

PART FIVE

THE RAT

RESURGENCE

1974-1981

"Are Rats getting a fair deal?"

- Joan Pearce and Geoff Izzard - "Rats", 'Fur & Feather'
22nd, January 1976

"I will admit... I rocked backwards and forwards in my
rocking chair and wheezed 'Aaah, I see'd it all before.'
and concluded it was another flash in the pan. But I
was wrong."

- Eric Jukes - "The Time is ripe for a resurgence in
Fancy Rats" - 'Fur & Feather' 7th. July 1977

THE RAT RESURGENCE

(1974 - 1981)

The latest, current (and hopefully, permanent) Rat revival began quietly in 1974. Mr. Geoff Izzard, a Herpetologist, had kept Fancy Rats since 1963 as snake fodder, although he had kept a couple as pets, as had his daughter, Yvonne and found them to be excellent in this respect. So, in late 1974, he entered a few Fancy Rats in classes staged by the Mouse Section at the prestigious "all Fancies" show, the London Championship Show, held at Alexandra Palace, North London, hoping that he might meet a few people with an interest in Fancy Rats. However, there was only one other Rat exhibitor, Joanna Hill, although she was a Fancier of Mice as well as Rats. Mr. Izzard did, however, make contact with a prominent member of the London and Southern Counties Mouse Club, Albert Collins, who pointed out to him that he could exhibit Fancy Rats at L & SCMC shows and also shows staged by the Harlow and District Rodent Society, of which he was a leading member. With this in mind, Izzard departed after the show and missed his bus. Whilst waiting at the bus stop, a lady came up and admired his Rats which were in a cage on a trolley. Both got talking and the lady introduced herself as Mrs. Joan Pearce, a teacher from Abbey Wood, South London and declared her interest in Fancy Rats, as she had recently undertaken a teaching course in which Fancy Rats were used as classroom pets. Wanting to obtain some for herself she had come to the show hoping to find some, as Pet shops were no help whatsoever. The following year, 1975, having bought some Rats from Mr. Izzard, Mrs. Pearce showed a great interest in Fancy Rats and they both exhibited regularly at L & SCMC and H & DRS shows, albeit mainly against each other. At that time, the number of varieties of Fancy Rat numbered slightly more than the number of exhibitors; four!

Towards late '75, a leading Mouse Fancier, also interested in Fancy Rats, Jon Strutt suggested that Geoff and Joan should place an advertisement in 'F & F' calling on any would-be Rat Fanciers to come forward and, if the response was favourable, form a separate club just for Rats. This was duly carried out, and a few replies received. So, on 13th. January 1976 a quorum consisting of Geoff Izzard and his wife Marion, Jon Strutt, Joan Pearce and geneticist Roy Robinson met at the Izzard's home in Surbiton, Surrey and formed the "National Fancy Rat Society".

From then on, things began to escalate. The first 'Rat Exhibition' was staged the following week at the Bradford Championship Show at the kind invitation of the Show Director, Brian Emmett. Amongst the Rats exhibited were some of the new Rex (curly coated) Rats bred by Roy Robinson. All the Rats were shown in small plastic 'Standard' fish tanks, a move that was publicly praised in 'F & F'. The 'Standard' tank was duly adopted as the standard N.F.R.S show pen - a great improvement on the large wooden Maxey cages of many years ago. The first exhibition was well received and by April, the N.F.R.S was ready to stage the first "Rats only" show, which took place in Clymping, Sussex on 24th. April and was a great success with 25 exhibits. At that time the old Edwardian Standards of Excellence were still being used but, on the advice of President Eric Smith who judged that first historical show they were amended and updated - a practice that still continues from time to time as Fancy Rats are bred in superior type. In 1977, Eric Jukes helped the Rat Fancy tremendously by reprinting an updated version of his 'Origins' series in 'F & F', which, at that time was fortnightly and full of Fancy news. In 1978, Geoff Izzard found a new show venue in Surbiton, which was retained regularly for several years. He also was instrumental in starting the first regular N.F.R.S newsletter. Albert Collins was the first Editor, handing over to Mr. Izzard in 1979. In late 1978, a number of Himalayan Rats were imported from France by the Society. Also in late 1978, member Helen Dagg from Lancashire formed the Northern Counties Fancy Rat Society, a well-intentioned move, but, in the Author's opinion, not the time for two Rat Societies. After three shows and a general decline in membership the N.C.F.R.S was defunct by late 1981. Membership grew fast and in 1980 several new venues were used and the Executive Committee increased. The post of Standards Officer was created and taken by Miss Ann Storey, a self-taught geneticist, as there were so many new varieties of Fancy Rat. In early 1981, 'Fur & Feather', now in glossy and commercialised format ceased publication, a terrible blow for the small Fancies, especially as 'F & F' became 'Rabbits' and 'Cats' for the two most powerful Fancies. However, the National Fancy Rat Society did not suffer greatly from the loss of 'F & F'; its demise coincided with that of the publication of the first issue of the N.F.R.S' own new journal; "Pro-Rat-A".

The resurgence, as Eric Jukes termed it, continued....

Show reports

NARROW TOWN ENTRY DOWN

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

Geoff Izzard had been exhibiting Fancy Rats at shows run by the Harlow and District Rodent Society for some months before the large Harlow Town Show in August 1975. (Left).

Mr E N SMITH'S CLASSES

HARLOW SHOW on August 24 was well down in entries on last year, only two rail entries Mr and Mrs Marriot, and Larry Heywood. Our thanks once again to them for their trouble and expense in order to support this show. I am afraid some southern fanciers who usually give support to this show were absent: Sunday is generally not a good day for a show and I understand next year this may be changed to a Saturday. Albert Collins also believes he should have had the schedule printed in FUR & FEATHER instead of asking folk to send for one. Albert and his wife worked hard all day writing the prize cards and dealing with the general public who showed a lot of interest in the exhibits and asked a lot of questions.

AGOUTI or CINN Ad 3: 1 K Branston, Cinn, very good top, could be brighter under, in tip top condition 2 J Steer, Agouti, falls mixing, fair around eyes 3 M A Collins, Cinn, rather patchy 8 wk 1: 1 K Branston, Agouti, nice little mouse, coat could be brighter CHIN or FOX Ad 1: 1 J Steer, Chin, rather too light top, a little thin under 8 wk 1: 1 J Steer, Chin, could be darker, sound white under ARGENTE Creme ad 3: 1 2 3 M and A Collins, wonderful type, very good white under, falls moult across shoulders 2 falls white under, uneven top 3 falls under and moult AOV 8 wk 1: 1 A D Jones, Longhaired white, very nice coat of good length and density, falls a little colour CHAM ad 11: 1 K Branston 2 M and A Collins 3 J Steer 8 wk 2: 1 A D Jones 2 J Steer SATIN Self ad 7: 1 2 A and G Cooke, blue, best all round, good sheen 2 PE golden, falls under 3 J Steer, white, rather uneven 8 wk 4: 1 2 A and G Cooke, PE gold, what a good one, wonderful sheen and real gold, what a pity had moult on head 2 blue, also very nice, white tip to tail 3 J Steer, white, fair all round Tan ad 1: 1 J Steer, argente, not yet ready for showing, poor tan 8 wk 1: 1 J Steer, dove, a lot of work still to be done, poor tan AOC Ad 1: 1 A and G Cooke, gold, white rump, what a good effort, first Satin rump I've seen, well done 8 wk 2: 1 2 A and G Cooke, argente, rather uneven, good sheen AC Chall ad 9: 1 2 3 A and G Cooke 8 wk 7: 1 2 A and G Cooke 3 J Steer TAN Black or choc ad 2: 1 Mr and Mrs Marriot, black, good top colour, sound tan 2 L Heywood, black, good top and tan, best feet, slight moult 8 wk 3: 1 L Heywood, black, good top level tan 2 3 Mr and Mrs Marriot, blacks, nice all round, little between, top colour seemed dull Cham or silver ad 13: 1 3 J Steer, cham, wins on tan, rather dark top colour 2 L Heywood, fair all round cham 3 cham, falls tan 8 wk 3: 1 J Steer, cham, best condition, very good tan, dark top 2 L Heywood, cham, looked a little rough, good tan, dark top 3 Mr and Mrs Marriot, dark for a silver, fair tan AOC Ad 1: 1 L Heywood, dove, looked rough, not in condition 8 wk 3: 1 2 M and A Collins, doves, fall tan and moult 3 L Heywood, blue, falls top colour and tan AC Chall ad 6: 1 Mr and Mrs Marriot 2 L Heywood 3 J Steer 8 wk 6: 1 3 L Heywood 2 J Steer. E N SMITH

Mr G SQUIBB'S CLASSES

HARLOW DESERVED more support. A good show, nice tent, one of the largest I have seen for a mouse section, well organised by Albert Collins. It was a pity more fanciers did not give their support. The mice were a mixed lot. Selfs on the whole fairly good, one or two in most classes stood out, making it very difficult in the challenges. Marked were few and only fair.

SELF White or Cream 8 wk 1: 1 A D Jones, Cream, very good mouse, best in show, only fault slight moult on head Black or Blue ad 2: 1 2 E Branston, Blacks, nice doe, only a few tan hairs, one of the best I've seen 2 few more tan hairs than winner 8 wk 1: 1 E Branston, Black, falls white hairs on flanks, otherwise good all round Cham or silver ad 1: 1 A D Jones, Cham, very good little doe, best adult, only fault slight moult on head which seemed to be a common fault on a lot of the mice 8 wk 1: 1 M and A Collins, Silver doe, good colour except white tail root and nose AOC Ad 2: 1 1 M and A Collins, Silver doe, good colour off, good type 2 K Branston, Red, falls white hairs in back and type 8 wk 2: 1 M and A Collins, Dove, racey little doe, dark 2 V Feuill, Red, not in same class as winner, out of condition AC Chall ad 4: 1 A D Jones 2 E Branston 3 M and A Collins 8 wk 5: 1 A D Jones 2 E Branston 3 M and A Collins DUTCH or RUMP WHITE Ad 4: 1 2 A and G Cooke, cinn Dutch, fair saddle, good colour and condition 8 wk 3: 1 2 A and G Cooke, argente Dutch, fair saddle, better head 2 cinn Dutch, beaten saddle BROKEN or HIMALAYAN Ad 1: 1 E Branston, Broken, 7 spot black, only fair, small mouse, rump solid AOV MARKED Ad 1: 1 E Branston, black even, 8 spots, brindled spots 8 wk 1: 1 E Branston, agouti, even spots tending to run together AV MARKED Chall ad 6: 1 2 3 A and G Cooke 8 wk 4: 1 A and G Cooke 3 E Branston AV Breeders ad 23: 1 K D Jones 2 M and A Collins 3 Mr and Mrs Marriot Supporters 26: 1 3 M and A Collins 2 J Steer HDRS Members 20: Repeat Grand chall ad 33: 1 A D Jones 2 J Steer 8 M and A Collins 8 wk 24: 1 2 A D Jones 3 E Branston AV Doe 6: 1 A D Jones 2 E Branston 3 M and A Collins Buck 8 wk 5: 1 2 A D Jones 3 M and A Collins Breeders 8 wk 16: 1 A D Jones 2 E Branston 3 M and A Collins Juvenile 1: 1 V Feuill, Red, rough coat, out of condition Stud buck 13: 1 E Branston 2 3 M and A Collins Doe 8 wk 11: 1 A D Jones 2 E Branston 3 M and A Collins RAT Self ad 3: 1 2 F Field, cream, coat moult in class 2 very large patch of fur missing Marked ad 2: 1 2 G Izzard, hooded, nice colour, fairly good markings 2 not as well marked 13 wk 2: 1 B Watson, hooded, well marked, small moult patches 2 G Izzard, hooded, moult, markings uneven and patchy AOV Ad 1: 1 G Izzard, silver fawn, best rat, good colour, superb condition AV Chall ad 6: 1 3 G Izzard 2 F Field Stud buck 1: 1 G Izzard Supporters 4: 1 B Watson 2 3 F Field HDRS Members 7: 1 2 G Izzard 3 F Field. G SQUIBB

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

Classes for Rats were also included at the Greenwich Town Show in September 1975. (Below). Greenwich was destined to become one of the National Fancy Rat Society's main shows in later years. As we can see from both reports, Rats were very few in number, variety and classes. Note that the breed name of "Japanese" was still in use at this time. A nostalgic note about 1925 can be seen below left.

GREENWICH

FOR ONCE in a while it did not rain at Greenwich show on September 13. I have attended these shows for several years and it is usual for the crowds who visit to have to contend with rain and also wind, gale force at times. For some reason the crowd seemed smaller, maybe the rail and bus strikes had something to do with this. However, in the mouse tent we had a goodly gathering. The mice on show were, except for the few, only average. Best in show went to an Argente Creme, wonderful type and condition, owned by M and A Collins.

TAN Cham or silver ad 2: 1 J Steer, cham, top colour rather dark, some moult 2 A D Jones, silver, good tan but top coat with marks 8 wk 1: 1 J Steer, silver, good top colour and tan, moult on head Black or choc ad 1: 1 M Bloom, black, good top colour, fair tan, falls feet 8 wk 3: 1 2 M Bloom, black, good top colour, fair tan, good feet 2 black, falls tan 3 M and A Collins, choc, falls tan, top colour too light AOC Ad 3: 1 3 A D Jones, dove, very good tan and top colour, slight moult on head 2 C Simmons, cin, nice top, good tan, falls type 3 dove, moult on head, falls top colour 8 wk 1: 1 M Bloom, dove, good top colour, slightly rough 2 C Simmons, agouti, falls under, poor tan AC Chall ad 8: 1 A D Jones 2 C Simmons 3 M Bloom 8 wk: 1 J Steer 2 3 M Bloom CHIN or FOX Ad 2: 1 J Strutt, Chin, bright top, even tipping, good colour under but could be richer 2 J Steer, Chin, falls under, brown tinge to top 8 wk 1: 1 J Steer, falls under, fair top AGOUTI/CINN/SABLE Ad 7: 1 K Branston, Cinn, nice top colour, pretty good under, good condition 2 C Simmons, Agouti, small for adult, falls under 3 J Steer, Cinn, coat seemed rather dull 8 wk 7: 1 R Holland, Cinn, falls under 2 C Simmons, Agouti, falls under 3 K Branston, dull coat, poor under SATIN Ad 4: 1 2 J Steer, Ivory, best satin shine on coat, well furred under 2 Ivory, falls under, rather thin 3 J Hill, Ivory, coat not even AOV Ad 10: 1 M and A Collins, Argente Creme, best in show, in real show condition, very good type, very fit, beautiful top and pure white under, only fault slight moult on head 2 A D Jones, white Longhair, very nice indeed, long silky coat, rather small for adult but young 3 M Bloom, Argente Creme, some moult, falls under 8 wk 8: 1 3 J Campbell, Silver Gray, very good even coat carried well under 2 M and A Collins, Argente Creme,

falls under, young, should improve 3 Silver Gray, not so level as first but still a good one Chall ad 21: 1 M and A Collins 2 A D Jones 3 K Branston 8 wk 15: 1 3 J Campbell 2 M and A Collins RATS Self ad 6: 1 2 3 Mr and Mrs Bennett, white, a grand rat, so clean, good colour and type, a treat to handle, best in show 2 white, also a good one, falls size 3 black, a good try, coat uneven 13 wk 1: 1 Mr and Mrs Bennett, fawn, nice all round, handled well Marked ad 5: 1 B Watson, well marked fawn Japanese 2 J Pearce, fawn Japanese, falls on markings 3 G Izzard, not so well marked, looked rough 13 wk 6: 1 J Hill, black Japanese, very good markings, only young, should make up wall 2 J Pearce, fawn Japanese, falls markings 3 Mr and Mrs Bennett, Japanese, falls markings AOV Ad 2: 1 2 G Izzard, Silver Fawns, very good all round 2 bigger but not so even AC Chall ad 13: 1 Mr and Mrs Bennett 2 G Izzard 3 B Watson 13 wk 8: 1 J Hill 2 Mr and Mrs Bennett 3 J Pearce London members: 1 J Hill 2 3 G Izzard Doe: 1 J Hill 2 3 G Izzard Stud buck: 1 G Izzard 2 3 Mr and Mrs Bennett. E N SMITH

OCTOBER 30, 1975



Fifty years ago

MR AND MRS MARRIOTT were winning with PE Whites and Champagnes and were successful in getting mouse classes included in the classification of Boston and District Fanciers show.

There was the National Mouse and Rat Club and also the Northern Mouse Fanciers Club, the Southern Mouse Fanciers Club, the Self Mouse Club, the Marked Mouse Club, the AOV Mouse Club, plus various local clubs throughout the country.

Bristol was a hot bed of mouse fanciers and had a Bristol Mouse and Rat Club.

The Northern Fancy Mouse Association, president Joe Wood, had a balance in hand of £15, subscription 5s (25p).

The Yorkshire Mouse Club subscriptions 2s 6d (12½p) was running shows in Shipley.

Mr A L Edmondson was responsible for securing a mouse section for the first time at the Royal Lancashire show.

It was reported that no NMC books existed prior to 1922 having been destroyed by fire while in the hands of a previous secretary.

Rats

ARE RATS getting a fair deal? We have exhibited and displayed Norwegian rats at a number of shows and have found an increasing public interest. But shows, including rat classes are so few.

If more publicity could be given about rats the rat fancy might get a fairer deal. It might not be widely enough known that fancy rats exist in a range of colour and markings and are easy to rear and handle.

JOAN PEARCE AND GEOFF IZZARD

JANUARY 22, 1976

National Fancy Rat Society

APRIL 24. Exhibits twenty-five. Entries eighty-one. Best in show G Izzard. A well run show with a good entry, and supported by fanciers from far and wide, and not an easy venue to get to. Rats are certainly finding more followers. Judging was to new NFRS standards which I think will have to be amended before generally accepted.

SELF Ad 4: 1 G Izzard, albino rex, rather small for adult, good curl, fair colour 2 M Izzard, albino rex, falls colour and short tail, good curl 3 J Pearce, choc rex, very small 13 wk 1: 1 J Vet, cham, short tail, falls under MARKED Ad 14: 1 S G Izzard, argente, lovely rat with little to fault, good top and under, very fit, perfect condition, shows well 2 B Watson, argente, smaller than first and not so good under, but very good rat indeed 3 hooded argente, will win a lot of classes, falls a little on marking, grand rat 13 wk 7: 1 2 G Izzard, argente, very nice baby, falls colour to adults but will make a good one 2 hooded, falls a little on markings, saddle rather too wide 3 Miss Fenton, hooded cham, falls markings AV Chell ad 16: 1 G Izzard, argente, went on to win best in show 2 B Watson, argente, second best in show 3 hooded Kitten 13 wk 8: 1 2 G Izzard 3 Miss Fenton AA 25: 1 3 G Izzard 2 B Watson Pet 6: 1 Mrs Woodward, wins well, very fit, shone like silk 2 B Watson, also in fine form, wonderful condition 3 Pardoe, another rat looking fit and well. E N L SMITH

MAY 13, 1976

Southern topics

THE LONDON and Southern Counties Mouse Club held its final table show before the summer on Saturday, June 5, at Richmond Community Centre. Entries were absolutely magnificent at nearly 700.

Congratulations to Eve Branston on winning best in show with an adult Even—not an easy variety to breed successfully.

SELF Pink-eyed White ad 4: 1 P Woolford 2 R Holland 3 J Parsons 8 wk 5: 1 2 P Woolford 3 A Collins Black or Blue ad 2: 1 2 E Branston 8 wk 4: 1 2 J Strutt 3 E Branston Champagne or Fawn 8 wk 4: 1 2 A Collins 3 E Jukes Cream or Silver ad 9: 1 3 J Moss 2 A Collins 8 wk 8: 1 J Strutt 2 3 A Collins AOC Ad 2: 1 P Woolford 2 J Parsons 8 wk 4: 1 R Holland 2 3 J Parsons AC Chell ad 19: 1 P Woolford 2 J Moss 3 A Collins 8 wk 21: 1 3 P Woolford 2 J Strutt TAM Black or chocolate ad 3: 1 J Moss 2 P Cox 3 J Steer 8 wk 8: 1 G Squibb 2 3 L Cox Champagne or silver ad 3: 1 3 E Jukes 2 Wickham Stud 8 wk 3: 1 Wickham Stud 2 3 E Jukes AOC Ad 6: 1 Wickham Stud 2 R Holland 3 J Moss 8 wk 7: 1 Wickham Stud 2 R Holland 3 J Steer AC Chell ad 12: 1 J Moss 2 E Jukes 3 Wickham Stud 8 wk 18: 1 G Squibb 2 3 Wickham Stud DUTCH or RUMP WHITE Ad 4: 1 2 A and G Cooke 3 P Cox 8 wk 4: 1 2 3 A and G Cooke BROKEN or HIMALAYAN Ad 1: 1 E Branston 8 wk 3: 1 J Strutt 2 3 E Branston AOV MARKED Ad 3: 1 2 E Branston 3 T Jones 8 wk 2: 1 2 E Branston AV MARKED Chell ad 6: 1 3 E Branston 2 A and G Cooke 8 wk 6: 1 E Branston 2 J Strutt 3 A and G Cooke SATIN AC Self ad 9: 1 J Mills 2 A and G Cooke 3 J Woolford 8 wk 4: 1 2 A and G Cooke 3 F Pranti AOC 8 wk 5: 1 3 F Pranti 2 A and G Cooke AC Chell ad 11: 1 J Mills 2 A and G Cooke 3 J Woolford 8 wk 9: 1 2 A and G Cooke 3 F Pranti AGOUTI or CINNAMON Ad 4: 1 3 J Parsons 2 G Squibb 8 wk 6: 1 2 3 G Squibb PEARL or SILVERED Ad 7: 1 3 P Cox 2 E Jukes 8 wk 3: 1 2 3 E Jukes ARGENTE or ARGENTE CREME Ad 2: 1 D Woolford 2 F Pranti 8 wk 8: 1 2 J Hill 3 J Parsons AOV Ad 7: 1 M and J Coppens 2 G Squibb 8 wk 7: 1 M and J Coppens 2 G Squibb Chell ad 18: 1 M and J Coppens 2 G Squibb 3 J Parsons 8 wk 20: 1 M and J Coppens 2 G Squibb 3 E Jukes AV Grand chell ad 56: 1 E Branston 2 J Miles 3 A and G Cooke 8 wk 73: 1 A and G Cooke 2 E Branston 3 M and J Coppens Stud buck 15: 1 M and J Coppens 2 J Moss 3 J Parsons Brood doe 15: 1 P Woolford 2 E Branston 3 J Moss Breeders 8 wk 65: 1 A and G Cooke 2 E Branston 3 M and J Coppens Supporters 64: 1 P Woolford 2 J Miles 3 M and J Coppens Juvenile 20: 1 R Holland 2 J Moss 3 J Woolford Novice 19: 1 2 3 J Moss Unstandardised 2: 1 J Strutt 2 J Miles Pet 1: 1 J Parsons Selling class 2: 1 E Branston 2 J Strutt RAT Ad 1: 1 G Izzard 13 wk 7: 1 2 3 G Izzard Chell 8: 1 2 3 G Izzard.

MARY DOBSON

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

The very first mention of the new Rat Fancy just after the formation of the N.F.R.S is seen here, written by founders Geoff Izzard and Joan Pearce.

National Fancy Rat Society

THE NATIONAL Fancy Rat Society held its first ever show at Clymping, near Littlehampton, with the kind co-operation of the Southern Hamster Club who made us very welcome. I feel I must say thank you to Mr Eric Smith (our president) for his kind remarks and for undertaking the judging for us free of all expenses.

I should also like to thank our hard-working secretary/treasurer, Joan Pearce, for her support with the stewarding, etc. and for those of our members who travelled considerable distances to exhibit and help. It was most encouraging to find local people turning up on the day with their pets and to enrol several new members. We shall continue to run a pet class at all shows under our control.

Although my friend and fellow member Albert Collins does not say so, there will be a Fancy Rat Section at Greenwich on September 11, also at Harlow on August 29. There will also be classes at Dagenham, Southsea, Guildford and, of course, the London Championship. We hope also at Bradford in 1977.

