

# VOLUNTEERS' MEWSLETTER 22

## October 2008



Hello Catlovers!

Hail Catlovers full of grace – here is my confession – it has been some time since my last newsletter...

I trust that you are all keeping well and have made the most of the few days of sunshine we've been blessed with in recent weeks.

I seem to have inadvertently taken a summer break, while getting accustomed to a new job and its challenges. Added to that a knee injury making life awkward and a general reluctance to spend too much time on the keyboard in the evenings meant I shirked normal duties for a while! However, a recent email from Jenny has finally stirred me into guilty action so here, with apologies, is what has come in to me since July.

### NEWS FROM HQ

#### Highlights of Trustees' Meeting – 19 Sept 2008

##### Fundraising events

We discussed events we had attended, were due to attend this year and those to be booked for next year. It was felt that due to the recession, we may be more likely to increase our takings from the shows we attended if we ran games rather than selling gifts. We will continue with the street collections next year. These will be in Marlow, Henley and Maidenhead. We will also apply for collections at local supermarkets. Moss End Garden Centre have kindly said that we can have a stall during the weeks just before Christmas.

We will still run jumble sales and Beverley is looking at the possibility of selling any items left unsold afterwards.

We will not be attending Chiltern Show, Stubbings or Denham Fair in 2009, as it was felt that we could not justify the cost of attending with the amounts taken.

##### Re-homing

Due to the recession we are currently going through, we have had more animals in. We have 11 cats in the cattery, 20 with fosterers and 7 still to come in when space is available. On the plus side, we have rehomed 69 cats since 1 January 2008.\*\*

##### Finance

Jenny ran through the accounts for the last three months. The end of year accounts are going to the Accountant next week. We will also be applying for our Gift Aid refund.

##### Boarding pens

Beverley has been given two cat pens.

##### Christmas cards

Beverley looked into the cost of having CLAWS Christmas cards printed, unfortunately they would be too expensive for us to consider this year.

##### Date of next meeting

Next meeting Thursday 20 November 2008.

\*\* Note from Sam: This number has increased since the meeting – as I write, the website says 76! Way to go Bev!

### FUNDRAISING UPDATE

At the Earley Fun Day back in July, a stall manned by our new volunteers down there made £55.19 – well done ladies and thank you!

Guide Dog show in Maidenhead in July made £86.05.

Anne Roberts kindly set up a stall at Beaconsfield Market for 3 weeks on the trot in July and netted £125 for us. Thanks for your efforts Anne.

The DBARC event made £87.70 for us.

Moss End stall one day in July brought in £87.70. Our thanks to Moss End Garden Centre for their kindness in letting us pitch camp there.

Chiltern Show was poorly attended and 2 days' efforts reaped only £61.80.

Maidenhead street collection in July made £127.22.

Sainsburys collection in July didn't take place as we had been double-booked with the RAF Association. NB: the collection has now been rebooked for 18<sup>th</sup> October.

Littlewick Show made £190.24 thanks to Sue Hansom and her family.

RSPCA Show at Chobham - £257.80. Many thanks to Sue & Gerald and their family for all their hard work that produced this wonderful result.

Henley Show made £178.61 thanks to Anne and her helpers.

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### REHOMING NEWS

#### Felix

This is a story that gladdens my heart as Felix was a visitor to my home for over a year, feeding several times a day and running off whenever approached. He would often sleep overnight, fleeing at the slightest noise. When my husband came down in the mornings he would often see this black flash hurtle past him. Although Felix would tolerate me watching him eating from the hallway, if I made the slightest move towards him, he'd bolt. He was the master of creeping in unnoticed and we often only knew he'd been in by the sight of his back legs and tail disappearing through the catflap! As he would often fight with Jet who is very territorial, as a kindness to all concerned I made the decision to trap him so he could be rehomed.

The family who adopted him sent us an update:

*"Initially Felix was very nervous, he wanted loads of cuddles and didn't want to leave the sitting room. By Saturday, he started to investigate the kitchen and Sunday he decided to venture upstairs. Today is Monday and he is now confidently walking around the house and my husband and I are hopeful we will get to sleep in our own bed tonight (we have spent the last three nights, sleeping on the sitting room floor with Felix)*

*We are delighted with his progress, he has come on so far in just three days. Phil and I both love him to pieces and we can't image life without him. He is such a lovely boy, with a very gentle and fun loving nature.*

*Many many thanks from all three of us.*

*Chris, Phil & Felix"*



Photo: Felix



I would like to send personal thanks to Chris & Phil for bringing Felix out of his shell and for making him so comfortable.

