

# VOLUNTEERS' MEWSLETTER 25

## January/February 2009



Hello Catlovers!

Hope 2009 got off to a decent start for you all,. Must admit it would have been nice not to deal with those snows, digging the car out, driving cautiously to work, avoiding the black ice. Lane End was icebound some mornings and many roads around Wycombe were closed. Our pussycats weren't too keen on exploring the snows and caused their own traffic jams at the catflap, daring each other to go out! I'm glad for the dry crisp days that have followed and am loving the arrival of the Spring flowers.

### NEWS FROM HQ

I gather the phone was fairly quiet over the Christmas period, but January brought with it an avalanche of calls along with the snows, including some rescues.!

On 12<sup>th</sup> February, Maidenhead Advertiser kindly ran an article about CLAWS entitled "Cats in Credit Crunch" with the tagline "Crash sees charity swamped with pets as its own funds run dry".

An extract of the article is reproduced here:

*Feline friends are beginning to feel the full force of the credit crunch, according to a cat charity in crisis.*

*CLAWS has been inundated as owners feel the pinch. Volunteer Sue Collins said calls have doubled as some owners are having to move out of their homes. The Knowl Hill cattery is at saturation point and staff are distraught at having to turn cats away.*

*Sue said "it is very upsetting. You feel like judge, jury and executioner". Fellow volunteer Beverley Gubbins urged owners to be responsible about neutering cats to prevent unwanted kittens and to give them as much notice as possible if they are going to have to give up a pet.*

*While the credit crunch is hitting cat owners, the charity too is finding it hard to pay the bills as a rainy summer affected fundraising events. Jenny Alder said "what we really need are more people giving us standing orders or direct debits, however small".*

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**Note from Sam:** The Advertiser also filmed some video footage of some CLAWS volunteers up at the cattery. Quite a few volunteers turned up - Jill was there as she works at the cattery on Tuesday, Ann Maine came along, plus Jenny, Beverley, Sue and, of course, Theresa was there to tell them all about the cats' characters and the sort of homes they need.

To see this, click on the following link  
<http://www.maidenhead-advertiser.co.uk/news/article-9849-video-even-cats-suffer-the-credit-crunch/>

On the subject to rehoming, as at the end of last year, we had rehomed **80** cats as far as I recall. Not bad eh? So far this year, as I write, the number stands at a whopping **17** – way to go Beverley!!

On a sadder note, I'm sure you'll join me in sending Beverley lots of love and hugs for the recent loss of her beloved Gummy, as well as another of her elderly rescues Blackie. I remember Gummy from when Beverley lived in Marlow. Gummy used to guard the stairs at first and then later he was guard-cat at the door, marshalling all visitors through the front door. He was quite a character and a magnificent tabby. Those of us who knew him, will certainly miss him.

### FUNDRAISING UPDATE

You recall I mentioned a supporter, Tim Hopkins, who was running the Cliveden Run in December to raise funds for CLAWS. Sue sent me the following report:

*The Cliveden Cross Country run is organised by the Burnham Joggers Club. Chairman Keith Scudamore is a cat fan (he has a Tonkinese) and was very interested that CLAWS had someone running to raise money for it.*

*Sunday morning (28<sup>th</sup> Dec) dawned fine but very cold. We collected Tim and arrived at Cliveden at 10.15 am (the race started at 11.00 am). It was very well organised, lots of marshalls to make sure the cars were parked in an orderly manner (there were 550 competitors so that gives you an idea of the magnitude of the operation).*

*We walked down to the start. It's a truly magnificent setting and it was a carnival atmosphere. The competition was fierce, but everyone was very friendly. Mike & I had never attended a cross country race before and were very impressed.*

*Tim warmed up gently (and I took a few photos - not very good but OK to give a flavour of the occasion) and they were off!*

*The course was approximately 6 miles of scenic, but testing, terrain in the beautiful grounds of Cliveden House. The race started and finished in front of the famous hotel and wound its way through the attractive National Trust land. There were some harsh hill climbs - the best known one is Yew Tree Hill where people have to climb about 200 feet on wooden steps.*

*The winner's time for 32 minutes 32 seconds - amazing! There were categories for men and women and also over 40s, over 50s, over 60s and over 70s.*

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Tim completed the course in just over an hour - a very respectable time and a great achievement. The race commentator mentioned him by name as he crossed the finishing line ! He was in great shape and hardly out of breath.

We raised £337.00! Well done, Tim - you're a star! Many thanks to everyone who helped achieve this fantastic total.

Thank you for your report Sue and huge thanks to Tim for his great effort. Respect!



Photo: Tim before the race



Photo: Tim finishing the race

### CAT TAILS

Purdy and Leo, Candy, Jerry and Claude (who had been with us since last August), also Magpie, fostered by Debbie, have been "reserved" and will be going to their new homes in early March.

