

The Manx Breed

By Joy Yoders-Dey

EDITOR: This INTRODUCTION to the MANX BREED was written by Joy Yoders-Dey, who has served as the Manx Breed Council Secretary for four years. Her 'Deydream' Manx cattery was established in 2001, producing since that time, many National, Regional & Breed Winners.



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Historical Manx Images
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The Manx cat is considered, to be one of the oldest recognised breeds of cats, and although it has always been a minority breed, its long history probably qualifies it to also be considered as a 'legacy breed'.

They are of course, a breed native to the Isle of Man, located in the Irish Sea between England and Ireland, while their developmental history appears to coincide with folklore.

It was said, according to Celtic folklore, that the Manx cat was the last of God's creatures to climb aboard the ark, just making it before Noah slammed shut the door! Or, that perhaps Noah's dog was the culprit responsible for the loss of the cat's tail! Also, that the tail-less cat may have fled the ark and swam from Mount Ararat to the Isle of Man.

Another tale claims that the Irish of the Vikings stole Manx kittens and used their tales as good luck charms. But they have long been referred to as 'good luck' cats.

Yet another tale is that the wise mother cats bit off the tails of their kittens; but now, we no longer need to rely of folklore, as geneticists have determined that the lack of a tail occurred as the result of a spontaneous genetic mutation, and that the Manx breed was established due to the genetic nature of the tailless trait and centuries of breeding on an isolated island environment.

The Manx cat is by nature a friendly, and both affectionate and loyal companion. They are definitely an easy feline to share your home and life with.

There was a famous saying I heard a few years back, which states 'that the Manx cat may be short on tail, but it is long on personality!'

Manx cats adapt well to most situations that they may be faced with, and are intelligent, sweet and even tempered. This breed forms a long-lasting bond of trust with their humans. They are also playful



Manx cat exhibited at the Crystal Palace, 1871

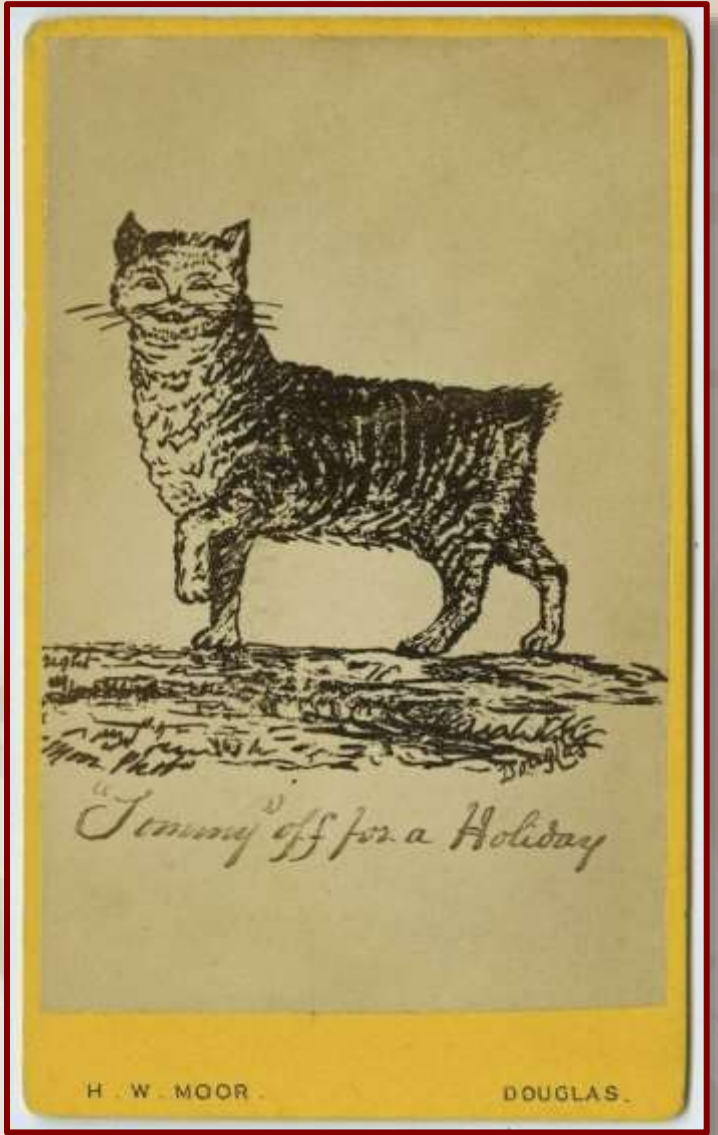
Image: The Harrison Weir Collection.