On behalf of the Society I have written to my local MP and to British Rail regarding the cessation of livestock carriage (except for the favoured few) as from July 1 next. It seems fish will continue to be accepted—good luck to them—presumably because they do not have to be fed. But neither do mice, rats, hamsters, gerbils, cavies, rabbits. We ensure that sufficient food and moisture, in the form of carrots, are placed in our rat containers and surely this is the case with the other small livestock I have mentioned. Tropical fish would die if exposed to very low temperatures—coldwater fish would die if exposed to very high temperatures. Our small mammals can stand such extremes for limited periods if packed appropriately. We must fight this further infringement on our liberties. It could kill our smallest shows. It must not happen! Surely we would all be willing to pay a bit more if really necessary.

GEOFF IZZARD

MAY 27, 1976

JULY 22, 1976

National Fancy Rat Society

IT WAS nice to see one of our members writing an article on the fancy rat and our thanks to FUR & FEATHER for publishing. The article was very comprehensive and most interesting. We have had several enquiries as a result. Well done Alan, but please not 'male and female' but 'buck and doe'. We are also trying to popularise the name 'kitten' for the babies—they are so playful they do remind one of kittens.

A word on the REX RAT may not be amiss at this point. I will not go into the origin of the variety but would like to explain that the variety is far from perfect, although well established. With the exception of the albino Rex, which is the only type worth showing at present, the coats are inclined to be rather thin in places, especially on the shoulders and the colour goes somewhat 'rusty' during the moult—sometimes bald patches appear at this time and the fancier is likely to give up in disgust. However, with a little patience, the coat grows again but we are not satisfied with the colour and there is a lot of work to be done on this variety. Here is a challenge for the patient fancier.

The rex coat in the Norway (Fancy) Rat is heterozygous—rex coat to normal should produce 50% of each—rex to rex 75% rex and 25% normal. This is different to the mouse where the F1 generation are all normal coated.

GEOFF IZZARD

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

The historic first N.F.R.S show (and possibly the first ever "Rats Only" show) was held on 24th. April 1976 and well supported. (Above Left). The London and Southern Counties Mouse Club, as ever included classes for Rats at their shows.

The fancy rat

PEOPLE THINK of rats as dirty and vicious. And this is not true.

Wild rats can never be tamed as they are too highly-strung and ferocious. They will go to the back of the cage startled by every noise, frightened by every moving object.

Domesticated rats are very different. They are clean and tame. They are bigger than mice and gerbils.

Rats don't smell, are very easy to feed and are intelligent.

The younger the rat the easier it is to tame. Try to get a rat about one month old just after it has been weaned. You can learn a lot from where you get your rat. The dealer shouldn't hesitate when putting his hand into the cage. Rats that are not kept clean are prone to disease.

A cage 24in long x 12in wide and 12in high will house a pair of rats or a female with her babies. Fill the bottom of the cage with sawdust, wood-shavings and hay for the nest. The cage should be cleaned out once a week. Every two weeks wash the cage thoroughly with hot water and disinfectant. Let it dry thoroughly before putting your rat back into the cage.

Hamster food which is already prepared can be used to feed rats. They will eat most foods. Bread soaked in milk is very good, especially for pregnant females. A piece of carrot or apple will be welcomed, but don't give too much as it can cause diarrhoea.

Feed at regular times. Rats seem to have built-in timepieces. All mother rats feed their babies at the same time.

There should always be fresh water as they drink quite a lot.

Rats' teeth are growing all the time. A beef bone or some brazil nuts or black walnuts will keep teeth short and in condition.

Rats should be about four months old before they are bred from. They should be well grown and fit to reproduce their kind.

There is no season for breeding as rats will breed the whole year round. Females have an oestrus cycle of about five days with one day in this period when she is in high heat. Leave the male with the females for about a week. Then separate them or mating takes place immediately after the birth of a litter. The females shouldn't be bred from more than five times a year.

TIMETABLE OF LITTER

Ears open 2½-3½ days. Teeth breaking through 8-10 days. Young find their way to mother 8-10 days. Opening the eyes 14-17 days. Breasts and sexual organ covered with hair 16 days. Breakthrough of first molars 21 days. Breakthrough of second molars 29 days. Breakthrough of third molars 35 days. Migration of teat ducts 15-51 days. Opening of vagina 15-72 days. Average life span 1 000 days. Maximum life span 2 000 days.

From the twelfth to the fourteenth day baby rats will start taking solid foods.

The National Fancy Rat Society needs new members. Even if you only keep them for pets you will gain much in the way of advice but the Fancy needs enthusiastic breeders to produce new varieties.

Details of the society can be obtained from Mrs Joan Pearce, 57 Myrtleend Road, Abbey Wood, London SE2 telephone 01-855-3661. ALLEN WELLS

JUNE 10, 1976

Fancy rats at Worthing

JUNE 25. Exhibits thirty-one. Entries 70. Best in show P Wade, a very good show was put on by the National Fancy Rat Society at Worthing. Well done Geoff Izzard but Eric Smith and I think the standard wants looking at. In my opinion you should go back to the old standards. Best in show a silver fawn Argente, really nice rat.

SELF Normal or rex ad 6: 1 P Vaughan, albino doe, good clean rat, tip missing end of tail 2 3 G Izzard, albino rex, moufty face, large for a doe, falls tall set 3 albino rex doe, best rat in class for size and coat, but was a mass of moult 13 wk 3: 1 B Watson, argente doe, in my opinion this should still be called a silver fawn and the belly colour should be white and not yellow, the white goes yellow with age 2 G Izzard, albino rex, falls coat, very moufty AOC Normal or rex ad 8: 1 2 G Izzard, argente (or Silver fawn) buck, very nice top colour, belly a yellow colour but had been white, as the rat gets older will go yellow 2 Argente Hooded, nice colour, slight pull on saddle, make a nice stud buck 3 J Pearce, champagne Fox, poor stops, really a cham with silver ticking on top coat, nice eyes 13 wk 6: 1 P Wade, doe, Argente (silver fawn), pure white belly, top coat the best I have seen, nice eyes, ears, very nice set, best in show 2 3 J Pearce, Agouti Fox doe, smashing colour only fault stops on back feet out 3 Argente (silver fawn) belly nice and white, bites AC Chell ad 12: 1 3 G Izzard 2 P Vaughan 13 wk 10: 1 P Wade 2 B Watson 3 J Pearce Grand chell 21: 1 P Wade 2 G Izzard 3 P Vaughan Pet 9: 1 S Fisher 2 P Vaughan 3 M Pardoe.

ALBERT COLLINS

JULY 22, 1976

fur & feather

FORTNIGHTLY 28p

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 2 1976 (next issue September 16)

Fur or feather, a royal welcome awaits you at the greatest show on earth

LONDON CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW

November 5, 6 1976 Alexandra Palace London N22



Current 'London Super Pet' Streaker, cavy boar owned by 12 year old Allison Clare Rosser from Cranleigh, Surrey. Allison's winning 'streak' also included best rat. The children's pets show will again be a Saturday highlight—entry form from Mr and Mrs J T W Brown, Loreen, 143 Hatfield Road, Stanway, Colchester, Essex CO3 5JT. (SAE appreciated.) Telephone: Colchester 76759.

RABBIT JUDGES

(Schedule and entry form in FUR & FEATHER, September 30 issue)

FANCY

Netherland Dwarfs
Selfs: C H B Simpson
Non-Selfs: C Graveling

Polish
A Hazelwood

Harlequin or Magpie
V Murray

English
G Bloomfield

Tans
A Bluff

Himalayans
T Moody

Silvers, Angoras
Mrs G Webb-Bailey

Dutch
D Hemingway

Lops
G Redman

Belgian Nares
W J Clarke

Flemish, AOV Fancy
Miss G Wren

Best Fancy
L V Eldridge

NORMAL FUR

Sables
F Fuller

Silver Foxes
D Hose

Lilacs, Setins
B Roberts

Siberians, Chinchillas
F Folling

New Zealand
M Ward

Argenties

F Toyne

Callifornians
W Wheeler

Havanas
Mrs J V Watts

Beverens, Chin
Gigantes, British
Giants, Smoke Pearls,
AOV Normal Fur
A J Power

Best Normal Fur
Messrs Fuller, Power,
Ward

REX

Ermines
Ad Bucks, u/5 Does:
S Cole

Ad Does, u/5 Bucks:
E Hutchings

Blacks
P J Hales

Havanas
Mrs C A Gardiner

Orange, Fawn
J H Phillips

Seal, Sable
S Southgate

Lynx
Mrs A Edwards

Blues, Castors, AOV
Rex
W Burbidge

Lilacs
B Roberts

Chinrex
T Fearley

Best Rex
Messrs Burbidge,
Cole, Southgate

CAVY JUDGES

(Schedule and entry form in FUR & FEATHER, September 30 issue)

'LONDON' OPEN

Self Blacks
H Waterhouse

Self Whites, Self
Creams, Self Goldens
Mrs M Woodward

Self Reds, Self
Belgs, Self Lilacs
Self Chocolates
T Berry

Abyssinians
D Pike

Peruvians, Shelties
Mrs S Davies

Cresteds, Himalayans,
Rare Varieties
Mrs E M Elward

Agoutis, Dutch,
Tortoise & Whites
N Stennett

Also entertaining
National Cavy Club
YSS

Selfs: Miss J Radeglia
AOVs: P J Kelly

National Tortoise &
White CC Annual
S W P Heard

English Self Cavy
Club ASS

R Watson

Abyssinian Cavy Club
ASS

R Treadwell

And entertaining the Poultry Club's fifth National Championship Show
(Details and schedule from the Poultry Club)

National Pigeon Association presentation of
Fancy Pigeons

MAMMOTH OPEN MOUSE SHOW
GERBILS, RATS, HAMSTERS

plus
THE LONDON 'SUPER PET OF THE YEAR'
SHOW
(children's pet show)

Watch FUR & FEATHER for details of these and other events

Issued by the London Championship Show, Elder House, Chattisham, Ipswich IP8 3QE. Telephone: 047-387 354.

I WAS very pleased to judge the National Fancy Rat Society classes at Guildford on September 4. Twenty-one exhibits made fifty-five entries. B Watson won best in show with a very taking young Argente. I would like to make one or two comments regarding penning and staging. I think a standard exhibition cage is an urgent must, and adequate staging is required for the public to see the exhibits, also some information regarding the club and exhibits. Regarding the exhibits with one or two exceptions there is much to be done in the breeding pen regarding size. I thought the adults were on the small side. Coat texture requires a lot of attention, most exhibits were much too coarse in coat. I think the rex coated exhibits are at the present at too great a disadvantage to compete in the same classes as normal coated exhibits. I would like to congratulate all exhibitors on the cleanliness and docility of their exhibits.

SELF Ad 4: 1 3 Hill, White, good colour, nice coat and under, good condition 2 Love, Cham, level top, nice condition, just beaten under 3 Rex, good texture, rather patchy Kitten 2: 1 2 Pearce, White, thin on shoulders and under 2 Choc, not ready AOV Ad 6: 1 Hill, Hooded, good frontal and saddle 2 3 Love, Argente, nice top, fair under 3 Hooded, beaten frontal Kitten 5: 1 2 Watson, Argente, very taking exhibit, good all round, best in show 2 hard to separate 3 Pearce, Rex, difficult to assess coat, not ready AV Pet 4: 1 2 S Love, two very fit and clean exhibits 2 nothing to choose 3 J Pearce, not the condition Chalf Ad 11: 1 3 Hill 2 Love Kitten 6: 1 2 Watson 3 Pearce Grand chalf: 1 Watson 2 Hill 3 Love. R C EDMONDSON

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

By late 1976 the N.F.R.S had staged several shows and gained a number of members. The first Annual General Meeting was held at the London Championship Show, where a great number of ninety rats was exhibited. The Society's first "caretaker" Chairman, Jon Strutt, stood down after guiding the N.F.R.S through it's first, crucial year.

Rats

IT WAS a real pleasure to be asked to judge the rat section at London. Entries were the most even at 407 with ninety rats on show. I think that rats have really arrived at last. Best Self rat L T Suttlng, best Marked L T Suttlng, best rex J Pearce, best AOV B Watson. Best in show was the AOV, a very nice Argente. As from January 1 this breed will go back to the true standard in my opinion, Silver Fawn. A really good show, Geoff, well done.

SELF Ad 17: 1 L T Suttlng, PEW doe, nice size and type, nice clean coat, best Self, only fault moult on face 2 6 Peckham Manor School, PEW buck, good type and size, coat was dirty or would have won class 3 Miss S Love, PEW doe, only fair coat, very dirty as was all rats in this class 4 5 P Dickinson, PEW buck, very dirty coat, fair size and type 7 J W Smallshire 13 wk 3: 1 L T Suttlng, Cham buck, very nice rat, colour just right, size and type good 2 Miss S Love, PEW buck, not a bad rat but coat dirty and belly fur very thin 3 W J Smallshire, Cham buck, best colour in class, the ears had been got at, a real pity, could have done well MARKED Ad 20: 1 5 J Hill, English Hood, very nice cham saddle, just right colour, good all round, a nice doe for the breeding pen 2 L Suttlng, Argente Hood, good type and colour, only real fault saddle a bit too wide, will make a good stud buck 3 4 W J Smallshire, Choc Hood doe, good saddle, a few white hairs in hair colour, good otherwise 4 Choc Hood male, better colour but the saddle not as good 5 G Love 7 J Chapman 13 wk 14: 1 2 5 6 L Suttlng, Argente Hood, a smashing little buck, the saddle perfect, very young, colour not through which stopped it getting best in show 2 Argente Hood, better colour than the winner, fails saddle 3 7 A Storey, Agouti Hood doe, fair saddle, very nice colour, tail set not as the first two 4 P Dickinson, Argente Hood, good colour, poor saddle, a nice little buck REX Ad 12: 1 2 3 5 J Pearce, Agouti Hooded Rex, lovely coat, smashing colour and type, good hood and saddle, a really nice doe 2 Choc Rex, nice type, good colour, very nice buck 3 Choc Rex doe, nice

type, colour not as good as second 4 G Izzard, PEW doe, nice big rat, up against it today, colour a bit yellowish 6 J Hill 7 L Suttlng 13 wk 3: 1 J Chapman, cham doe, fair colour, coat not through, nice type 2 G Izzard, choc buck, fails coat and colour, may get better as it gets older, 3 C McKnight, Irish buck, poor coat, stops on feet, the tail should be half choc and half flesh colour AOV Ad 11: 1 7 B Watson, Argente doe, smashing top colour, ticking just right, belly good, had just about everything, best in show 2 L Suttlng, Argente doe, top not as good as winner but still a very nice rat 3 G Izzard, Argente buck, good type, fails a little on top colour, belly a bit thin 4 J Pearce, Argente buck, poor type, colour ok but fails belly 5 6 C Love 13 wk 10: 1 2 L Suttlng, Argente buck, good colour, good white belly fur, good type 2 Agouti buck, smashing top colour, fails a little on belly but will get better as it gets older 3 4 5 6 7 C Love, the next two rats were both unstandardised but what smashing rats, a deep cream undercoat blending to a silver cream top then topped with black AC Chalf Ad 6: 1 B Watson, Argente, best in show 2 4 L Suttlng, PEW, best Self 3 5 J Pearce 6 Peckham Manor School 7 W J Smallshire 13 wk 26: 1 2 3 4 5 L Suttlng 6 C Love 7 A Storey Stud buck 27: 1 5 L Suttlng 2 6 J W Smallshire 3 J Pearce 4 J Hill 7 G Izzard Doe 41: 1 B Watson 2 3 5 L Suttlng 4 J Hill 5 J Pearce 7 S Love Juvenile 14: 1 5 Peckham Manor School 2 3 S Love 4 7 P Dickinson 6 C McKnight London members 88: 1 B Watson 2 3 5 8 L Suttlng 4 7 J Pearce Grand chalf 91: Repeat.

ALBERT COLLINS

NOVEMBER 25, 1976

THE FIRST annual general meeting of the National Fancy Rat Society was held on Friday, November 5, 1976 at 5.30 pm at Alexandra Palace and was attended by twelve members, one of whom had travelled from Yorkshire especially to be there.

In his opening remarks the chairman, Jon Strutt, welcomed the members saying how pleased he was to see so many present considering the society had existed for less than a year. He had been the initial "caretaker" chairman to get the society going. When originally asked about forming a Rat club he had said, "Let's just form one, nobody else has" and it worked out well. Although basically a mouse man, the main point he wished to make was that rats are NOT poor cousins of the mice or any other Fancy. Rats could stand on their own as a Fancy and get as big a following as the cavies, perhaps even bigger than the mouse Fancy because rats made better pets and could be tamed more easily.

The secretary, Joan Pearce, reported that after the first meeting of those interested in forming a society on January 13, 1976, and first public appearance (a very successful exhibition at "Bradford") there were now forty-five members scattered throughout the country. Public interest was growing, as witnessed by the article in the colour supplement of 'The Observer', letters to FUR & FEATHER and interviews in the local press. There was tremendous interest shown at the many shows all over the South of England resulting in recruitment of new members and the public had seen that fancy rats were not the 'horrid things' they were thought to be. Our thanks to Geoff Izzard for his hard work and to Joanna Hill who had taken upon herself to circulate a news letter. As hon treasurer, Joan Pearce stated the society was just solvent, 'subscriptions and donations just covering expenditure to date.

All the officers were re-elected with the exception of the chairman who wished to stand down. Proposed by Jon Strutt, seconded by Geoff Izzard, that Albert Collins be nominated to fill the vacancy—elected unanimously. A vote of thanks was given to Jon for his efforts in getting the society on its feet.

The hon secretary read the proposed rules, which were amended and ratified and it was proposed that the amendments be sent out as an addendum.

The proposed standards of excellence, which had been in operation since the inception of the society, were also read, amended and ratified, the principal amendments being the

return of the name 'Silver Fawn' (previously Argente) and the adoption of the original standards for the Irish and Berkshire (additional) marked varieties. The revised standards would be circulated to all members.

The show secretary, Geoff Izzard, reported that a very successful series of shows had been staged by the society, although a little more support could have been forthcoming from members. The first show to be run by the society was at Clymington when we were guests of the hamster people (many thanks to Peter Lomas). Local people attended and we enrolled new members. The pet rat class was well supported. Another show followed at Worthing on June 26 and here the pet class really proved its worth. Arrangements were in hand with Peter Lomas for more shows on the South Coast in 1977. He continued:

"A little nearer home, with the kind co-operation of the Epsom Cavy Club, we are now holding regular shows at Epsom, the first of which took place on July 17. This will be continued throughout 1977.

"For the first time for many years rats were on the schedule at Guildford, thanks to Tony Cooke who donated some space for us—not much I am afraid as the authorities would not take on any more expense. New members were enrolled. We also 'ran' Southsea rat section and actually made a small profit but attendance was poor although 'local' members exhibited. What a pity the rats always seem to get crowded out and treated as 'poor relations'. It was particularly distressing for youngsters (not forgetting the stock) to have to wait until, sometimes, 4.30 pm before judging commenced. Classes were also provided at Dagenham, Harlow and Greenwich but in some cases support was poor. We MUST support these classes if we still want the promoters to sponsor them and they are good shop windows for the Fancy!

"Our present London Champion show has passed all expectations with entries around the 400 mark and ninety rats. Several members had journeyed from the Midlands and beyond to be with us, which was most gratifying. Let us hope 'Bradford' on January 22, 1977 is as successful.

"My sincere thanks to judges Eric Smith, Albert Collins, John Steer, Roger Edmondson who officiated. I am more than satisfied, gentlemen! Thanks also to the many helpers and particularly to Joan, who has supported me so nobly and helped with the organisation, and to Joanna for her invaluable assistance with our stand and to all other helpers."

JOAN PEARCE (Secretary)
GEOFF IZZARD (Show Secretary)

DECEMBER 23, 1976

RATS

SATURDAY ONLY

Rats to be penned by 9.30 am on Saturday, January 22.

Entry Fee: Classes 1 to 11 and 14 to 15, 10p per Entry; Class 12, 5p per Entry; Class 13, no Entry Fee.

Prize Money: 30p, 20p, 10p all Classes except Class 13.

Judge: Mr John Steer (Harlow).

CLASSIFICATION

- 1 Self AC Normal Coat Adult
- 2 Self AC Normal Coat Kitten
- 3 Marked Normal Coat Adult
- 4 Marked Normal Coat Kitten
- 5 Rex AG and/or Marking Adult
- 6 Rex AC and/or Marking Kitten
- 7 AOV Adult
- 8 AOV Kitten
- 9 Adult Challenge
- *10 Kitten Challenge
- *11 Grand Challenges AV AA
- *12 Pet Class (not to be entered in any other Class, judged on Condition only)
- 13 Cup Class. Mr Len Dews of Haslington (late of Blackpool) has kindly presented a Cup to be awarded annually to the best member's Rat of his selection from the winners of Classes 1-8 inclusive. No Entry Fee. These winners will go automatically into this Class.
- *14 Stud Buck AV
- *15 Doe AV AA

* Must be duplicated.

Definition of a Kitten: u/13 weeks.

Various Specials and Rosettes to be announced. Bradford Small Livestock Society offers Terton Rosette for best Rat in Show and other Bradford Special Rosettes.

Rat entries close Sat, January 16.

All Rat entries to Mr GEOFF IZZARD, 49 Grove Road, Durrillton Surrey, KT5 4BY. SAE please. Telephone 01-380 2311.

DECEMBER 23, 1976

The time is ripe for a resurgence in fancy rats

7/7/77

Eric Jukes

AFTER HALF a century of neglect the fancy rat is rapidly rising to take its rightful position alongside the other small livestock fancies of rabbits, cavies and mice.

In the early 1900's the rat Fancy was equal to, if not greater than, its mouse cousin. It was the National Mouse AND RAT Club then, and the London and Southern Counties Mouse AND RAT Club.

In the early days the rats were closer to the 'ideal' standard than were the mice but then something went horribly wrong, the rat part of the Fancy declined, although the mouse Fancy continued to grow.

What caused this decline? Who can say. But decline they did, and so much so that the two mentioned clubs eventually expunged the record by removing any reference to rats from the club name and rules.

Over the years there have been several short bursts of revived interest which have quickly waned when the instigator has been unable to communicate his enthusiasm to others.

Early in 1976 the National Fancy Rat Society was formed and this time came success.

I will admit that when the Society was formed I rocked backwards and forwards in my rocking chair and wheezed 'Aaah, I see it all before' and concluded it was another flash in the pan. But I was wrong. It is the third attempt to form a rat club in the last ten years and it would be easy to say 'third time lucky!' But that is not the case! The society is growing rapidly thanks to the hard work and enthusiasm of Geoff Izzard and Joan Pearce and the rest of the rat fanatics. A number of open shows have been held and the society's members actively support the London and Southern Counties Mouse Club's rat classes, so much so that the rat part of the schedule has had to be enlarged twice in less than a year.

A number of reasons could be advanced for the society's rapid growth. Enthusiasm

must be one, but I feel that Geoff Izzard and Joan Pearce's advantage is that they are interested only in rats. They are not mouse fanciers with a passing interest in rats.

I said in a recent article in FUR & FEATHER that the rat Fancy could be even bigger. How? Well, back to what I mentioned at the start of my article of May 12—publicity.

In FUR & FEATHER of January 22 1976 Geoff Izzard and Joan Pearce wrote 'Are rats getting a fair deal?' They said that they had exhibited and displayed rats at a number of shows and that 'if more publicity could be given about rats the rat Fancy might get a fairer deal'.

Since then there have been the announcement of the formation of the National Fancy Rat Society, a report of its first annual general meeting and some show reports.

But what about articles on the care, management, breeding varieties of fancy rat—nothing, except an article by Allen Wells in FUR & FEATHER of June 10 1976.

So Geoff and Joan, you want more publicity, and it is in your own hands to provide it. And what about you other rat fanciers? Tell us why you keep rats—the problems of breeding your favourite variety—how you see the course of the rat Fancy over the next few years.

