nice agouti, leader, excellent in colour and ticking; 2 Kilometer, two spot and headed black even, beautiful colour and condition, nice shape and eye; 3, r, he and Irish cup Foulds, good attempt at a Dutch-marked head, wants a saddle though; 4, r, he, c, spl best Leo Bros.; c Douglas and Nunn.

The election is a thing of the past, and while the club in general is to be congratulated on the result, the Rat fancying section in particular has cause to rejoice. First and foremost, our branch of the hobby is now included in the club's title; we tried to carry this through some years ago, but it was then negatived by about as strong a majority as this year has carried the proposition. The recognition of Rats in the club's title will, I think, give a great impetus to the Fancy, as in the past there was nothing to indicate that Rats came within the scope of the club, and Rat fanciers consequently were not encouraged to join. Further, the "Ratters" are now strongly represented on the executive, so that our branch of the Fancy will be pushed forward, and if, when the next club show comes round, the Rat Fancy is not booming, Rat fanciers will certainly have no one but themselves to blame. Let us make things hum; we have now such prospects as we never had before.

Another good move is that the new area cups will be awarded for combined points in Mousers and Rat classes, thus encouraging fanciers to keep and exhibit both varieties. Rats are also in future, I understand, to have a look in for the London bowl.

Mr. W. Howland writes: "I think I have seen the hybrid between a Rat and a Mouse. I have a few Mice, and wild Rats abound here. One of my silvers has been out some time. Result is that a delightful silver fawn half-sized Rat has been seen in the outhouse, but I have not been able to catch it."

Mr. F. W. Nunn also tells me that he hears a Rat with a Dutch head and several spots on body has been bred at Darlington. We are on the forward track, it is clear.

I am wondering if fawn-and-white Rats are peculiarly sensitive to damp. I have had several given to me lately, but none have done well, and several have died. Mr. Tilling, who, by the way, is at home at Hesseford once more, also writes me that on his return he found that a number of his fawn-and-whites had died; and Mr. Marriott's stock has also suffered terribly.

Of late I have been experimenting with Scott's and Angier's Emulsions as food for youngsters, the method being to give a little daily on the bread and milk, or otherwise to does with litters, and also to the youngsters when able to eat. Of the two, Angier's seems to be preferred by the Rats, and the results have, I think, quite justified the experiment, as the does keep in better condition and the youngsters make altogether finer specimens, and grow faster than those fed on ordinary food. I am wondering if the much-behanded Viral would help the Rats to withstand the ravages of damp, also whether they would take it? Has anyone tried the experiment?

Mr. Singleton's suggestions respecting club judges set one thinking. As I have several times pointed out in another column, now is the time

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

1913 was truly the heyday of the Rat Fancy, prior to the Great War, just over a year distant. As well as writing her new, regular column "Rat Resume", Miss Douglas also wrote, along with other 'leading lights' from other Fancies, a regular "surgery column", entitled simply "Rats", in which were answered the (un-printed) questions posed by other Fanciers and Novices.

A.V., 13 WEEKS, 17: 1, 4, spl, spl best team White, agouti Japanese, nice stripes and hood, though falling on throat, which should be solid; 2, vlt, he, spl, 2nd best team Foulds, three spot and hooded black even; 3 Mrs. Collins, neat black, pity the colour does not keep like this when they mature; r Douglas and Nunn; c and spl best novice Rat, Holdridge; Northern Area Points' Cup, spl best W. J. Evans; Southern Area Points' Cup, spl best entries in Mice, Messrs. Russell and Son; spl most entries in Mice by a lady, Miss W. K. Whitlaw; spl most entries in Rats by lady, Miss M. Douglas (Douglas and Nunn); spl most points in Rat classes, Mr. F. Foulds.—A. SELBY-THOMAS.

Bar the Japanese class, the entry at the cup show at Birmingham was most satisfactory, and I heartily congratulate all. I have not at the time of writing seen a detailed report of the show, but I hear that Irish Rats were very poorly represented. It seems a pity that more interest be not taken in this handsome variety, more especially as it is the only one that possesses a cup of its own. Moreover, a good one is not easy to breed, and there is plenty of interest in availing it. For the benefit of beginners let me give the Irish standards. "Head, colour (body), ears, eyes, and tail as in self blacks, fawns, or agoutis. Distinctive markings are, a white equilateral triangle on chest and four white feet. The triangle should be of good size, clear cut without fringing at the edges, and not extending in a streak down the belly. The white feet should resemble the stops of a Dutch Rabbit."

Here is something clear and distinct to breed to—and a good chance of capturing the cup to encourage one. To found a strain, mate an agouti or a self black, or a fawn, with a self white or black, etc., and white. In the resulting litter there will probably be some, at least, black, fawn, or agouti youngsters, with more or less white on the belly, and white feet. There will probably be too much white, and in the wrong place. The problem is to keep the white feet and breed the belly white back to a triangle on the chest. This will be a matter of selection, mating the youngsters either with one brother or back to the coloured parent. The second generation will probably show improvement in the matter of the white underneath, and successive matings on the same lines should produce a good strain. Care must be taken, however not to reduce the white on the feet. Hitherto dark feet have been a common failing of otherwise good specimens, while those with good stops generally continue the triangle in a streak down the belly. I commend Irish to anyone anxious to build up a useful and handsome strain, and hope we shall have a few good specimens in competition at next cup show.

I suppose everyone has read Mr. House's interesting description of Mr. Alan Roberts' achievement in breeding blue Cayics. I offer Mr. Roberts my heartiest congratulations. What specially concerns Rat fanciers in the matter is the means adopted by Mr. Roberts to produce his new variety. Also I note that blue and cream Persian Cats are nearly allied. If this holds good in Cats and Cayics, why not in Rats also? Blue and chocolate we know are both "alloyed" forms of black. Does not this suggest an idea? Most of our black Rats at present have a suspicion of chocolate in their coloring. What would be the result of mating such a Rat with a self cream or cream and white? I don't know, but the experiment is worth trying. We could do with some blues!

Mr. Cottingham writes me that he has obtained some specimens of the Old English Black Rat, "Mus Rattus." According to my experience of this variety—I had quite a number of them some years ago—they are very shy breeders, in captivity and terribly nervous. But there is no more beautiful Rat in existence, and I trust Mr. C. will meet with success. "Rattus" will be an eye-opener when he appears on the show bench, and "may I be there to see!" Good luck, Mr. C.!

The Rat fancying members of the club are steadily increasing, and I hope the new area cups will induce many Mouse fanciers to add Rats to their stud. Why should there not be as many "Ratters" as "Mousers"? Can't we get our entry into three figures by next cup show? And can't we, each of us, get one or two new recruits for our hobby during the next few months?

Classes for Rats at Bristol will be the same as at the spring cup show. I hope a larger company of Japs will be present.

May 9, 1913.

Mr. W. J. Elms inquires:—"Should the hood of a Jap. or even-marked Rat run right under the lower jaw?" This point has not been raised of late, and is not provided for in the revised standards. I shall be glad to have the opinions of breeders, so that we can decide the point and include our decision in the standards.



Communications for this column should be sent to Miss M. Douglas, Wadebridge, Cornwall.

As no notes requiring immediate attention are to hand, I don't think I can do better than proceed at once to continue Mr. Colwell's notes on White Rats commenced in the last instalment of Rat Resume:--

Re green food and water. Opinions differ as to the advisability of giving water to Rats. Personally, I found my Rats kept in better condition without water, but it would be cruel, however, to keep them without some form of moisture. I think my Rats obtained sufficient from the soft food and an occasional carrot in the cold weather. Very few days passed during the summer months without every inhabitant of my cages receiving some form of green food, chicory, lettuce, or dandelion. Frequently, the green food was substituted for the soft food, except in the case of a doe with a litter; I should not advise giving both together. Most people manage to have a little more time before breakfast in summer than in winter, give it then. My stock was seldom troubled with sore ears and tails, caused, I think, by the blood becoming overheated by giving too liberally of heat forming foods. The ideal to aim at, is the production of a fine healthy specimen, racy, sleek and fine in coat. Far too many of the Rats I have seen on the show bench, and in the mousey too, have been round, "podgy" and coarse in appearance, with hard, "spiky" quills upon the dorsal porcupine. Experiment with your feeding and carefully note results; you will soon evolve a good system if you attack it in the true fancier's spirit. How many Rat fanciers bestow as much care on their pets as do the most successful Rabbit and Cavy men? One cannot live with the stock, but a daily grooming of at least the best specimens will work wonders. Handle them daily, if possible, from earliest babyhood, place them on your arm or on a bench, brush them from nose to tail with a soft hair brush, and follow with the hand or a soft duster or selyct. Handle and stroke them as often as possible, and oh! what a pleasure for the judge no more railings about their ferocity. Really Rats are most tractable if you care to make them so.