and active, even into their later years. Remember, Manx are exceptional jumpers and quick to react because of their very powerful hindquarters and back legs. Manx are a true working cat and are excellent mousers and just love a good game of fetch. This, is why the Manx, is sometimes referred to as 'dog-like'.

Patience is a virtue when it comes to a Manx. They will wait for you, and follow you, in whatever you are involved in, and make it a point to help you out.

Manx make great watch-cats and are in tune with their surroundings and environment. They will let you know when someone is at your door before you do. They love children, dogs, and other cats.

They will greet visitors at the front door and seem to welcome them into your home. I must say that they enjoy a conversation with their people, and seemingly willing to hang on every word you say. They can also be, very quiet, watchful, and patient.



Manx cat postcard from Douglas, in the Isle of Man c.1860-1870

Image: © The Harrison Weir Collection



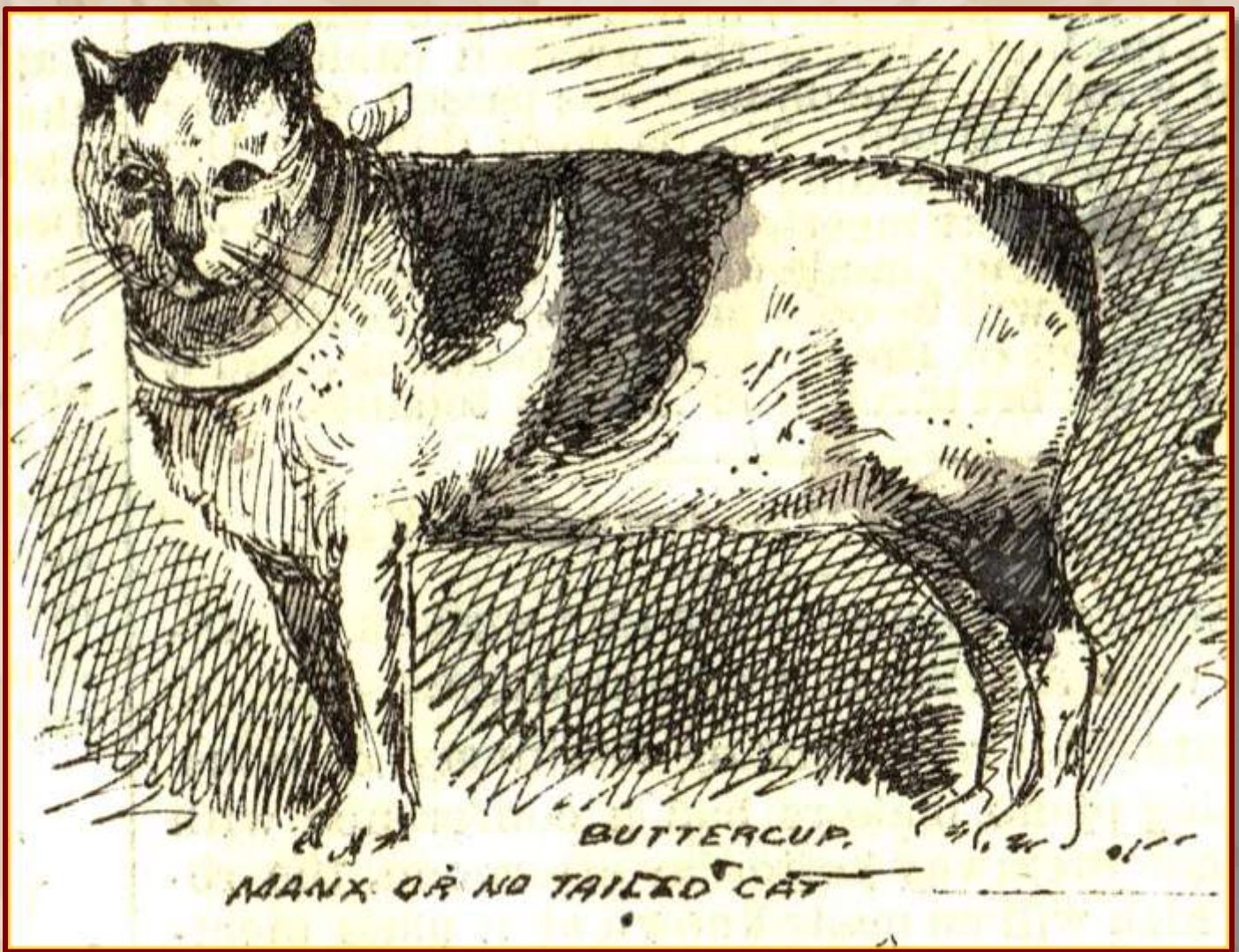
First Prize Manx Cat

Owned by P. Williams, Esq.

'Cats' Their Points & Characteristics (1874)

By W. Gordon Stables, M.D., R.N.,

Image: © The Harrison Weir Collection



'BUTTERCUP' – One of the earliest named Manx cats exhibited in the United States, at Boston, March 1880.

Illustration from: The Daily Graphic, New York, March 1880. Image © The Harrison Weir Collection.

The Manx cat does not require excessive grooming. They are more often usually low maintenance and would only require at least a good once weekly combing or brushing. Like most other breeds, they also need their nails clipped and ears cleaned on a regular basis.

Manx have two coat lengths. The coat length is the only difference between the shorthair and the longhair Manx, which in some registries is known as the 'Cymric' (pronounced 'Kim-Rick').

The shorthaired Manx has a double coat, which is short, dense, hard and glossy. The longhaired Manx also has a double coat, that is medium in length, with