To start you off the editors of FUR & FEATHER have agreed to reprint my series on 'The Origin and History of the Fancy Rat'. The series was published quite a few years ago but I have amended and rewritten some sections to bring it right up to date. Advertisements for the re-released Mick Jagger film 'Performance' say that it was ten years ahead of its time when first released. The same applied to my series on rats.

Rats at Fareham

MAY 1. Judge E N Smith. Best in show L Suttlings White. Best opposite age J Chapman.

Self ad 2: 1 2 L Suttlings Kitten 5: 1 2 3 J Chapman Marked ad 7: 1 J Chapman 2 M Izzard 3 L Suttlings Kitten 6: 1 3 J Chapman 2 L Suttlings Rex ad 7: 1 3 J Chapman 2 L Suttlings Kitten 5: 1 2 J Pearce 3 L Suttlings AOV Ad 6: 1 L Suttlings 2 Mrs Bennett 3 G Izzard Kitten 3: 1 3 L Suttlings 2 K Woodward Unstandardised kitten 2: 1 2 L Suttlings AV Chalf ad 21: 1 2 L Suttlings 3 J Chapman Kitten 19: 1 2 J Chapman 3 J Pearce Grand chalf 40: 1 2 L Suttlings 3 J Chapman Pet 4: 1 S Woodward 2 3 Mrs Stratford.

Rat show dates

May 28, Littlehampton.
July 9, Dagenham.
July 16, Epsom.
August 6, Portsmouth.
August 28, Harlow.
September 4, Guildford.
September 10, Greenwich.
September 24, Epsom.

MAY 26, 1977

JULY 21, 1977

The brown rat, like its black cousin, is of Asiatic origin. Early in its history it learned to depend on man and his possessions for its sustenance, and for this reason is sometimes called 'commensal' a word meaning 'eater at the same table.'

Everywhere man has gone it has contrived to go with him, often by stowing away on ships; and once it sets foot on an alien shore it soon establishes itself. It has gained a considerable foothold in North America.

The brown rat is also known as the Manoverian Rat, possibly because it first reached Britain in early Georgian times.

The brown rat is much larger than the black rat; it is more heavily built, with a much blunter muzzle, smaller ears and eyes, and a shorter tail, which is slightly haired. The body length is about eight inches, with a tail a little shorter; the colour of the fur is brown-grey above with a tawny tinge and a dirty white on the underparts.

It is less active than the black rat, but much more dangerous and can inflict severe wounds with its long incisor teeth. Extremely voracious, it will exterminate and eat other vermin which intrude upon its domain. It also practises cannibalism, killing and eating any member of the family which is weak, sick or old.

For some unknown reason the males outnumber the females; possibly this has something to do with its cannibalistic habits.

It eats almost anything from table delicacies to rubbish; and that which is not eaten is often fouled. The amount of damage it does in the course of a year is enormous and totals thousands of pounds. Whether it lives in a barn or a sewer it is of the same species.

Origins and history of the fancy rat — part 1

Eric Jukes

THE GENUS *Rattus* is very large, so large in fact, that naturalists have divided it up into about thirty groups, in which at least some 450 different forms are represented. The natural distribution of rats is immense. They are found all over Europe, Asia, Africa and the East Indies, the Philippine Islands and Japan, New Guinea, Australia, and the Pacific Islands of Fiji and Hawaii as well as numerous small islands which surround the coasts of these countries.

The genus is not natural to the American Continent but was accidentally introduced by man many years ago. More will be said of this later.

Rats are very adaptable, and those isolated on islands and mountains would soon acclimatise themselves to local conditions; then in the course of time would differentiate into new species and sub-species.

To give representatives from all of these groups would be an enormous task, so two will be dealt with, both of which are well-known.

The *Rattus* group

There are eighty-two forms in this group. The type species is the BLACK RAT (*Rattus Rattus*).

The black rat is a nuisance and destructive to man's possessions, but not so much as its relative, the brown rat. It is of Asiatic origin and probably reached Britain at the time of the Crusades; although it was driven into remoter parts some 400 years later by the arrival of the brown rat. It is not so scarce, however, as was once thought, being found around ports and often on ships.

It made its way to North America many years ago and once roamed over a wide territory, but here also it was driven out by the brown rat, although it is still fairly numerous in the southern states. The Alexandrine form—*Rattus rattus Alexandrinus*—is also to be found in America where it is known as the roof rat.

The Black Rat is built on slender proportions with a body length of about seven inches. The tail, which is ringed, scaly, and comparatively hairless, is about eight inches long. The fur is long, blue black in colour, with a sprinkling of grey, although grey and fawn specimens have often been seen. The muzzle is long and pointed, and projects far beyond the short lower jaw; the whiskers are long and black; the ears long, thin and naked and the feet flesh coloured.

The black rat is very active, clean in its ways and is reputed to have a mild disposition. In feeding, although clean, it is omnivorous, and has been known to devour both fish and molluscs, as well as flesh and vegetable matter.

It is a climber, and in India, where many live an outdoor existence, it is known to nest in trees. The nest is made by the female; and usually consists of paper, rags and straw. There are five to six litters during the year, the number of young being seven or eight. They are born blind, naked and deaf.

One of its greatest enemies is the brown rat, which will destroy and devour it.

The *Norvegicus* group

This group consists of thirteen forms. The type species is the BROWN RAT (*Rattus norvegicus norvegicus*).

Like other rats, the brown rat has several litters during the year, the young usually numbering from four to ten, although larger litters have been recorded. They are born naked, blind and deaf.

Brown rats, especially those which live in the country, have a habit of migrating to fresh localities in the spring, and it is not uncommon to see hundreds of them on country roads during this period.

Hybridisation between the black rat and the brown rat is very doubtful.

With all its ferocity and cunning the brown rat when domesticated can become exceedingly tame, and makes an admirable pet for children.

The fancy rat

'The rat is a most intelligent and affectionate animal, and even those taken in the wild state can be quickly made to respond to a little kindness, and once gain his confidence he will become tame and gentle.' Thus wrote Walter Maxey, father of the mouse Fancy. What better testimonial could a rat have?

Fancy mice are more popular than fancy rats, possibly because there are more varieties; or even because the name rat is at once associated with the horrible wild creature. However, rats make very good show animals as well as pets; they cost little to feed; breeding results appear in a short time and they are very hygienic.

In the early part of this century the National Mouse Club was known as the National Mouse and Rat Club, and had classes for rats at its shows and I propose to deal in some detail with the history of the Rat Fancy.

Club secretaries

National Mouse Club: Mrs N Horne, 6 Carlton Gardens, Stanwix, Carlisle CA3 9NP, telephone 23694.

Alredale Mouse Club: John Keillett, 56 Claremont Grove, Wrose, Shipley, West Yorkshire, telephone Shipley 56821.

Border Mouse Club: A A Horne, 6 Carlton Gardens, Stanwix, Carlisle, telephone 23694.

Caldar Valley Mouse Club: E Longbottom, 109 Hopwood Lane, Halifax, Yorkshire, telephone Halifax 54124.

London & Southern Counties Mouse Club: Eric Jukes, 13 Richea Road, Tottenham, London N15 3TB, telephone 01-802 4520.

East Midlands Mouse Club: B A Bartley, 20 Sunny Bank, Kilton Estate, Worksop, Nottingham S81 0BG.

West of England Mouse Club: A Ralco, Liza's Cottage, Earthcott Green, Alveston, Bristol.

National Fancy Rat Society: Joan Pearce, 57 Myrtledean Road, Abbey Wood, SE2.

National Mongolian Gerbil Society: Mrs M Brookes, 3 Tracks Lane, Wigan WNS 7BL.

Available October, 1977.

EXHIBITION AND PET MICE

Tony Cooke. Size 234 x 156 mm. 224 pages. 8 pages in colour. Covers history, showing, varieties, genetics, etc. Hard covers and laminated jacket. A 'must' for all fanciers.

£5.40 plus £1 p/packing. Reserve your copy.

STAR PUBLICATIONS, Liss, Hants.

RAT Self ad 4: 1 3 L Suttlings 2 C Love 13 wk 5: 1 3 L Suttlings 2 J Chapman Marked ad 9: 1 2 3 J Chapman 13 wk 7: 1 L Suttlings 2 J Chapman 3 G Izzard Rex ad 3: 1 2 J Chapman 3 C McKnight 13 wk 5: 1 G Izzard 2 J Chapman 3 N Mays AOV Ad 10: 1 2 L Suttlings 3 G Izzard 13 wk 3: 1 3 L Suttlings 2 N Mays AV Grand chalf ad 26: 1 3 J Chapman 2 L Suttlings 13 wk 20: 1 3 L Suttlings 2 G Izzard.

LONDON & SOUTHERN COUNTIES MOUSE CLUB

Origins and history of the fancy rat - part 2

Eric Jukes

FANCY RATS were first shown under club auspices at Aylesbury in 1901 and added to the club's list of varieties at the annual general meeting held at Blackburn in that year. At this time they were extremely limited as to varieties, there being only PE Whites, black and whites, an occasional agouti and white, and now and then a black.

On looking back it seems that whereas the mouse fancy owed its existence to the enthusiasm of Walter Maxey, the rat fancy owed its existence to Miss M Douglas, for many years secretary of the National Mouse and Rat Club, later to become president of the Club.

I have read reports of some shows held in 1910 for rats from a scrap book belonging to Jack Wormald which I understand formerly belonged to Walter Maxey, a priceless document indeed.

I have seen photographs of rats and mice of the early 1900's and it is there that a strange anomaly arises. The rats of that era were far superior in the type and quality of the variety than the mice. Now—sixty years later—things are reversed. I am afraid that the rat fancier has sixty years of breeding to catch up with the mouse.

The oldest variety of fancy rat is the pink-eyed white, an albino form of the brown or Norway rat. It is not known precisely when and from where this mutation originated. This variety is mentioned in a book written in the mid-nineteenth century by the Queen's rat catcher, who possessed fawns, fawn and whites and who said 'I ketched the first white rat I had at Hampstead, and the first blacks at Messrs Hodges and Lowmans, in Regent Street, and them I bred in'.

About the same time, Jimmy Shaw, a then well known sporting, 'fancy' and doggy publican, said 'The first white rat as I heard of came out of a burial ground'.

I understand that in fact the albino mutation is the most common type of mutation for fur colouring in animals and birds, closely followed by melanism, which produces all black fur.

It seems that in the early days of the rat fancy the black eyed white was, according to H C Brooke, vice-president of the London and Bristol Mouse and Rat clubs in 1920, the 'longed for, but unattained ideal' until in 1919, 'after five years' work' Mr Brooke produced Champion Snowflake and her sister who died unshown'.

About the same time, Sir Claud Alexander bred a buck which was 'very near the mark' but which was never shown. So much for the ones that got away!

The Cream rat

It seems that the Cream rat was introduced to the Fancy by Mr Marriott who in 1910 obtained a pale cream buck 'csught in a provision shop in Chesterfield'. This specimen killed twenty does before he at last mated with a PEW doe. Mr Marriott first exhibited a Cream at Liskeard, and the day being dull it was 'passed' as a dirty white. So much for all his work.

The first fawn rat sprung from a wild doe who, after killing a number of bucks 'found her match in a savage old black buck, who mastered her after a terrific battle'. The first generation were all wild rat colour but mated together produced a proportion of fawns and creams.

By 1920 all the fawn rats had died out and had given way to silver fawns. These are described as being evenly ticked or silvered with white hairs all over the body on a rich and dense fawn ground colour, the belly to be white. My theory is that these 'silver fawns' were in fact argente or argente creams. It seems that one or two silver grey rats were seen on the show bench.

The self chocolate rat was considered by many to be the most attractive variety of rat in existence and they were first produced by Mr A E Baker of London, one of the founder members of the London and Southern Counties Mouse Club. The parents of the first chocolate were a fawn buck and his daughter, a black doe, whose mother was an agouti. It seems that the early chocolates had a difficult time as some judges called them 'bad blues' and others called them 'bad blacks'. I do not feel that the variety could possibly have been

as attractive as the Edwardian Rat Fanciers made out, as the best blue rat seen which won the breeders cup at Bristol, and was described as being 'as good a blue as any mouse', from Mr Baker's strain, moulted out into a 'good chocolate' later on!

The dream of a red rat was never realised—although when Mr H C Brooke showed a dark fawn in 1914 at Bristol, Judge Selby-Thomas wrote in his report 'Reds are in sight'. Alas, he was premature, as Mr Brooke said that the only red rat he saw was a chestnut-coloured wild doe which he killed 'when ferreting some piggeries near Woolwich, about 1900'.

Blues were another non-starter as they never retained their colour through the moult. It appears that the bluey-chocolates and the chocolate-blues were probably dark lilacs.

In the early days the blacks were the least popular variety of all and were found also to be the worst-tempered.

The Irish rat

The Irish Rat is still in existence today and is characterised by its 'diamond' on the belly. This was a local variation of the melanistic (black) variety of the common rat, although early this century Miss Douglas did a lot of work on it.

Agouti rats were, as in mice, the ordinary wild rat colour, 'improved and idealised'. H C Brooke found the Agouti rat to be particularly prone to cage gnawing.

Nowadays the only marked varieties to be seen, with the exception of the Irish marked, are Japanese hooded rats and capped rats. However, in the golden age of the rat events, brokens and even Dutch varieties were bred.

However the Dutch rats that were produced were few and far between and the best dutch rat bred did not have a saddle. The rat fanciers blamed the standard 'compilers' for making the dutch standard too high an ideal, thus causing fanciers to give up the variety.

The Berkshire variety was supposed to resemble the variety of pig of that name but it seems that it was impossible for rat fanciers to breed in the spot in the middle of its forehead required by the standard.

AUGUST 18, 1977

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

Eric Jukes, Hon. Secretary of the London & Southern Counties Mouse Club gave great support to the N.F.R.S in it's early life.

Apart from urging N.F.R.S members to join and exhibit at L & SCMC shows and vice-versa, he updated and re-published his excellent series "Origins and History of the Fancy Rat", which ran for seven months in the fortnightly 'F & F'. In Part Two (Left), he re-caps on the early history of the Rat Fancy and the formation of the differnt varieties. The "Cook(e) Book" 'recipe' for breeding Silver Fawns (Below) applies to Silver Fawn Mice, for Silver Fawn Rats are, genetically, Argente and, for a time, were classed as such. Later, the name became Silver Fawn as they resembled this colour more.

The Cook(e) book

RECIPE NUMBER THIRTEEN

To produce Silver Fawn

Ingredients:

- One trio Silver Greys.
- One trio Self Reds.

Procedure:

- 1 Mate Silver Grey buck to Red does.
- 2 Mate Red buck to Silver Grey does.

Intermediate results:

The litters from the above matings will contain 50% Reds (retain) and 50% other Sells (reject).

Procedure (continued):

- 3 Take the Red bucks from crossing 1 and mate them to the Red does from crossing 2.
- 4 Take the Red bucks from crossing 2 and mate them to the Red does from crossing 1.

Results:

Pairings 3 and 4 above should both produce litters containing the following proportions: 6 Reds, 3 Blacks, 2 Silver Fawns, 1 Silver Grey.

Comments:

Since the silvering often does not fully show itself until 6-7 weeks of age beware of rejecting non-silvered mice too early. Also the extent of silvering may be very variable initially.

TONY COOKE

National Fancy Rat Society

NOVEMBER 27. Exhibits forty-two. Entries 114. Best Self and best Marked L Suttling. Best Rex J Chapman. Best Pat Isabel Williams. Best in show B Watson's Silver-Fawn Argente doe. I had to undertake judging at last moment due to non-arrival of booked judge. This, with sickness, meant withdrawal of twenty-four entries. What a bumper turnout for a local table show. Thank you all for rallying round and helping to make a difficult task easier. A pity a little more attention had not been paid to preparation. One or two exhibits were soiled or had dirty tails. It could make all the difference. Beryl Watson's delightful Silver Fawn Argente doe was again the best rat but was run very close. Where were all the kittens? Thanks particularly to Clive Love for stewarding for me and helping me sort out the best in show, to Les Suttling for judging the pets and Jacquie Chapman for clerking.

Self ad 4: 1 3 L Suttling, a lovely clean pure white rat 2 C Love, albino, failed belly colour 3 nice cham, prefer little deeper colour Kitten 1: 1 C Love Marked ad 7: 1 2 L Suttling, well marked Hooded buck 2 agouti Irish doe, lovely colour 3 J Chapman, nice agouti Hooded doe, failed saddle Kitten 1: 1 H Fenton, well marked cham-Hooded kitten, could have done well later

If owner had not had to leave early Rex ad 1: 1 J Chapman, lovely cham doe, nice coat, beautiful whiskers, pity sickness reduced both rex classes Kitten 1: 1 C McKnight, cheeky little doe, a shame not more competition ADV Ad 8: 1 B Watson, beautiful doe, lovely colour, easy to handle 2 C Love, nice clean doe, not quite the colour of winner 3 L Suttling, another nice clean doe Kitten 1: 1 B Watson, pretty kitten should improve with age Unstandardised ad 3: 1 2 3 C Love, all nice rats, this exhibitor is making a good job of producing new varieties 1 a sort of silver brown, a nice rich colour, almost cinnamon, good coat 2 3 mouly Kitten 6: 1 2 3 C Love, well grown kittens for age 1 2 buck and doe respectively, a lovely interesting smoke effect 3 sort of silver brown AV Chail ad 25: 1 B Watson 2 3 L Suttling Kitten 11: 1 C Love 2 B Watson 3 C McKnight Grand chail 38: 1 B Watson 2 C Love 3 L Suttling. G IZZARD

Mr L SUTTLING'S CLASSES

A LITTLE more care could be taken in pre-show grooming, even with the pet section—dirty tail loses points. PET 8: 1 Williams, a nice clean rat, lovely pet, mis-marked black Hooded 2 B Love, good black Hooded 3 J Chapman, lovely coat, dirty tail. L SUTTLING

Origins and history of the fancy rat - part 3

Eric Jukes

WE NOW come to the varieties of *Rattus* described by Mr Brooke as 'one of the most graceful of existing quadrupeds, a thorough aristocrat.' It used to be thought that its extreme activity and timidly unfitted it for shows but H C Brooke considered himself the only person in the country to tame it. Mr Brooke goes on, 'but the fact that I won well with *Rattus*, both the Old English black variety, and the agouti Alexandrine, at Wadebridge and Newquay Shows in 1914 and 1915, shows what can be done. The agouti variety, with or without white belly, used to be but little known, and its occurrence gave rise to reports of the existence of hybrids between *Rattus* and *decumanus*. Dr Lewis Bonhote, now of the Cairo Zoo, first produced a fawn *Rattus*; when he left for Egypt Dr Egedorn took over his stock and produced more fawns or yellows, some with fawn bellies, which we have not yet attained in our fancy Rats, also dove-coloured or blue-fawn, with a very blue tinge, and chocolate. Skins of these were inspected by Miss Douglas, Mr Tilling and myself. Sir Claud Alexander informs me he has seen some BE cream *Rattus*, and at the moment of writing I possess two lovely BE whites, the like of which Mr R I Pocock of the London Zoo, writes me he has never heard of. I also have a beautiful BE fawn *Rattus*.

One of these white *Rattus* has at the time of writing just won first and best in show at St Werburgh's and first and best in show, NMRK Summer Cup Show, Bristol, 1920; thus again proving the value of *Rattus* for exhibition purposes. The presumed mother of these Rats, a beautiful fawn doe, was unfortunately killed in Bristol in August 1920.

The Club description is as follows: in build, the varieties of *Mus rattus* (the typical representative of which is the Old English Black Rat) are much more slender and elegant than the common Rat, and considerably less in size. The head is long, nose well pointed, ears (as large as possible) about twice the size of those of the common Rat and so thin as to be almost transparent; eyes very black and full; coat rather long and shiny; tail very long and slender, tapering to a fine point. In the black variety the tail is black. The colour of the typical *Rattus* is a slaty black, the belly being of a bluish tinge. Slate-blue, greenish, blue-fawn or dove colour, cream, yellow, and chocolate are existing self colours. In the Alexandrine varieties the colour is, first in order of merit, a rich, well ticked ruddy or sable agouti, with pure white belly (*Mus rattus tectorum*, Bonhote); the next, agouti with grey belly (*Mus rattus Alexandrinus*).

The rarest fixed variety appears to be greenish, an exotic form. I possessed specimens of this beautiful form in 1903: it did not appear to become known to scientists until 1905, when a specimen was taken in a London granary. Judging from descriptions, the later known specimens were far inferior in colour to those I possessed, which included in one litter greens, agouti, sandy and blacks; the mother I was told was a beautiful green specimen, but too wily for capture.

The clubs

I have dealt in some detail with the history of many of the varieties of fancy rat, but I have said little on the clubs which were fostering the rat fancy. I have been unable to ascertain whether or not the National Mouse Club was founded in 1895 as the 'National Mouse and Rat Club' by which name it was for some time known.

The London and Southern Counties Mouse Club, of which I have the honour of being secretary, was founded in 1915 as the London and Southern Counties Mouse and Rat Club, and included in its founder members was the late Walter Maxey. I would imagine that the years from about 1905 until the outbreak of the first world war were the heyday of the rat fancy. The London and Southern Counties Mouse and Rat Club dropped support for rats at its annual general meeting in 1934 on a proposition of a Mr King and Mrs Blowers 'as the rat section of the Fancy was now dead as far as competition was concerned'.

It was not to be for another twenty-four years that the National Mouse Club was to take the same course of action at its annual general meeting in 1957, although this does not mean the National Mouse Club was actively supporting the rat fancy during this time.

It was probably the work of some sharp eyed member who noticed that the club was still 'supporting' the rat fancy and the proposal was merely to set the record straight.

In that same year (1957) the London and Southern Counties Mouse Club unanimously voted to reinstate classes for rats to its table show schedule. This was as a result of pressure from a Mr Edwin Gay of Portsmouth and a Mr Rayfield. Both of these fanciers did a lot of work in the late fifties in a vain endeavour to popularise the rat fancy, including articles in *FUR & FEATHER* and classes for rats at the Portsmouth shows.

In the early 1960's a 'National Rat Club' was formed but it never got off the ground and nothing further was heard of it.

In October 1968, rat classes were re-introduced at the London and Southern Counties Mouse Club table shows, the practice having lapsed after the initial enthusiasm in the late 1950's. Central England Mouse Club followed this example but after the death of its secretary and founder, the late Fred Beach, no further shows were held.

Another attempt was made to found a rat club in 1969. An advertisement appeared in the National Mouse Club year book stating: 'What is the IFRC? The IFRC is the International Fancy Rat Council. It has been formed to promote the breeding and exhibiting of the long neglected cousin of the fancy mouse—the fancy rat. 1969 will be the year of the rat!'

Unfortunately even this grandiose advertisement failed to attract any support and so 1969 proved not to be the rat's year.

At the annual general meeting of the National Mouse Club in September 1970 I proposed that the NMC should 'promote the breeding and exhibiting of fancy rats for a probationary period of five years'. Although more were in favour of the proposition than those against it the proposal failed to gain the necessary two thirds majority to bring it into effect.

And so the London and Southern Counties Mouse Club continued to be the only club still steadfastly maintaining its rat classes. Support was always very little. I do not think that there was ever more than a handful of rats exhibited. The rat classes were also included at the Dagenham and Guildford Town shows and the London Championship Show.

The club's rat classes started filling when Geoff Izzard joined in 1974. He was the first fancier for as long as I can remember who had joined solely because of his interest in rats. He soon brought into the club other rat fanciers, including Joan Pearce.

On January 13, 1976, the National Fancy Rat Society was formed with Joan Pearce as secretary and Geoff Izzard as show secretary. The NFRS first show was held on April 24, 1976 at Clymington, near Littlehampton. There were twenty-five exhibits which were judged by Eric Smith in accordance with the club's new show standards. Geoff Izzard obtained best in show with an argente adult. In his show report in *FUR & FEATHER* Eric Smith commented that he thought that the show standards would have to be amended.