Housing and Cleanliness.—My stock was never elaborately housed. I could not rise to anything approaching luxury, so simplicity of structure and easy access to all parts were chiefly considered. Cube sugar loxse or empty tea chests, with an additional floor, with door covered with fine mesh wire-netting attached to the whole front, make cosy homes, easy to clean, and giving plenty of air space. A thin board of hard wood three or four inches wide let into slots inside the lox, will keep back the sawdust, and prevent the Rats from littering your floor. I believe in movable nest boxes, and strongly recommend them, as they can be removed wholesale for examination of litters or cleansing purposes. Straw has been recommended for the nest boxes, but I prefer coarse hay, and the Rats will probably eat some of it. Fine clean shavings make a nice warm nest, and Rats like to play with them. As all Rats unfortunately make their nests very dirty, it is absolutely essential that constant attention should be paid to the nests if your stock is to be kept wholesome and sweet. White Rats stain easily, and the nests should be changed as often as possible, but at least twice per week. Pitch pine sawdust, or white dust with an occasional sprinkling of one of the recognised disinfectants should be sprinkled on the floor of the nest, with a plentiful supply of clean sawdust for the run.

White Rats are not so pure in colour as albino Mice, a distinct yellow tinge on the extremity of hair on back and flanks, being all too common, whilst the coat is generally too long and thin. The former most certainly can be cured, by careful selection in breeding, selecting the shortest in coat and purest colour to breed from. Feed liberally, but carefully, mating only when the stock is in good form, and keep your stock in clean, wholesome surroundings. There is no royal road to success, but be patient, consistent and painstaking, and your stock will eventually do you credit. Many notes on Rats have appeared in "F. and F.", and I apologise if these notes in any way repeat the advice tendered in these columns in the past, my only excuse being that some little seed lost by the wayside may now fall upon good ground. If any fancier, however, wishes for further information upon the subject, I shall be only too pleased to enlarge upon any point and give him the benefit of my experience so far as I am able.

To the above I venture to add one comment, viz., that I believe Rats do far better without any description of nest-box. A heap of dry bedding in a corner of the cage, varying the amount to suit the weather, is, in my opinion, more sanitary, and better for the youngsters also, as they can crawl in and out at will.

November 12, 1913.



FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 1913.

Mouse and Rat Fancies' Loss.

What will become of the Rat Fancy? This was the first thought which entered our mind when Miss Douglas informed us that she will shortly be leaving these shores to take up work in South Africa. Miss Douglas has worked so hard and unceasingly in the cause of the Mouse and Rat Fancies, that her place will, indeed, be hard to fill. Since she took over the duties of secretary to the National Mouse and Rat Club, that organisation has made good progress. Her enthusiasm is of the kind that infects, and many have been drawn to give their services through her influence. As a regular contributor to the columns of "F. and F.," we know her writings have been much appreciated by our readers. But for her continual plodding there is no doubt that the Rat Fancy would have gone out of existence long ago. As it is, this section of the Fancy is now a fairly lively member.

A New Leader Wanted.

We are confident, however, that fanciers will not allow the good work done by their secretary to come to naught. As Miss Douglas says, it may be that her departure will induce many to come forward to the front of the battle, who would otherwise never have done so. Several have already promised to do their share, and Miss Douglas feels assured that the cause will not flag. We hope not! What is wanted is some good fancier to take the place of Miss Douglas, and carry on the good work she has been doing for so long. There should be plenty such in the Fancy to-day. Let them not hide their light under a bushel. Miss Douglas is, she says, consoling herself with the fact that no one is indispensable, yet that does not blind us to the knowledge that her place is hard to fill. But if all do their best the work will be carried successfully, and nothing will give greater pleasure to Miss Douglas than to know that the Mouse and Rat Fancies are progressing in her absence.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

Much to the dismay of not only Rat and Mouse Fanciers, but to that of the Editors of 'F & F', Mary Douglas announced that she was to take up a job in "one of the colonies", South Africa. (I have been unable to ascertain the exact nature of her work undertaken there). The Editor, again, probably J.E Watmough himself, wrote in the Leader column of 21st November 1913 about what many saw as "The Mouse and Rat Fancies' Loss". However, he needn't have worried, as so great was Mary Douglas' enthusiasm, that she wrote a regular column from South Africa!



Communications for this column should be sent to Miss M. Douglas, Wadebridge, Cornwall.

The new varieties, I am pleased to see, continue to make progress. We have now both P.E. and B.E. self fawns, tawn-and-whites, B.E. self cream and also a third colour, which I am at present calling biscuit. This colour is lighter, and has less yellow in it than fawn, and so far I have not seen a self specimen—only Japanese. As a rule, it would be a very taking variety, but is less effective when combined with white, though still very pretty.

We are promised a show to end this year, and another to be in 1914 well, viz., Ripley (Derbyshire), on Dec. 27th, and Stratford, on Jan. 1st. Each gives two Rat classes, and I hope will receive good support. A few specials would be appreciated.

I am wishing that Rat and Mouse fanciers would take a leaf out of the Rabbit and Cavy men's book and send "F. and F." plenty of letters on points connected with our varieties. I am sure it would do the Fancy good if they would do so.

In another column I am making an appeal on behalf of club funds. Club show left us badly in the lurch, and there are other expenses to be met for medals, printing, etc. I ask all Rat fanciers to put their hands in their pockets and be generous.

This damp weather is very liable to produce colds among the stock. I have lately been experimenting with Zambuk, well rubbed into the top and sides of the nose, and believe it used when the cold begins it will prove a useful remedy; it seems to do some good also to a chronic case on which have been trying it. A valuable preventive is to change the straw, etc., frequently. It gets damp very quickly in this weather, and is then an excellent developer of colds.

I have lately been giving the youngsters a more generous diet than I think is usually adopted, adding bones, scraps of meat, and Angier's Emulsion to the menu. They seem to thrive splendidly on this augmented diet, and promise to develop into fine specimens. Size is a point to which need to pay attention now, as the greater number of Rats now exhibited leave a good deal to be desired in this respect. One reason of the deterioration is probably breeding too much with closely related specimens; another is breeding at too early an age before the Rats are fully developed; a third is working the does too hard, and not allowing them sufficient rest between litters; and a fourth is allowing them to bring up too many youngsters in each litter.

Mr. T. C. Wilkinson writes: "My young ones just after being taken from their mothers, become ill. The fur between the hind legs becomes wet and brownish. This wetness, in some cases, extends up to the throat. What is the cause and remedy of this?"

I shall be glad to have the opinion of others on the case.

We need the names of several more fanciers who are willing to serve in the various offices. Don't be afraid to offer; by doing so you are giving solid help to the club. Please write me at once, so that voting papers may be prepared in good time.

As another instalment of Rat Resume will not appear before Christmas, let me now offer my heartiest Christmas greetings to all Rat and Mouse fanciers. May it be a very happy season to all.

December 19, 1913.

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

OUR issue of Dec. 26th will be published on Monday Next, Dec. 22nd. All literary matter and Advertisements for that issue must reach us by first post on the late date.

1d. FOR TWO WORDS

This is the rate for small Prepaid Advertisements. No charge less than 5an 6d.

"FUR AND FEATHER," IDLE, BRADFORD



FRIDAY, AUGUST 14, 1914.

The War.

Our heading is somewhat trite, but it is expressive, and it is that of which we are about to speak. From the signs which we see around us we are afraid that some of the leaders of the Fancy are losing their heads. This is no time for panic. It should be the aim of every man and woman rejoicing in the name of Briton to, as far as possible, live and move as if the war had no existence. Those who do go about in this spirit will be doing their country's work as effectively as her sons who are fighting for her against the enemy. We give to-day a long list of fixtures which are abandoned, some, months ahead. This is folly. Nay, worse, it is madness. If we would encourage those who are doing their country's work on land and sea, we should let them see that we at home have neither fear nor alarm in our hearts. This will encourage and cheer our sons who are fighting for us, even as it will dishearten and discourage our enemies. Britain's worst foe just now is panic, her best ally confidence, the confidence of a people determined to go about their work as usual. Let us copy the Belgian professors and students who put through an examination, and then went out and faced the Germans. An example of calmness and courage that will live in ages to come.

Its Effect on the Fancy.

The war is certain to effect the Fancy adversely, even as it must affect many phases of our national life, but thus far we are pleased to know that the entries have not been largely affected, nor has there been much difficulty in getting exhibits to and from the shows. Members of our staff were engaged last week in the North, South, East and West, and not one of them experienced any difficulty in reaching the different points, transit being open and regular. Those who are responsible for the carrying out of show fixtures should, if it is at all possible, go on as if nothing abnormal existed. Many of our people will be depressed and saddened by the war and its effects, and if all means of recreation are taken from them they will give way to the saddening influences surrounding them, therefore, everyone who tries to lift the burden of life, and draw the thoughts of his fellows from the war will be doing good work. It may be that financially the fixtures may be a loss, but if economy is practised in carrying out the details of management even this may be avoided. But above and beyond any question of loss we should all endeavour, so far as we possibly can, to fulfil all our obligations and duties as if the war had never started. Our Penistone friends have given a grand example of how to act. Penistone Show will be held on Thursday next, and the profit, if any, given to the war funds. Well done, Penistone.

Concerning Ourselves.

The war has affected the newspaper trade of the country most seriously. Much of the news paper used in Britain comes from Germany, Norway, and Sweden, whilst quite two-thirds of the wood pulp from which paper is made by our British makers comes from the same countries. These supplies can no longer be drawn upon, and we are dependent upon Canada and Newfoundland. As a consequence, a large number of papers have already suspended publication, others have decided to appear at longer intervals, whilst those still running have had to reduce the number of pages, and omit certain regular features. We are amongst the latter, and we are sure we shall not ask the indulgence of our readers in vain when they miss things they expected to find in our columns. In common

with our contemporaries, we must practise economy and husband our resources until such time as the war is over, and the paper supplies are again normal. From the course things are taking that will be much sooner than a week since anyone could have dared to hope. We are proud of our Belgian and French allies.