Am thrilled to bits he has finally relaxed and has settled in so beautifully. Seeing the photos brought tears to my eyes as I so wish we could have done the same for him, but the best news is he has fallen on his paws. This is what CLAWS is all about.

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### Tippy & Whiskers

In April 2007, the Lea family adopted Tippy & Whiskers (now known as Pepsi & Whiskers) two black & white sisters fostered for us by Rose.

We received a call recently from Mrs Lea, saying the family was returning to South Africa and that the cats were going too! She needed help from us with documentation so their pet passports could be issued. We wish the Leas and Pepsi & Whiskers "Bon Voyage" and look forward to hearing news of them in their new home.

### Bobby

Here's another lovely update from some adopters about a cat I helped Beverley settle at the cattery earlier this year after a trip to the vets:

*"We're just writing to let you know that we LOVE LOVE LOVE Bobby, who we adopted in May. After considering a very long list of possible names, he's ended up being called Flapjack! it just stuck to him. he's got so much personality and is so lovable. He loves being with us at all times, plays with his toys and enjoys the garden. Since he's been microchipped, he's been on a few adventures over the fence and has made friends with the neighbours' cat, but he's never gone long as he has to come back and check that he's not missing out on any food! Our boy loves his food. Even daddy, who originally didn't think he wanted any pets has fallen head over heels for the little man. Thank you for taking great care of him while he was with you. I often wonder where he came from and what his life was like before. At least now he's very loved and well taken care of."*

*Thanks again for rescuing him!!*

*Potts Family"*

### Mary

In the May newsletter, I reported that a lady called Mary had not been too well and needed us to look after her 2 cats while she underwent treatment away from home. Fortunately Debbie agreed to take the cats in.

The good news is that Mary is now back home. Because of her disabilities, the Housing Association has provided her with a bungalow in Sunninghill. It has made her life much easier and meant that she has been re-united with her 2 cats.

Many thanks to Debbie for looking after them.

### My homecheck

This weekend, I undertook a homecheck for a family who had tried to save 2 month-old kittens they'd obtained from people who evidently did not realise how quickly young kittens deteriorate when their mum stops feeding them. The kittens were in a very bad way by the time they were taken in and sadly both died within 24 hours of being rescued.

I duly homechecked the prospective adopters for some kittens in our care and am pleased to report all went well. I happily referred them to Frances who has been fostering for CLAWS again. I'm very glad that this family's tragic experience did not put them off and we're grateful they were willing to give it another shot. They're due to view the kittens this week.

### **NEWS FROM FOSTERS**

#### Bandit

As sod's law would have it, I received a photo from Sue of dear old Bandit just a fraction too late to include it in the newsletter I circulated back in July.



In her note to me, Sue said:

*"In July "Bandy-pops" (aka Bandit) came of age and as you can see from the photo, she celebrated in style!*

*As you may know, she suffers from dementia and is often "away with the fairies" and she also has IBS which means she is sick on a regular basis but nothing gets her down for long. She is a dear little soul with a quirky character and a very loud voice and we love her dearly. In September, she will have been with us for 2 years."*

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Update:

I was saddened to hear the news last month, after Sue sent the above photo, the fairies took dear Bandit off to the big garden in the sky where she has lots of CLAWS companions to play with and her earthly challenges are behind her.

Big hugs to Sue and Mike for making her last years so comfortable and untroubled.

Sue sent me a wonderful and poignant piece she wrote paying tribute to older cats and which I have included at the end of this newsletter.

### FUTURE EVENTS

Oct 18th	Sainsbury's Taplow	Collection	Helpers Wanted
Oct 25th	Maidenhead, Town Hall	Combined Charities Fayre	10.30am to 3.30pm
Nov 1st	Holyport Hall	RSPCA Xmas Fayre	
Nov 8th	Cox Green Centre	Jumble Sale	10am to Noon
Nov 22nd	Institute of Marketing, Cookham	Victorian Themed Christmas Show	
Nov 29th	Henley	Street Collection	9am to 3pm
Nov 30th	Kensington Town Hall	Animal Aid Xmas Without Cruelty	
Dec 6th	Maidenhead	Street Collection	9am to 3pm

### \*\*\*Volunteers wanted!!!\*\*\*

Can anybody help out at the remaining events scheduled for this year?

If so can you please contact Jenny Alder (or me to pass on to Jenny) as soon as possible?

### JET'S CORNER



Hello again from Jet's Joint!!

MummySam tells me she now knows my boyfriend Stripes does in fact "belong" to someone, but he still loves our food and so visits most days. MummySam reckons there isn't a catflap at the digs where he lives, so he prefers to spend time with us. Wish he'd stay longer, as MummySam can now stroke him but he doesn't like DaddyMark and runs away when he's around cos DaddyMark grumbles about the cost of feeding the neighbourhood cats, and Stripes is skint!


