



FELINES

Taunton & Wellington Branch Newsletter
Spring 2020 (No. 129)



In this edition:

- *Higgins is a hit!*
- *Knut - Who?*
- *Neutering update*
- *Rodent control*
- *News of earlier adopted cats*
- *The Poets - 5+ years on*

Beau.fu | Coco -
Growing up fast!

Higgins—the CP cat wows them at Wellington's pantomime

The pantomime performed by the Wellington Pantomime Group this year at the Wellesley theatre was 'Dick Whittington'.

What could be more appropriate for our branch to be one of its chosen charities this year, supported by collections made at every performance

Branch volunteers attended every performance, mornings and evenings to show the flag and support Branch cat Higgins.



Higgins is a larger than life 'cat' and the volunteers prepared to dress up needed not only help in clambering into the costume, but a minder to guide them when on the move.

A talent for acrobatics was useful as well, and our volunteers rose to the task.

High diving visitors, young and old, strung around, tail swishing.

Higgins, the branch cat with a attitude.

A wonderful opportunity to our Branch.

We thank Wellington Pantomime Group for supporting us and of course to all the visitors and audience members who donated after the shows!

*Hello Friends and Readers,
Welcome to our .rst edi on of your
Felines Newsle er for the new decade — Spring 2020*

Hopefully by the me this edi on is printed the endless rain & wind will be but a memory. The long range forecast of a record breaking cold winter, gave us instead ooded roads, mud and depressing skies. It means, as we have as yet failed to train our cats to wipe their paws before coming in, the kitchen oor needs constant aen on, never being quite sure if the brown muddy 'mess' is just decomposing leaves or 'something' else.

So it was a rare semi sunny day when looking out of the kitchen window admiring the rst snowdrops & da odils saw our smallest cat stalking a bulb bandit, aka a squirrel.

Squirrels are the bane of bulb planters, so are not welcome in our garden.. However it must have sensed it was not alone, and turning charged our smallest cat - we waited to see if George would turn and ee - nothing of the sort, with his le paw he bie d the squirrel as it came close and it darted away.



Our southpaw cat was hero of the hour. Just wish we'd been able to take a photograph but at least our bulbs are safe from the menace of squirrels. George on guard duty.

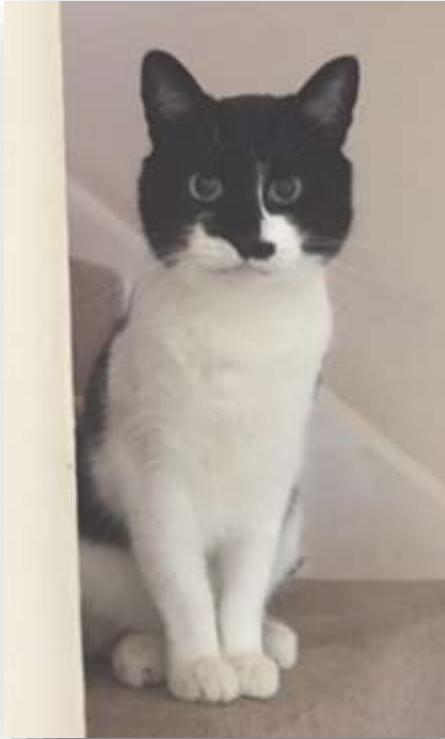
Update: Sadly, Amazon is no longer supported by Give As You Live as one of their 'Stores' when you Shop On-Line . Therefore it is no longer possible to support Cats Protec. on Branches if you are an Amazon buyer—a blow as however lil e one spent, it all helped support cats.

There are though, s ll hundreds of other on-line retailers through which you can support Cats Protec on T&W

If you haven't already signed up to this scheme—why not do so and choose Cats Protec on Taunton & Wellington as your worthy cause—the cats will thank you!

Go to—h ps://www.giveasyoulive.com and follow the links

A Happy Ending for Milo



Milo came in to the branch's care when his owner was moving and could not find a landlord who would allow a cat.

An issue that CP has been working to resolve for some time with its Purrfect Landlords Campaign.

Now settled in his new home, Milo comes downstairs and meows when it's time for tea.

Below "his" sleeping place in our bedroom.

CF



Monty & Smudge - now grown up



Update on these two who were kittens when homed by the Branch back in the summer of 2013. Now grown up - *"Can't believe they're 6 years old now"*.

Today's photos of Monty & Smudge. Smudge hates the camera - hence looking a little grumpy above, but a rare picture below looking at the camera for a change. Monty & Smudge prefer slightly warmer, less windy weather, so have to be shooed out for a breath of fresh air on occasion. Their response is often to bring "playmates" indoors which we have to chase & catch to release! AO



**Do you remember - previously adopted branch cats
Zodiac & Riley?**



Riley

**Riley &
Zodiac** when
they first came
into the Branch
for rehoming.

Two very pretty
kittens - part of
a litter of 7.