Table Rabbits at the Dairy.

We are very pleased to hear that Table Rabbits will again figure in the schedule of the big Dairy Show, to be held in October next. This is a splendid opportunity of bringing home-bred Table Rabbits before the public. Thousands of people visit the Dairy Show, and much can, therefore, be done to break down the prejudice which exists against hutch bred Rabbits. The classes will be: "(a) Couple of Flemish, Belgian or Flemish-Belgian cross," and "(b) Couple of any other other variety." The Rabbits must be sent killed and paunched, but not skinned, and the British Dairy Farmers' Association have accepted the amended standard of the British Table Rabbit Association, Ltd., which was recently published in our columns. It will also interest breeders to know that at the nomination of the Association Mr. Childs has been appointed judge of this section. Breeders should generously support the above classes, and it will not be out of place to point out that exhibits should be born on or after June 29th to qualify for entry, as 16 weeks is the age limit.

Dog Fosters Cavies.

Some remarkable incidents have been brought to light of animals adopting young of another species, but the case cited below will take beating. It is vouched for by the writer, Mr. W. H. Love, of Neath. He says:—

We often hear of youngsters being reared by foster mothers, but seldom do we hear of Cavies being fostered by a dog. A week ago Mrs. Love sold to a friend two Dutch-marked Cavies, one month old. They were taken home and placed in the box with Mr. O'Neill's Pekingese bitch, whose pups had been recently taken from her. To the owner's surprise they started suckling the bitch, who took to them quite kindly.

Appointment of Judges.

It used to be considered an honour to be invited to judge a show, but the position of judge is fast losing what honour attached to it. We hear of men offering to judge for nothing, and to give specials out of their own pockets in addition. Now we hear of a secretary of a specialist club seeking to use his position as such to be appointed as judge. We have before us a letter from a prominent fancier to the secretary of a show. We suppress the names of persons and places, but all are well known. The letter runs: "Dear Mr. —, I have had some communication with our secretary of the — Club, and he is willing to guarantee four classes and give two silver spoons. Mr. — would judge, and take other classes. He would require his out-of-pocket expenses."

How Is It Done?

This is prostituting the office of judge. This Mr. Blank would guarantee four classes and give two specials, and then, as if that was not enough inducement for him to be appointed, we find he would only require his out-of-pocket expenses. Now how is it done? The man in question is a business man, but he buys and sells stock, also exhibits! How can he afford to give his time and services, and travel 400 miles, for his out-of-pocket expenses? Are the rewards of judging for nothing more remunerative than judging for a fee? It seems so. How, and where do they come from? Who pays them? In some cases both the successful and the unsuccessful exhibitors. The former in presents to such judges, or by purchasing stock from them, and the latter in not winning when they should win. It is surprising that show committees can be so blind to their interests to appoint men simply because they judge cheaply. Ability and integrity should be the first and greatest consideration in the appointment of our judges. The office would then be elevated instead of being degraded as it now, so often, is.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

One of the saddest days in the history of the twentieth Century was the outbreak of the "War to end all Wars", also known as "The Great War" and, twenty-one years after, the "Second World War", as the first did not end all wars. It was also a sad day for the Fancy World, and indeed, many small clubs and Societies in the British Isles. As the Leader column of August 14th. shows, many Club Committees panicked - as well they might - and cancelled a large number of shows. It was fortunate that, thanks to the advice of those such as the Editors of 'F & F' this trend did not continue, as the War was not "all over by Christmas" as many thought. As well as giving such timely advice, the Editors still were able to expose what they termed "The prostituting of the office of Judge." Strong words on both counts...



OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS OF THE BRISTOL MOUSE AND RAT CLUB.
 Top row (left): Messrs. G. Bush, P. T. Bond, J. Ranahan, and F. Burgess. Middle row (left): Messrs. H. Buer, H. Bryant, E. Bryant, E. Gazzard, W. Wait, and E. Thornell. Front row (left): Messrs. W. Brewerton, A. Bond, H. Leakey (sec.), and W. Cunneber.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

Bristol, England's "second city" was perhaps the "capital" for the Mouse and Rat Fancy, with its very own Bristol Mouse and Rat Club (Left).



Communications for this column should be sent to Miss M. Douglas, Wadebridge, Cornwall.

At the time of writing Bristol results have not reached me. The last time I heard how entries were coming in the Rats left something to be desired. Ratters! Don't leave the game to just a few players; and you Mousers who have also a few Rats, do let them have an airing. The cricket season is coming on, let's all play the game for all we are worth and see if we can make "Ratland" the champion county!

By the way, we want some shows to cater for us in May and June. Does anyone know of a society who will give us classes?

Mr. H. C. Brooke writes that some time ago he had a black *Decumanus* doe which he obtained from the Zoo. He says: "She was a perfect terror. I kept her with a *Rattus* buck but she terrorised him and he died at last, when I found she had injured his jaw and the teeth not meeting had grown like the sketch. I have the skull now."

The sketch sent me showed a tooth starting from the front of the upper jaw, curving round under the lower jaw and almost reaching the eye.

How about photos for the Special Longtail Number? Time is passing and the editor will be pleased to send terms to all. It is up to us to make the thing a success you know, and it is worth an effort for the help it will be to our hobby.

Mr. Marriott's account of how fawn rats originated—quoted from the "American Naturalist"—is interesting.

The first Rat with any semblance of fawn in it that I had was caught in a trap on a provision merchant's premises in Chesterfield. You could scarcely call it a fawn but more of a cream or dirty white. I have also had four others similar to this one, two caught at the same place and two caught at a millhouse in close proximity to the other premises (in all three bucks and two does, but the only one that I was able to get to breed was the first brought to me which was a buck. When first caught it was very wild, in fact, it appeared to me to be more wild than an ordinary wild Rat. It was a source of trouble getting it to mate, killing no less than twenty does before mating. I eventually got it mated to two does, one a pure white for at least ten generations, and one black-and-white hooded and striped or Japanese Rat. The result of the pure cross was two young, a buck and a doe, which were agoutis with no white at all. The result from the Japanese cross was seven young—five does and two bucks—which were the colour of Irish agoutis, being agouti colour with a white stripe running underneath. These results naturally caused me great disappointment as I was expecting a fawn coloured young one. When the young were old enough I mated father and daughter, result, all; mother and son, result, all. The brother and sister mating from the pure white cross produced two fawn coloured Rats, a buck and a doe, and five agoutis. The brother and sister mating from the Japanese cross produced two fawn-and-white Japanese, one cream-and-white Japanese, one black-and-white Japanese, and four agoutis. The fawns and fawn-and-whites resulting from these crosses were much deeper in colour than the wild grandaere. Mated one with another they gave a proportion of about two fawn coloured or fawn-and-white in seven young. I may say in conclusion that the original wild Rat was in shape of body, skull, etc., as the ordinary brown or agouti Rat that we have running wild in this district.

IN THE FIRING LINE.

A WHITE RAT IN THE BATTLE OF MONS.

The only white Rat that is known to have taken part in the battle of Mons, the Marne, and the Aisne, is at present recuperating in London. Her name is Billy—but she is a lady Rat, in spite of her name—and she is generally to be found in the daytime inside the sling that carries the right arm of Corporal Johnson, of the Royal Field Artillery.

At night she sleeps in his cap. Billy's part in the battle of Mons was that of an outlooker. The Germans were too far off for her to have a chance of coming to close quarters. So she just sat on the line of Corporal Johnson's right boot for a few moments and watched the battery fire.

"I lost him twice during the battle of Mons," Corporal Johnson told a "Daily Express" representative "once for half an hour, but each time he came back again and perched on the toe of my right foot. I suppose he wanted to see the German shells!" The corporal always calls Billy "him," although "he" is a she. Billy is, or was, a French white Rat. She became British when a battery of the R.F.A. landed at Boulogne, at the beginning of the war. "A French girl gave him to me," Corporal Johnson said, "and she cut off a bit of my overcoat to keep instead. Billy and I became fast friends. I have had eighty days at the front, and Billy was with me all the time. My right-hand pocket was his motor-car and his tent. He played a trick on me at Mons, for he ate half the bully beef of my three days' emergency ration, and left me the biscuits; but ever since then we've shared alike, and when I get a lemonade Billy has his drink from the glass. He gets nothing stronger, as I am a teetotaler."

Corporal Johnson's battery was in the fighting all the way from Mons to Melun, south-east of Paris, and back to the Marne and the Aisne. He is "No. 1" of his gun, and nearly every day fired about 100 shells. "Billy" was in his pocket all the while.

"He was like me on the first day we got into action—scared," said the corporal. "He hopped about in my pocket all day, and tried to get out, but I kept him buttoned up."

"After that we were both all right, and he took no more notice of the noise or the shells than I did. He never got hurt, in spite of all the knocking about."

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

One bright spot in the many sad articles in which the loss of so many young fanciers was highlighted, is a remarkable story right from the front line - featuring a White Rat no less! One is only left to conjecture as to how a White Rat found its way into the dreaded trenches at the battle of Mons. (Left) Mary Douglas, writing as ever, under "Rat Resume" includes an article by famous Fancier Mr. Marriott detailing how the first so-called Fawn Rat was discovered in a Provisions shop in Chesterfield (Right).