The standards were approved, as amended, at the first general meeting of the club, held at the London Championship Show in 1978.

The club is rapidly gaining support and has held a number of small open shows as well as rapidly swelling the London and Southern Counties Mouse Club's rat section, so much so that additional classes have been added to the rat classification.

I have dealt now with the origins, show and club history of the fancy rat and I shall now go on to deal with the care and breeding of the rat, after which I shall deal with the show standards of the rat.

Turning firstly to the keeping and breeding of the rat, although many of the views expressed will be my own, I shall be quoting extensively from *Fancy Mice and Rats*, by Walter Maxey, the section on breeding of rats being revised by Miss M Douglas and H C Brooke.

to be continued

GUILDFORD

National Fancy Rat Society

THE NATIONAL Fancy Rat Society members are very grateful to Tony Cooke for stepping it at the last minute to judge at the Guildford Show
J M PEARCE (Secretary)

SEPTEMBER 4. Judge Tony Cooke. Best in show L T Suttling.

Self ad 4: 1 2 L T Suttling 3 Mrs J Chapman Kitten 5: 1 3 Mrs J Chapman 2 L T Suttling Hooded or Capped ad 2: 1 Mrs J Chapman 2 L T Suttling Kitten 2: 1 Mrs J Chapman 2 Mrs J Pearce Berkshire or Irish ad 7: 1 Mrs J Chapman 2 C McKnight 3 L T Suttling Kitten 3: 1 2 Mrs J Chapman 3 J Pearce Rex ad 3: 1 C McKnight 2 3 Mrs J Chapman Kitten 3: 1 2 Mrs J Chapman 3 Mrs J Pearce AOY Ad 4: 1 2 L T Suttling Kitten 4: 1 2 Mrs J Chapman 3 Mrs J Pearce AV Chell ad 20: 1 2 L T Suttling 3 Mrs J Chapman Kitten 17: 1 2 3 Mrs J Chapman Unstandardised 3: 1 2 3 L T Suttling Pet 2: 1 C McKnight 2 D McNeill.

GREENWICH

SEPTEMBER 10. Judge E N Smith. Best in show L T Suttling.

Self ad 7: 1 3 L T Suttling 2 Mrs J Chapman Kitten 7: 1 Mrs J Chapman 2 3 L T Suttling Marked ad 11: 1 Mrs J Chapman 2 Mrs M Izzard 3 Miss A Storey Kitten 4: 1 Mrs J Chapman 2 Mrs M Izzard 3 Mrs J Pearce Marked Rex ad 2: 1 Mrs J Chapman 2 Mrs J Pearce Kitten 6: 1 J O'Leary 2 3 Mrs B Watson AOY Rex ad 8: 1 Mrs J Chapman 2 C McKnight 3 G Izzard Kitten 3: 1 Mrs J Chapman 3 G Izzard AOY Ad 12: 1 G Izzard 2 C McKnight 3 L T Suttling Kitten 5: 1 Miss A Storey 2 3 Mrs J Chapman AV Chell ad 40: 1 L T Suttling 2 3 Mrs J Chapman Kitten 25: 1 3 Mrs J Chapman 2 Miss A Storey Pet 3: 1 C McKnight 2 Miss A Storey 3 Mrs A Norman.

Rat-mania

MY LIFE with rats began in 1942 when I was a small boy and a friend of mine pulled out of his shirt a young ginger and white doe. Fascinated by the small animal, I was told it was for sale for 9d. After great difficulty I managed to scrape the money together and having bought the animal, I quickly found out what a delightful pet it was. So began my interest in rats.

After National Service I came across a man in Chiswick who kept rats in tea chests covered with sacks in the back garden. So I bought another doe as a pet this time, black hooded. Since then I have bought rats on two occasions from pet shops—which I am unable to walk past without entering.

Going down memory lane, two years ago I visited Blandford in Dorset where in 1949 I did a ten week driving course. Looking in a little book shop I found a copy of *FUR & FEATHER* which I read from cover to cover (and still do), discovering inside a London & Southern Counties Mouse Club advertisement for a show in Richmond. I paid them a visit thinking keeping mice would make a nice hobby. When I arrived, to my delight, rats were on show. That did it, I was hooked. (Sorry mice men, maybe later on I'll join you.)

Starting off with six rats, purchased from Joanna Hill in August 1976, the first litter from them was the basis of my show team that did so well for me in the London Championship, winning two cups (much to my surprise and delight). I now have a Champion Silver Fawn doe, which has won five best in shows for me, the second champion in the National Fancy Rat Society.

My rats (usually numbering around forty) are housed in an 8ft x 6ft garden shed (to say the least, a bit cramped). The breeding cages are of wood measuring 2ft x 1ft. I use 4ft budgerigar flight cages for young, growing stock to have plenty of room to exercise. Apart from the exhibiting of rats, which I enjoy very much, I am also extremely interested in the search for the old varieties that were on the show bench years ago. At the moment, I am working on the capped and the cream variety, to bring them up to exhibition standard.

My feeding method is as follows. In the evening I feed poultry corn with pieces of dog meal. All rats have a square of bread and milk. Breeding does with young I feed extra portions. When the young open their eyes and start moving around I put Quaker Oats in the nest, also making sure they are able to reach the water bottle. Carrot is fed regularly, together with grass from the lawn.

To any person looking for a new hobby to enjoy in their leisure hours, I can thoroughly recommend the fancy rat as a clean, friendly and very intelligent animal, the breeding and exhibiting of which I find both absorbing and fascinating. I urge you to have a closer look at the fancy rat when you next see them on show.

I see a great future for the National Fancy Rat Society and the London & Southern Counties Mouse Club and am proud to be a member of both associations, the members of which I have found to be very friendly and helpful.
LES SUTTLING

Rat show dates

November 25. Epsom
December 10. Fareham.

Origins and history of the fancy rat - part 4

Eric Jukes

IT IS quite obvious that rats require more space than mice and this may be one of the reasons why they are not popular. A cage for two to five rats should be not less than 2 ft x 2 ft x 2 ft. Miss Douglas recommended a 'Tales Sugar box' but I presume that Tales Sugar probably comes in cardboard boxes, as is the case with many other goods these days. I have found, contrary to popular belief, that rats do not gnaw their cages any more than mice, and some rats never gnaw. I kept my rats in a cage with an open wire mesh front (half inch mesh) which was hinged and opens outwards. A tea chest or an old rabbit hutch would make an ideal rat cage.

Rats are gregarious animals and they like company. They will soon go out of condition if left on their own. In my opinion the greatest advantage that rats have over mice is the fact that male rats can be housed together and will seldom fight. Obviously care has to be taken here. It is not advisable to introduce a strange male into a cage already occupied by other male rats. The rats, including the stranger should be all put into a clean cage and then there will be no trouble.

Some years ago I saw a television programme in which a number of behaviour experiments had been carried out on rats particularly regarding 'territory'. It has been discovered that if a strange male rat is introduced to a cage already occupied by a male both rats will fight but the 'stranger' even if bigger than the 'occupant' will cower down, and, if left in the cage, will eventually die. Scientists have found that the dead 'stranger' usually has no marks which could account for death. Upon performing a post mortem on the rats the scientists have found the rat to be suffering from ulcers in the stomach, but this could not cause death. A mystery indeed!

Rat cages should be clear from damp and draughts as these will prove fatal to the rats.

Cleaning

The floor of the cage should be strewn with a thick layer of sawdust, which should be scraped out and renewed when damp and soiled—How often this is necessary depends largely on the size of the cage and the number of rats in it.

For the nests I preferred to use hay as the rats could eat this. It should be used thoroughly dry of course.

Feeding

The feeding of rats is basically the same as that of mice except that a little more variety can be introduced.

The staple diet for my rats was soaked bread which was squeezed dry and a little milk added, except in hot weather. I used brown bread but white bread would no doubt be just as good as there is probably not much difference in bread these days. Dog biscuits, boiled vegetables, clean household scraps and greens can also be given. Rats also relish a meaty bone occasionally. The fancier should not be afraid of giving his rats change of diet so long as the change is made gradually. Food is better given in heavy dishes which cannot be tipped over rather than laid on the sawdust. Rats like a drink of water although if moist food is given it is not essential except in hot weather. Unfortunately rats have an unfortunate habit of soiling the water and putting sawdust in it so water bottles would really be better. Do not forget that rats have strong teeth and so the water bottle should be of good quality glass.

Obviously rats need more food than mice. They should be given as much as they can eat as they will not overeat. I have noticed that rats delight in burying their unwanted food and so it is best to see how much they leave and adjust the amount of food accordingly. I fed my rats once a day which was quite sufficient.

A basic feeding rule for rats is 'If you eat it, they eat it, if it does you good it does them good'.

SEPTEMBER 29, 1977

Origins and history of the fancy rat—part 5

Eric Jukes

Continued from September 29 issue



A LITTER, 13 DAYS OLD

Breeding

THE GESTATION period of the rat is twenty-one days and the young are born naked, blind and deaf. They are fully furred at twelve days and open their eyes at fourteen or fifteen days. At this age they begin to eat solid food starting on the soft food that the doe brings into the nest. They eat freely from the food dish at three weeks. They are mature at twelve weeks, will probably mate earlier than that, but it is not advisable to breed with them until fifteen weeks.

The buck should be removed from the cage before the litter is born as otherwise he will mate the mother straight away. Two does can litter down together if space is 'short'. Rats often have very large litters, fifteen in the litter is not uncommon. I noticed that cannibalism of the young by the mother was very rare, in fact I can go so far as to say that I had no cases of this.

A mother rat can easily bring up a large litter, the strange thing being that the individual rats from a litter of fifteen will be the same size as a litter reduced to four. This is because the rat has enough milk to feed a litter no matter how many there are. I have read somewhere that because of this reason litters should not be culled as this is liable to upset the doe. I have found this to be untrue and recommend the culling of the litter to four notwithstanding what I have already stated about size.

The reason for culling is obvious. If it is not done one will soon be overrun with rats, they will be difficult to dispose of, and the fancier will become fed up with them.

If it is necessary to foster young rats it will be found that rats make excellent foster mothers.

The young rats should be handled from an early age in order to make them easily manageable on the show bench. When I fed my rats I talked softly to them, and they all came to the mesh front of the cage to listen. I know this does make me sound a little eccentric but I am quite convinced that the sound of the voice had a soothing effect on rats and I found that they become tame in time, often when they have not been handled at all.

I once had a rat which I recaptured after an escape by calling it. I am no Doctor Doolittle and I think that the explanation is that they associated the sound of my voice with food and this had a soothing effect upon them. (This is, of course, the same principle as Pascals Dogs). Also rats are intelligent animals, far more so than mice. I have not been bitten by a rat—as one fancier said to me 'They are too intelligent to bite the hand that feeds them'—there is a lot of truth in that.

I never had a lot of trouble with ailments in my rats. One thing that often bothers the novice rat fancier is the colour of a rat's teeth. The teeth in a healthy rat should be a bright orange in colour. If they are of a pale colour then the rat is suffering from a deficiency of calcium.

'Asthma' can affect rats as well as mice. I use the word 'asthma' in quotes deliberately, as I have never been convinced that the disease or condition is in fact asthma, but more likely some other bronchial condition. However, 'asthma' it is known as and 'asthma' I will call it.

In many cases the rat does not lose condition or flesh. Often the condition occurs suddenly and may continue for some months, often disappearing with the onset of the warmer weather. I have never been in favour of attempting cures on mice as there is always the danger of the disease spreading before a cure can be effected. Rats, however, being larger animals are possibly easier to treat if one wishes to try. Miss Douglas recommended 'Scotts emulsion' and 'Starcross snuff mixture' but I doubt if either of these preparations are now manufactured. In the case of acute asthma she recommended the 'happy despatch'.

It has been suggested that bald patches occurring on the body are a result of weakness and Miss Douglas suggests small doses of sulphate of iron mixed with the food but I would not bother to treat a rat if I knew it to be suffering from any weakness as it would not be any good to use it in the breeding pen.

Two of the most common ailments are rough ear and scaly tail. Rough ear begins with little crusts on the edges of the ears, the veins swell and congest and in time the ear is eaten into like a saw-edge. If left untreated this can then go on to affect the nose and vent.

The old remedy for this—and it appears easy to effect a cure if taken in the early stage—is to make an ointment of a table-spoonful of Vaseline, ten drops of Jeyes fluid, teaspoonful of flowers of sulphur well rub into affected parts, removing gently any scabs, wipe off any left on the coat, repeat twice at two days' intervals.

There is the risk here that the rat might bite if it becomes frightened in which case the rat should be rolled in a soft cloth to prevent it moving.

Bites or sores, according to Miss Douglas, can be bathed with dilute Condy's fluid and then dusted in flowers of sulphur. I have used Johnsons Baby First Aid cream to advantage. I think that the rule is to use a non-toxic preparation as the rats are bound to lick it. Vaseline and flowers of sulphur are good standbys.

OCTOBER 27, 1977

Origins and history of the fancy rat - part 6

Eric Jukes

NOVEMBER 24, 1977

AS WITH mice, rats are prone to tumours, although I have found less cases of tumours in my rats. I do not recommend the treating of tumours which are a form of cancer, but the rat may also get an abscess and there seems to be no reason why these should not be treated so long as the animal is not suffering unduly. I would not treat an abscess on the vent or face for instance. When the abscess bursts it can be treated with Condy's fluid, or the sulphur. Rats are naturally clean animals bodily and I have noticed no smell from the male rat's urine but this may be because they are kept in the mesh fronted cages whereas the mice are in boxes with less ventilation causing the urine smell to be more noticeable.

One particularly odd thing I have noticed about rats is a peculiar habit they have of gently swaying their heads from side to side at times when they are standing still, giving them the appearance of meditation. National Mouse Club Judge, Eric Smith, who used to keep rats tells me that he also noticed this in his rats. I presume that is a behaviour pattern common to all rats. One word of warning regarding the health of the fancier, not the rat—The rat has sharp claws and fanciers with sensitive skin may find that the claws cause small red scratches on the back of the hands and arms and these may take a few days to clear up. For those people I would recommend the wearing of gloves for protection when handling the rats unless the rats are going to be placed on the sleeve.

VARIETIES AND SHOW STANDARDS

In covering this section I had intended to entirely disregard the 'old' rat show standards which were laid down by the National Mouse and Rat Club and, incidentally, to which the rat section of the London and Southern Counties Mouse Club were judged until the advent of the National Fancy Rat Society with their 'new' standards. However, I have written this series as a 'history' and thus it should be unbiased—or as unbiased as any history can be. I feel that rat fanciers may find it of some use to be able to compare the 'new' and the 'old' standards. I had intended to incorporate the 'new' standards with the 'old', but I think that this may lead to confusion. Therefore the 'old' standards will appear first, followed by the 'new' standards.

BOTH the Black Rat (*Rattus rattus rattus*) and the Brown Rat (*Rattus norvegicus norvegicus*) were exhibited and standards of perfection were drawn up for them. For this reason I have kept the Fancy rats in the same two groups already described.

1 THE RATTUS GROUP. Comprises, or comprised, several self varieties of the Black Rat (*Rattus rattus rattus*).

These were once very popular, and among the colours produced was a black-eyed white, which was stated to be a new sub-species, according to older publications on mice and

Rats. It was called *Rattus rattus brookel* by fanciers, named after Mr H C Brooke, who bred the specimen. I have, however, been unable to trace it in the natural *Rattus* Group.

STANDARD AND POINTS

In building the varieties of *Rattus rattus rattus*, the typical representation is the Old English Black Rat, which are much more slender than the Common Rat and considerably less in size. The head is long, nose well pointed, ears (as large as possible) nearly twice the size of the Common Rat, and so thin as to be almost transparent. Eyes very black and full (there only appears to be one albino recorded); coat long and shiny, tail very long and slender, dark in colour, tapering to a very fine point. The colour of the typical *Rattus*, (Black Rat) slaty black, belly on bluish tinge, slate blue.

Greenish, white, cream, fawn, yellow, dove colour and chocolate are known.

Self Colours. In the Agouti or Alexandrine varieties, first in order of merit is a well ticked ruddy Agouti, with pure white belly, the line of demarcation being sharply defined; next Agouti with grey belly.

Colour	40
Condition—not fat, long, shiny coat	15
Shape—slender and elegant, brisk carriage	10
Eyes very black, bold and prominent	5
Ears of great size, dark, erect, very thin with fine wrinkles	10
Head—long and very pointed	10
Tail—very long, thin, no kinks, very finely pointed	10

Origins and history of the fancy rat - part 7

Eric Jukes

DECEMBER 22, 1977

NORVEGICUS GROUP

2 THE NORVEGICUS GROUP. Consists of several self and marked varieties of different colours. Much was done by fanciers to attain a high standard of perfection.

The rat should be of good size, long and racy in shape, arched over loin, plump and firm, with clean long head, not too fine or pointed at the nose. The eyes should be bold and prominent and of good size. Ears, feet and tail should be free from warts or roughness, and the coat in all rats should be close, soft and glossy, sleek to the touch and not too long. In bucks the coat is apt to be somewhat harder and longer than in does. The tail should be well set on, thickish at butt end, clean and tapering to a fine point, the length being equal to the rat's body from end of muzzle to root of tail. The ears should be of good size and tulip shape and not be set too close together. In Sells, feet, ears and tail should be slightly covered with fur as nearly as possible the colour of the body.

The rat should be perfectly tractable and free from any vice and not subject to fits and other similar ailments.

Kinked tails or fits to be penalised 20 points. Blacks, Blues, and Chocolates. In blacks the colour should be dense, free from silvery or chocolate shading, eyes black, ears, feet and tail slightly covered with fur, as nearly as possible the colour of fur on body. Blues should be a pleasing medium slate blue, rich and level, with ears, feet and tail to match. Chocolates should be the colour of rich eating chocolate, feet, ears and tail to match.

Colour	40
Condition—not fat, short, sleek and glossy coat	15
Feet—sound in colour	10
Shape and carriage	10
Size	5
Ears—shape, size and position	5
Eyes—large, bold and prominent	5
Head—long, not too pointed	5
Tail—long and uniform, no kinks	5

100

BLACKS, BLUES AND CHOCOLATES

Colour	40
Condition—not fat, short, sleek and glossy coat	15
Feet—sound in colour	10
Shape and carriage	10
Size	5
Ears—shape, size and position	5
Eyes—large, bold and prominent	5
Head—long, not too pointed	5
Tail—long and uniform, no kinks	5

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

Eric Jukes details the Standards of Fancy Rats, Old and New in the last four parts of his series. Note the fact that The Black Rat, *Rattus rattus* used to be exhibited, albeit in far fewer numbers than the Brown Rat *Rattus norvegicus*. In the 'modern' Rat Fancy, *Rattus rattus* has never been shown, but has been bred by a couple of experts.

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WHITES, CREAMS AND FAWNS

Whites, Creams and Fawns. Whites should be pure in colour, free from ivory, cream or brown tinge, head fine and long, rather than round, ears of good size, fine and clear, eyes full of a deep ruby colour; ears, feet and tail should be slightly covered with fur, bright in colour like satin. Creams should be pale but distinct and level throughout, free from fawn or white patches, undercolour same tint, eyes either black or ruby. Fawns should be as rich and level as possible, with undercolour of same tint, ears, feet and tail to match.

Colour	40
Condition—not fat, short, sleek and glossy coat	15
Shape and carriage	10
Size	5
Eyes—deep ruby colour or black, bold and prominent	5
Ears—shape, size and position	5
Feet—sound in colour	5
Head—long, not too pointed	5
Tail—long and uniform, no kinks	5

95

IRISH BLACKS, CHOCOLATES AND FAWNS

Irish Blacks, Chocolates and Fawns. Head, top colour, ears, eyes and tail as in Self blacks, chocolates and fawns. Distinctive markings are a white equilateral triangle on chest and four white feet. The triangle should be of good size, clear and without brindling at edges, and not extending in a streak down the belly. It should occupy all the space between the front legs. The white feet should resemble the stops of a Dutch rabbit.

Colour	35
Condition—not fat, short, sleek and glossy coat	15
Triangle	10
Shape and carriage	10
Size	5
Feet	5
Ears—shape, size and position	5
Eyes—large, bold and prominent	5
Head—long, not too pointed	5
Tail—long and uniform, no kinks	5

100

Origins and history of the fancy rat - part 8

Eric Jukes

Continued from December 22 issue

JAPANESE

Japanese (Hooded and Saddled). Sides, legs and feet pure white, with head and saddle of any distinct colour. The hood should cover head, shoulders, throat and chin, without a break, or any white on throat, and the saddle should extend in a straight unbroken line of moderate breadth from hood to tail. The edges of both the head and saddle should be clean and free from jaggling or brindling and there should be no spots. Tails should be parti-coloured, ears to correspond in colour with hood, eyes black or ruby and white to be pure in colour.

Colour, including purity of white	25
Head and saddle	25
Condition—not fat, short, sleek and glossy coat	15
Shape and carriage	10
Size	5
Head—long, not too pointed	5
Ears—shape, size and position	5
Eyes—large, bold and prominent	5
Tail—long and uniform, no kinks	5

100

EVEN MARKED

Even Marked. Any rat should be considered even marked which has any even distribution of any distinct colour divided up into spots or patches. These should be of a good size, clear and distinct, but not large. An unbroken hood, while not disqualifying, should be greatly against a rat, preference being given to check and blaze, as in Dutch-marked. Edges of hood and spots or patches to be clearly defined and free from brindling. Tail parti-coloured. Eye black or ruby, and white fur pure in colour.

Colour, including purity of white	25
Head markings and clearness and number of spots or patches	25
Condition—not fat, short, sleek and glossy coat	15
Shape and carriage	10
Size	5
Head—long, not too pointed	5
Ears—shape, size and position	5
Eyes—large, bold and prominent	5
Tail—long and uniform, no kinks	5

100

Origins and history of the fancy rat - part 9

Eric Jukes

Continued from January 5

IRISH AGOUTI

Irish Agouti. Colour, ticking, build, eyes, ears and tail as in Agoutis. Triangle and foot stops as in Irish blacks.	
Colour, top and under	30
Condition—not fat, short, sleek and glossy coat	15
Triangle	10
Shape and carriage	10
Size	5
Ticking	5
Feet	5
Ears—shape, size and position	5
Eyes—large, bold and prominent	5
Head—long, not too pointed	5
Tail—long and uniform, no kinks	5
	100

CAP OR HOODED RAT

Cap or Hooded. This is a very recent variety: It was first bred in several colours by Mrs J Curzon, who has supplied the Standard for it. The variety is merely the Japanese, but without the saddle. The head only should be coloured, but not beyond the ears, a white blaze on the forehead and the rest of the body white.

Colour, including purity of white	25
Cap, not to cover shoulders	15
Blaze, not too small or large	10
Condition—not too fat, short, sleek glossy coat	15
Shape and carriage	10
Size	5
Head—long, not too pointed	5
Ears—shape, size and position	5
Eyes—large, bold and prominent	5
Tail—long and uniform, no kinks	5
	100

POINTS FOR BROKEN MARKED

Broken Marked. Broken-marked rats should have no hood. Spots or patches on head or body may be of any colour but should be unevenly distributed as is consistent with a pleasing appearance. Edges of spots or patches to be clear cut and free from brindling. White fur should be pure in colour. Tail particoloured. Eyes black or ruby.

Absence of hood, clearness of patches, number and position of same	30
Colour, including purity of white	20
Condition—not fat, short, sleek and glossy coat	15
Shape and carriage	10
Size	5
Head—long, not too pointed	5
Ears—shape, size and position	5
Eyes—large, bold and prominent	5
Tail—long and uniform, no kinks	5
	100

POINTS FOR SILVER FAWNS, SILVER GREYS ETC

Silver Grey, Silver Fawn, etc. The fur on the upper parts of the body should be of dense colour, richly silvered or tipped with white, should be as even as possible all over the head and body. The belly colouring should approach as near as possible that of the upper parts of the body. Eyes black or ruby; ears, feet and tail as in Self colours.