breeches, stomach and neck ruff having longer hair than on the body. It is dense, soft and silky, yet falls smoothly on the body but is still full-bodied.

The Manx is a very unique and special breed of cat. They are a solid, sturdy, medium-sized cat, which is often described as round all-over.

The ideal Manx cat can be drawn using a series of circles. They have a compact body, short back, with hind legs that are longer than those at the front. Being of substantial boning, they display a wider barrel-like chest, and a greater depth of the flank. A Manx has a round muzzle, is broad-jowled, with round eyes and feet.



Mr. J. M. Thomas's Brindle Tortie Manx Shorthair. Prizewinner at the Crystal Palace, London, 1880, 1881, 1882.

Below: Manx Shorthair at the New York Fanciers Show, Madison Square Garden 1884.

Images: Above: Drawn by Harrison Weir, 1889. Below: Harper's Weekly, January 1884.





Top left corner: Mr. Dobson's 'SWEET' a Tabby Manx female, Prize-winner at the Crystal Palace, 1891.

Illustration from 'The Sketch', November 7th 1891.

Image: © The Harrison Weir Collection.

Manx cats have a very distinct ear set, which, when viewed from behind, forms a cradle or rocker shape, similar to the curved base of a rocking chair.

The Manx has four different tail lengths. Tail length is random, therefore you never know what you are going to get until the kittens are born. The tail types are:

Dimple **Rumpy** / Rumpy – No tail at all.

Riser / Rumpy Riser – stub of cartilage or several vertebrae under the fur.

Stumpy - Partial Tail, more than a riser, but less than a full tail.

Tailed / Longy – complete or near complete tail.

What originally attracted me to the Manx breed was the fact that they were rare and a minority breed. I thought that they

were so unique and special due to their lack of tail and sweet face – the fact that they were a natural breed that had been around for centuries, and having an old history surrounded by folklore.

