

# THE MANX CAT AS I KNOW IT

MARION TRACY

There has been enough written on the origin of the Manx so I don't feel it is necessary for me to go into it here. Later on there will be a book written exclusively on the Manx by Tana White which is quite comprehensive. I have read this manuscript and the book will be in my opinion a "must" with anyone either now breeding, or planning on beginning with the Manx cat. I only wish this book had been available when Dick and I started to raise Manx many years ago.

It has been said that once a Manx "owns" you, you will never again be without one. I don't know that this holds true with all people, but with us it is so. Personality wise they do differ from the other breeds somewhat.

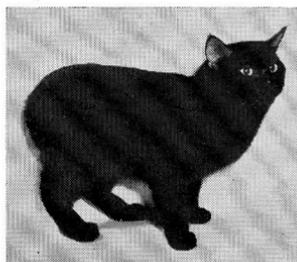
As a rule Manx will single out one person, and this one person will be their best friend. There are Manx that do not do this, but they are few. Though they will show affection for the whole family they will single out one person for their very own. We had a lovely black female **Tpr. Gr. Ch. Xantha's Candice of Tra-Mar**, who was my cat. She liked Dick, and wanted him to pet and love her, but she was truly my pet first, she did not care for strangers and until her later years would disappear when someone she did not know arrived to visit. She also hated other cats with a passion, and never could be put in the cattery. However, fortunately for us, she was quite ready to accept a male at certain times of the year!

Her son **Qd. Gr. Ch. Tra-Mar's Sunny** was just her opposite, he loved everyone, and cats did not bother him in any way. He simply got along with everyone. Though he liked me, and would want me to hold him and love him, he was first of all Dick's cat. He dearly loved to ride around on Dick's shoulder, and it was not unusual to see him perched on Dick's shoulder, walking all over the showroom at a show. Strange males did not bother him in the least, yet he was an eager stud at home.

His daughter **Gr. Ch. Tra-Mar's Nutmeg** is a little like both her sire and her grand-dam. She loves people, all people as far as she is concerned are her "bosom" pals. However she hates cats, and you cannot leave her to run with any other cats for any length of time or she will tangle with them.



Mrs. Tracy

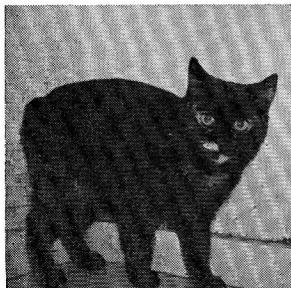


Sunny

Another daughter of Sunny's Gr. Ch. Tra-Mar's Suzy likes to perch on a shoulder also; this is the only way she will permit anyone to carry her. She gets along with all people, and though she does get along with other cats she is not chummy with any of them, preferring to be left alone.

Sunny's sire Tpl. Ch. Manxland Mornin' Mist of Tra-Mar Imp. was very fond of children, though as he became older he did not want to be handled by adults too much. He never became nasty with either Dick or myself. Since he was used quite heavily as a stud this we felt could be expected. Until he died he remained sweet and loving with both Dick and me.

If you know your bloodline it is possible to introduce your cats gradually to what you want them to accept and usually they will, but this must be started when they are very tiny kittens, and you must persist day in and day out, and be prepared to spend a good amount of time with them. In fact, you must spend time and attention on all Manx, they seem to require a lot of attention.



Nutmeg

You will hear that in Manx breeding you must introduce a stubby, or longie (long-tailed) every 3rd generation. We have found this a wise conclusion though you can breed rumpy to rumpy even into 4-5 generations, if you do though you will find that many of your kits will begin to develop more and more problems.

We have found in our own breeding program that it is wise to use a stubby every 2nd or 3rd generation. We prefer stubbies, for we have not had too much luck producing rumpy kits with longies. You will get a few, but you will get more with stubbies. However, we have heard of other breeders having excellent luck by using a longie.

As a rule your longies are not as good typewise as are your stubbies. Most, not all, longies will seem to have all your Manx faults, long nose, too big of ears, long body, too light in bone. Though many of your stubbies will also carry this type you will fairly often have one come along with outstanding type, these are the ones you definitely keep for breeding as they tend to throw good type to rumpy kits.

Also at the top of your list of breeding stock should be the rumpy-riser. To us this is an invaluable breeder. They will tend to throw healthier kits, and a good percentage of rumpies. A rumpy-riser male is most valuable, since he can be used with many females.

Occasionally you will find a female who tends to throw more rumpy kits than usual. At one time we had a blue female rumpy that never produced anything but rumpy kits no matter what sire you used with her. This is very unusual, as many times a complete litter can be longies.

Earlier in our breeding program we had another blue female who always without fail produced 3 kits per litter only. When she

reached the age of about 8 years she finally produced a litter of 6, and absolutely refused to own three of them. No matter what I tried she refused to take care of the other three. I finally gave up and placed them with another female, who did raise them. As a rule most Manx will accept any kits you give them and raise them along with their own. But **Tizabu** just was not going to have more than her usual three! Guess she thought she was getting too old for all that!

