

VOLUNTEERS' MEWSLETTER 19

March/April 2008



Hello Catlovers!

Well, this Spring is bringing us some surprises. Not the heatwave of last year, but some glorious crisp days with blue skies & sunshine and then sudden bone chilling cold & snow! My pussycats sit huddled round the catflap on cold mornings, daring each other to go out. The snow had them all skittish and they kept me laughing at their antics. I hope your pets are in good health and enjoying the changeable weather.

NEWS FROM HQ

There was a Trustees' meeting recently and a summary of the Minutes is shown below:

FUND RAISING EVENTS

We ran through the events already booked for 2008. There was discussion on the venue for the Autumn Fair. We will be buying some new folding boards to take on street collections and to shows.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Due to the continuing demand, we will be continuing to offer free neutering. We will still be asking for a donation towards our costs of £5 to £10 depending on the owners ability to pay.

REHOMING

There were 4 cats & 10 kittens in the cattery & with fosterers waiting for rehoming. Quite a number of cats have been rehomed in recent weeks, including 2 long term residents of Knowl Hill and some ferals.

VOLUNTEERS

We have a new group of volunteers in Earley who are happy to cover home checking and fundraising events in that area.

DATE OF NEXT TRUSTEES MEETING

The next Trustees meeting would be 5 June 2008.

NEW FEATURE ON THE WEB SITE

Vaughan has suggested that we list the cats that have found new homes through the website. Sue is going to provide him with a list for 2008 so far and then up date it weekly.

The website is now a very effective tool to promote our cats. We receive many complimentary remarks

about the site. Sue would like to say a big THANK YOU to Vaughan for all his hard work.

NEWS FROM FOSTERERS/ADOPTERS/CATTERY

CLAWS has taken in 3 other strays over the past week. I happened to be with Beverley when they were picked up from the vets and 2 taken to the cattery, and 1 to Bev's following a thyroidectomy.

I am doing a couple of homechecks this week. As of yesterday, the situation is that we have 6 cats at Knowl Hill, with two more coming in over the next week or so. Nicky and Ann still have kittens.

Report from Sue

Sue's two oldies are continuing to enjoy the comforts of the Collins household! Beth has acupuncture every 3-4 weeks to help her wonky legs and Bandit has a monthly check up, to be on the safe side, as she'll be 18 in July. Beth recently had her portrait painted, from a photo, by Chrissie Snelling who does alot of commercial work but also accepts a few commissions. Sue came to hear of her through an article in THE CAT magazine. It was a present for Mike's birthday. I shall look forward to seeing it in due course.

Am happy to report that Tia and Bailey, mentioned in the last newsletter, have gone to their new home near Henley. Sue reports they are settling in very well.

The best piece of news this month is that, at last, Jessie and Joe have been homed with a lovely family in Datchet. They had been with us since June last year.

Herbie, a Bengal, has settled into his new home.

Jessie, mum of the four kittens which have been with Beverley, went to her new home with a family in Burnham. The kittens have now all found homes too.

Suzie is now the new resident indoor cat at a flat in Datchet.

Bagpuss will be going to his new family in Arborfield at the beginning of June.

PUDDING

You may have seen the article in the Maidenhead Advertiser about Pudding and her lovely feeder, Mrs Spindler, at a Woodlands Park nursing home. Pudding was duly taken in by Beverley and did very well there. However, an opportunity came up to home Pudding with a lovely lady in Staines. Here's a photo of them together:



The Advertiser did a follow-up item in last week's edition. However, we received the very sad news yesterday that Mrs Spindler, who looked after Pudding all those years, died suddenly at the weekend. It was serendipity that CLAWS were able to step in when they did and we are grateful to Mrs Spindler for being so kind.

Further sad news is that Beverley had to have dear old Alfie put to sleep a few days ago. Beset with other problems since rescue a few short years ago, his chest finally filled with fluid because of a chest tumour. After watching this frail soul plug away each day, enjoying the care we were blessed to give him, it wasn't fair to let him linger in the newly discovered circumstances.

We shall all miss him as he was such a lovely boy – he was so lucky to have found Bev who took such great care of him in his twilight years. He became a firm favourite, just like little Ollie before him, and underlined why we do cat rescue in the first place. Understandably, Beverley is devastated at his loss.



Gummy and Monty are still with her, plus a new addition to the Binfield hospice - an old gentleman cat called George, rescued from the garden of one of our supporters. I saw them all yesterday and George was enjoying the warmth as he sunbathed in the garden.

Report from Nicky: tales of fostering over the year

PIMPOM/TILLY

Little Pimpom came to CLAWS after she collapsed on someones doorstep, sadly aborting her dead kittens. The vet believed she had been kicked as the injuries were only to her stomach.

She underwent surgery and came into Nicky's care. She was told to keep her in for a week and take her back for her vaccinations in a fortnight, the stitches did not need to be removed as the vet had put in dissolving ones. When she went back for her first vaccination, it was found she had torn her internal stitches and had to go back in to have a hernia repair. Back she went and to stop this lively young cat doing herself more damage, she was confined to a cage for 10 days!!