Tilly, Fifi, Socks, Cleo and Charlie have also found homes in recent weeks. I\* was lucky enough to do the homecheck for Cleo a fortnight ago, and this weekend for Charlie who will be going to a couple who live only a few streets away from me.

### Sheba

The Advertiser kindly put in a piece about Sheba for us. Sheba is 12 years old female whose new owner sadly developed an allergy to her. She's a black & white long-haired cat and requires grooming. Let's hope someone comes along for her soon because she's too beautiful not to spend her remaining years on someone's lap or in front of a fire.

### Big Boy

He made a garden in Lower Earley his home and fortunately for him the family there loved cats and, had they not had two cats of their own, would have adopted him. Instead they cared for him through the spring and summer of 2008 but when the cold, dark days arrived they asked us to take him in and so he went to Knowl Hill Cattery just before we "closed" over the Christmas period.

He is a beautiful boy and very affectionate and has won all our hearts.

In January Beverley took him to Kelperland for his MOT. Imagine her distress when she received a phone call to say that he was FIV positive. We decided to continue to keep him in isolation for three months and then re-test him which we're hoping will lead to a negative result.

In the meantime we are seeking a very special home for BIG BOY. He will need to be an indoor cat with someone who is an experienced cat owner and who has the commitment to help him live a happy and healthy life - it is perfectly possible !



Photo: Big Boy

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### Emmy

Emmy is the latest resident to join the Warwick Close Retirement Home.

She was a CLAWS cat that we homed to a family in Slough about 5 years ago. When a change in domestic circumstances meant that they could no longer keep her, we agreed to take her back.

Emmy is 16 years old and totally blind. She has now had her second vaccination and a check-up. She came to Sue & Mike on 2 January weighing 2.8kg and nearly 3 weeks later weighed 3.44kg, so something must be agreeing with her. Her blindness was caused by retinal haemorrhage so the vet checked her blood pressure in case it was high but it wasn't anything to worry about. He doesn't want to see her again unless we are concerned about her.

She has settled in well and is a happy girl. Sue says it's interesting to watch her explore her new territory. She finds the wall of the room and very carefully walks round it negotiating any obstacles, such as chairs. She is a dear little girl and no trouble at all. She sleeps well and eats well. She is very happy in "her" room and occasionally explores the other rooms upstairs.

When the weather allows Sue to open a window Emmy knows immediately and goes to sit underneath it to get the benefit of the fresh air. She was an outdoor cat before she lost her sight so has had to come to terms with a very different life style. Despite it all she appears happy and content - often purring and doing rolypolys!

Adapting to a new environment is stressful for a blind cat so she will be staying with Sue & Mike for the rest of her days.



*Photo: Emmy*

### Cooper

We were contacted by a veterinary practice in Slough and asked if we could take in a stray that had been brought to them and so Cooper came to us.

He is about 10 years and a delightful lad, very friendly and loves of his food ! He needs a special diet and regular medication so he will stay with Beverley.



*Photo: Cooper*

### Penny & Farthing

Here are some super photos of PENNY and FARTHING given a home by Aiden last September.

As you can see they have settled in well!



*Photo: Penny & Farthing*

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### VOLUNTEER NEWS

Welcome to all new volunteers – I hope to see you all at some point during the coming months.

Maggie Ranson has already been for coffee with Sue. I gather she's a lovely lady who has already signed up to help at street collections.

Sue has also been in touch with Mandy Hussey. She and her husband haven't been very well but Mandy is looking forward to taking up cat cuddling duties again soon. We hope you are both now recovered.

We send our love and best wishes to Hazel Bugey who underwent an operation on her foot recently. Her convalescence is being supervised by Elly (see photo), her beautiful tabby boy, not to mention her husband, Ray !



Photo: Elly

Many thanks also to Ann and Michael Maine for taking in a little tortoiseshell girl (Charlie) at a moment's notice. She soon made herself at home and is doing nicely. Jill has now taken over Charlie's fostering duties and hopefully Charlie will be rehomed this week.

### TALES FROM THE HELPLINE

The phone rang:

"Is that CLAWS?"

"Yes"

"Can I speak to Sue, please?"

"That's me".

"Oh, hello Sue - this is "Mary". I don't expect you remember but CLAWS helped me when one of my cats was ill."

"Yes, I do remember - is he not well again?"

"No, he's fine"

"So how can we help?"

"Well, I don't know how to tell you ....but I may be going to prison in February and I'm worried what will happen to my cats. The trouble is until I appear in court I won't know if I'll be going to prison or not and I can't bear the thought of them being thrown out of my flat and left with no one to look after them. Can you help me?"

Sue talked to Beverley and then phoned Mary back. As Mary had been concerned enough about her cats to put them first at a time when she was under considerable pressure, CLAWS agreed to take them in should the need arise.

