

The history of the Rex

by Julie Ridgley (2009)

Where would the fancy be without the pioneers who pursue with patience and expertise to develop our rare varieties... Well we certainly would not have had our marvellous, endearing Rex breed!

As our web site www.rexcavyclub states from Mrs I Turner: "One day I was judging a show (in Yorkshire if I remember rightly) and I got to the pets' class. In the pets' class was a cavy which I believed could be a Rex, so I called Ted Brearley who was at the show and he agreed with me. When the girl came to collect her pet we talked to her and were surprised when she said she had more like that at home and that they had come from her school which had more of them." However, this strain seemed to die out, but soon afterwards Fred Holmes discovered one and from that one comes all our present Rex.

This superb cavy with a best disposition amongst cavies - calm, friendly sociable was noticed and developed by Fred Holmes; a colourful character to breed characters! Whilst I was on the Judging Course, during the Rex session expertly delivered by Rex Matthews, Fred explained how he first clapped eyes on '*Fred*', the first Rex cavy (with red/white Dutch markings)!

He instinctively knew it could go on and be developed into a new unique breed. It was at Fred's local show, the Northampton Show around 1977. *Fred*, the cavy, was bred and entered by Phil Dolphin. This original pig had come from a pair of red Dutch cavies. Fred Holmes, also being keen on the Dutch variety, secured the sale from Phil and took the Dutch Rex back to his shed for a good time with anything that he had available, mainly Dutch sows. The carrier sows were put back to the original *Fred* and true to form, he sired many: resulting in the first generation of the new breed. The REX was born. Fred pursued showing and establishing the Rex through the RVCC and sold some of this early stock to Mary Belcher, who carried on developing and distributing the breed. The harshest, most desirable coats arise from the Agouti especially the Silver followed by the Cinnamon. However, part of the interest and delight is the range of colours that the Rex does come in and of course that original Red and White is glorious, all be it softer than the Agouti coat.

Through their hard work and persistence, the Rex had achieved Guide Standard by the late 1970s and finally in May 1984 the Full Standard was written. However, it remained as a breed within the RVCC. The BCC recognised the standardisation so that the Rex could now compete in the Open classes against other Non-Selfs. By 1992, with continued and rising popularity it was agreed for the formation of the Rex Cavy Club.

Enjoy your Rexes I know I certainly do!

Happy showing...