EVOLUTION OF BLACK-EYED WHITE RATS



Communications for this column should be sent to Miss M. Douglas, Wadebridge, Cornwall.

Some three months ago I sent a card to Dr. Hagedorn to express a hope on behalf of the Fancy that all was well with him and his stock in these times. On my return from Newquay Show I received the following reply, posted on December 12th, so it was nearly a month in reaching me.

You must excuse me for not yet answering your kind card. I intended to, but I wanted to let some skins dry before sending you them, and then I forgot to do it. In ERB AND FEATHER I read about the success of Mr. Brooke's Rattus at the first show. If I did not judge the crossing too risky just now, I would have sent some of my own Rats. I am now sending you a few skins, so that you can judge of the new kinds, and give us your opinion about the name the blue, or silver, should have. The entire skin is that of our fawn silver doe, which had just reached breeding age, when one of our dogs managed to break into the ratery, and smashed its cage and killed it. As it was the only Rat of its colour we possessed, you can imagine how glad we were, when, about a week later we discovered that a litter of three youngsters born of its parents, turned out as one chocolate and a couple of this new colour. As Rattus does not over-reproduce as mothers, we took the three away and had them reared by a fawn fawn Japanese doe. The two silvers are about half-grown now; but the little chocolate doe has mysteriously disappeared. However, we have two does of that colour now, one about full-grown and the other about ten weeks old. Our cinnamon-agouti doe is now nearly full-grown, too. I am glad to say that as yet I have no chocolate or cinnamon skins to send you for inspection. We have quite a number of yellows now, and we can now breed as many as we want. As yet we have not sold any of them. I think it would be a good plan to make up a small collection of different Rattus, say a couple each of fawn, grey-bellied agouti, white-bellied agouti, light black, and jet black; and advertise the lot to be sold "en masse." It may be that I will have to cross to England in the early spring, and if so I could perhaps bring over a lot of Rats and dispose of them in England.

The skins duly arrived with the letter. That of the Rattus (Old English Black) was similar to the specimens exhibited by Mr. H. C. Brooke, as also was the Alexandrine. Others were a specimen of Rattus Teretiorum, which is like the Alexandrine, on the upper parts of the body, but white, instead of grey bellied. The white fur is clearly and sharply defined, and does not shade off into the colour. The yellow Rattus is similar to our fawns, but there is a bluish shade which is not present in the yellow or fawn Decumanus variety. The new colour which Dr. Hagedorn calls silver a hardly, to my mind, expressed by this term, although it is possible that the silvery shade is more apparent in life. In the dead skin the colour is, I think, better expressed by the term, "Dove" or "Biscuit." It is a beautiful soft colour, darker on the back than elsewhere, and a suitable eye-catcher.

I hope many of us will be able to secure specimens should Dr. H. bring them over. They would be an addition to our hobby and its possibilities well worthy of our Coming of Age year. And the supposed difficulty of taming them has been proved by Mr. H. C. Brooke, to be wholly imaginary, so no one need hesitate to start with Rattus on that score!

Mr. W. Mackintosh Kerr is to be congratulated upon opening up this perplexing subject, and although his ideas appear to me absolutely beside the mark, yet I respect his line of reasoning, and, meanwhile, offer any apologies for refuting same. In the first place, inherent colour centres in different sub-genera differ most widely in their localisation, and it is unfair to generalise even between musculus and rattus. The two subjects present quite different material. Professor Allen's principles are well known to many Mouse fanciers, but these do not apply with the same weight to Rats.

As one of the founders of a strain of Dutch-marked Mice with saddles as high up as their prototype, the Rabbit, it is perhaps wise to say that in the production of this strain the difficulty was not to get the side patches functional, but to reduce and keep within bounds their excess of pigmentation. This is the reverse of Mr. Kerr's idea. Where present-day fanciers, and, for that matter, those of the past, have made the error of their lives, is that they have endeavoured to produce a divergence of characteristic from stock in which their present type of markings has been fixed and perpetuated by in-breeding. The difficulty to be overcome is thus heart-breaking, and the patience, and time required altogether prohibitive. By far, the "shortest cut" is the crossing of distinct strains, thus letting loose the law of variation. Then a methodical system of selection will rapidly collect, or eradicate desirable or undesirable qualities, and ensure success.

To outcross with "pure-bred whites" is suicidal undoubtedly. No white has been known that did not possess some recessive colour. All whites are extracted from coloured stock, are due to imperfect pigmentation, and retain all the colours in a dormant mood of the strains they spring from. Countless generations of breeding inter-so will not eliminate these qualities. The absurdity of suggesting their use as a means of "breaking up," or diluting coloured strains must be absurd. Loss of stamina due to in-breeding is not proof of the weakness of the system, or that in-breeding in itself is responsible for any of the ills that follow. It only points to the weakness of the conductor of such system. Stamina, size, intelligence, reproductions, and every other desirable trait can as easily be cultivated by in-breeding as the loss of such.

Mr. Albee's endeavours and the supposed sylvatic cross are also well known to most of us, but at the same time the evidence to-date, is far from being conclusive. The same results are equally as possible with musculus, and, to my mind, much more probable. "BYSTANDER."

March 12, 1915.

PROPOSED BLUE CROSS SHOW

Though several Red Cross shows have been held in various districts for Rabbits, Cavies, Mice and Rats, I do not think there has been one in aid of the funds of the Blue Cross Society, which does for the horses what the Red Cross does for the soldiers. The sufferings of sick and wounded horses must, I am sure, make a special appeal to the minds of fanciers. With the co-operation of my friend, Mr. H. C. Brooke, of Tregonissey, St. Austell, I therefore propose to run a Blue Cross Show, probably in May, and for this I cordially invite the help of fanciers in every branch of the Fur Fancy. I should like to see them all represented. To make the thing a success—indeed to make it a possibility, unless on a very small scale—pecuniary aid is needed, and the object of this preliminary letter is to invite all fur fanciers who are interested in the object, to write either to me or to Mr. Brooke, stating what help they are willing to render, either in guaranteeing horses or in a pool guarantee for general expenses, which will be kept as low as possible. I know it will be said we are too far West; I admit it, but we can't help this and there is a good train service to Wadebridge by two railways. I also invite the co-operation of the various specialist clubs, as well as of individual fanciers; if we all pull together we ought to be able to raise a useful sum. For the sake of the horses, then, fanciers, I appeal to your liberality.

M. DOUGLAS, Hon. Sec., National Mouse and Rat Club, Wadebridge, Cornwall.



Communications for this column should be sent to Miss M. Douglas, Wadebridge, Cornwall.

It is seldom that I get the chance to see any Rats except my own, but in the last few weeks I have visited both Mr. Tilling and Mr. H. C. Brooke and had a good look round their stock. Of Mr. Tilling's I fear my recollection is a bit hazy, but as half-an-hour or so before I was there I had had a spill out of a trap, and was consequently feeling a bit shaky, perhaps, this is excusable. Hagedorn is a very pretty place—when you get there—but, oh dear, the hills! I can't describe them in polite language, so won't try.

But the Rats were beauties, we had most of them out to handle, and they were tame as kittens. Mr. Tilling swears by Moxey as soft food, says he knows of nothing to equal it as a conditioner, and certainly the general appearance of the stock bears out this statement. There were some lovely fawns and fawn Japs and other colours also.

In addition to the Rattus and Alexandrine, which have been so often described that there is little left to say about them, Mr. H. C. Brooke makes a speciality of even and broken-marked Rats. Of these he has a large assortment and though he has not yet achieved the ideal Dutch head he is well on the way to the goal. In his ratery small heads covering the head only are too numerous to mention. Several specimens have a well defined blaze running between the ears nearly, or quite, to the level of the eyes; others have a white star on the forehead. He is fortunate in owning a buck with small head, blaze, three spots under and no spots on back, who seems to possess an unlimited power of string youngsters with similarly broken heads, so we have good grounds for hoping that the ideal Dutch head is within measurable distance. Then the saddle will have to be got!

A curious point about these Rats is that they develop small spots on the body long after the coat has appeared at an age of several weeks in fact. One or two which had developed spots in this way were shown to me and some which, when I saw them a fortnight ago, had pure white bodies and small heads, have since that time, I hear, developed small spots on the body.

Mr. Brooke has also a flourishing family of Egyptian spiny Mice, one of which captured 3rd prize in A.O.V. class at St. Austell. They are a very pretty variety, blue in colour, with stiff lighter coloured "spines" or stish bristles in the fur on the back. They are larger and have bolder eyes than the ordinary Mouse, and are, I understand, quite easy to keep and breed. I commend them to "Mousers" and hope the variety will be taken up. A peculiarity of the variety is that they are born with their eyes open, or, at any rate, have them open within 24 hours of birth.

As my work for the Blue Cross seems likely to develop into a big clerical job instead of going about—which, on Cornish hills and with Cornish disappers, takes too long to be paying—I shall probably be chiefly at home again, and so can come more get up my stock of Rats. I shall, however, be leaving Wadebridge for good in the course of a few weeks, but new address will be duly advertised in PUP AND FEATHER.