As Sue says, you never know what the next call will bring!!

### FUNDRAISING EVENTS FOR 2009

|             |                                  |                   |                  |
|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Mar 21st    | Maidenhead                       | Street Collection | 9am - 5pm        |
| Apr 18th    | Marlow                           | Street Collection | 9am - 5pm        |
| Apr 25/26th | Berkshire College of Agriculture | Lambing Weekend   |                  |
| May 9th     | Cox Green Community Centre       | Jumble Sale       | 8.30am - 12 noon |
| May 16th    | Maidenhead                       | Street Collection | 9am - 5pm        |
| May 17th    | Maidenhead                       | Duck Derby        | 10am - 5pm       |
| May 23rd    | Sainsbury's Taplow               | Collection        | 9am - 5pm        |
| Aug 1st     | Cox Green Community Centre       | Jumble Sale       | 8.30am - 12 noon |
| Sep 12th    | Henley                           | Henley Show       | 8.30am - 6pm     |
| Sep 19th    | Henley                           | Street Collection | 9am - 3pm        |
| Oct 10th    | Maidenhead                       | Street Collection | 9am - 5pm        |

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|----------|--------------------|---|------------------|
| Nov 14th | Maidenhead         | Street Collection includes Nicholson's Walk | 9am - 5pm        |
| Nov 28th | TBC                | Jumble Sale                                 | 8.30am - 12 noon |
| Dec 19th | Sainsbury's Taplow | Collection                                  | 9am - 5pm        |

### JET, ROVING REPURTER



Hello again from Jet's Joint!

Well it's been "all go" at the vets since KittyMas. MummySam has had us all up there in turn, but Rockhead has been up there more than the rest of us. We all had our nasty boosters and horrid wurming tablets. My boyfriend Rocky went poorly a few days before his appointment and went off his tucker. He was running a tempurrature and got all dehydrated. He was on the receiving end of a bigger needle than me but it brought his tempurrature down overnight and he started scoffing again. It has taken a week of pink pills and primula cheese to make Rocky right in the head again, but he's now thankfully much better and MummySam can rest easy cos he's back to meeting her at the car in the evenings and doing rolypolys in the carpark! He keeps nicking my spot on the frij-freezer but that's ok.

I've also been impressing MummySam with the number of mouses I can bring in during the night. She is especially complimentary when I bring them in quick sucksession, atleast that's wot I think she's saying when she rushes to pick up the mouses...! My record so far is 4 in half an hour...

**Paws for thought:** when are a pussycat's eyes too big for its belly? When a rare Reeves pheasant comes to dinner on Mummy's lawn! (DaddyMark has named it Christopher!)

Lots of catcuddles from Jet xxx



### Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV)

There are a lot of myths surrounding FIV (Feline Immunodeficiency Virus) . The virus depletes the number of white blood cells, which eventually makes the cat less able to fight off infection. However, because it is such a slow acting virus many FIV positive cats can enjoy a normal life span with no apparent health problems resulting from the virus.

FIV is species specific, so can only be transmitted from cat to cat, and not to humans or other animals. The virus is present in the blood and saliva of infected cats. It is a very 'fragile' virus, and cannot survive for long outside the body. It also requires a high dose to establish an infection in another cat. Therefore, it is not easily passed from cat to cat. The main route of infection is through biting, when the virus in the saliva of an infected cat is injected directly into the blood stream of the cat it bites. Conversely, a cat which bites an infected cat, is at less risk of being infected, as the virus would not be injected straight into the blood stream, although there is still an element of risk.

Cats who fight who are most likely to be infected. Cat fights are most likely between entire toms and these are therefore the group most at risk. Since many feral cats are unneutered and have to compete for food, there is a higher incidence of FIV in feral cats.

The message is: to prevent fighting - make sure your cat is neutered.

To find out more go to the CLAWS website, click links and then click CATWORK. This is the site of a lady called Barbara who runs a sanctuary for FIV positive cats. It is an inspiring and humbling experience to learn of the work she does and she is always willing to talk to you and offer advice.

### Items Offered Free of Charge

We have been given a HANIMEX RONDETTE 1800 SERIES SLIDE PROJECTOR with 3 X 120 round magazines. Free to a good home !

CLAWS has been given a YAMAHA ELECTRIC ORGAN MODEL HS4 to sell to raise funds. Any offers?

If you are interested please contact Sue on the help line 01189 341699.

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Something you have to admire about cats....their ability to nap just about anywhere...!



My thanks to Liz for these. More to come in next newsletter!

AND FINALLY...

Someone I love dearly, with a clearly warped sense of humour, suggested the following for the new CLAWSmobile!! Hmmm enough said.....!



Sam Collington  
Jan/Feb 2009