My other boyfriend Rockford Chili Trevor (Rockhead to his friends) still amuses MummySam and does strange things like sleep beside the toilet, or curl up on her handbags on the shoe cupboard at the bottom of the stairs, like he did last night. MummySam would've taken a photo if she could've got her mobile out of the handbag without disturbing him!

He still washes me sometimes if I beg, but mostly he ignores my batting eyelids at him and rubbing up against him. My big brother Ozzie still jumps on me at playtime, but I just run up to the top of the stairs and thump him one when he passes.

I've been having fun watching the birds on the feeders. They didn't visit for a bit cos of the berries on the scratchy brambles out front and Mummy got annoyed at the purple poop she kept finding on the car. We have 3 noisy young woodpeckers coming to feed regularly and chase each other around alot. They also make MummySam laugh by pecking at the tree quite a bit instead of gobbling up the fatballs. I sit and chatter at them through the window, but they scare me, so I don't go outside when they're around.

Auntie Looby has been making us all goggle-eyed by dashing round the house and up & down the garden path on dry days, being what MummySam calls "skittish". I'm not sure what that is but she fluffs up her whiskas and scoots on the floor in circles around the scratchpostthingy and tears around the house like Ozzie is after her. Getting older can be fun then.....!

Paws for thought: don't drink leafy water. It's horrid!

Jet xx 

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### IN PRAISE OF OLDER CATS, AND ONE IN PARTICULAR

*By Sue & Mike Collins*

Those of us who foster or adopt older or infirm cats know that the time we have together will be limited. We feel the privilege of caring for these sweet little souls far outweighs the rollercoaster of emotions we will experience whilst they are with us and the distress their deaths will cause us.

Bandit and her sister, Biscuit, came to CLAWS when their owners emigrated to Spain, taking their dog but not their cats.

Both cats, then aged 16½ years, had been neglected and under-fed all their lives and sadly Biscuit died of renal failure within a few weeks. Bandit needed to have her thyroids removed and it was after the operation that Beverley asked us if we would take her in while she recovered. So in September 2006 Bandit (also known affectionately as Bandy-pops) joined our family.

We took her to Tim, our vet, for a check up who said she was in pretty good shape, though underweight (only 2.79 kg). Her mouth and teeth were the worst he had seen in 30 years in practice (she must have been in great pain but never complained) and needed extensive work done on them but this could not be undertaken until she had gained some weight.

We had a mission! We were ably assisted by Bandy who ate everything that was offered to her (you never know where the next meal is coming from, you know!) and when she broke the 3kg barrier she underwent a 2½ hr operation during which all but one of her teeth were removed and repair work carried out on her mouth. She remained in hospital for three days and then returned home.

She continued to put on weight reaching 3.65 kg. She developed a quirky personality and endeared herself to all who met her – she had lots of “aunties” many of them CLAWS volunteers, but the person she loved most was Mike – they were best mates and she contributed in no small measure to his recovery after major heart surgery. They would sit together for hours just happy in each other’s company.

Nothing fazed Bandy – she became stone deaf, developed dementia and was diagnosed with IBS which meant she was sick quite a lot but she took it all in her stride and she celebrated her 18th birthday in July. All was well until a month or so ago when she seemed a bit under the weather but with Tim’s help she rallied until the first Friday in September when she collapsed, her vital energy spent at last. Tim came and gently put her to sleep.

Bandy was a feisty little cat with a big personality and a loud voice (Maria Callas had nothing on her !)

Have you ever heard of a cat that is afraid of the dark? Bandy was so we always left a light on in “her” room. Each night it shines still in her memory.

Sweet dreams, dear Bandy, love you loads – miss you lots.

SUE and MIKE

We do urge you to consider seriously taking an older cat into your home (and your heart). The rewards far outweigh the heartaches. A number of our volunteers are dedicated to this work and would be happy to talk to you about it. In particular Beverley, whose “hospice” at Bear Cottage is always full geriatric waifs and strays, has selflessly devoted many years to the care of these “poor little sausages” and would be glad to share her experience with you.

### AND FINALLY...

I see in the Advertiser this week that our old volunteer Trish Canziani was one of two community wardens who helped someone in an emergency. Well done to Trish and your community spirit.

As ever, a newsletter is only as good as the news which is passed on to its author, so please, if you have any news, any snippets, anecdotes or anything you wish me to include about CLAWS, local events, items of interest, then please contact me.

Thank you.

Sam Collington/Oct 2008