Body colour	25
Silvering or ticking, rich and even	20
Condition—not fat, short, sleek and glossy coat	15
Shape and carriage	10
Size	5
Feet—dark, slightly covered with fur	5
Ears—shape, size and position	5
Eyes—large, bold and prominent	5
Head—long, not too pointed	5
Tail—long and uniform, no kinks	5
	100

POINTS FOR BERKSHIRES

Berkshires. Head, back, sides and greater part of the tail black, belly, feet and legs to middle joint, and tail tip white, with white not to exceed one inch in length. On the sides the line of demarcation to be sharply and clearly defined and straight, without any runs or brindling. A white spot on the forehead is desirable; all white markings to be pure in colour:

Demarcation of body	20
Head—marking and shape, long, not too pointed	15
Tail—long and uniform, no kinks, white not to extend one inch	15
Feet and lower half of legs white	15
Condition—not fat, short, sleek and glossy coat	10
Colour	10
Shape and carriage	5
Eyes—large, bold and prominent	5
Ears—shape, size and position	5

POINTS FOR AGOUTIS (BROWN AND FAWN)

Agoutis (Brown and Fawn). The head and top colour of the brown should be a rich ruddy brown, evenly and richly ticked with black; under or belly colour ruddy brown minus the ticking; ears and tail dark, feet light, eyes black. (Some Agoutis have silver grey under or belly colour, but ruddy brown is the ideal to breed for.) Fawn—head and top colour light fawn or drab,

JANUARY 12, 1978

evenly and richly ticked with darker brown or chocolate hairs, the contrast to be as marked as possible. Belly colour to be as nearly as possible like top colour minus the ticking; eyes very dark red.

Top colour	20
Under or belly colour	15
Condition—not fat, short, sleek and glossy coat	15
Shape and carriage	10
Head—long, not too pointed	5
Size	5
Eyes—large, bold and prominent	5
Ears—shape, size and position	5
Tail—long and uniform, no kinks	5
Ticking	15
	100

POINTS FOR HAVANAS

Havana. The colour of the Havana to be a warm brown, the richer the better, as in the Havana rabbit, the hairs are light at the base and dark set at the tips, this being less noticeable in young short-coated animals. The silvery appearance given by this in certain lights is not to be confounded with real silvering. Belly colour closely following top colour, no line of demarcation; white marks to disqualify. Fur of ears, feet and tail to match body colour; head darker on top, lighter round eyes, this shade gives a very distinct appearance. Eyes deep dark red, harmonising well with general tint.

Top colour	20
Under or belly colour	20
Condition—not fat, short, sleek and glossy coat	15
Shape and carriage	10
Head—long, not too pointed	10
Size	5
Ears—shape, size and position	5
Eyes—large, bold and prominent	5
Feet	5
Tail—long and uniform, no kinks	5
	100

That concludes the 'old' rat standards. We next come to the 'new' standards, that is, those laid down by the National Fancy Rat Society.

To be continued

Club secretaries

National Mouse Club: Mrs N Horne, Edofiss, Echo Hill, Sleights, near Whitby, North Yorkshire YO22 5AE. Telephone Whitby 810272.

Alredale Mouse Club: John Kellett, 56 Claremont Grove, Wrose, Shipley, West Yorkshire, telephone Shipley 55621.

Border Mouse Club: A A Horne, 6 Carlton Gardens, Stanwix, Carlisle, telephone 23694.

Caldar Valley Mouse Club: E Longbottom, 109 Hopwood Lane, Halifax, Yorkshire, telephone Halifax 54124.

East Midlands Mouse Club: B A Bartley, 20 Sunny Bank, Kilton Estate, Worksop, Nottingham S81 0BG.

London & Southern Counties Mouse Club: Eric Jukes, 13 Riches Road, Tottenham, London N15 3T9, telephone 01-802 4520.

North Yorkshire Mouse Club: Mrs N Horne (see National Mouse Club).

West of England Mouse Club: A Reice, Liza's Cottage, Earthcott Green, Alveston, Bristol.

National Fancy Rat Society: Joan Pearce, 57 Myrtledean Road, Abbey Wood SE2.

National Mongolian Gerbil Society: M's M Brookes, 3 Tracks Lane, Wigar, WNS 7BL.

London and Southern Counties

THE LONDON and Southern Counties Mouse Club held its first table show after the summer opens. And what a start—an entry of 1007 which is a record for a table show. The Even owned by Eve Branson went on to win best in show, the silver Tan best opposite age, and best rat Jackie Chapman's Rex.

RATS Self ad 8: 1 3 L Sutling 2 J Chapman 13 wk 4: 1 3 L Sutling 2 J Chapman IRISH or BERKSHIRE Ad 7: 1 J Chapman 2 C McKnight 3 L Sutling 13 wk 3: 1 L Sutling 2 3 J Chapman HOODED or CAPS Ad 5: 1 2 M Izzard 3 J Chapman 13 wk 2: 1 J Chapman 2 L Sutling REX Marked ad 7: 1 J Chapman 2 3 B Watson 13 wk 2: 1 2 J Chapman AOC Ad 7: 1 J Pearce 2 N Mays 3 J Chapman 13 wk 3: 1 2 3 J Chapman AOV Ad 10: 1 L Sutling 2 3 J Pearce 13 wk 6: 1 3 J Chapman 2 A Storey AV Chall ad 45: 1 2 J Chapman 3 L Sutling 13 wk 20: 1 3 J Chapman 2 L Sutling Breeders ad 41: 1 2 J Chapman 3 L Sutling 13 wk 23: 1 3 J Chapman 2 L Sutling Stud buck 18: 1 3 J Chapman 2 C McKnight Doe 34: 1 2 J Chapman 3 M Izzard UNSTANDARDISED .8: 1 2 C Love 3 S Love.

DECEMBER 8, 1977

EXHIBITION AND PET MICE

Tony Cooke. Size 234 x 156 mm. 224 pages. 8 pages in colour. Covers history, show, varieties, genetics, etc. Hard covers and laminated jacket. A 'must' for all fanciers.

£5-40 plus £1 p/packing. Reserve your copy.

SPUR PUBLICATIONS, Liss, Hants.

Origins and history of the fancy rat

— part 10

Eric Jukes

Continued from January 12 issue

National Fancy Rat Society standards

GENERAL CONFORMATION:

THE RAT shall be of good size, long and racy in type, arched over loin, firm fleshed with clean long head but not too pointed at the nose. The eyes shall be bold and well set. The ears shall be of good size, well formed and widely spaced, the tail shall be firmly fleshed, thickish at the base, tapering to a fine point and be as long as the body. The ears, feet and tail shall be covered with fine hair. The coat shall be smooth and glossy. Bucks are larger than does and have a somewhat harsher coat.

SERIOUS FAULTS

Bad condition or bad health, bare areas, scalliness of ears or tail, kinked or short tail. Lack of vibrissae (whiskers) automatically disqualifies.

SCALE OF POINTS

Colour and/or pattern	50
Body, type and size	15
Fur	10
Head	5
Eyes	5
Tail	5
Condition	5
Ears	5

COLOUR VARIETIES

AGOUTI: To be a rich ruddy brown, as evenly ticked as possible with black guard hairs. Belly fur to be a silver grey and as rich as possible. Eyes BLACK.

CINNAMON: To be a warm russet brown, as evenly ticked as possible with chocolate guard hairs. Belly fur to be yellow and as rich as possible. Eyes BLACK.

SILVER FAWN: To be rich orange-fawn as evenly ticked as possible with silver guard hairs. Belly fur to be as white as possible. Eyes RED.

BLACK: To be a deep solid black, as even as possible, devoid of dinginess and white hairs or patches. Eyes BLACK.

CHOCOLATE: To be a deep rich chocolate as even as possible, devoid of dinginess and white hairs or patches. Eyes BLACK.

CHAMPAGNE: To be a warm beige, as even as possible, devoid of white hairs or patches. Eyes RED.

ALBINO: To be as pure white as possible, devoid of creamy tinge or staining. Eyes PINK.

PATTERN VARIETIES

ENGLISH HOODED: The hood shall cover the head, throat and shoulders, be unbroken and continuous with the saddle extending down the spine to the tail, as much of the tail as possible shall be coloured. The saddle width shall be 1/2 in to 1 in (nearer 1/2 in); it must be as even as possible and unbroken. The edges of the hood and saddle shall be clear-cut and devoid of brindling. Colour to conform to a recognised colour variety. The white area shall be pure and devoid of yellowish tinge or staining.

BERKSHIRE: To be symmetrically marked, with as much white on the chest and belly as possible. All feet and tail to be white to half their length. The white shall not extend up the sides of the body, the edges shall be clear-cut and devoid of brindling. The body colour shall conform to a recognised colour variety. The white area shall be pure and devoid of yellowish tinge or staining. A white spot on the forehead is desirable.

IRISH: White equilateral triangle on chest and four white feet. Triangle to be of good size, clear and devoid of brindling, not extending in a streak down the belly but occupying all space between front legs. The body colour shall conform to a recognised colour variety.

CAPPED: This variety is merely the English Hooded but without the saddle. The head only should be coloured but not beyond the ears. A white blaze on the forehead and the rest of the body white. Colour to conform to a recognised colour variety, etc.

COAT VARIETIES

REX: Coat to be even, dense and not excessively harsh. Marcel waving desirable. Bent vibrissae are normal for REX. Colour shall conform to a recognised colour or pattern variety.

RAT SHOW CAGES

The old Rat show cages were of the Maxey pattern and were similar to mouse cages, except that they were larger.

At shows held under the patronage of the National Fancy Rat Society rats have to be exhibited in 'standard' plastic fish tanks, size 12in x 8in x 8in with a wire mesh sliding top.

JANUARY 19, 1978

National Fancy Rat Society

(65)

CONGRATULATIONS to Eric Jukes on a very fine series of articles covering the history of the fancy rat and thanks for publishing the standards then in use by our Society. One or two slight amendments have taken place since his draft went in for publication and several new varieties have been added, viz: Cream, Mink and (as from February 18) Variegated, which are given below:

AMENDMENTS AND ADDITIONS TO STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

CINNAMON (revised): To be warm russet brown, as evenly ticked as possible with chocolate guard hairs. Belly fur to be silver grey (not yellow as previously stated) and as rich as possible. Eyes black.

MINK: To be a pleasing light coffee colour, as even as possible, devoid of dinginess and white hairs or patches, with a distinct bluish sheen. Eyes black.

CREAM: Pale but distinct and level throughout, devoid of fawn or white patches. Eyes either pink or black.

VARIEGATED: The head and shoulders to be of any distinct colour with a white blaze on the forehead, the variegation to cover the body from shoulders to tail including the sides. Colour to conform to any recognised colour variety. Belly colour to be white, devoid of creamy tinge or staining.

REX: Coat to be even, dense and not excessively harsh, with as few guard hairs as possible. Marcel waving desirable. Bent vibrissae are normal for Rex. Colour shall conform to a recognised colour or pattern variety.

REVISED SCALE OF POINTS FOR REX ONLY

Colour and/or pattern	30
Body, type and size	15
Fur	30
Head	5
Eyes	5
Ears	5
Tail	5
Condition	5
	100

Scale of points for other varieties, including those listed above is as already published.

May I add a word of thanks for all those enthusiastic members who have helped the Society in many ways during the past twelve months and express the hope that the same enthusiasm will remain with us all during the coming year.

Our congratulations to Jackie Chapman for winning best in show under Albert Collins at Doncaster and to Ann Storey for best opposite age. In the Dews Cup class, the cup was won by Ann Storey and the runner-up by Jackie Chapman—a very nice black Irish kitten and a lovely adult respectively. It is nice to see our young members winning. Actually, Albert's decision for best in show was the same two rats in the reverse order!

Thanks to judges Collins and Dews at Doncaster, not forgetting stewards and our very efficient clerk Joan Pearce. Much interest was evident and several new members were enrolled. It is also nice to see all hands taking a share in the clearing up. Many thanks everyone.

Last but not least my own personal thanks to Brian Emmett and his helpers for their courteous assistance. GEOFF IZZARD

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

AT THE annual general meeting at Doncaster on January 21 those present were: A Collins (chairman), J Pearce (secretary/treasurer), G Izzard (show secretary), J Chapman, L Dews, L Suttliff, A Storey. Apologies were received from E Jukes.

The secretary stated that membership remained steady and many inquiries were being received and the society was progressing favourably. At the close of the year we had some £25 in hand.

The show secretary stated we had some twenty-four shows over the last 12 months. Fareham did not seem to be popular as our standards and rules were not adopted.

At all shows run by the society it was agreed that prize money be awarded on the basis of 60 per cent of the entry fees. This would ensure losses were kept to an absolute minimum. Raffles and refreshments were another source of income.

It was agreed additional classes be added to current schedule, viz: Breeder's class; Novice class; Sportsman's class (no prize money).

While the Epsom show venue (bi-monthly) had proved successful the owners had now increased charges to such an extent that it was now no longer a good financial proposition and the show secretary was negotiating for the hire of a hall in Surbiton at a considerably cheaper rate, a date having been arranged for Saturday, April 8, 1978 (watch FUR & FEATHER for details). It was a 'Rats only' show and it was hoped to provide refreshments. Further dates were being negotiated.

Albert Collins (chairman) agreed to prepare and publish newsletter, procure new show cards, rosettes, etc.

The following were elected as officers for 1978: L Suttliff (president), A Collins (chairman), J Pearce (secretary/treasurer), G Izzard (show secretary), R Robinson (genetical advisor).

The date and venue of the next annual general meeting would be Alexandra Palace (London Championship Show). It was suggested all future annual general meetings be held in London.

In reply to a query it was pointed out that if a member wished to call a committee meeting this could be done by applying to the chairman who would then ask the secretary to convene. J PEARCE, G IZZARD

FEBRUARY 16, 1978

rats

BRADFORD

IT WAS a real pleasure to be asked to judge on my first visit to the Bradford show. Entries could have been better but the rats on show were all in good condition. The rat section was given plenty of room, which made it a real pleasure to sit and judge. Best rat was a chocolate Irish adult doe, owned by Jackie Chapman. Well done Geoff on another well run show.

Self ad 4: 1 2 L Suttliff, cream doe, colour good, type and condition, would like to see more space between the ears 2 white doe, fails on colour, good otherwise 13 wk 2: 1 2 L Suttliff, white buck, good colour, fur very thin on belly, good condition 2 white buck, same as first, also thin on the face, will get better as it gets older Hooded or capped ad 3: 1 L Suttliff, English hood, silver fawn, good colour and hood, saddle needs to be half the width 13 wk 5: 1 3 G Izzard, English hooded, silver fawn, good type, colour not through, saddle just a bit wide very nice little capped doe, a bit younger 3 very nice capped doe, a bit younger 3 English hood, silver fawn, good colour not through, could be a real good one here Berkshire or Irish ad 3: 1 J Chapman, choc Irish, good type, condition, triangle perfect, best Irish I have seen, best in show 2 L Suttliff, agouti Irish buck, very nice rat, up against it today, good all round 3 C Mcknight, Irish agouti doe, triangle goes too far on belly 13 wk: 1 2 3 A Storey, Irish choc, as good as the adult but fails triangle, coat a bit thin 2 Irish buck, good all round, needs handling 3 Irish doe, out of condition 4 5 J Chapman, Berkshire, only fair, poor colour 6 L Suttliff Rex ad 3: 1 L Suttliff, Irish rex buck, good coat and condition, fails feet Kitten 7: 1 3 G Izzard, English hooded rex, very nice rat, good colour and type, good markings 2 L Suttliff, Irish rex doe, good all round, very nice rat 3 English hooded rex, good markings, belly fur too thin 4 5 C Mcknight, silver fawn rex buck, fails colour but will get better 6 J Chapman 7 A Storey

AOV Ad 5: 1 3 C Mcknight, silver fawn, good colour and type, good breeding stock 2 L Suttliff, belly too thin 3 silver fawn buck, too old for showing 13 wk 2: 1 L Suttliff, silver fawn doe, very nice rat spoilt by moult, good type 2 G Izzard, silver fawn, good kitten, colour not through AV Chall ad 18: 1 J Chapman 2 6 C-Mcknight 3 4 5 7 L Suttliff 13 wk 22: 1 6 A Storey 2 3 G Izzard 4 5 7 L Suttliff Unstandardised 2: 1 A Storey Stud buck 10: 1 C Mcknight 2 3 L Suttliff Doe 18: 1 J Chapman 2 5 C Mcknight 4 6 7 L Suttliff Dews Cup (judge L Dews) 7: 1 A Storey, nice kitten, first rate rat 2 3 5 6 7 L Suttliff, nice condition 3 nice rex, too small to be an adult 4 J Chapman, too small. A COLLINS

FUR & FEATHER, FEBRUARY 16, 1978

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

Eric Jukes' series comes to an end in 1978 and Geoff Izzard publicly congratulates him. (Above). The amended standard for the Cream Rat was removed at the 1978 A.G.M., as no Cream Rats had been seen, let alone exhibited.

National Fancy Rat Society

MAY I take this opportunity of saying how much I personally like the new lay-out of FUR & FEATHER and the greater space allotted to the 'smaller' Fancies. I have been a little distressed at the lack of 'rat' news since Eric's series finished and feel it is up to me to try and get the ball rolling once more. After all, we do have a very good showable animal in *Rattus Norvegicus*. Very intelligent, attractive, clean, tractable, virtually odourless, subject to very few ailments most of which are curable.

I can remember my original introduction to the fancy rat in 1963—I purchased a trio from a well known London pet store consisting of a pair of Silver Fawn Hooded and one Silver Fawn doe originally for breeding food for my Red-tailed Boa and African Rock Python. They stood me in very good stead and I still have the original bloodline running through my stock.

During the years following we had a series of pet rats which we brought into the house where they were allowed much freedom. One Silver Fawn buck named 'Jackie' used to go upstairs to bed with my young daughter and used to come down when I whistled him. He had a liking for music as he used to run up and down the keyboard of the piano for which he made a bee-line when let out and he used to feed off the same plate as our Corgi bitch.

The snakes grew too large and found other homes but the rats remained and I was thrilled to bits when, I think it was in 1972, I learned there were classes for rats at 'The London', entered and won a yellow card. I remember Albert Collins said I had some very nice Silver Fawns and encouraged me to join a club. I joined the London and Southern Counties Mouse Club, of which I am still a member. In those days there were only two classes but there are now twenty.

It is a long cry from the days when I bought my first Orange-hooded (as they were then called) and I still get the same thrill as I did in those days when I hear the cheeping of new-born kittens—it is still music to my ears.

Perhaps I may be permitted to appeal to my fellow members of the NFRS (or anyone owned by a rat) and tell of their various experiences—any aspect of rat keeping such as ailments and their cures, breeding experiments, feeding, showing, etc.

I will start the ball rolling by saying that I would be glad to hear of any suggestions for clearing up the problem of encrusted eyelids. I encounter this problem from time to time. In contrast I can suggest a cure for scabs which sometimes appear on the shoulders—this is where it normally starts—of backs. (Why is it that does not seem to be affected with skin trouble nearly so much as backs?) 'Betnavate' scalp lotion administered twice daily for seven days.

I used to think it was caused through infection from hay. I no longer use this but it still occurs occasionally. Is it because backs are usually the more highly strung of the two sexes? Is it because their fur is longer and coarser than the does? Both normal-coated and rex backs are equally susceptible.

GEOFF IZZARD

APRIL 6, 1978

A liking for rats

ALTHOUGH ON the whole my husband and I are 'rabbit people' we do have a couple of rats, both bought at the 'London' show on different years. I find rats fascinating creatures and, dare I say it, far more intelligent than either cavies or mice. I have always had a rat or two about the place. At one time I had four hooded rats which used to go to work with me, two on each shoulder, the looks that I got from passing motorists!

When I was first married I decided to have a rat as we had no pets at the time. We duly purchased a hooded female from our local pet shop. After we had had her about two years she developed a lump on the base of her skull; this grew and grew until it was the size of a small walnut. Fearing the worst we took her to our vet. Of course he diagnosed a tumour which I believe rats are very prone to. He said there was a chance that it could be removed and it was a risk worth taking. So we left her and the following day we collected her; she had a neat little scar and four large stitches. The vet said she had been a model patient and had not bitten him even when frightened and in some pain. The sad ending to the story is that within four months a larger lump appeared and she eventually died, but she had that extra bit of life made possible by the operation.

(Mrs) GAIL BRAY

In search of an even marked

Gary Bayldon

THE FIRST thing that struck me when I entered into the rat fancy was the lack of varieties. I acquired some very nice Silver Fawns, which have given me immense pleasure.

Later I visited Richmond in pursuit of my interests in the mouse fancy and I fell for the Rex rats. I obtained a pair of Rex Agouti which were very tame from Mr Suttling, who wouldn't take any money for them, which is very representative of the excellent fancy we are developing. I still have these rats producing some very nice Rex Silver Fawns for me.

I would like to hear comments upon my experiment to produce even marked rats, and I would like to hear of any other experiments fellow fanciers have in the pipeline.

My Silver Fawns produced some Hooded Silver Fawns, which were irregularly spotted down the back, they were capped but otherwise white bellied and tailed. I thought it would be nice to have some rats which were spotted like this all over—they would be another variety for the fancy. I selected the rats at first which were well spotted. I bred about fifty of these and, after some very strict selection, ended up with three. Then on I went to produce some with spots further down the sides, still in silver fawn colouring. Tails are clear of any markings.

This is the stage at which I am now. The rats still have hoods. I hope to cross to a RE White which should dilute the factors giving the hood colouring, and after a time I hope to produce some rats which are just spotted.

But I have produced a tricolour rat. It came from black hooded and is the same as the rats mentioned above, patternwise. The colours are white background with a chestnut/brick red spot near the tail. Over the loin there is another chestnut spot balancing a black one to the left, the other spots are all along the spine and are black. There is a nice big spot in the middle of the animal's belly, which gave me visions of producing a rat in the future with three colours—black, white and chestnut, spotted on top and belly.

This rat was crossed with a Silver Fawn 'even', and the young look very promising indeed with pied tails which I think are an added attraction. I find in the mating some young ones are black spotted, some are going to be agoutis.

All this I find very interesting but if we don't keep in touch through FUR & FEATHER, what will come of our developing fancy? The Newsletter last month was very interesting, and I look forward to the next one.

APRIL 27, 1978

Mice

FOR HOBBYIST AND EXHIBITOR

by JOHN KELLETT

Price 50p including postage and packing

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AUTHOR'S NOTE:

A fact which Mary Douglas would have appreciated was that several Rat Fanciers contributed articles to 'F & F'. Ann Storey, later to become the N.F.R.S' Standards Officer debates the possibility of an even marked or 'Tricolour' Rat. (Right).

Unstandardised varieties

Ann Storey

I WAS very interested to read about Gary Bayldon's tricolour and would like to ask the following questions:

- 1 Does it breed true?
- 2 Does the rust colour correspond to any existing colour?
- 3 Is there any physical or psychological difference between this rat and your others, ie does it waltz?

In Roy Robinson's book 'Genetics of the Norway Rat' he mentions a 'mosaic'. There are two mentioned, one was a black and blue doe and the other a silver fawn and agouti hooded buck. Both of these were somatic mosaics, that is they did not pass on their colours to their offspring. On the other hand one parent must be carrying this gene at least so I would suggest the doe is mated back to her father. How about bringing it down to a show for us to see.

I would doubt that crossing to a PE White would break up the rood on your evens. All coloured rats have CC or Cc at the albino locus but albinos or PE White are cc. This gene pair cc masks all the other colours and marked genes at all the other loci. Because of this it would be possible to have a rat that was genetically a self black except that it had the albino gene pair instead of the full colour and so this rat would be a PE White. Crossing this to your rats would give you Irish, Berkshires and bad hoods. So you see you have no way of knowing what your albino is carrying. I would suggest that you try a capped with a heavy blaze.

In 1977 four unstandardised varieties were given a provisional standard; they were the capped variegated, cream and mink. The first three were bred by Les Suttling; quite an achievement. Minks seem to have been around for some time before Jackie Chapman standardised them. She apparently bred her first ones from a black x agouti. Am I right in thinking that this litter also threw cinnamons and any ideas on the parents breeding? I got my first mink in 1974 from an exhibition; a school had a stand and were showing off their animals and they had several minks but I don't know where they came from.