JULY 18, 1915

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

Miss Douglas, tireless as ever, threw herself into voluntary work for the Blue Cross during the War's second year (1915). One of the fund-raising ventures that she urged Fanciers to support (and successfully so) was a show in aid of the Blue Cross (Left). Also, at this time much headway on new varieties of Fancy Rats was being made and detailed analysis printed (Above Left).

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SAM SMART ON AFFECTIONATE RATS.

"Miss Douglas is quite right, Parker. There is a more affectionate pet than a Rat. Of course, they sometimes overdo it, like Jack Brown's sister." "How was that," asked Parker.

"Why, aunt you heard!" replies Sam. "It was like this! Jack was very fond of his sister, and being a bachelor, thought he knew the way to catch other people how to be happy though married. Of course, if he'd been a married man he'd see too busy trying to find out for himself. So he tells his sister to try and be bright and happy, and always to meet her husband with a smile when he came home from his work, and then they'd be happy ever after."

"She was a nice jolly girl, and her husband a good sort, although he was a little irritable sometimes, so it worked all right for a bit. One day he had been playing cards with "lucky" Jim, and, of course, he'd lost, and comes home feeling very irritable; he'd just got indoors and taken his right boot off, when his wife comes into her room all smiles; so he ups with his boot and lings it at her, saying, 'Who are you grinning at?'—She'd overdone it."

"As I was saying," Sam continued, "Rats are very affectionate. Jim Smith had heard about it, so he buys a couple 'cos, being a bachelor and living alone, he felt a bit lonely like. He found them rather savage at first, but after a time they were quite pleased to see him—when he went to feed 'em, in a short while they were so tame he used to take them out on the table while he had his meals; and they would 'beg' quite nicely for little dainty portions of his food. He used to leave their cage door open for them to go in and out as they liked. You never see'd such a fuss as they made when he came home—they'd have pulled his slippers to warm before the fire, and as soon as he put the latch-key in the door, scamper along the passage to meet him, run up his legs on to his shoulder, and begin to kiss him. As soon as he'd settled in the armchair, they'd untie his bootlaces, come running to him holding his pipe in their tails, and were as affectionate as a bride on her honeymoon. It's true he felt they were rather making too free when they made a nest in the corner of the chest of drawers with the seal of his Sunday trousers, and gnawed their way into the cupboard to see what he'd got for dinner."

"Opening his door one evening, expecting to be welcomed by his beloved Rats, he was struck by the silent stillness of the house. 'Ah!' he said, they are waiting behind the door to surprise me, but no, hunt where he would they weren't to be found. Suddenly he noticed he'd left the trap off a drain in the scullery, and he knew the worst. Sorrowful and broken-hearted, he went to bed. Parker, it is difficult for you and me to understand Smith's unreasonable sorrow, as day after day passed without news of his lost treasures, 'cos we've never felt the all-powerful affection that can only exist between Rats and the men they love. But we can understand his unbounded delight on going home about a fortnight afterwards to find his pets in the passage in spite of their bedraggled appearance. However his joy was quickly turned to amazement on going into the parlor to find the welcome he received from the hundreds of friends and acquaintances they'd brought home. It appears his Rats had spread the fame of his kindness and generosity throughout the Rat Kingdom. So the house was full of drain Rats, upstairs and downstairs, all anxious to show their affection. However, when Smith failed to live up to his reputation, the disappointed Rats first killed those that had misled them, and then turned on poor Smith, and he had to flee for his life, which only shows, Parker, that those who love the most, hate the most."

Parker could only murmur, "Rats!"

July 9, 1915.

OLIVER JONES.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

It is hard to say whether the above article by Oliver Jones is in favour of, or against Fancy Rats. If it is in favour, then it is most humorous. If not, and it is "poking fun" at Fancy Rats, one can only assume that Mr. Jones was, to say the least, unenlightened.



Communications for this column should be sent to Miss M. Douglas, Wadebridge, Cornwall.

I regret to learn that Huckleall, as well as Darlington and Newton-le-Willows was as frust as far as Rats were concerned; so much so that the classes were cancelled at Huckleall and amalgamated at Newton. This is hard to understand, as at the present time the Club includes more ratters in its membership than at any previous time; besides the old hands there are a number of beginners. Most earnestly I appeal to one and all to do their best to support shows as they come along. Most of those now being held are the fruits of the efforts of a few fanciers to help the club. Work and reasonable expenditure are gladly undertaken, but it is up to everyone to do his or her bit to help by seriously trying not to let any show pass without at least one entry.

Now please make a good effort to make the Summer Cup Show which is being run at Stoke Newington by Mr. A. E. Baker and a few other friends a real success. One or two can't do it even if they send every Rat they can find a cage for—but if all will send one or two exhibits it will be a good show. Please buck up.

By the way I shall be glad to hear of once from anyone willing to join up in a paid guarantee of the Rat classes at Stoke Newington. The classification will be found in specialist club column.

Otherwise ratting prospects are rosy. I understand that Sir Chand Alexander has bred a chocolate Rat, and as Mr. Tilling and I both have some specimens of his strain we may hope that the advent of the chocs. on the show bench is not far distant.

Black-eyed whites are also on the road. Mr. H. C. Brooke has recently bred some youngsters in which the colour is reduced to a minimum and I have one, not yet moulted out, which if not quite a B.E. white, is so light a cream that I am at present unable to determine whether it is white or cream. In either case I can take no credit for it, as it is the sole survivor of a litter which it was hoped would be black Irish. Mother Nature does not always work on the lines we suggest to her!

Several medals and spoons are overdue. It is now very difficult to get them and the stock is out. I presume the makers are engaged on munition work of some sort, so will those kept waiting for their just dues please blame German Willie.

September 10, 1915

LONDON MOUSE & RAT MEMS.

THE "LONG TAILS" TO BOOM IN THE METROPOLIS

I hear that Mr. Baker, of Stoke Newington, has had a litter from his chocolate Rats, and that there are seven of the youngsters of various shades of chocolate, three of which Mr. Baker thinks will turn out good ones. I cannot understand the difference of opinion with regard to the colour of the two adults. Mr. Selby Thomas at the club show called one of them a good attempt at blue, and I hear that Mr. Kilminster, judging at Gloucester, thought it was a poor black. I have seen both in daylight, and say they are undoubtedly chocolates, the doe being of especially deep and rich colour.

Mr. R. Blake, who is at present working on munitions at Woolwich, has joined the London Mouse and Rat Club. He called on me to-day, when we had a pleasant hour with the stock. Unfortunately he is not in a position to keep a stud, but is anxiously waiting for the time when he can get back home to make another start.

During the week I had a call from another Mr. Baker, of South Tottenham. He has been a breeder of live stock for some years, and takes a deep interest in the Fancy. Nothing satisfies him but the best, and he is after the best in Mice now, and promises to join the club at an early date.

A whisper reaches me that two fanciers of former years are coming back to the fold, viz., Mr. Matthews, of Reigate, and Mr. L. A. Barnett, late of Horseley, now of Spencer Street, E.C. Strange how the "long-tails" held one when once the interest has been captured. Welcome back friends. The Fancy is going to boom in London and district.

T. PATTERSON RIDDLE.

A. ril 7, 1916.



Communications for this column should be sent to Miss M. Douglas, Wadebridge, Cornwall.

Mr. S. J. Reynolds writes:—

"The other day I was talking to a lady about colour breeding in toy Poms, and I told her about colour breeding in Mice, and how successful Rat breeders have been the last year or two. When I mentioned chocolate, she said she had a chocolate and white Rat quite 8 years ago. I asked her how it was marked, and she said it had one Dutch cheek, a large spot on the centre of its back, and a spot on the root of its tail. I didn't believe it at first, as I understood Rats with broken hoofs, and especially Dutch checked, are of quite recent origin. But when I contradicted her she was quite annoyed. She had seen it advertised in "The Lady," and had sent for it as a curiosity. She was quite sure of the colour, which she said was rich and dark. I thought perhaps it was a white that had been dyed, but that made it worse than ever, as it had black eyes. I should be glad to hear your opinion on the matter. The lady said it had a very rough coat, was very wild, and eventually escaped."

I see no reason to doubt the account of this remarkable specimen; it is only a pity it did not fall into the hands of a fancier. It may have been a freak, or have belonged to a strain now extinct. For instance, some 14 years ago I saw, in Worcester, some beautiful black broken marked Rats, the spots or patches being of good size, well broken up, and covering the whole body. There was a whole litter of them, but I foolishly did not secure them at the time, and was never afterwards able to trace them. Well, as the rhyme says,—

All that other folks can do

Why with patience may not you

Try, try, try again!

Now Rat fanciers, just a word of earnest appeal to you to make our section a real success at Club show, of course it is too late to start breeding for it now; that, no doubt, is done. But let us all do our best to fill the classes—don't let 'em "stick at 6." These are bad times, but where there's a will there is generally a way, so let us each and all, as I don't doubt we have the will, try hard to fill the classes, even if we make a sporting entry to do it.

This is—or should be our birthday show. The circumstances prevent us from celebrating the event as we should wish, a big disappointment to the old hands, but we can at least celebrate the occasion by making the very biggest entry that our pockets, stock and cages will allow. Quite a lot of new fanciers have joined this year. I hope each and all of them will try their luck at Bristol. "Nuff said." You'll do your best, won't you?

"Keep on Advertising."

Presiding at the meeting of A. F. Pears, Ltd., on Oct. 29th, Sir T. R. Dewar said: "If you keep on advertising, advertising will keep you. It would be suicidal to depart from that policy which has proved a success."

