



TOM COX

Under the Paw

Confessions of a Cat Man



REVIEW BY SAM COLLINGTON OF "UNDER THE PAW" BY TOM COX

When people refer to "cat-lovers", they are mostly presumed to be women, either young, single and living with a demanding pedigree cat or, alternatively, a middle-aged woman totally besotted by a host of moggies, living in a residence which smells of catnip and liberally scattered with cat fleeces!

"Under the Paw" has been written by a cat-loving man in an effort to redress the balance and put forward the assertion that being a man who loves cats, is nothing to be ashamed of - nor is it as uncommon as one might think.

That said, Tom Cox spent much of his earlier life sneaking cuddles with passing cats, living in awe of his parents cats and generally hiding from his friends his love of all things feline.

The book traces the story of the family cats, neighbourhood cats, cats Tom would have loved to meet and ultimately how he and his wife ended up with

several cats living under their roof. Many adventures were had along the way, including several house moves. Pet custodianship played a big part in Tom and his partner getting together. They ultimately decided to move out of London and into the countryside, getting married along the way.

The book charts the highs and lows of being owned by cats, the various scrapes Tom's cats got into over the years, and how they all adapted to life in the country. The cats, it appears, outsmarted their humans time and again! Inevitably, tragedy strikes periodically, familiar to any of us who have treasured animal companionship. However, the pathos is offset by dry observations and the certain knowledge that men's thinking processes are totally differently from those of women. Tom spends a lot of the book in a state of bewilderment about cats and their behaviour, even though he had the added benefit of working from home and having many hours to observe his cats in rest and play.

I found the book a thoroughly entertaining read, which resulted in many chuckleworthy moments, but punctuated here and there with exclamations when an event occurred which might have been handled differently. Cats, as ever, keep their humans on their toes.

Definitely worth a read but perhaps not when travelling on public transport - the sudden laughter is bound to draw attention!

May 2008



Tom Cox