As a rule Manx do not produce large litters. From one to three kits seem to be a normal size litter. We have had a few females that would produce from 3, to even 8 kits per litter. Many years ago we had a black female import that consistently produced 6 to 8 kits per litter. Needless to say, they were never all rumpies, though she never failed to have at least one rumpy per litter.

Most Manx are good mothers, they like to keep their kits about three months, and at times even longer. We let them since we feel this gives the kittens a better start in life. We have also found Manx kits that are left with their mothers this long seem to thrive better, but then this holds true in all breeds of cats.

If you have a female you are showing, plan on her having her kits early in the spring for almost all females lose their double coats when raising kits; most of them will not have a double coat for several months after a litter of kits. Though almost all Manx are seasonal with their coats we have found them, coat-wise, to be somewhat variable. Some coat early in the fall and will lose their coats earlier, some coat later and lose the coat later in the summer. As with all other breeds also, the texture of a coat will vary. Some will be harsher in texture, while others have the "soft, plushy" feeling you desire. I think this is also the place to mention: cats vary with the section of the country you are in. We have had cats shipped in from the West Coast, and their coats "went to pot" for about a year, this holds true with imports also. Allow at least one year before you decide on coat texture, and double coat after changing climate on them.

Also allow a kitten to reach the age of 1½ to 2 years before you decide on their coat. A kitten will have a kitten coat for many months before he or she develops their adult coat. When they change coat will depend a lot on what time of year they were born. Those born late in the summer will require a longer time to develop a full adult coat as a rule.

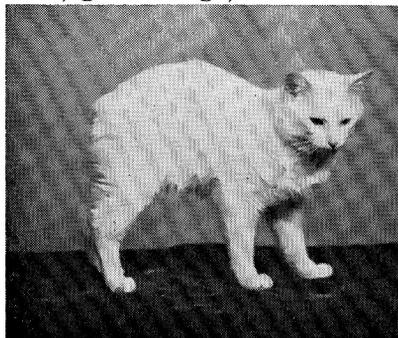
We have also found in our own Manx that once a female reaches the age of 6-7 years she will tend to throw less and less rumpy kits than she did when she was younger. We don't know why this happens, but with our Manx it has been so. Since we live on a farm situated out of the way of heavy traffic we are in a position where



Gr. Ch. Tra-Mar's Suzy

we can turn our Manx loose to run if we desire. As we no longer use some females for breeding we will allow them the freedom of the farm and they come and go as they please. We are careful to keep only one male running loose, so we almost always know who the sire is when they breed. These kits are always sold as pets, with no papers issued.

We have found our outside Manx do not stray away from home. They are excellent hunters and are likely to bring in a variety of their prey. We have seen them bring in snakes, the usual rats, mice, groundhogs, and rabbits.



Paddy

“nest” taking care of them all by himself. As they grow older he will play with them also.

Most outside kits are born in either the hay loft, or the hay manger. We find these kits extremely healthy as a rule and they are afraid of nothing! They will show no fear of cattle, horses, or chickens. I remember one time when we had a Vet here working on cattle one Manx was chasing a chicken, she did not want the chicken, but used to chase it to hear it squawk as it ran from her. The Vet watched them a while, finally informing me he's seen chickens chase cats, but he'd never seen a cat chase a chicken. I'm sure he didn't believe me when I told him the cat was a Manx, and that they weren't afraid of anything. Since he is not the Vet we use with the cats he knew very little about their habits.

A good many years ago our (at that time) outside male decided to stalk and tackle a red fox. I saw him do this, and went after him. Needless to say he got the worst of that argument. This cat found his way to the Vet for a good many stitches, and was a while getting back to normal, but he did learn from it. I never again saw him after a fox!

We never worry about our barn Manx being picked up, for they will not allow a stranger to pick them up, and will as a rule pull the “disappearing act” when someone comes around they do not know.

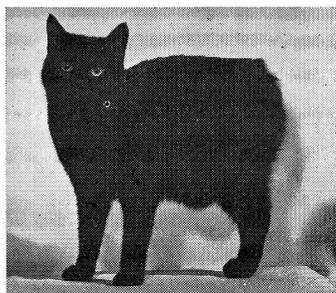
When we started raising Manx there was very little information available on them, and even today there is very little you can find in a book. It seems experience plus consulting a long time breeder on your problems is the only way. Since so many problems occur, many will give up and acquire another breed of cat. Only a true

Our outside male, a black import from England allows no other males near. It has been at least two years since we have seen a strange male around. As male kits come along they are sold, or neutered since Star will not allow them to stay around any other way. We have found he makes a wonderful father, being able and willing to “baby sit” when mama wants to roam for a while. He is very gentle with all the kits, and it is no surprise to see him in the

Manx lover will persist year after year in the face of so many disappointments. For raising Manx can be heart-breaking along with all the joys. To us—when a top type kitten comes along, and you are fortunate enough to raise it, all the past heart-breaks fade, and you will take extreme pride in the new kitten, being ready to perhaps face another few years without producing a really top kitten. For though you will produce rumpies, this does not mean you have a show type kitten, we have had many rumpies born we did not consider show type.