Fanciers should lay to heart these words of wisdom from such a successful business man as Sir Thomas Dewar, who further said that the result of the policy he advocated was that September was a record month in the history of A. and F. Pears, notwithstanding the world-wide dislocation caused by the war. With Sir Thomas we say—

"Keep on Advertising."

RAT RESUME

Communications for this column should be sent to Miss M. Douglas, St. Feep, Lostwithiel.

Will correspondents please note that I am back at Wadebridge, and expect to be here for some time to come.

The remarks on "Ratters" in Mouse Memo on June 2nd are a bit drastic and rather liable to rub my eye in the wrong way, though, if I read them aright, they are not written in any unkindly spirit, but rather are they intended to buck us up a bit. I know that I, for one, have been, apparently, a slacker, but for months past I have been very hard worked and have had but little time or spare energy for Fancy matters. Had I been a little less keen on them when I am I might have been tempted to give up until better days return, but I shall hang on and try to do my bit as well as circumstances will let me.

"Is the time not ripe for a Specialist Club for rats only?" In my opinion, "No. Emphatically not!" The present time, with many away from home in the Army, Navy, or other forms of war work, is no time for disturbing an existing club or starting a new one. The Rat Fancy is the letter for the support of the Mouse Fancy, and the Mouse Fancy in no way suffers by reason of the club including the Ratters. Further, quite a number of "Mousers" now include Rats in their stock, and if the two varieties of longtails were to be severed it would make it necessary for those to pay two club subscriptions instead of one, which would scarcely be helpful. Moreover, it would follow that the Mouse section would lose members as there would be no object in those who keep Rats only, remaining in a club which did not cater for them.

As for supporting shows, here I must admit that there is room for improvement, and I earnestly appeal to every fancier who owns Rats to make an effort to send one or more of them to every show that caters for us. But thirty-three Rats in five classes is not so much worse an average than 157 Mice in 4 classes that there is a great deal of room to ramble.

With regard to the show promoters who "intend to drop Rat classes in future," they are fanciers, and therefore I feel certain that I need only suggest to them that such a course would be neither generous or sportsmanlike, for no sportsman hits a man when he is down. The Rat Fancy, like most other fancy's, is passing through a bad time, but our motto is "Resurgam"—I shall rise again—and we look confidently to more prosperous fanciers to give us a helping hand by providing classes for our raties. Near do we ask this as beggars. More an once I have said, both publicly and privately, that I will be responsible either alone or in a pool with other Ratters who have promised their support, for guaranteeing two or more Rat classes at every show which caters for Mice, and here and now I put this statement. This will, I trust, remove all for all any objection that any society or individual show promoters may have had to catering for Rats, and I earnestly hope that at the Mouse shows which are now being arranged classes for Rats, under the conditions offered above will be added.

It only remains, I think, again to ask every Ratter step into the breach and help to hold the fort. I have a few nice youngsters nearly ready and shall be pleased to send a pair to any Mouser who will take a pair to his or her stock—and show them! Also shall be glad to hear from anyone who will join the guarantee mentioned above; many hands make light work, and what might fall heavily on two or three will be a trifle divided amongst a number. Let us all pull together and then when the better days which we all hope are not far distant come at last our hobby will come out triumphant and we shall appreciate it the more in that we have not been it the "fair weather friends" whose faith and friendship fail in time of adversity.

July 6, 1917.

RAT RESUME

Communications for this column should be sent to Miss M. Douglas, Wadebridge, Cornwall.

In the last Rat Resume, I replied to the paragraph containing an apparent attack on our section in Mouse Memo of June 22nd. I have since been assured by the writer of the par in question, that it was written "not with any ill-feeling or prejudice on the matter, but simply asked a few questions for the sole purpose of rousing up the Rat Fancy a bit.

Here I should like to say that, in anything I have written on the matter, I did not and do not, of course, regard it in anyway from a personal point of view. The fact that I am a ratter and have worked hard for the Rat Fancy, has, so far as I can see, nothing to do with the case. It is the Rat Fancy, one of the most interesting of live stock hobbies, that we are out to protect, and it is up to us Ratters to see that no show committee has even the ghost of an excuse for omitting our section. It should be a matter of course that every show which caters for Mice should cater also for Rats; such is as much a part of the Club as the other.

In a recent circular to the committee I called their attention to the subject; one and all plumped for the Rats, and Mr. J. E. Wright, referring to the omission of Rat classes from several recent shows, says, "let fanciers know that I am not a party to this. While I am in the Fancy I can assure you that anything I can do to further the interest of Mouse and Rat fanciers I shall only be too pleased to do.

Other members of the executive express similar views, and we may rest assured that there is no fear of a split in the camp. In the words of the old song we are all "pulling hard against the stream" and it is up to us, one and all, to do our best to keep things going and to help the whole Fancy, not only the particular variety that is our own chief personal interest. We should each and all do our best to get shows, and if we are so situated that we can't do that, we can at least try to make one or two entries at every show that is arranged by others.

An old friend of my father's, at a meeting, the members of which were not quite agreed as to the course to be pursued, remarked, "Well, gentlemen, if we don't all hang together, we shall all hang separately." That's our case, too, I guess.

This brings me to a par. of quite a friendly nature in Mouse Memo, July 13th, inviting us Ratters to join with the Mousers in arranging a guarantee fund for future shows. The very thing! The only comment I feel bound to make is on the remark that "let fanciers are somewhat shy in asking show committees to include Rat classes. Not at all! But as Rats belong to the Club as much as Mice do, classes for them should be as much a matter of course as classes for Mice; as well leave out classes for—say—Self Mice, as classes for Rats! If it would be absurd and unfair to leave out one, it is equally so to omit the other.

Here I may say that for months past I have had so little spare time that it has been almost impossible for me to arrange shows, which, as secretary, of course, I ought to have done, and I heartily thank those who have stepped into the breach and catered for us. Also here in Cornwall, I am quite out of the track of shows and long-tail fanciers—Mr. Tiling and myself are the only active ones in the county. I am, therefore, heavily handicapped at the best of times in my endeavours to secure shows, and shall welcome every help from fanciers more conveniently situated in this respect.

However, this is straying from the subject of guarantee. Yes, I heartily welcome the suggestion of a united guarantee fund, and feel sure my fellow Ratters will do no likewise. I have already received several promises from Ratters to join in guaranteeing classes, and I now ask all who have not already done so to give their help. The matter, if we all help, will be a mere trifle, probably not more than a few pence apiece for each show, and if we all make a few entries it won't amount even to that, for the classes will be filled.

Why should we not all, Mousers and Ratters, carry out Mr. Matthews' excellent suggestion of a few weeks back, viz., to contribute 1s. per month each to a show fund? This, surely, would hurt no one, and it would supply a joint fund that would carry us along without difficulty. I shall be glad to hear from all who are willing to fall in with this suggestion or who have any better one to make, and in the course of a week or two hope to be in a position to announce a definite scheme.

The Summer Open Show will be held at Botherham, on August 18th, with Mr. J. T. Midleton judging. There will be five Rat classes. Let us try to fill them all.

July 20, 1917.

RAT RESUME

Communications for this column should be sent to Miss M. Douglas, St. Feep, Lostwithiel.

Mr. R. Blake writes me that he has now joined the army. His address is "Gunner R. Blake, No. 202134, R.F.A., 35th Res. Battery, Room 6 Piershill Barracks, Edinburgh," and he hopes that fancier friends will drop him a line occasionally.

There are two new railway regulations that we must note. The first is that respecting the prepayment of all packages by passenger train. This makes it essential that in sending to shows the necessary amount for return journey should be enclosed with entry fees. Please make a note of this, and don't forget it, as we certainly can't expect any show to cater for us unless we fulfil this requirement. The amount can easily be ascertained by weighing the boxes when prepared for show and then enquiring at the station what the fare will be. Make a note of the weight and then you won't have to weigh them every time.

The second regulation is not a new one, but is new, I understand, more strictly enforced. It is that no compensation will be given for any damage unless parcels are signed for "not examined."

Mr. C. M. Matthews writes: "At present the responsibility of guaranteeing classes seems to fall on the same few fanciers every time. I suggest that members of the Club be asked to contribute 1s. each, neither more nor less, once every month or two months to provide a fund for guaranteeing classes. If only half the members contributed there would be about £3 provided, and I feel sure that every fancier not in the Army would willingly give such a small sum as 1s., so the total would probably exceed £3. Then we could have a show with as many classes as the annual show once every month. The idea in limiting the contribution is to get as many members as possible to contribute, and to increase the amount subscribed."

An excellent idea, can we work it? Opinions, please!

The other day a pair of wild Rats contrived to get into my rattery and make a nest at the back of the cages. They kept so quiet that their presence was not discovered till they had reared a fine family and brought them up to an age when they could just feel themselves. At this stage of proceedings I captured the whole lot of youngsters and put them with a doe having a couple of her own. They are doing well and are as tame as any youngsters I ever had. The odd thing is, though, that one or two of them have white feet and white on the belly. Now, ye s'monds of heredity, where do they get that white from? The parents certainly had no connection with my Rats and mine are, I believe, the first Fancy Rats ever seen in the district. In fact they are regarded as such a curiosity that numbers of people come to see them.