I have been trying some experimental breeding with minks. First I crossed a mink buck who was heterozygous for pink eyed to an agouti doe who was heterozygous for chocolate, non agouti and pink eyed. The resulting litter contained one black, two agoutis, four cinnamons, one silver fawn and three champagnes.

In the second mating I crossed the same buck to another mink who was also heterozygous for pink eye. The litter contained four ordinary minks, two minks with a white base fur and heavy silvering and three pale coloured champagnes. Both parents were silvered and the two kittens with white base coat are beginning to resemble Clive Love's pearls.

In the third mating the same buck was crossed to a black and she had a litter of 100 per cent blacks. I intend crossing a buck from this litter to the two agoutis and one black from the first litter.

I also mated together two cinnamons, both of which were produced from a cinnamon x mink and the litter contained two cinnamons, two minks and three unusual coloured kittens. These are best described as a silver fawn with the same ticking but a butter colour where silver fawns are fawn. When compared to a silver fawn of the same age they make it look very dark and dull. Bearing in mind that silver fawns are pink eyed cinnamons could this new colour be pink eyed dilute cinnamon? Any ideas all you genetics experts?

Mrs Dagg wrote about a two week old mouse being fostered in a newborn litter. This does not surprise me as it used to happen in the pet mice I had. Sometimes a doe would savage the whole lot and on the next occasion she would rear anything even once a baby rat. Coming back to rats I've known does to rear kittens two weeks younger than their litter and also once to come into milk when she had been housed with a doe and litter. She definitely had milk, you could see it and she had not been near a buck.

I once had a rat born with what I think is called Hydrocephalus. He had a big domed forehead and I thought he was cute and called him Whisky. I used to sneak him into bed with me where he chewed the sheets much to mum's annoyance. Unfortunately he used to have epileptic fits and in the end he bit his tongue and had to be put down. I think rats beat all other children's pets hands down and are definitely one of the most intelligent rodents.

rats

DAGENHAM TOWN

I WAS asked to judge the rats on July 8 in place of E. N. Smith, who was unable to attend through illness. Stock on the whole was poor, with many rats suffering from moults and poor condition and it was rather sad to see the deterioration in the Irish and Berkshire classes. Best in show was N Mays silver fawn rex kitten, and best opposite age was L Suttlings silver fawn adult.

SELF Ad 3: 1 Mrs C Chapman, albino, a nice clean rat spoilt by a slight moult on the head 2 3 L Suttlings, albino, nice big buck, top colour too dark 3 albino, colour right on this one but had red staining on the shoulders 13 wk 6: 1 2 L Suttlings, albino, a good shade of white but again spoilt by very slight stain on back 2 albino, not colour of first and again spoilt by stain 3 J and J Chapman, champagne, colour a little muddy, moult on the head BERKSHIRE or IRISH Ad 7: 1 2 Mrs Chapman, agouti Berkshire, the only one in class with head spot and all four feet stops, only missing tail stop 2 black Irish good chest marking, no back foot stops 3 A Storey, cinnamon Irish, good colour but very poor markings 13 wk 2: 1 2 L Suttlings, two cinnamon Irish, winner gets it on slightly better markings AOV MARKED Ad 5: 1 L Suttlings, agouti Hooded, a nice rat with a good straight saddle, spoilt only by long hairs in the middle of the saddle 2 3 Mrs Chapman, black Hooded, not saddle of first 3 black Hooded, saddle broken at the tail 13 wk 3: 1 2 J Pearce, chocolate Hooded, a nice rat, good colour, head and saddle 2 chocolate, good markings but head in two colours 3 L Suttlings, black Capped, good cap spoilt by stray black patches on back of head REX Ad 4: 1 C McKnight, champagne, best in the class, good waving and colour 2 3 Mrs Chapman, silver fawn, colour and ticking good but not waving of first 3 champagne, a massive buck but rather old for the show bench, way out of condition 13 wk 4: 1 N Mays, silver fawn, a first class rat, good colour, good waving, best in show 2 J Pearce, agouti Capped, a good attempt, spoilt by stained tail 3 J and J Chapman, mink, colour a little washed out, very poor waving AOV Ad 11: 1 L Suttlings 2 A Storey 3 C McKnight, all these Silver Fawns, on colour and ticking they were well up but all in this class had moult on the shoulders with only the winner being free of this 13 wk 3: 1 2 L Suttlings 3 A Storey, all Silver Fawns and bar the winner the same faults as the adults AV Grand chail ad 29: 1 L Suttlings 2 C McKnight 3 Mrs Chapman 13 wk 17: 1 N Mays 2 3 L Suttlings Supreme chail 37: Repeat. JOHN STEER

AUGUST 10, 1978

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

A Best In Show for an up and coming young Fancier at the Dagenham Town Show, 1978. (Above).

Rats rule OK!

Ann Storey

AFTER PUTTING the job off I have at last got down to putting pen to paper and telling you why a normal (well fairly) eighteen-year-old chooses to keep rats.

It all started when I was about six and we owned several snakes and other animals which required rats for food. Rats at the time cost 7s 6d each and so we decided to breed our own starting from a nucleus of six laboratory rats one of which was a large and exceptionally savage doe who consistently had large litters of fourteen and on one occasion this charming animal only left one alive and deserted this. However, we managed to rear this kitten by hand and she became my first pet. I suppose after this I just became addicted to rats and started to breed them for pets and animal food although at this stage I only had albinos and black hooded.

In 1969 I obtained two silver fawn hooded rats from Geoff Izzard; I seem to remember that the doe was very well marked, and by crossing these with the blacks I got agoutis. In 1973 I got an Agouti Berkshire doe from a local school and I am developing selfs and Irish from her. It was also in 1973 that I started to keep records, the same system more or less that I use now. This comprises of a book to write down day to day happenings, egg births ready for transferring on to each rat's personal sheet of paper kept in a file. The file is divided into breeds, ie AOV, Irish, Self etc and each rat has its name, sex, breed, breeding and showing performance and remarks on type etc on the sheet of paper. I find naming more convenient than numbers or letters but then I never have more than about forty rats at a time.

At the moment I am attempting to specialise in agoutis, cinnamons and silver fawns with their appropriate marked varieties, except hooded, although I would like to breed a good self black just to show it can be done. Adult rats are housed together in groups of three to seven of the same sex. Bucks seem to get on all right as long as they have grown up with each other and are not separated for more than two or three days. For mating the buck and doe are left together overnight or even when I am feeding in the evening and returned to their separate cages during the day. This is repeated until a successful mating has occurred. Sometimes, especially if either animal is rather old, the doe will 'miss' and a new mate will be necessary. I have found that some inexperienced bucks can be frightened off by aggressive does, so I try to mate these to placid second and third litter does and the more aggressive does to dominant bucks.

Pregnant does are put into a cage by themselves to kindle. I don't usually let two litters together as one rat will chase the other off and rear two litters by herself which is not really a desirable state of affairs. I cull deformed and obviously mis-marked kittens in the nest and any others when it becomes apparent that they will be no use for show or breeding. Kittens begin weaning when their eyes open at fifteen days and are started by licking milk off my fingers. When they get older they eat milk soaked Winalot and young and growing rats are fed on milk, Winalot, sunflower seeds and peanuts, vegetables and

table scraps. Adult rats get the same except for the milk, peanuts and sunflower seeds. Table scraps must be fresh and meat and meat bones can be fed safely. Unlike mice, rats seem to do best on a varied diet and as a general rule anything that is good for us is good for them. During cold nights I feed a bran mash made of boiled potatoes in skins, bran and cod liver oil. The rats enjoy this and it saves money. Silver fawns must have carrots to bring their colour out. It is very important that young kittens get enough protein, calcium and without which they will not grow correctly. If any rats get bald patches, I find they can be cured by a joint treatment of sulphur water and 'Zerrol' ointment. I put about half an inch of crushed sulphur in a jam jar with water and shake it at regular intervals. This water is given once a day to affected animals and the ointment is rubbed into the affected area.

My rats seem to keep fairly healthy and (touchwood) I have never seen a case of scaly tail or ear. Some rats suffer from a 'sneezing' virus that in itself does not make the rat look at all ill or even make it lose condition. It appears to come and go and can only be detected by fairly frequent sneezing. The real danger is secondary infections such as bronchitis and pneumonia and these rats must not be allowed to come in contact with any other rats. I usually cull rats with pneumonia as they never make a satisfactory recovery. Older rats may develop growths or abscesses and these are sometimes chewed off by the others and they have no more trouble. If they do recur or seem especially persistent in a strain it is better to cull infected animals and watch carefully any of their offspring.

The first show I exhibited at was the London 76 I saw it advertised in the 'Daily Mail' and I entered some rats in the rat section. After an incredible series of mishaps ie entering rats in the wrong classes, no show pens, getting lost on the day; I ended up doing quite well, obtained some more stock and joined the National Fancy Rat Society.

Before showing I wash the rats that need it in warm water with washing up liquid using an old bristle toothbrush to clean their tails and ears. They are dried on an old towel and then with a hairdryer, again using the toothbrush for grooming. When the rat is quite dry I rub a drop of glycerine onto my hands and then rub my hands over the rat until the coat is gleaming. If anybody keeps rats but doesn't show please have a go, I'm sure you will enjoy yourself.

Pauline Marsden wrote a very interesting article on rats a few months ago most of which I agreed with. However, she thought it doubtful that rats actively hunt but I have first hand experience when rats have got into a cage of pet mice or there has been an escaped mouse in the shed. In both cases the mice concerned were killed by a quick bite in the throat and once dead they were ignored. I would advise all people who have rats and mice not to risk contact unless they have been brought up together.

Before I finish I must say thank you to Geoff Izzard and all the other people who have helped me and I wish everyone success in the coming year.

rats

Mr A COLLINS

I HAD a very nice day out at this year's London Championship show at the Ally Pally, and found it a real pleasure to judge the rat section along with my old chum John Steer. This year's entry was the highest it has ever been, and with so many good rats on the show bench it makes it hard work but well worth the energy spent sorting the stock out. Once again Geoff Izzard and Joan Pearce made it into a very good and well run show, what would we do without them? This coming year sees a new president of the National Fancy Rat Society, also the first of our life members, which is given for all the hard work that he put into starting and keeping going the NFRS, to Geoff Izzard, who also becomes our new president, need I say more. My thanks go to Jackie Chapman and Ann Storey for running the rats at a break-neck speed to my table for me to judge, thank you both. If I had to have one moan about the London it would be that after having a wonderful lunch I had a stiff neck, the dinner tables were at least two feet below the chair I was sitting on, but never mind it was a very good meal, last of all my congratulations to the Loves (Genesis Stud) for their first ever best in show, what a place to get it, see you all next year at London.

SELF Ad 7: 1 J Chapman, a champagne buck, good colour, good type, rather small for an adult but still a very nice rat 2 Thamesgrove Stud, champagne buck, good colour, coat needs cleaning 3 4 Belmont Stud, cream doe, nice colour and type, dirty tail 4 champagne doe, very small, only fair colour, poor tail set and very short 5 6 Genesis Stud 7 C McKnight BERKSHIRE or IRISH Ad 11: 1 6 Genesis Stud, pearl Berkshire, good all round, slight moult on head, buck 2 Rivendell, Berkshire doe, good belly and stops, fair top colour, nice clean rat, black 3 7 J Rea, Berkshire black doe, nice type, tail set and colour, needs improvement 4 5 N Mays, Berkshire doe, black, good colour and type but needs handling, had to chase this one round the table MARKED AOV Ad 12: 1 Genesis Stud, Agouti English hooded, wonderful colour and type, good hood, perfect saddle, the best hood I have seen, went on to get best in show 2 Thamesgrove Stud, champagne hooded buck, perfect colour and hood, falls saddle 3 4 M J Pearce, mink hooded doe, fair colour, good type, still a baby, a nice rat 4 same as the last one 5 6 7 Beddows AC AV Ad 7: 1 C McKnight, champagne Rex buck, smashing coat and colour, wonderful type, get them all like this

one 2 Rivendell, black Rex buck, good wavy coat but the colour needs a lot of improvement 3 4 Thamesgrove Stud, silver fawn Rex buck, good colour and coat but needs more waving on shoulders 4 same as the last one, falls colour 5 J Chapman 6 J Pearce 7 J Rea AOV Ad 10: 1 3 C McKnight, silver fawn doe, very good colour and nice white belly, perfect condition 2 Jackie Chapman, Agouti doe, very nice colour, falls feet 3 same as the last one, colour not as good 4 Rivendell, silver fawn buck, good top colour, falls belly, too much yellow, good type 5 Joanna Chapman 6 N Mays 7 H Pownall AV Chail ad 47: 1 4 Genesis Stud, best in show 2 3 C McKnight 5 Justin Chapman 6 Thamesgrove Stud 7 Rivendell Stud buck 21: 1 4 5 Genesis Stud 2 C McKnight 3 Rivendell 6 J M Pearce 7 Beddows Doe 40: 1 Genesis Stud 2 7 Belmont Stud 3 C McKnight 4 Rivendell 5 6 H Dagg JUVENILE Exhibitor AV AA 10: 1 6 Justin Chapman 2 4 5 7 N Mays 3 Joanne Chapman AV London members 71: 1 4 Genesis Stud 2 Belmont Stud 3 Rivendell 5 Jackie Chapman 6 Justin Chapman 7 Thamesgrove Stud NFRS Members chail 77: 1 5 Genesis Stud 2 Belmont Stud 3 C McKnight 4 Rivendell 6 7 H Dagg Grand chail (open) 72: Repeat UNSTANDARDISED 2: 1 J Chapman, silver brown, very good colour 2 Belmont Stud, Dutch, long way to go. A COLLINS

Roy Robinson

IT IS intriguing that, while a Himalayan rabbit and a Himalayan cavy have been known almost since time immemorial, the discovery of Himalayan patterns in the mouse and rat is quite recent. The Himalayan gene was found in the mouse in 1960 but did not reach the Fancy until many years later. The pattern was not found in the rat until about 1972 in France.

In both the mouse and the rat the coat of the youngster is a pale sepia with darker, but not markedly darker extremities. As the animal grows older the body fur becomes lighter but the points become darker. The eyes are light red.

The rat resembles the mouse in that the Himalayan gene (symbol *ch* in both species) occurs in two distinctive phases. These are the Siamese, where the body fur is light sepia, and the Himalayan, where the body fur is almost white. This latter is due to heterozygosity for albino. Therefore, Himalayan x Himalayan would be expected to produce a ratio of one Siamese, two Himalayan and one albino on the average.

The above may be compared with the Himalayan rabbit and cavy which exists only in one phase, white body fur and coloured points. The Siamese cat is also basically Himalayan pattern but on a higher level of pigmentation, as shown by the sepia shaded body fur and blue instead of pink eyes. The pink eye shows an absence of pigment while the blue eye indicates the presence of some pigment.

The Himalayan rat would make a welcome addition to the range of varieties. Attempts are in hand to import a few animals. Anyone who is interested is urged to contact the National Fancy Rat Society: Mrs Joan Pearce, 57 Myrtledeane Road, Abbeywood, London SE2. Financial support would be welcomed.

Since it will be practical to import merely a few rats, it would be desirable for these to be outcrossed to British animals in the initial stages. The standard Himalayan is a non-agouti, hence the imported rats should be mated to Self Black as far as possible. Matings may also be made to albino provided these are bred from Black parentage.

In the second mating all of the offspring will be Himalayan or half Himalayan and half albino depending whether or not the Himalayan parent is pure-breeding. In the first mating all of the first cross will be expected to be Black. When these are intermated among themselves the expectation is a ratio of three Black to one Himalayan. Mating the first-cross Black to a Himalayan will be expected to produce half Black and half Himalayan.

The agouti Himalayan is a chinchilla pointed animal—that is, white body fur and chinchilla coloured extremities. This is an unrecognised colour in the Fancies. The Rat Fancy will have to decide if the colour should be recognised or not. If it is not recognised crosses of Himalayan with agouti, or albinos descended from agouti, are less desirable.

Mating of the Himalayan with Berkshire, Irish or Hooded is not recommendable because the subsequently recovered Himalayan will probably have white marks on the nose and feet. Since the points should be solid black these would rank as blemishes. In this respect it would be wise not to introduce any aspect of the hooded gene in these early crosses. This will only lead to problems in later generations.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

It was a red letter day for the N.F.R.S when their Genetical Advisor Roy Robinson announced the existence of a Himalayan Rat in France. Preparations to import some were duly made. (Above). Ann Storey writes at length on the rare Self Black. By 1979, the variety was even rarer, due to the unwelcome breeding of Silver Greys, ousting the Self Black. However, by 1983, thanks to Ann, the breed staged a successful comeback.

says Helen Dagg

I HAVE just discovered that having rats in the house have their uses as well as the enjoyment of looking after them and the nail-biting excitement at shows.

A few days ago I had let two of my rats out for a run round. Pippin was busy teasing the cat and inviting her to chase and Mandy, who thinks that it is sheer heavenly bliss just to be allowed to sit on my shoulder for an hour or so (this is something Mandy and I don't agree on), was in her usual place.

I looked out of the window and saw a woman going down the street knocking on doors and inviting people to buy her lucky charms. We get quite a few coming round. They are supposed to be gypsies but I doubt very much if they are. Anyway she finally arrived at my door and knocked. I didn't answer but after three or four knocks I finally got up thinking wildly of some excuse.

I picked Pippin up and put her on my other shoulder and opened the door. The woman took one look at me and opened her mouth to speak, then she suddenly saw two huge rats sitting on my shoulder staring at her with big black menacing eyes. Needless to say she fled and I just sat down and laughed, wondering what she would say to her family when she got home. (If any of you have proverbial mother-in-laws, you know what to do now!)

There have been lots of letters of advice in both FUR & FEATHER and National Fancy Rat Society newsletters on how to feed, house, breed and care for rats, but not much has been written about the character of rats, which to me is just as important. I have bred mice for years but not once could I say that I have known a mouse as a character. True they have character but not as strong as rats have.

Rats are very intelligent and, when tame, it is possible to know and understand each one as a definite character.

The first rat I ever had was a hooded buck called Marcus. I was living in a bedsitter in Burnley on my own at the time. He was always quiet and when he became tame he never knew a cage and always had the run of my room. At night he would curl up on my bed with the cat and sleep there all night. During the day when I was working he would just wander round or curl up on the settee. He even used to sleep on the rug in front of the fire or on my knee in the evenings while I watched television. He never got into mischief and was a very good companion.

When he died I had just got married and moved to my present home. I bought another hooded rat, a doe this time. Pippin is her name and she is exactly the opposite. To describe her properly she is a scoundrel! I got her at five months as a wild beast who bit my hand dozens of times. But she has such a strong character that within a week she was hand tame. Her greatest joy is to be let out of the cage to plague the cat. Midge and Pippin play cat and mouse to-

gether up and down the stairs and all over the house.

When Midge is not around she busies herself chewing the chairs, the carpet, the children's toys, or trying to pull the tortoise out of its shell! She is so nosy, inquisitive and a damn nuisance that she has to be watched every minute or she is into mischief of some kind. She found out how to open her cage door and many a time has spent the night wandering 'till I built a 'stronghold' for her.

Mandy, who lives with her, is a young Berkshire and is so quiet you wouldn't know she was there. She is allowed out like Pippin but prefers to just sit on my shoulder. If I put her on the floor and walk away she follows and climbs back up again. She makes a little chattering sound as if she is talking in my ear. Because she and Pippin are so different they can live together in perfect harmony so to speak.

I have three young rats kindly given to me by Geo Izzard in May. Although they are only kittens their characters are forming and of the two does, who are both highly excitable, Sally is showing herself to be the bolder and the dominant one while Sue is still very shy of me but extremely nosy. As soon as I walk into the room her little face is peering out watching what is going on while Sally is trying to assert her dominance by pushing her away.

Simon, my only buck, is like a cuddly teddy bear. He has a very boyish nature and loves climbing and walking upside down on the bars of his cage. But when you walk away and ignore him he looks at you so mournfully you feel like picking him up and cuddling him.

So there you are the characters of the rats that I have. All those of you who have rats must surely agree that each one has his or her own personality. In fact rats are so intelligent that I dread to think what they would do if they were the size of sheep. We would probably find ourselves competing with them over who rules the earth, and I certainly wouldn't fancy an argument with Pippin that size!

AUGUST 3, 1978

Breeding the Self Black rat

SELF BLACKS are one of the more neglected varieties of rats and appear to be in the hand of only two or three breeders. In spite of this they have made progress which is more than could be said for some other varieties.

All the dark coloured selfs tend to put people off them because they usually have white toes. This is something which must be bred out. I now have two does with solid black hind feet, one of which was bred from my own stock. The Self Black breeder is faced with problems which just do not arise with Self Chams or PE Whites. Many judges acknowledge this and place them if they are good for a Self Black and not necessarily better than the Chams and PE Whites below them.

The three main faults are white toes, silvering and poor colour.

White ticking or silvering is caused by a recessive gene and is very difficult to get rid of. This problem is always worse in bucks and shows up on the third moult at nine to twelve weeks. Older rats sometime develop white hairs but this is not the same and is nothing to worry about. Cull all kittens if possible which show silvering no matter how good they are in other respects unless, of course, you are breeding Silver Greys.

Many Blacks (including marked) around are poor coloured with brown or rusty colouring. This is caused mainly by three things:

1 Exposure to UV light. Never leave your Blacks where sunlight can reach them. This forms rusty patches.

2 Age or moult. Show your Blacks after the moult and remember that by the time it

is seven or eight months old the coat will become duller and rusty.

3 Incorrect breeding is the single most important factor. Blacks carrying chocolate are never any good colourwise because the black gene (carried on the same locus as the chocolate) is an incomplete dominant to chocolate. If anyone does not believe this they only have to read 'Genetics of the Norway Rat' by Roy Robinson.

Never outcross to Cinnamons, Minks (dilute chocolate), Chocolate, Champagnes or Silver Fawns. The only outcross suitable in my opinion is another Self Black or a dull wild type agouti. The bright agouti required by the standard is either heterozygous for chocolate or is carrying modifying polygenes which also would give the Black a brown tinge.

To see the colour you want take a piece of anthracite and compare it to your best Black. Don't be surprised at the difference. A good black mouse compares favourably and there is no reason that rats shouldn't either. To say that rats are not like mice and that it is not possible to ever get them like that is the talk of a defeatist. Inbreed your stock and drastically cull, leaving the rats with best colour, fertility, type and size. Never let the fertility slip.

Blacks have a tendency to be small but with reasonable type for a rat. Size is apparently connected to the colour genes in rats as it is in mice but does not appear to have such a marked effect on type. From what I have written it can be seen that there is a long way to go before perfection is attained. I think an improvement class added to the rat schedule might encourage more people to breed them. This is a variety for the breeder who wants a real challenge.

ANN STOREY

New strain at 'Bradford'

LAST YEAR the National Fancy Rat Society imported some Himalayan-marked rats from France. This new strain came about in 1972 in French laboratories and the society was so'd exclusively some young adult specimens which were duly imported. The society is pleased to announce that these rats are now out of quarantine and will be on show at the Bradford Show on Saturday, January 20, but at present, none are for sale.

Recently our fast-growing society has acquired some new members abroad and has gone from strength to strength from obscurity to acclaim, largely due to the efforts of the founder members president, and recently-elected life member Geoff Izzard and secretary Mrs Joan Pearce.

Anybody who is interested in joining the NFRS should contact Mrs Pearce at 57 Myrtledeane Road, Abbey Wood, London SE2, or see her on the big day. I joined in April 1977 and belong to the society, heart, body and soul, that's how good it is.

NICK MAYS

Rat section

Best in show: L Suttling's albino Rex buck. Best opposite age: L Suttling's Champagne kitten. Best Marked: H Dagg's black Irish doe. Best Self: L Suttling's Champagne kitten. Best AOV: C McKnight's Cinnamon kitten. Dews Cup: L Suttling's albino Rex buck. Runner-up to Dews Cup: L Suttling's mink Berkshire kitten.