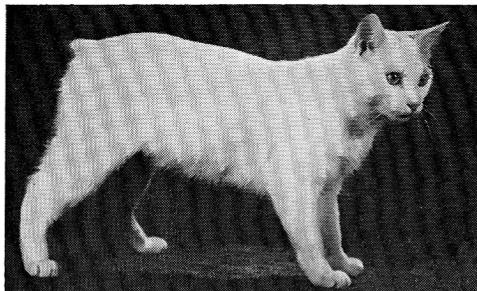
More and more in the past ten years judges have begun to recognize a truly good Manx when they see one. We believe this gives a breeder more incentive to try to produce better type on Manx, rather than just trying to get a rumpy kitten.

The first truly outstanding Manx we remember being shown in this area was a lovely black female import, **Qd. Grand Ch. Mrs. Kelly of An-si**. Mrs. Kelly was shown in the early and middle 1950's, and in her show career made many top wins. She was Highest Scoring Cat in the East for two or three years.



Mrs. Kelly

In later years many have come of, and have made some top wins in



Gr. Ch. Kelsha Ghost of Karns

along that have been worthy the show room. Among those have been: **Triple Grand Ch. Xantho's Candice of Tra-Mar**, a lovely black female now deceased. There was also her son, a black male, **Qd. Gr. Ch. Tra-Mar's Sunny**. Also shown have been **Gr. Ch. Wila Blite Pola of Silva Wyte**, a copper eyed white female, **Gr. Ch. Kittrik's Katydid**, a black female, **Gr. Ch. Kittrik's Surprise**, a blue eyed white female, **Gr. Ch. Kittrik's Question Mark**, an odd-eyed white

female, **Gr. Ch. Tra-Mar's Suzy**, a black female, **Gr. Ch. Tra-Mar's Nutmeg**, a tortoiseshell female, and a blue eyed white male, **Gr. Ch. Kelsha Ghost of Karns**, one of the newest Grands, having made his Grand this season. These are only a very few of the top Manx that have made top wins in the show room in the past few years. I am sure many more will come along in the future.

Line breeding can be done successfully if you really know your bloodlines, in fact even a small amount of inbreeding with care can be, and is done. We use father, daughter, mother, son, granddaughter to grandsire and have even on rare occasions brother to sister. As in any other breed you will cull undesirables, and this is one of the

swiftest ways to find any imperfections in a blood-line. Bear in mind that you will get undesirable traits along with the wanted ones by breeding this way, and we feel it should not be carried too far.

Some of our best results have come from a brother, sister breeding on one side then on the other side introducing an outcross while still using one of the same brother and sister line for the grandparents, making 3 of the 4 grandparents all being full brother and sister. To do this you must have a completely healthy line, otherwise you will run into many problems. At any time you must proceed with care when doing this with a Manx line, using one you are completely familiar with for several generations.

By going back through old stud books we have found that most of the Manx bloodlines in this country will go back to a few original Manx. If you have a line bred in this country for many years you will be able to trace them all back to an original few. However, most breeders over a period of years will run into imports, and unhappily will find they are unable to trace an import line. Until the past few years no written pedigrees were kept on the Isle of Man, and most of the time when you ordered a Manx from there you did not receive much back-ground information on them, if any. There were one or two breeders on the Isle that did keep a record and did controlled breeding, but many were "details unknown."

Yes, over a period of many years we have been "owned" by Manx, and we feel they have made a huge contribution to our enjoyment of life in general. Though we raise other breeds of cats we will never be without a Manx, there is nothing, at least to us, any more enjoyable than the planning of a breeding, the 9 weeks wait, while you wonder—will there be a rumpy in the litter, and if so, will you be able to raise it, and will it be a show type kitten?

With Siamese, Abyssinians, in fact all other breeds, you know they will all resemble their breed, but with the Manx, you will wonder, will they be tailless, stubbies, or longtails? Even though we have had many, many kits born, there is still the excitement of wondering what will be the result of the expected litter.

Though we have had many rumpies born, we have had only a few that we considered really top show stock, worthy of appearing in final wins in a show room. It is extremely difficult to get all the desired traits in a rumpy kitten, and the rare times you do, you have every right to be extremely proud of your new Manx kitten.

We have lost many Manx breeders due to the heartache involved in Manx kittens, and those that persist through all this, to us, are true lovers of the Manx cat. May each of them come along with "just what they want" in their future breeding programs. And may they have much success with these coming kits in the showroom!