Nicky says it felt more like a month! Pimpom howled and cried – to add insult to injury, she also had to wear a lampshade that she rattled along the bars. It was a nightmare trying to keep her in the pen while Nicky cleaned litter trays and changed food. Because of the collar, bless her, she couldn't cover her poo properly (or she couldn't tell whether she had) so every morning Nicky got up to find her bedding in the litter tray – lovely!

Anyway, things settled down until a stray tried to move in - a very attractive semi-longhaired male tabby, nicknamed Growler. Trouble was he was very aggressive and wanted to kill Pimpom. More trips to the vets resulted from bites, but the biggest bombshell was after Nicky had found her a home.

Between Nicky and her neighbour, they had got Growler to the vets to be neutered, only to find he was FIV positive. So, the day before Pimpom went to her new home, Nicky sat in Kelperlands carpark for an hour with everything crossed as she waited for a new blood test to decide Pimpom's fate. Thankfully she came through and the following evening was duly taken to her new home (the family next door to Nicky who Pimpom had been visiting on the sly for weeks).

Pimpom (now renamed Tilly) has been in her new home for several months but still visits Nicky on an almost daily basis – mostly for food – but always happily returns to her new home.

ELVIS-JACK-ELVIS

In June last year, a stray black male started hanging around. He was a little worse for wear but at Nicky's he at least got food. He was very wary of Nicky and her cats, so she thought he might be a feral. Nicky

got a trap from Bev with a view to getting him neutered and having him back as she figured what's one more mouth to feed?

Unfortunately the weather was against her, too wet to leave a cat sitting in a trap all night. However when she saw how badly damaged his tail was, she had to get him to the vets, so set the trap in the garage. Luckily it worked quite quickly. The poor soul was trying to chew off the bottom of his own tail because it was dead.

The stray was nicknamed Elvis as the first thing he did when entering the cattery was curl his lip! His tail was amputated midway, he was neutered and vaccinated, then despatched to Knowl Hill Cattery. For the first week, Nicky visited him, spending lunch hours coaxing him and being growled at. By the end of the week, he'd begun to respond.

Nicky's new upstairs neighbour had expressed a wish to re-home Elvis but she was heading off to Spain for the summer and didn't hold out too much hope he'd still be available in September.

The summer came & went, the neighbour returned home. She initially tried to adopt Growler and was devastated when he had to be put to sleep. Elvis - now re-named Jack - turned out to be an affectionate cat after all. Nicky had kisses and tummy tickles during further visits, a big change from the cat she originally took in. On the day she re-homed Pimpom, she collected Jack (Elvis) from the cattery. He spent the afternoon with her at work and then was passed to the upstairs neighbour, where he is once again Elvis (it turns out she has always had a male cat called Elvis). This was a homing that was meant to be and what a happy couple they are!

WURLEY & SHADS

The 2 black kittens mentioned in the last newsletter are now ensconced in their new home with a family in Wokingham.

The male was nervous of strangers and Nicky was worried the prospective family would be put off by this. Nicky reckoned without a very determined young gentleman who was going home with 2 kittens, whatever they were like! So Nicky fished the male out from under the sofa, put him in a basket and off they went.

Nicky didn't complete the paperwork that night, as the kittens were distressed at being in boxes, so she visited them in their new home a couple of days later. They were so chilled and totally relaxed in their new surroundings. Wurley brought out her toys to show Nicky, helped her complete the paperwork and then curled up on the sofa to sleep.

Shads came in, had a cuddle, spread himself out on the heated kitchen floor and dozed.

The children adored the two kittens and the rehoming couldn't have worked out better. It was harder leaving these two little scraps this time than when they had left Nicky's home because they were so relaxed and happy - and seemed to have already forgotten her.

Nicky's latest housemates are Charlie and Lola, two adorable semi-long haired black kittens about 6 months old. They came from living in one room with a single mum and young baby. Nicky was told the little boy was timid but he has been nothing of the sort with her. They are wonderfully affectionate; both are head-butters and have fantastically loud purrs.

There were initial problems with feeding but now they are happily tucking into anything and everything. They had never been outside before so this has been a great novelty. They were very hesitant at first and very unsure about the damp white stuff at the weekend, but they happily charge in and out all day. They even had a little mate who visits everyday to play with them.

Little Charlie's favourite trick is to tunnel under the duvet in the middle of the night and sleep down Nicky's back - great in this cold weather!

I thoroughly enjoyed reading Nicky's updates and am so pleased that all these cats have landed on their paws finally.

Here's a couple of photos of Bobbie - a friendly natured pale ginger & white tom, and Pippa, a sweet-natured but sad-faced girl.



Bobbie,
about
3-4 yrs
old



Pippa, about 8 yrs old

FUNDRAISING UPDATE

The collection at Tescos Dedworth raised £190.03.

The jumble sale at Cox Green raised £331.70.

Our lovely volunteer Hazel has graciously raised another £120 at her line-dancing club. Thank you very much Hazel – and a huge thank-you to your friends for being such steady supporters.