Mr L DEWS

Dews Cup 14: 1 2 L Suttling, albino Rex buck, excellent throughout 2 mink Berkshire, spoilt only by white spot on flanks, beautiful colour 3 M Dagg, black Irish doe, very nice.

L DEWS

Mrs J PEARCE

CONGRATULATIONS LES on a hat-trick, best in show and Dews Cup with a magnificent albino Rex buck and best opposite age cup (kindly presented by A Storey) with a lovely Champagne kitten. Standard good generally but what has happened to the white belly of the Silver Fawns? Our thanks to the stewards and clerk who did a good job. Thanks for the effort everyone in atrocious weather.

SELF Kitten 1: 1 L Suttling, very good even colour IRISH or BERKSHIRE Kitten: 1 L Suttling, mink Berkshire, lovely colour spoilt only by white mask in side and no tail stop 2 H Dagg, black Berkshire, nice black but brindled sides and mouly REX Marked kitten: 1 C McKnight, black Berkshire Rex, nicely marked except for tail stop, rexing thin AOV Kitten: 1 H Dagg, silver fawn Rex, very poor rex coat. SILVER FAWN Kitten: 1 2 C McKnight, good colour, white belly 2 good as first but for dark patch on back 3 A Storey, very good condition, colour slightly uneven, yellow tinge to belly AOV Kitten: 1 C McKnight, Cinnamon, nice even colour, rather pale, excellent condition 2 D Beddoes, rather dark Agouti, darker patch centre of back AV Chall kitten: 1 7 L Suttling 2 3 4 5 C McKnight 6 A Storey. JOHN PEARCE

Mr G IZZARD

SELF Ad 3: 1 L Suttling, Champagne doe, good colour, excellent condition 2 N Mays, Cream buck, scratch on left shoulder, otherwise good 3 A Storey, lovely Black buck, what a pity he had one white hand HOODED, CAPPED or VARIEGATED Ad 5: 1 2 5 D Beddoes, silver fawn Hooded doe, best saddle but hood tail slightly 2 silver fawn Hooded buck, best hood, saddle short of tail 3 Suttling, nice Hooded doe, brindling on saddle 4 N Mays, black Hooded, brindling on saddle, failed under hood BERKSHIRE or IRISH Ad 3: 1 H Dagg, black Irish doe, very good triangle, good condition 2 A Storey, Irish doe, excellent condition but small spot on triangle 3 L Suttling, nice doe but a bit small for adult REX Marked ad 2: 1 N Mays, silver fawn Hooded buck, nice soft coat 2 C McKnight, champagne Irish buck, rexing not consistent, marking indistinct AOV Ad 2: 1 L Suttling, magnificent albino buck, coat well rexed and soft, best in show and Dews Cup 2 A Storey, chocolate Rex buck, good coat but thin on shoulders SILVER FAWN Ad 5: 1 C McKnight, doe, best of rather disappointing batch, condition excellent 2 3 A Storey, doe followed by a buck, what has happened to the white belly? 4 L Suttling, doe, fur thin on belly 5 H Dagg AOV Ad 1: 1 L Suttling, lovely Cinnamon doe, a bit small but worthy of more competition AV Chall ad 20: 1 3 L Suttling, albino Rex buck, coat so soft, rexing good, excellent all round 2 H Dagg, beautiful black Irish doe 3 lovely Cinnamon doe but a bit small 4 A Storey, choc Rex buck, coat thin on shoulders 5 C McKnight 6 N Mays 7 D Beddoes.

G IZZARD

BOTH JUDGES

AV Stud buck 7: 1 L Suttling 2 3 N Mays 4 6 D Beddoes 5 7 A Storey Doe 13: 1 4 L Suttling 2 H Dagg 3 A Storey 5 D Beddoes 6 C McKnight 7 N Mays.

The care and breeding of fancy rats

(69)

Mrs H Dagg

THE FANCY RAT has always had a bad reputation, especially in the north, as being a dirty disease ridden rodent that roams the sewers and dirty rivers of this country. True there are such creatures that are so unfortunate as to have nowhere else to live. But if anyone has the patience to watch them they will notice that even wild rats living in such places endeavour to keep themselves clean. They have a drink and they wash themselves, they have something to eat and they wash themselves. And not just their faces, but all over. You point out a human being that has a bath every time he has a drink!

For generations now Fancy rats have been kept as pets and through selective breeding or just plain luck we have quite a few varieties. I will go through each variety and describe them to you.

Agouti. This is the wild colour that has been developed into a richer brown than the dull coat of the wild rat. The standard calls for a rich ruddy brown ticked with black guard hairs. The belly colour is silver grey and the eyes are black.

Cinnamon. This is a lighter form of the Agouti. A warm russet brown with chocolate guard hairs. Belly a silver grey, and eyes black.

Silver Fawn. This again is a dilute form of the Agouti and most attractive. It is a rich orange colour with silver guard hairs. Belly fur is white and the eyes are red.

Pearl. This is one of the newer varieties and is a pale silver with a white undercolour. Each hair all over the body is tipped with grey or black. The eyes are black.

Black. A well bred and looked after black is a beauty. The body colour should be jet black with no brown patches or white hairs. So far it has been impossible to breed the black colour to the density of the black mouse but a good one always catches the eye.

Chocolate. This is the colour of deep chocolate and should have no white hairs. Eyes are black.

Mink. This is rather an unusual colour and one that the mouse Fancy has not got. The standard describes it as a pleasing coffee colour with a distinct bluish sheen. Eyes are black.

Champagne. This is a warm beige colour and the eyes are pink.

Cream. The colour of this breed is an off white colour. Eyes are pink.

Albino (PEW). This is self descriptive and a good one with no creamy tinge is beautiful and will go a long way. Eyes are pink.

The pattern varieties.

There are five pattern varieties of the Fancy rat and a good one with true markings takes some beating.

English Hooded. This variety was the most popular and the commonest variety seen for sale in pet shops. The pattern consists of a hood of any colour covering the head, throat and shoulders. There is a line running down the spine to the tail and half way down. This is called the saddle. The rest of the body is white. The saddle should be about 1/2 in to 1/3 in in width and even and unbroken. A lot of hard work and selective breeding goes into a winner.

Capped. This variety is merely the Hooded without the saddle. Just the head is coloured, with a white blaze down the forehead like the Dutch mouse. With careful breeding the Dutch markings could be produced, but would take a very long time and lots of patient hard work.

Variiegated. This breed has the head coloured rather like the Capped and the body has a variegation of white and any recognised colour. The belly colour is white.

Berkshire. This breed has a white belly and the top colour can be of any recognised variety. The white should not come up the side. Also a white spot on the forehead, and four white feet.

Irish. This is my favorite breed. Any body colour with a white triangle on the chest. Four white feet.

There is also a curly coat variety called Rex, which has curly whiskers. This can be any colour or variety.

A new breed has just been imported from France. The Himalayan Marked which is just like a Himalayan mouse or rabbit.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

Helen Dagg was a most prolific writer on Rat matters within 'F & F' and later she went on to form the Northern Counties Fancy Rat Society in December 1978. In the article on the Care and Breeding of Fancy Rats (Left), Helen brings readers up to date on the latest varieties, as does the author in his first article for 'F & F' detailing the arrival of the new Himalayan Rats from France.

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Wild Rats

I WAS rather amused to read Mrs H Dagg's views on the wild Brown Rat (FUR & FEATHER, February 22). I can understand her being opposed to people's revulsion of the tame rat. I have kept, and enjoyed keeping the tame variety but I cannot hold with her views of the wild rat 'being unfortunate enough to have nowhere else to live' but sewers and dirty rivers'.

She points out these wild rats are always washing themselves yet are still classed as 'dirty, disease ridden rodents'. They are, Mrs Dagg, washing doesn't detract from the fact that the brown rat (*Rattus norvegicus*) is a mobile disease factory, who, far from 'having nowhere else to live' will choose sewers, refuse tips, maggot factories etc. The Brown Rat will eat anything, clean and wholesome or rotting and stenching.

Surely Mrs Dagg, you don't believe that because the Brown Rat is always washing it is clean? It may be, outside, but the Brown Rat carries Leptospirosis, lethal to a dog who gets nipped, and equally lethal to humans. In humans it is known as Weil's Disease, the victim showing symptoms akin to jaundice but being a yellow corpse within a week of the onset of the symptoms. Not even a bite from *Rattus Norvegicus* is necessary to induce Weil's Disease—contact where a rat has urinated is enough.

What does need pointing out to people is that the tame rat is well bred, internally clean and highly intelligent, deserving indeed the show bench and a popularity it does not seem to get, whereas the wild Brown Rat needs killing at every opportunity.

I'm sorry Mrs Dagg, but there is no such thing as a clean wild rat. (Miss L. POWELL)

8/3/79

Deadly disease

MISS POWELL in your letter in FUR & FEATHER of March 8 I think you have missed entirely the point I was trying to make about wild rats. I did not say that wild rats are always washing themselves yet they are still classed as dirty disease ridden rodents. In fact I said and I quote, 'The rat always has had a bad reputation as being a dirty, disease-ridden rodent that roams the sewers and rivers of this country. But if anyone has the patience to watch them they will notice that they ENDEAVOUR TO KEEP THEMSELVES CLEAN'. I did not say that because they keep washing themselves that they can wash the disease away. Anyone knows that is not possible. They try to keep themselves clean.

Granted the creatures do not know they carry disease but they have very clean habits with regard to personal hygiene. I know, I have watched them as a child day after day and still do whenever I get the chance to see any. I spent my whole childhood down by the river watching the wild life going on around and I have studied these creatures.

I know very well that they carry a deadly disease. As a child I suffered two personal losses in my life due to the Leptospirosis. The first was a ferrier that we had and loved very much. He used to go out every day hunting rats on his own, till he went missing for 24 hours and came home and promptly collapsed and died in front of the fire. Post mortem showed that he had been bitten by a rat and subsequently contracted the disease.

The second one was when I was nearly fifteen and courting with a seventeen year old local lad who spent as much time as he could ratting with his ferrets. He used to take me along and we had some good ferreting days. The day he was bitten by an extremely savage doe I was not with him but he died with Weil's Disease nine days later, two days before his eighteenth birthday.

No Miss Powell, you do not need to tell me about the dangers of wild rats. I know!

And please bear in mind that this is a weekly article I am submitting and had you been a little more patient I would have dealt with all this in a forthcoming article. Mrs HELEN DAGG

29/3/79

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

Like Mary Douglas before her, Helen Dagg was the target of certain other Fanciers if she wrote something that they did not agree with, as the above example shows. However, Helen proved herself more than capable in replying to such critics in a far blunter manner than Mary Douglas. Also, she had the support of other erstwhile Rat Fanciers, such as Sara Handley.

Care of fancy rats

by Mrs Helen Dagg

FANCY RATS are very intelligent and can easily be trained. They have been used in laboratories in studies of behaviour and have been known to find their way out of a complicated maze and when they are put back in they find their way out again without making a wrong turning. They have very good memories and soon learn their owner's certain body scent and the sound of their voices. They can differentiate between human words and will learn their own name so that they come when they are called.

If a certain routine is worked out in the battery, and is maintained, they soon learn what is going on and their feeding time. Most of my rats spend the day playing with each other or sleeping, or suckling if they have young, but at feeding time when you look in all the cages, they are there by the door waiting for their supper.

Rats are gregarious and do not like living on their own. They get very bored and lonely if they have no company and, as can happen with a prisoner in solitary, they can turn slightly mad if left on their own a very long time. Mind you, rats can be kept on their own if they are let out and played with every day. They soon become part of the family, just like a cat or a dog.

I used to live in a flat on my own in Burnley and I had a rat then, a Black Hooded buck called Marcus. To tell you the truth I bought him on impulse. He was my first rat and I hadn't even got a cage for him. He slept in a wooden box and had the run of the flat all day while I was out at work. (No the landlady didn't know!)

I also had a cat and the two used to play together and curl up together in front of the fire. When I got home at night and had my tea I used to sit on the settee and watch television and Marcus would curl up on my knee and go to sleep. After the first few nights of sleeping in a box he soon wormed his way into bed with me. He was just like a hot-water bottle, especially in winter. Unfortunately my husband won't allow it now!

After I got married and Marcus died I was 'ratless' for two years and after I bought my next rat I realised, that they were two years wasted. Pippin was my very favourite and had such a character. She was a very dominant rat and used to get jealous if I paid no attention to her. She was another who used to play with the cat and her and Midge would play cat and mouse all over the house and up and down stairs. She would run under the sideboard and poke her nose out and back again teasing Midge. She was no show rat but I used to take her to every show and must have travelled about 2 000 miles with all those trips to London and back and then to Doncaster. She used to sit on my shoulder everywhere I went, even on the trains.

I decided to mate her once to one of my bucks as I would have liked one of her youngsters to carry on the tradition of 'Stud Mascot'. Unfortunately something went wrong in labour and after two days with no babies I took her to the vets who said she was going to die but would try a caesarian on her, though he had never done such an operation on so small an animal before. The operation was a complete success and I thought for Pippin it was worth every penny and certainly experience for my local vet.

Wild rats

FOR SOME little while I have been considering the letter written by Miss L Powell on the subject of wild rats.

Finally I decided that perhaps someone besides Helen Dagg ought to speak up on their behalf.

Miss Powell describes the brown rat as a 'mobile disease factory'. Surely this description fits mankind much more aptly. We spread disease with gay abandon, even going so far as to invent new ones, using rats to test them on.

Contrary to Miss Powell's description of Weil's Disease, humans are rarely a yellow corpse within a week, on showing the symptom. The incidence of mortality is fairly low. Those highest at risk of contracting the disease are farm and sewage workers. They catch it from contaminated water, either through a cut or abrasion, or through drinking the water. The average person is more likely to catch measles.

Not even wild rats carry leptospirosis. Pets are the most likely to be affected fatally by this disease though, hopefully, one can keep them in secure quarters where wild rats cannot gain access.

Graham Twigg in his book 'The Brown Rat' deals with leptospirosis very comprehensively. Perhaps Miss Powell would find it useful to obtain a copy and thus allay her fears of mankind being wiped out by rats.

SARA HANDLEY

12/4/79

She died finally at the beginning of March of old age and has left a very big gap in my life.

As you have gathered from my stories rats can become a very firm friend with the family and are certainly very good pets for anyone interested in small livestock. They are very gentle and a child can easily look after them. My two children (three and sixteen months) play with my rats and thoroughly enjoy them.

NORTHERN COUNTIES FANCY RAT SOCIETY

THE NCFRS will hold its first show in Chorley on April 12. Due to a misunderstanding the venue is now at the Park Street School off Park Road, which is well known to the Chorley people so if you ask someone they will soon direct you to it. Len Dews will be judging at 6.30 pm and you can send your entries to me at 44 Bower Street, Mill Hill, Blackburn.

I had a telephone call from the reporter of Granada Television who interviewed me last time. She will be coming round with a film crew on the night of the show, so members this may be your only chance to be on television so let's have a good turn out and some good entries for Len.

Details of the show will be advertised over the air on radio Blackburn inviting people to come and have a look at our rats. There will be rosettes for the winners of all classes and for best in show and best opposite age. Also there is a cup which will be awarded to the owner of the best in show rat, so there is plenty to compete for.

HELEN DAGG

FUR & FEATHER, MARCH 22, 1979

NORTHERN COUNTIES FANCY RAT SOCIETY

OUR FIRST show was a great success with eighteen rats and forty entries. We had seven of our members there with a few who weren't but were interested. We got two more members and the society made almost £10 with subscriptions and so forth.

We were unlucky in having to change the venue at such short notice due to unforeseen circumstances, but we managed to hold the show in my new house which I have just bought but not moved into yet. We were pushed for space but everything ran smoothly.

I thank Nick Mays who travelled all the way from London and stayed the night. He was well rewarded for it by winning best opposite age. Now you know what it is like for me Nick when I come all the way down to show at Surbiton. Still I think everyone agrees it is all worth it. Sorry you couldn't make it Chris. You would have enjoyed it.

The Press turned up at 9 am and took some photos so we will be in the *Blackburn Times*.

Many thanks to Len Dews who judged for us and to Nick who stewarded. Here are some results: Class 2 Wittonbank Stud, Class 3 Nick Mays, Class 4 Wittonbank Stud, Class 6 Mrs Caccia, Class 7 Nick Mays, Class 8 Shauna Carden, Class 9 Chall Nick Mays, Class 10 Chall Wittonbank Stud. Best in show Wittonbank Stud. Best opposite age Nick Mays.

Our next show will be held on June 2 at Prospect House in Leyland. We will make it our first annual show and there will be rosettes for winners of all classes and for best Marked, best Self, best AOV and for best in show and best opposite age. There will also be the cup for best in show. (Mrs) H DAGG

RATS

Northern Counties

JUNE 2, Judge G Izzard. Exhibits 17. Entries 63. Best in Show Wittonbank Stud's Agouti kitten. Best opposite age N Mays's Silver Fawn doe. Best Marked B Sorby. Best AOV Wittonbank Stud.

Mr G IZZARD

A WELL run show in an excellent venue, could have been better supported. I was a little concerned that, due to a 'May' festival in Preston, Helen Dagg was left to do the stewarding, as well as the clerking of the show. Only one other local member stayed around and she was running the complementary pet show. The condition of the rats was extremely good. The going is very hard for the rat fancy in this part of the country and more support should be forthcoming from the other fancies.

SELF Kitten 2: 1 2 Wittonbank, slightly moult, condition OK, nice doe, colour not pure enough, best self 2 few coloured hairs in nape of neck, colour not pure, nice buck.

HOODED or CAPPED Ad 2: 1 N Mays, nicely coloured Silver Fawn doe, saddle could have been neater 2 Shauna Carden, Agouti Hooded doe, again good colour, failed with brindling on saddle. Kitten 3: 1 B Sorby, lovely Silver Fawn capped doe, almost perfect cap, white spot could have been bigger, best marked 2 S Carden, Silver Fawn Hooded, nearly best winner, very nice but a bit too young 3 Wittonbank, another lovely Black Capped, good white spot but failed with two saddle spots.

BERKSHIRE or IRISH Ad 2: 1 2 Wittonbank, a disappointing class, Black Berkshire, better of two but too many white hairs, buck 2 Mink Berkshire,

buck, moult, a very difficult colour, white under uneven. Kitten 3: 1 Wittonbank, Mink Berkshire, most even of the bunch but a bit moult 2 3 S Carden, Mink Berkshire, not very symmetrical 3 Black Berkshire, good colour but brindled under.

AOV Ad 2: 1 2 N Mays, Silver Fawn Doe, good top and under 2 Silver Fawn buck, best coat, good colour on top, fails badly with belly colour. Kitten 2: 1 2 Wittonbank, beautiful Agouti kitten, hard to fault, could find no white hairs, best AOV, best kitten, best in show, take care of her Helen 2 Siamese buck, good dark nose, tail base and ears, too young to show final body colour.

REX Ad 1: 1 S Carden, where were all the Rex. This is good all-rounder. Championship Hooded, buck, rexing could have been more extensive, should throw good kittens.

Challenge ad 7: 1 N Mays, Silver Fawn doe, good top and under, best opposite age 2 Silver Fawn buck, fails belly 3 Silver Fawn Hooded doe. Kitten 9: 1 Wittonbank, Agouti doe kitten, definitely deserved the award of best in show 2 B Sorby, very attractive Silver Fawn Capped doe 3 S Carden Silver Fawn Hooded kitten.

AV STUD Buck 4: 1 S Carden, easily the best stud buck, this championship Hooded Rex should throw some really good kittens if mated to the right 'normal' doe 2 N Mays, Silver Fawn, a nice solid buck but fails under 3 Wittonbank, Black Berkshire. Doe 6: 1 N Mays, Silver Fawn Doe, good rat, best second on basis of age 2 Wittonbank, little Agouti, only beaten on age 3 B Sorby, Silver Fawn Capped kitten. Breeders 9: 1 Wittonbank, Agouti doe kitten, best in show 2 N Mays, Silver fawn doe, best opposite age 3 B Sorby, Silver Fawn Capped kitten.

JULY 19, 1979

Best friends

I THANK Roy Robinson for his interesting article. He just about sums up the intelligence and friendliness of the fancy rat and one wonders why it does not become popular. I have spoken to many a person, who has agreed that there are mice, rabbits, etc in the wild and there are also tame ones which can be kept as pets and become lovable members of the family. At the same time these people just cannot accept that there are rats in the wild and also tame rats that can become just as lovable members of the family. (I am beginning to wonder just who has the most intelligence and commonsense, the human being or the rat!)

Regarding the intelligence, I have recently found out that the intelligence of a rat can be greatly improved in the early days of its life before it leaves the nest. If young rats are handled for a minute or two each day from the day they are born they are subjected to a certain amount of stress which helps their brains to develop to a greater degree. This does not apply solely to rats, but to other mammals as well, mice and cats, etc. Also by repeated handling at this early age the rat learns that even though it is taken away from the warmth and comfort of the nest and its mother, it soon learns that it is only temporary and that no harm has come to it. Subsequently this makes for a much tamer rat.

I have heard one or two judges who have remarked that my eight week old rats which they have judged are extremely tame and have no skittishness about them.

My rats are also acquainted with my two cats and my dog as well. They will not harm them and my rats are not frightened. They love to be let in the house to play with the cats though they do sometimes take advantage by teasing them and pulling their tails and whiskers. But the cats don't seem to mind. They take it all in

their stride as being part of the mad household that they live in!

I recently had to take one of my cats to the veterinary surgeon for an injection and as one of my buck rats had a couple of small sores, I thought that I would kill two birds with one stone, as they say, and take the rat with me. I put them both in the same basket. When I arrived at the veterinary surgeons and entered his surgery he could not believe his eyes and called in his other two colleagues to have a look. I felt rather like I was doing a circus act. Still it's all part of the publicity.

Which brings me to another subject of the publicity. When I started out to let everyone know via newspapers, radio and television about fancy rats I did not realise just what the effects it would have on my friends and neighbours. My neighbours haven't spoken to me since and have sent in three petitions so far to try and get rid of them. The Health Department have been about six times, till they finally got sick of the complaints and petitions and sent a letter to all my neighbours saying that the only reason that they could tell me to get rid of my stock was health reasons only, and as far as they were concerned they could see no reason at all. That stopped the petitions but then they started something else. I came home one day to find my sister-in-law's Jack Russell Terrier in my backyard with my Alsatian. I learnt that someone had thrown him over, as he was such a good ratter, in the hope that it would get mine! Unfortunately, my Alsatian was on heat at the time and as he couldn't get in the shed with my rats, he took my bitch instead! And the silly dog lay down to make it easier for him! So in about three to four months time if anyone wants a Jack Russell cross Alsatian puppy you know where to come!

(Mrs) HELEN DAGG



AUTHOR'S NOTE:

The first two N.C.F.R.S shows in 1979 were quite successful. (Above). (Below and Left) Compare the styles of Douglas and Dagg, some sixty-two years apart.

THE RATTERY.

BY M. DOUGLAS.

Mr Birley writes:—"In answer to your par. in Rattery column I hardly think yours is the correct solution of what causes white Rats to have pink ears. My idea is that breeders ought to try and breed selfs with fine ears and covered with fur; I think that pink ears usually have a coarse appearance, and are not of the satiny appearance that selfs ought to have, viz., ears, feet and tail slightly covered with fur."

Yes! If we can accomplish this we shall have made a step in the right direction, but probably the pinky appearance, which is due to the blood showing through the almost transparent skin will still be visible, at least I think so. On this matter Mr. Twort writes:—

"Colour in whites is, I think, got more by cleanliness than by selection. I got my first white Rat from somebody who keeps Rats right in the open and crossing this with one which I got from you I soon got a good nest of white. I hardly ever got a bad coloured white, which I put down to keeping their cages clean; but ears and tail I never studied. Whether we have fur on the ears of white Rats or not, the skin will still look pinky. If they look satiny it will be because the fur on the ears prevents one from seeing the skin."