April 27 1917.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

As well as a great authority on Fancy Rats etc., Mary Douglas was a great diplomat, a quality most desirable in the Fancy World, even today, as in 1917. In the article dated 6th, July 1917, she speaks out against her critics and those show promoters intending to drop classes for Fancy Rats, with great tact, although her personal feelings must have been greatly hurt. She holds forth again on the same subject in the issue of 20th, July 1917. However, at this time, the decline in the Rat Fancy is apparent. Miss Douglas herself never wanted to form a separate club for Fancy Rats only.

RAT RESUME

Communications for this Column should be sent to Miss M. Douglas, Wadebridge, Cornwall.

During 1917 quite a number of new 'ratters' joined the Club, most of them have not yet done much exhibiting, but I trust that 1918 will see their stock on the show bench, and that they will save all the work to the old hands. Once again, so, I earnestly ask all ratters to do their best to secure that the Rat classes at every show shall be filled. Let us all "do our bit" towards this. The year 1917 has seen two or three real advances. A young blue Rat, said by the judge to be as good as any blue Mouse, was exhibited by Mr. Tilling. Dutch saddles have hitherto eluded Mr. H. C. Crooke, he has, after four years work, bred Rats with Dutch heads, and also hoodless brokens. Mr. Tilling has also exhibited one or two good chocolates. Perseverance conquers all difficulties; hearty congratulations to both!

I have to-day heard from 2nd Lieut. T. Robinson, King's Liverpool Regt., B.E.F., who writes: Weekly I scan the pages of 'F. and F.' for Mousey and Rat notes. We in the trenches are looking forward to the days when peace will be with us. I, or one, immediately I am free shall start again with Rats." Lieut. Robinson, it will be remembered, was the introducer of fawns.

I have also heard from Mr. Baker, now with the Motor Transport in East Africa, and as keen as ever on the Fancy; also from another enthusiastic Ratter, Sergt. W. E. J. Hoiles, R.A.M.C., F.C.O., c/o. Isolation Hospital, Mandora Officers Mess, Aldershot, who asks fanciers to write him a few lines on our hobby occasionally.

Rat Resume has not appeared often of late. I have been corresponding with the Editor on the matter and he complains that Ratters don't advertise much: "The more advertisements the more space" is the idea. I hope my fellow Ratters will note this. Since I have been running a standing dtv. I have often had more applications for stock than I could supply.

January 25, 1918.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

It is a popular misconception that, whilst J.E Watmough was alive, finance did not enter into the publication of articles in 'F & F', even for the smaller Fancies. Mary Douglas' article above disproves this theory completely.

Death of Miss Douglas.

The whole Fancy will regret to hear of the death of that good and true lover of all live stock, Miss M. Douglas, of St. Veep, Cornwall, at which place she passed away on November 26th. Though it was known to her intimate friends that she was far from well, an early end was not anticipated. Her death was therefore a shock to a great many, especially those who had enjoyed her company at the National Mouse Club's Show at Gloucester, but three weeks before. All kinds of live stock were beloved by her, but it was on Mice and Rats, the latter especially, that the bulk of her affection was lavished. What she has done for that branch of the Fancy can never be known. To her selfless and unselfish example much of the Long-tail section's success is due, and it has, indeed, lost a true friend. We can all afford to lose fanciers of such sterling character and unselfish spirit, and we can only hope that there will arise up some other fancier to fill the place of Miss Douglas. All she would wish is that the good work she has done shall be carried on just as she would have done it herself.

DECEMBER 23, 1921.

MOUSE AND RAT MEMS.

By Ralph Blake, Rock Villa, Greytree, Ross-on-Wye.

It is with unfeigned sorrow that I announce the passing of the staunchest supporter of the Long-tail Fancy, Miss Douglas, whose death took place at St. Veep, Lostwithiel, on Nov. 26th. Little did we think, when we were all so happy together at Gloucester, on Nov. 5th, that three weeks from that day she would be no longer in the flesh. The telegram conveying the sad news came as a stunning blow to me, in spite of the fact that I knew she was ill. Ten days before her death I had a card from her saying that she was "utterly cracked," to use her own words, and would be unable to undertake any club work for some time. Previously she had begged me, when she knew that I was not enjoying too good health, to send her any work that I could, to ease my duties in connection with the club.

Those whose privilege it was to know her so intimately as the writer did will realise to the full extent what a true friend we have lost. A woman of highest principles, her life was one of Christianity reduced to practice, and her only thoughts were for others. Hers was a thoroughly unselfish life, devoted to her fellow creatures and to the hobby she loved so well. It would be impossible to estimate the benefit that the club and Fancy have received at her hands, and she was, in many instances, an anonymous donor. She gave, not to seek thanks or praise, but for the love of giving and helping.

Only a few weeks ago she told me that she hoped now to take a new lease of life in the Fancy, but, alas! it was not to be. Although she is no longer with us, her name will never die. It will go down in Fancy history as one who was a true friend and the pioneer of the Rat Fancy. Her entries in this section will be greatly missed at shows, for she used to enter liberally, regardless of any returns in prize money. We who are left to mourn our loss should do our best to carry on the Rat Fancy that she loved so well, and on behalf of whose interests she gave so much time.

I have before me as I write, a copy of FUR AND FEATHER of June 19th, 1914, in which our dear friend wrote an article on "My Duty to the Fancy." I find the last paragraph reads thus:—"Then there are the novices. The time must come when the old hands will pass away, and I, for one, should not like to think that my hobby will suffer because I am gone. Nor would the rest of you. The novices of to-day are the old hands of to-morrow, who will carry on the Fancy when we lay it down, and who, in their turn, will hand it on with its traditions to others."

It was always her wish to get the Rat section as popular as Mice, so cannot we do our level best to reach her ambition? I sent a beautiful wreath from the club, and expressed the deepest sympathy from the president, officials, and members of the N.M. & R.C.

DECEMBER 9, 1921.

MISS DOUGLAS MEMORIAL TROPHY.

Every member of the N.M. and R.C., past or present, will, I feel sure, agree with me that we should honour the memory of our late friend, Miss M. Douglas, by providing a trophy in some form whether a Cup, Shield, or whatever the members consider most suitable—as a perpetual memorial and thank-offering for her many years of devoted and unselfish work in our interests. Whatever form the suggested memorial takes, it should be known as the "Mary Douglas" trophy.

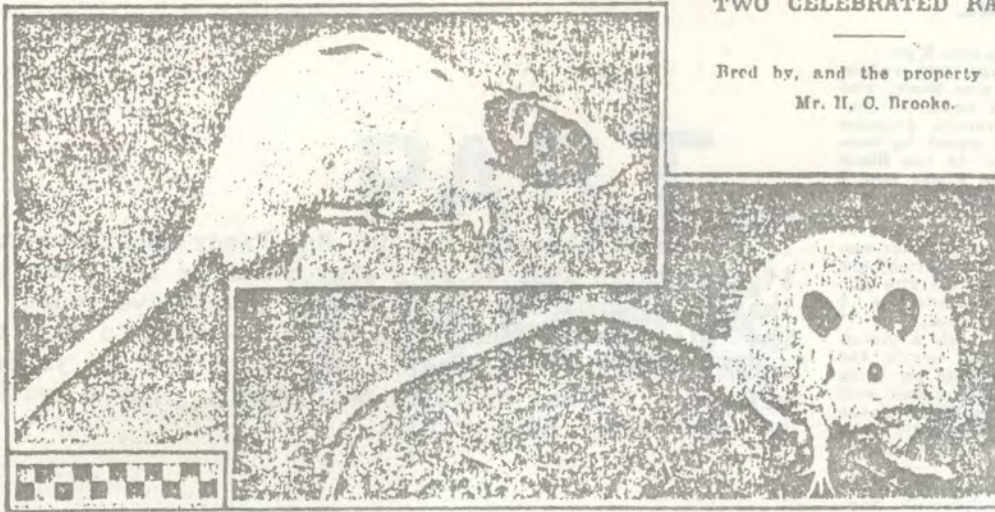
The Editor has kindly offered to grant the use of the columns of FUR AND FEATHER for the acknowledgment of donations, which may be sent to me at 42, Oaktree Lane, Selly Oak, Birmingham. When the matter has assumed definite shape, and the donation list is closed, a small committee can be formed to decide what form the "Memorial" shall take. I would ask any member willing to serve on same to be kind enough to write me to that effect.

FOSTER HACKWOOD.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

Whilst researching for this book, I found myself very caught up in the feelings of the writers and the times in and about which, they wrote. With this in mind, perhaps readers can also experience the terrible sadness that Ralph Blake, the Editors of 'F & F' and, over sixty years later I myself felt at the death of Mary Douglas. (Below left and Left). It is apparent that she was one of that rare breed of person who lived to work at what they did and enjoyed best.

Blake, the ninth Secretary of the N.M.C urged Rat Fanciers to take up the banner of the Rat Fancy. Unfortunately, very few did, a fact reflected by the absence of Rat articles in anything like the number published in earlier years.



Bred by, and the property of,
Mr. H. C. Brooke.