If anybody has any fundraising ideas, please feel free to let Beverley know.

FUTURE EVENTS

| | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Apr 19th | Marlow | Street Collection | 9am to 3pm |
| Apr 26 & 27th | Burchetts Green College | Open Weekend | 9am to 5pm |
| May 17th | Maidenhead | Street Collection | 9am to 3pm |
| May 18th | Ray Mill Island | Duck Derby | 10am to 5pm |
| May 26th | Denham | Fair | - |
| Jun 7th | Cox Green Centre | Jumble Sale | 10am to Noon |
| Jun 21st | Cookham | Village Fair | 11am to 4pm |
| Jun 22nd | Waltham St Lawrence | Fete | - |
| Jul 19 & 20th | Great Missenden | Chiltern Show | - |
| Jul 26th | Maidenhead | Street Collection | 9am to 3pm |
| Aug 9 & 10th | Stubbings | Berkshire Show | - |
| Sep 7th | Chobham | RSPCA Show | Helpers Welcomed |
| Sep 13th | Henley | Show | - |
| Sep 20th | Henley | Street Collection | 9am to 3pm |
| Oct 11th | Maidenhead | Street Collection | 9am to 3pm |
| Nov 1st | Cox Green Centre | Jumble Sale | 10am to Noon |
| Dec 6th | Maidenhead | Street Collection | 9am to 3pm |

Beveley has asked me to mention that we could do with some extra help in the summer, so if you have

any friends or know anybody who would be willing to turn out for us, please let Beverley know.

JET'S CORNER



Hello again from the Collington household!

Since my visit to the vets with a torn ear, Mummy has started calling me Tufty! The scar isn't painful but I'm still waiting for the hair to grow over so you can't see it anymore. I might just get my ears pierced like Mummy!

I didn't like the storms & rain very much. It was scary but I bravely sat beside the catflap waiting for the weather to change. I also kept a lookout for Big Brute so I could box his ears if he tried to come in!

Mummy kept pointing out the litter tray to us but my smelly brother and Auntie Looby went in there before me, so I didn't want to use it. I peed on the doormat instead and Mummy wasn't very pleased. She spent a lot of time cleaning up, using smelly wetwipe thingies and saying naughty words. She soaked the mat in the bath and said something about washing me too but I ran away so she couldn't catch me!

Another thing that happened was my boyfriend Rocky threw up on the living room rug in support of my "durrry protest". But Mummy said it's really cos he gobbled his food down too quick. She wasn't too happy about that either and muttered about "foster homes" wherever that is. I bet they don't get such nice grub there!

Mummy still gave us cuddles later on so I suppose she won't mind if we do it again.

Byebye for now and be good.

Jet xx



AND FINALLY...

I missed an article in a January edition of the Maidenhead Advertiser about Carol Verdagner and the cat at No.11 Downing Street. For those on the internet, the article is on our website under the title "Celeb Cat joins CLAWS".

The gist of it is that Sybil's owner, Mrs Darling, wrote to CLAWS in response to a letter she had received from us. Sybil turns out to be a rescue cat as well so Mrs Darling was interested to hear about the work CLAWS does. Sybil has consequently become a friend of CLAWS.

Survey

We have also received a request from Bristol University for our members to complete an online survey about their cats, as part of a project being undertaken at the university's Feline Centre, which is part of the School of Veterinary Science. I replicate here the contents of the email received. If anybody would like to participate, please click on the link contained in the email. If you should have any queries about this, please contact Ms Harbacher direct.

*Dear Claws Team,
My name is Gabi Habacher and I am one of the 'Feline Fellows' at the University of Bristol.*

As part of one of our research projects, the Feline Centre is currently carrying out a survey on cat owners' attitude on cat health. We have opted for a web-based study design in order to address non-registered as well as registered cat owners and, hence, identify a wide spectrum of perceptions and concerns.

As your webpage is highly appreciated by cat owners, it would be an ideal medium for posting this questionnaire and addressing cat owners directly. Is there any possibility to create a link that could be accessed from your website and/or to include it in your newsletter or a mail shot?

We are aiming to run the survey until end of June 2008.

The link for the survey is :-

http://www.vetschool.bris.ac.uk/surveys/feline_centre

I would greatly appreciate any further information and hope to hear from you soon.

*Best regards,
Gabi Habacher DVM MRCVS
lvxgh@bristol.ac.uk*

Sue also passed this little gem to me of a recent telephone call she received. It made me smile!

The help line rang.

Q: "Are you the cat place ?"

A: "Yes, we are"

Q: "Do you do dogs ?"

A: "No, I'm afraid not"

...at which the caller hung up !!!

Short and sweet eh? Poor Sue, she has the patience of a saint!!

Paws for thought

Right that's all for this month. As always, if you have any snippets of news or items you wish to relay to fellow volunteers, you know where I am.

Meanwhile I'll see some of you at the street collection in Marlow this Saturday.

Take care everyone!

Sam
March/April 2008