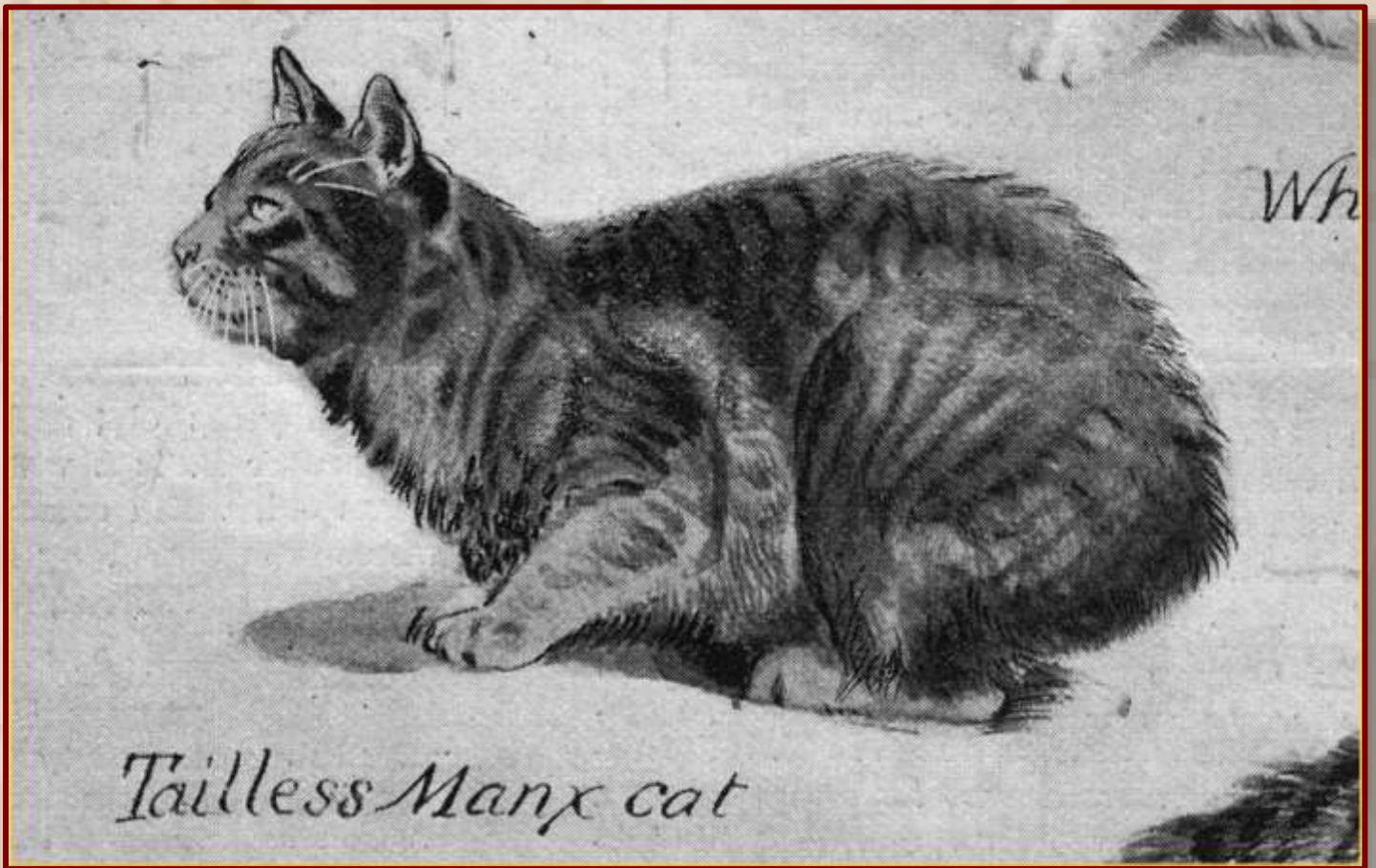
Once I acquired my first Manx cat, all of that became true to me and more. All the research I had done, and everything I had read about this breed, was proven beyond doubt to be manifestly true. It was now fact.

It goes without saying – and there is no doubt, that you will truly have a faithful friend for life when you adopt a Manx cat.

Joy Yoders-Dey

Deydream Manx

Manx Breed Council Secretary.



One of FOUR Manx exhibits entered at the New York Madison Square Garden Show, in 1895.

Possibly Miss Sarah J. Smith's 'MAX SMITH'

Leslie's Weekly, May 1895 © The Harrison Weir Collection.



CHAMPION BONHAKI – World Famous early Silver Classic Tabby Manx Shorthair male born 1897.

Bred by Mr. J. Jungbluth. Owned by Mr. & Mrs. H.C. Brooke.

Image: 'Our Cats' Magazine, February 14, 1900. © The Harrison Weir Collection.