A rumour reaches me that some fanciers are deterred from keeping Rats because of the prevalence of cankered ears. I hope this will not keep them out of the Fancy, as I am quite certain this trouble is easily preventible. Some fanciers seem to steer clear of it altogether. Perhaps they will give us the benefit of their knowledge. I for one shall be grateful, for I freely confess I get occasional outbreaks of ear-canker. I have, however, always found that the ailment yields readily to a few applications of lard and sulphur ointment, and, this being so, have contented myself with curing cases as they appeared. But prevention is better than cure, so if we can prevent this unsightly ailment by all means let us do so. One cause, I know, is insufficient cleanliness, and to this I don't plead guilty, as I clean all my cages every alternate day. Another cause, I believe—is this is theoretical—is an insufficient supply of green food, the blood consequently becoming heated. A liberal allowance of green meat, which is always relished, and a little flowers of sulphur two or three times a week in soft food would, I fancy, entirely prevent the trouble.

RATS

Mr R C EDMONDSON

JON STRUTT was unable to fulfill his engagement to judge the Fancy Rat section of London Championship show and I was asked to take his place. I thoroughly enjoyed judging along with my co-judge and old friend Eric Smith. I thank Chris McKnight and C R Love for serving me so well. Not having judged rats for some time I was able to assess how I thought the Fancy had progressed during the last two years. The clear plastic cages are very good and give the public every opportunity of seeing the exhibits. Regarding the stock I personally think that, with very few exceptions, all round quality has not improved, rather the reverse. When judging the stud buck class of 33 exhibits I found what to me was a probable reason for some of the general decline in the quality of the stock. Many of these stud bucks were of very poor quality for the purpose for which they were selected. Many failed badly on size, bone structure, and had no outstanding breed qualities at all. I feel much more care in selection is required before any real progress can be made.

SELF Ad 11: 1 Killingbeck, White, good colour, top, under and condition 2 4 L Suttling, White, good colour and condition, beaten size 3 Rivendale Stud, very nice Black, spoilt by white hairs 5 6 K Hewitt 7 Smallshire. Kitten 5: 1 3 Master J Chapman, Champagne, grand kitten in lovely condition, lacks that pinky tinge 2 4 L Suttling, White, coat a little patchy 3 Black, beaten feet and under. MARKED or AOV Ad 9: 1 3 Genesis Stud, Agouti Hooded, good head and shoulders, saddle could be better, good size, fit 2 Knight, Fawn Hooded, beaten shoulder and rump 3 Black Hooded, beaten saddle 4 J Chapman 5 6 P Marsh 7 J Pearce. Kitten 5: 1 4 Wittonbeck Stud, Fawn Hooded, nice all round, should make up well 2 3 V Szabo, Champagne Hooded, quite good, this colour does not show too well, not sufficient contrast 3 beaten shoulders and rump 5 Smallshire. HIMALAYAN or SIAMESE Ad 16: 1 4 Killingbeck Stud, Siamese, good shoulders and feet, nicely shaped 2 7 J Chapman, good ones, beaten condition 3 K Hewitt, really fit Siamese, beaten feet 5 Rivendale Stud 6 J Pearce. Kitten 6: 1 3 L Suttling, very nice Siamese, should make up well 2 C McKnight, promising youngster, beaten feet 3 just a baby, dark body 4 5 J Chapman 6 J Pearce. AV Juvenile 8: 1 3 5 6 K Hewitt, Silver Fawn 2 J Chapman, Champagne 4 R Bonker 7 Miss J Chapman. Stud buck 33: 1 2 Genesis Stud 3 Killingbeck Stud 4 6 Pearce 5 Leonard 7 Rivendale Stud. Chall ad 63: 1 3 Rivendale Stud 2 5 Killingbeck Stud 4 7 L Suttling 6 M Cleroux. Kitten 32: 1 Master J Chapman 2 4 7 L Suttling 3 C Izzard 5 M Dean 6 C McKnight. Doe 31: 1 Rivendale Stud 2 6 J Chapman 3 M Cleroux 4 L Suttling 5 Genesis Stud 7 V Szabo. LCSS Members 77: 1 Master J Chapman 2 4 L Suttling 3 5 M Cleroux 6 Witton Bank Stud 7 G Izzard. NFRS Chall 94: 1 Rivendale Stud 2 Master J Chapman 3 7 Killingbeck Stud 4 5 6 L Suttling. Grand chall 85: 1 Rivendale Stud 2 Master J Chapman 3 Killingbeck Stud 4 C McKnight 5 P Marsh 6 7 L Suttling.

Mr E N SMITH

MY THANKS to Jackie Chapman who worked so hard stewarding for me. If this was Nick Mays first show as manager he did well, his enthusiasm is a big help to the Rat Fancy. One man, the space allocated to the rats was too small as was the judging tables. Rex are going back, Himalayans and Siamese improving. Entries 501. Best in show Rivendell Stud's Silver Fawn adult.

BERKSHIRE or IRISH Ad 9: 1 2 Cleroux, not a good class, Agouti Berkshire, plenty of white on chest and belly, but this extended up the side a little, spot on forehead, a good point 2 much the same as first, spoilt by spreading white 3 Wittonbank Stud, lacks white on chest and belly 4 5 Genesis Stud 6 Rivendell Stud 7 L Suttling. 13 wk 7: 1 3 L Suttling, Agouti Berkshire, fair all round, wants more white as per standard 2 Rivendell Stud, Berkshire, small, fair 3 Berkshire, fails tail, lacks white 4 5 McKnight 6 Rea 7 Rivendell Stud.

AOV Ad 21: 1 3 Rivendell Stud, Silver Fawn, wins a large good class, best in show. I believe this rat has done a lot of winning, still a little to fault 2 K Hewitt, Agouti, good all round 4 Genesis 5 P Bunker 6 Rea 7 McKnight. Kitten 11: 1 G Izzard, Silver Fawn, nice little buck, could be brighter 2 5 L Suttling, fair all round 3 4 M Dean, Silver Fawn 6 Trinovanium 7 Rea. REX Ad 8: 1 2 L Suttling, small for adult but best cure 2 not much between first and second 3 G Izzard, Himalayan, a long way to go but improving as Himalayan, curl must be better 4 Marsh 5 Genesis 6 J Chapman 7 J Pearce. Kitten 2: 1 Wittonbank Stud, Champagne Hooded, thin coat, lacks curl 2 L Suttling, same remarks as first.

Chall 63: 1 3 Rivendell Stud, Silver Fawn, best in show 2 5 Killingbeck 4 7 L Suttling 6 Cleroux. Kitten 32: 1 Master Chapman 2 4 7 L Suttling 3 G Izzard 5 Dean 6 McKnight.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

By late 1979, the N.F.R.S was in a good, strong position within the Fancy World after three years of life, with a solid, dependable Committee. Shows such as the London Championship Show (Left) were always well supported as were the new venues staged by the N.F.R.S, such as 'Farnborough'. (Right).

RATS

(PALM COURT)

One day only—Saturday October 27. Judging at 10 am by J Strutt and E Smith.

Entry Fee: 10p (Class 18 free). Prize Money: 50p, 30p, 20p, 10p (Class 18, diploma and free membership 1980).

Entries close Saturday October 20. Entries to: NICK MAYS, 63 Watney Road, Mortlake, London SW14 7RA. Telephone: 01-876 7152.

1—Self adult. 2—Self kitten. 3—Berkshire/Irish adult. 4—Berkshire/Irish kitten. 5—Marked AOV adult. 6—Marked AOV kitten. 7—Rex AC AV adult. 8—Rex AC AV kitten. 9—Himalayan/Siamese adult. 10—Himalayan/Siamese kitten. 11—AOV adult. 12—AOV kitten. *13—Chall adult. *14—Chall kitten. *15—Stud buck. *16—Doe AA. *17—Juvenile Exhibitor AV AA. *18—London Ch Show Members AV AA. *19—Nat Fancy Rat Soc Mem Chall AV AA. *20—Grand Chall (open) AV AA. 21—Unstandardised Varieties AA.

Rats at Farnborough

IN MID-NOVEMBER Stan Bamford, the new press officer of the National Fancy Rat Society suggested a show at Farnborough, Hampshire, sometime in December. It was, I said, an ambitious move at very short notice, but with Stan's drive, go-ahead and efficient character we pulled it off. All credit goes to him. He booked a hall at Farnborough community centre, photo-copied handouts about the show, put up posters, contacted the local press and put up £7.50 prize money himself. All I did was take entries. Easy! The show was held on December 15.

Digressing briefly, Stan took over my job as press officer at the annual general meeting in October 1979 and I became show secretary. Put the two together, if they're the sort who get on, and wonderful things can be accomplished. Farnborough was but one. Stan, like me, had a good run of publicity and we both have articles on this to follow at a later date. He's the man for the job and has upped our membership considerably. Anybody interested in future society shows etc should contact me at my address, and anybody interested in information regarding 'rattiness' as a whole should contact him at his address. They are; Nick Mays, 63 Watney Road, Mortlake, London SW14 7RA, telephone (01) 876-7152; Stan Bamford, 51 Pinehurst Cottages, Farnborough, Hampshire, telephone Farnborough 49234.

We had 118 entries and a lot of support. Mrs Jackie 'Rat-Chat' Chapman was judge and did an excellent job. Best in show was Genesis Stud's Champagne kitten, and best opposite age Les Suttling's Himalayan Rex buck.

The venue was easy to get to with Stan's handout (ask him for one if you want to come) and there was a vast shopping precinct

Rats at Farnborough

SATURDAY DECEMBER 15 saw the first of what I hope will be many more shows at the Farnborough Community Centre. The day started cold and wet though the rain stopped, leaving us with a cold wind. I met Nick Mays at 12.30 off the Waterloo train and took him home to feed him. After he was fed and watered we left for the community centre, arriving there at 1.30 where we found Sue Love and family waiting; with all hands set-to the room was soon ready.

All the members turned up by 2.45 and we soon got into full swing. With an entry of 118 our judge, Jackie Chapman, spent a hectic two hours (well done). With Nick Mays as show secretary and myself as show manager we managed to get through without any trouble. (I know how Nick felt at the London).

The local press with the help of the 1st Cove Brownies Troop took a number of pictures and that with their article should, we hope, give the society some good publicity. Best in show went to Sue Love and best opposite adult to Les Shuttling.

The local press came to see and published an article on my rats. Then Radio Reading asked me to go over and give a chat on Fancy Rats. Two days later I was asked to go on Southern Television on 'Day by Day' and talk about the society. The two Silver Fawn rats I took with me were loved by all the studio staff. Since then I've had letters from many people wishing me luck with the society.

I am trying to get a publicity board going. Any member who has any press cuttings or photographs they can let me have, please send them to me. Also the BBC Animal Magic team would like coloured photographs. Can anyone help?

All cuttings and photographs may be sent to me at 51 Pinehurst Cottages, Pinehurst Avenue, Farnborough, Hants.

STANLEY BAMFORD, press officer

nearby, so everybody took turns to do their Christmas shopping. The local press turned up and took lots of photographs of a little girl holding the famous 'Ben' rat owned by Sue Love of the Genesis Stud, the very same Ben who entertained everyone at London. An excellent write-up was given. Stan awarded the £5 first prize money and £2.50 second prize money himself, so that's enthusiasm for you!

Everybody agreed Farnborough No 1 was a success! So four more Farnboroughs have been planned, to supplement our Surbiton and Richmond venues in 1980. They are February 23, April 26, June 28 and December 13. Remember folks (to quote a famous TV presenter) 'it's your vote that counts!' So, in other words, we need you to get Farnborough going in 1980. For our next show, February 23, inquiries to Stan, entries to me. NICK MAYS

FEBRUARY 7, 1980

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First impressions of showing fancy rats

Jean Judd

LIKE MOST novices, I was rather nervous about procedure when I launched into the world of showing. Although I had kept rats as pets for several years, it took me a long time to pluck up courage to show them in open competition.

The first two shows I attended after joining the National Fancy Rat Society and therefore, being eligible to show, I took no stock but went along merely as an observer. Basically I wanted to 'size up' the opposition and see what it was all about.

Thoughts of an ultra-serious, almost grim occasion were quickly dispelled by the sheer friendliness of other members. Everyone was extremely helpful and there was even a member co-ordinator to answer questions and settle final doubts. The atmosphere was jolly with a useful exchange of ideas while the actual judging went on. Refreshments made the occasion a truly social affair for the members as well as the rats and from both shows, I went home clutching increases to my own stock.

Apprehensive

I was, however, still apprehensive when it came to showing for the first time, and certain I couldn't compete with more experienced members. I made sure my entries were in well before the deadline. I memorised the time, place and route for the venue, not wishing to get lost and trudge around with stock in tow.

The night before was spent in detailed preparation; cleaning tails, brushing, wiping eyes, feet and noses. I went to bed shattered and with the question 'were my rats good enough?' constantly buzzing around my brain.

Of course, all my preparation on 'show-eve' was in vain. I had to go over it all again in the morning. This was my first lesson—rats never stay clean when you want them to.

I arrived at the venue complete with newly purchased standard show tanks, requisite wire tops, wood shavings, tissues, food, water bottles and, of course, the four rats I was showing. Again, everything was very informal and pleasant; also prone to problems like finding the caretaker to obtain the necessary key of admittance, while members and rats arranged themselves outside the hall to the amusement of passers by. These difficulties so daunting to the novice are rare, however.

Once the hall was ready, I found a space among other entries on the trestle tables and duly housed the rats in the tanks. The wire tops were slid firmly in place and I sat back, trying not to appear too anxious as the judging started.

Almost an old hand

I was convinced my rats would bite the judge or escape and run riot in the hall; and definitely that I would leave without as much as a 'well-done'. Wrong on all counts. My rats were well behaved, as always, and each one won a certificate (seconds and thirds). I was delighted and a firm supporter for future shows, where I have since acquired several 'firsts'.

Unbelievably, to me anyway, that first show was only nine months ago and I am almost an old hand now. I have even been able to answer questions for prospective members of the society and two of my rats have taken part

in a special exhibition showing all the different types available. I now breed selectively and have produced some very show-worthy kittens; in itself an absorbing and fascinating hobby which could bring a future champion.

There is nothing quite so satisfying as the sight of a litter of strong, healthy rat kittens. But, while rejoicing at the birth of possible future winners, it is as well to remember that rats age, and fairly quickly.

Care of sick or aging

A rat that reaches maturity and is physically capable of reproducing at a little over four months, will obviously be middle aged at 18 months, and old at two years. Again, while the majority of rats remain healthy throughout their lives, a small proportion will be 'sickly'. Some people would advocate a quick despatch for such rats but for those of us who cannot view our stock so dispassionately, perhaps the following will be useful.

I have nursed bronchitic rats, rats with tumours (malignant and benign), rats with abscesses and even a rat with meningitis. The golden rule must always be what is best for the rat. Obviously, if a rat is suffering, the only course of action is a visit to the local vet to have the animal humanely put down but, in many cases, the rat can be restored to health enough to lead a happy, active life. Indeed, the only time I have had to resort to having a rat put down, was in the case of meningitis when the rat had deteriorated rapidly overnight and was clearly in distress.

Bronchitis is a fairly common complaint and, once it gets a hold, is very difficult to cure. The animal has little or no symptoms in the early stages and often, it is wheezing that first alerts the owner to the problem. If allowed to continue unchecked, pneumonia can follow, or ulceration of the lungs and considerable weakness of the heart due to the strain of wheezing. The rat's normal respiration is very fast and it doesn't take much to push it beyond the limit of comfortable endurance. A course of Penbritin or Oxytetracycline in the early stages will arrest the complaint and leave it manageable although some degree of wheezing will probably remain. In only two cases among my own rats has it been totally eradicated and one of them still breathes squeakily in damp weather.

Early diagnosis

Of course, the two drugs mentioned above must be prescribed by a vet and I am fortunate in mine, who provides me with a supply to keep in stock.

Often, early diagnosis and treatment is vital but, even so, if there is any doubt, do consult a vet rather than give drugs unnecessarily. Administering the correct dose is made considerably easier if you can persuade your vet to part with a needleless syringe. The crushed tablet, mixed with a drop or two of water, can be squirted down the rat's throat while he is firmly held.

Tumours are another problem which must receive expert advice. In their beginning it is difficult to decide if it is malignant or not. A non-malignant tumour can be easily removed unless the rat is too old when, unless it causes discomfort, the rat will probably learn to live with it. Or, as in the case of one of mine with a

lipoma (fatty tumour), she reduced it to comfortable size herself by chewing at it.

Even if the diagnosis shows malignancy, it doesn't automatically mean doom for the rat. I nursed another rat with a malignant tumour on the side of his head. He had previously recovered from pneumonia and was left with a permanent bronchitic wheeze. When the tumour developed I feared the worst but he continued to be happy and full of life. He had constant treatment to control the course of the disease and slow it down. He lived to his full span and died very peacefully one morning, denying the disease by a matter of weeks.

The elderly rat sometimes needs special attention to remain in good working order. If there is any difficulty in getting around, a one-level simple cage is better than one with ramps, ladders etc. Food and drinking utensils should be within easy reach. While out for exercise, a close watch is needed to ensure the rat doesn't lose its balance and fall, causing serious injury. An extra nourishment diet is required to provide the vitamins and minerals necessary for good health. Rats are unable to store vitamins and a daily addition will prevent deficiency which shows up quickly in advanced age. Abidec or gerbil drops contain all that's needed and are without sugar. One drop a day is ample.

Milk thickened slightly with baby cereal (sugarless) or Vitbe wholemeal bread is equally good for old rats and kittens too. Fruit, particularly grapes, and vegetables add variety as well as being useful where there is constipation.

Brands Essence provides all the protein needed and is also ideal for sick rats of any age who won't eat. A quarter of a teaspoonful twice a day is enough.

If all this seems expensive, remember a rat only eats or drinks a small portion of anything. One apple would supply about 20 rats with a tasty morsel; a quarter of a pint of milk will go around ten to twelve rats and a small packet of baby cereal will last one rat about six months as half a teaspoonful a day is sufficient.

Obesity

Obesity is often a problem in older rats. It is not always caused by wrong or over feeding. As a rat ages, its metabolism slows down and more fat is stored. A fat rat has difficulty in cleaning itself properly, particularly the underparts which if neglected, can cause sore spots. Here, again, a little help is needed. Pick the rat up and if there is any staining on the underfur around the genitals, a daily sponge down with warm water followed by careful drying will keep the rat comfortable and will be appreciated.

A little extra care will ensure the rat's autumn months are as happy as its youth, and the joy of seeing a sick rat restored to health makes the small amount of extra work well worthwhile.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

Jean Judd, a relative newcomer to the N.F.R.S would surely have contributed a major series on Rat health to 'F & F', had it continued. As it happened, she went on to write such a series for the N.F.R.S' own Journal, "Pro-Rat-A", published at the same time as the demise of 'F & F'. The last ever Rat article in 'F & F' was about the successful Bradford Championship Show 1981. (Over page). The loss of 'F & F' would perhaps have destroyed the old Rat Fancy totally. Happily, this was not the case with the National Fancy Rat Society...

Swansong at Bradford

By NICK MAYS, Rat Section Manager

THE DANUM HOTEL, Doncaster, may never recover from the day the southerners arrived at the Rat Fancy southerners at that.

At the grim, dark hour of 6.30 am I crawled out of my nice warm bed to get ready for the long trek to Doncaster, on Friday January 16.

Getting myself and my stock ready was easy, but I had to travel from suburbia to Central London, a mere few miles, but the hardest part of the journey! Ever seen commuters travelling to London? They are a very sober, easily agitated crowd of people who just won't tolerate a stranger sitting in one of their seats, in their carriage, with a big box on the floor. I mean, it breaks their routine and spoils their day, doesn't it?

Consequently, when I boarded the 7.37 am to London Waterloo at Mortlake, and plonked my stock box on the floor, I was immediately the focus of much displeasure. Oh well, I can put up with being stared at for 20 minutes, and I did.

I arrived at Waterloo at 8 am and hurried off to the taxi rank to meet my friends, battling my way through the 'brolly brigade'. Some lady commuters are quite nice though.

I met Ann Storey and her fiancé Martyn and two fellow fanciers, Chris Lown and her fiancé Ziggy, at the taxi rank. I thought I was loaded up with one box and a small travelling bag—they had commandeered two trolleys, loaded up with suitcases as well as numerous rat boxes! However, two very interested and amicable cabbies drove us to King's Cross Station, saying how they'd like to go on 'Mastermind' and so on!

Eventually, we were on our Inter-city 125 train, all the luggage neatly packed away for the second time as we didn't like the first coach. The train departed, treating us to a view of rural Yorkshire in those strange lands north of Watford.

Of course, it was snowing in Doncaster when we arrived and tramped through the town to the wide-eyed amazement of the locals to the Danum Hotel, where we were staying. The young ladies in reception liked our rats... at a distance.

We thawed out over a drink or two in the bar, then Will & Sara Handley, all the way from Wiltshire, arrived, to complete our distinctly southern crew. At 1 pm we arrived at Doncaster Racecourse to set up our section and stage a ratty display in preparation for the show on Saturday. The Friday is always a golden opportunity to look up old friends and 'rabbit' for hours. I collected all our rosettes etc from Brian Emmett, who looked suitably harassed, so all was now set for the show.

The display attracted quite a bit of interest right up until the time we had to tuck the rats up for the night and leave.

At the disco/social gathering that night I met Brian Doyle and John Lister of FUR & FEATHER to console them on the only genuinely bad news of the whole show, the demise of FUR & FEATHER in its present form. So Brian, John and I looked a really happy bunch at the bar!

I had a very peaceful night's sleep in my room, apart from getting up five times in an hour to silence a pair of Russian hamsters in a cage as they chewed their bars—a warning to other fanciers—DON'T sleep in the same room as Russian hamsters—acute insomnia can result!

After an excellent breakfast—yes, I was able to eat safely—we all set off to the show which was getting into full swing with fanciers arriving from all directions. Soon Joan Pearce, our judge, arrived from London and judging was under way. The rest of the day went very smoothly—no shortage of helpful fanciers, no snow and not enough chairs in the cafeteria!

As usual, I did the ritual 'tour' around and watched the thronging masses crowd out the aisles for judging best rabbit in show—and what a rabbit it was, too!

It was also very pleasant to make the acquaintance of new rat fanciers: Janet Gregory and her daughter Wendy, and especially Sue Brown from Somerset, who bought a very pretty Mink rat—a possible

future champ!

Then came the presentation of prizes. The final results were: best in show Genesis Stud's enormous friendly Agouti buck, 'Ronald' who carried off two silver cups and numerous rosettes; BOA was Rivendell Stud's Silver Fawn doe kitten, awarded almost as many honours as his; best Rex was won by a Himalayan Rex buck, owned by some fellow named Mays, showing under Trinovantum Stud; and, finally, best pet was won by Sue Love's Black Berkshire buck, Otto.

The final presentation was of a beautiful rat portrait to co-founder of the NFRS, Joan Pearce, by virtue of the fact that the society was five years young that very week, and boasted a membership approaching 200. Joan was truly pleased and posed for several photographs of this happy event. These photographs should be in the January/February edition of the NFRS journal. A similar presentation had been made to co-founder Geoff Izzard previously, as he couldn't make it to Bradford.

And so we hastily returned to our homelands after the most successful Bradford yet, in terms of not only finance, but genuine happiness—and that's what it's all about!

My thanks to: Will, Sara, Ann, Martyn, Chris, Ziggy, Malcolm, Joan and all who exhibited and, of course, to Brian Emmett, Kevin Yates, and the BSLS.

And to all my loyal readers (pay attention both of you!) thank you for following my rather ratty features in FUR & FEATHER. If I do take up rabbit fancying as well as rat fancying, perhaps I'll see you in RABBITS. Until then—stay happy!
NICK MAYS



Above: Judge Mrs Joan Pearce presenting the Dews Cup for best in show, Genesis Stud. Left: Mrs Sara Handley presenting the Best Pet Trophy to Sue Love. Below: Judge Mrs Joan Pearce during judging.