The young Dutch-headed Even. Has won, only times shown 1st Cardiff (Summer Cup Show), 2nd Bristol, 2nd Malleshend, 1st Gloucester, N.M. & R.O. Annual, also Medal second best Rat. The Cream, Rattus Rattus, is one of that strain, now fixed by Mr. Brooke, which is exciting the interest of naturalists all over the world. Has won (only times shown): 1st Cardiff, 1st Bristol, 1st Douglas Cup, and Silver Medal N.M. & R.O. Annual, Gloucester. It is as famous as any Fancy Rat. The photos are by Miss Frances Pitt.

MOUSE AND RAT MEMS.

By Ralph Blake, Rock Villa, Greytree, Ross-on-Wye.

I expect my readers wondered what nonsense I was writing about in my last notes about a taking new variety of reds rather like cinnamons. You must blame the aptly-named printer's devil. It was the intention of the owner to give the public the opportunity of seeing this new colour at Bradford (not for competition), but I am told that this treat is withheld until later.

A skin—not, of course, one of the best—has been sent to our leading scientist, Dr. Crew, of Edinburgh University, calls it a shade of cinnamon. The curator of the British Museum writes that he has never seen quite this colour in any animal, the nearest approach to it being the semi-albino zebras and water-buck (ruby-eyed) the museum possesses. Liverpool Museum says it is somewhat of a chinchilla, but I must say that if my Chinchilla Rabbits turn out the colour of the Rat in question, I should find a fresh name for them.

From the skin that I have in my possession at the time of writing, I am inclined to agree with our president, who says: "Without doubt it is a light-shade sable." At any rate, it is nearer that colour than chinchilla or cinnamon, and I must say that it is a really fascinating colour, and undoubtedly a genuine production, the result of careful colour crossing, not a chance-bred fute.

Before leaving a ratty subject, may I appeal to all fanciers not to do the late Miss Douglas the slight of letting the Rat Fancy go down. It was almost a life's work to our departed friend, and if we wish to honour her memory, let us keep the section going—not merely rubbing along, but flourishing.

I know this would please her more than the provision of a dozen memorials. Only the last time we met, at Gloucester, she was lamenting the lack of progress in this line. Why this should be neither she nor I could imagine, unless it was, as Mr. Mason suggests, the name Rat; but then, as the Bard of Aven says, "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet."

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I do wish the London ratters would do a little more in the way of exhibiting. When I judged a members' show of the South London Mouse and Rat Club, some eighteen months ago, I was much taken with the quality of the Rats there. I venture to say that London could hold its own with any part of the United Kingdom. Now there is yet time to enter for Bradford, so do send me a few there. I can never understand why the North has never taken to Rats quite as the South has.

The Rat, now that the good old-fashioned "man-eaters" are never seen (or felt), has everything in its favour as a fancy animal, and nothing against it, bar the fact that it is not edible, but neither is the Cat or Dog, though I fail to see why any of these animals should not be used to fill the inner man. In fact, during the great Siege of Paris they readily sold for a franc each, and warriors of the sewer at that, so why not a clean, domestic Rat?

It is singular that whilst the Long-tail Fancy thus neglects the Rat, scientists at home and abroad take such an interest in it. That eminent scientist, Professor Bateson, of the Natural History Museum, I hear, recently delivered a lecture on the Rattus varieties presented to the museum by Mr. H. C. Brooke, from whom, by the way, the Liverpool Museum has purchased specimens of White Rattus.

Never have Rats been so tame, or afforded so many varieties to choose from. Do buck up and let 1922 show some life in this section. Do not let the many years of unselfish work put in by the late Miss Douglas prove to have been labour in vain.

By the way, I hear of a strain of line-bred variegated Rats being worked up.

I must crave the indulgence of Mouse men for having so much to say about Rats this week, but I am so anxious to provide a living memorial to the memory of our late friend.

Mr. Hackwood's suggestion of a Douglas Memorial Trophy is a good one, and I trust this will materialise in the near future.

I am asked by Mr. H. C. Brooke to mention that the Brooke brace special for marked varieties of Rats is to be awarded finally at Bradford to one of the three fanciers who won it last year. May I ask those three fanciers, Mr. Doody, Mr. Parsons, and Mr. Sawyer, to endeavour to send a brace for the final?

JANUARY 6, 1922.

I am delighted to hear that Mr. Thos. Jackson, of Failsworth, Manchester, who will be remembered as the breeder of such famous self reds as Ch. Lady Firefly and Ch. Firefly Belle, is returning to his old love, Mr. Jackson says, "It is no use, I must have a few Mice, and though I have no Firefly now, I think they will come." I extend a hearty welcome back to our ranks to Mr. J. May his hopes for a few more champions be realised.

A partnership has just been established in Birmingham by Messrs. H. A. Sheffield and S. M. Frost, who will exhibit as Sheffield & Frost. The firm has my heartiest wishes for a successful career.

The same wish is also extended to Messrs. Blackmore & Son, of Bristol, who have joined forces. The last time I stared with Mr. Blackmore it was clear to me that "Dad" Blackmore was as enthusiastic as his son, so that the news of the partnership did not cause me great surprise.

I am indebted to Mr. "Tommy" Shall (the newly-elected hon. sec. of the Bristol Mouse and Rat Club) for a donation of 10/- towards the proposed new Dutch Cup. I shall be pleased to receive further contributions towards the cup. What a begger I am!

My "wind-raising" expedition on behalf of the club has just had a generous gift in the shape of a £1 note from that good fancier, Mr. F. W. Mason, of Cornhill, E.C., thus making Mr. Mason's contribution 30/-. This, and a contribution of 1/- from a budding ratter, Mr. Medcalf, of Slough, makes the fund up to £10 3s. 6d. Many thanks all round.

As these will be my last notes before Bradford, let me make this final appeal to all to enter as many as you possibly can, and thus show your appreciation of increased prize money for a decreased entry fee.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

Rats were still exhibited for a time after Mary Douglas' death by such notable Fanciers as H.C Brooke, as we can see in the photograph above. Ralph Blake meanwhile, continued to urge "Ratters" to make 1922 a Rat year to remember. (Left).

MOUSE AND RAT MEMS.

By Ralph Blake,

6, Station Street, Ross-on-Wye.

I have just had a pleasant time reading the report of the Spring Cup Show, and take this opportunity of heartily congratulating all the cup winners. I notice in Mr. Young's very brief report he mentions "1st and cup, Neale" in the Black class. If this refers to the Victor cup, I am sorry to say this young enthusiast will be disappointed, for, if I mistake not, Mr. Fordrod won this "pot" outright at the annual. I am sorry if the Victor cup appeared in the list for competition, but as I cannot put my hand on the FUR AND FEATHER containing the classification, I am not sure if it was mentioned.

I was delighted to see such a strong Cinnamon and Agouti class, nearly the largest in the show. My hopes for these varieties are being realised. I can well imagine the pleasure it gave friend Baker to sort this class out, for he dearly loves a Cinnamon or Agouti, if I remember rightly.

Heartily congrats. to Mr. King on his tri-colour that carried off the "plums." Now, Mr. K., an article, please, on how to produce 'em.

Where were all the Rat exhibitors, only Messrs Butler-Adams, Brooke, Pink and Parsons showing, and in London, too, where that stud of champion Japs, is supposed to exist, and you let all the prizes come to little Ross. But friend Parsons was pleased. He brought his case in here after meeting them off the last train. I think the neighbour thought there was a row in the house, but I was only punching Parsons on the back. I think it gives me far greater pleasure to see a young hand, whom I have started, win, than it does to win myself now.

I regret to say that the only Rat I had to enter unfortunately "kicked the bucket," and in mice, of course, I have only the "three blind ones." By the way, many thanks for the cartoon, my unknown friend. I don't recognise your writing, but I "kenned" the post mark was Nottingham, and still I am in the dark. Anyway, Mut and Jeff were at their best in the last picture.

Harking back to the somewhat apathetic ratters, it is evident now that it was not Rattus rattus that was putting the breeze up rat men, for Mr. Brooke had made it known that he was not going to show this variety. Ratters, my lads, you have got to pull your socks up. Why keep things at home to look at? You might just as well stay at home to think about business; progress would be just about as quick. Send them out fearlessly and prove to the Fancy that you are not afraid of a licking, and at the same time you might be able to show that you can win. If you don't buck up I shall have enough ratters in Ross to outnumber you. My two latest are as keen as razors. The one, Mr. Stanley Parsons (no connection, by the way, with J.P.), has recently joined the Club and hopes shortly to trot something out worth seeing. The other is Master Oswald Broad, who is a ratter all through and a sticker. That is to say, if the markings don't come in the right place he is not faithhearted, but throws his hopes forward to the next litter.

MAY 12, 1922

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

If the measurable life of the Rat Fancy was to be taken from it's birth in 1901 to it's slow death by 1923, one can see that it did not live long, a mere twenty-two years. The "Bleak Years" that were to follow were to last even longer than the Rat Fancy's life - thirty-five years, with very few Rat articles published in 'Fur & Feather', in some years, none at all!

Blake yet again tried to whip up enthusiasm amongst Rat Fanciers in his article dated 12th. May 1922. The apathy with which his requests and entreaties were met was quite amazing. Obviously, along with fanciers such as H.C Brooke, there were still a few loyal Rat Fanciers. One can now only wonder what became of young Master Oswald Broad, the budding "Ratter" so glowingly described in Blake's article (Left).

It was the end of an era and the beginning of a very dark era for the Fancy Rat and the Rat Fancy....



MISS M. DOUGLAS, THE HARD-WORKING HON. SECRETARY.