Zodiac

- Now both much loved grown up cats



Before being found their perfect forever home - Zodiac & Riley spent me in one of the branch's foster pens.

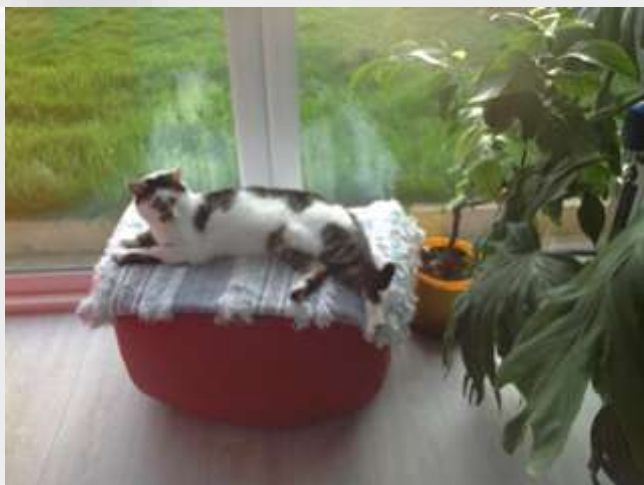
Zodiac (ginger & white) who thought he was a meercat - always let all the other pen residents know when there were human visitors to the pens.

Keenly interested in everything that was going on.

With their pen close to the food prepara on area, there was always plenty of ac on to oversee.

Whilst **Riley** (tabby & white), was much more laid back and preferred chilling out.

Now grown up -
Riley is sll chilling out.



7 Years on - Domesticated ferals

It is difficult to believe that by the time this edition of Felines is printed, our feral family will have been with us for 7 years - it seems only yesterday we welcomed four mysterious bundles of fur.

Mysterious, as we rarely saw them at the beginning, hiding away in their sleeping boxes inside the large puppy cages they lived in for the first few weeks, until they'd got used to the new smells and noises of their forever home.

I can recall the sounds of rattling cages as with a swish of a tail or tails they disappeared as they heard one of us approach the old cow shed they were living in to start with. So in desperation to catch sight of a cat or two, I would p totle over the gravel to try and snatch a peep before they'd vanished. Or standing in the shadows, as motionless as possible - difficult as it was a freezing February, when the temperature never rose above zero during the day, let alone as dusk fell. Wiggling my toes inside furry boots. If I was lucky I would catch a glimpse of one or more.



Archie, bottom left, **Lucy** top left, **Freddie**, top right, **George** bottom right.

After they'd been freed from the puppy cages and allowed to roam the barn, we still kept the doors closed, fearful they would hot foot it away. It was ages later we discovered an old drain exiting to the outside through which they came and went when we weren't about.

Before the year was out, they were coming into the kitchen for food, and by the time winter set in, they were using the cat flap to enter and exit spending more indoors.



George the inquisitive.

The only reminder of their feralness is the tendency to disappear if we have visitors. Not far as, as soon as the stranger's car disappears, they reappear. So one must assume they had been watching from a safe distance. Once the 'all clear' has been sounded, back they come. Not hiding very far.

Now 7 years on, two spend the night at the bottom of our bed, and at times a third will start off there, even if he disappears elsewhere during the night

Only one is a lap cat, but the others are happy to get up close and personal. Just lovely.

AP



Long haired **Lucy** — lovely.



Beloved **Archie** and **Freddie** above.

Rodenticide use on farms and smallholdings

Taunton & Wellington Branch saw a huge increase of approximately 85% in the number of trap/neuter/return (TNR) tasks last year as compared to 2018.

Thankfully we were able to successfully relocate many more cats than in previous years too, as we received many more requests to take on some 'working feral mousers' on other farms, stables and smallholdings.

Why could this be?

As a Branch, we certainly gained a lot of publicity last year, starting in January when Mole Valley Farmers, a major national farming supplier, published an article about feral working cats in their monthly newsletter.

It featured Taunton & Wellington as an active Branch dealing with such matters and on the back of that, the Media Office at CP head office, sent out more press releases to a wider selection of new outlets during the early part of this year. This gave us even more publicity - including BBC News Online in January 2020 - as well as other national periodicals and specialist farming publications.

Requests for ferals are still coming in, often from quite far ranging locations, asking us to relocate cats to farm premises. We are doing the best we can and the TNR team are spreading their efforts over a large geographical area here in the South West.

We suspect that the legislation regarding the supply and use of rodenticides might have had an effect on this increase as well. Training and certification for the users of such chemicals has been required since January 2018, a not inexpensive added cost for farmers and owners of small holdings. We wonder if people are realising that there is an alternative environmentally friendly way of managing rodents on their properties?

Since 1 January 2018, farmers and growers have only been able to purchase professional rodenticides if they can show they are part of a compliant assurance scheme, or that they have completed an approved training course. Similarly, sellers of professional use rodenticides need to be registered.

There is also the added concern about dangerous poisons getting in to the food chain, for both animals and humans.

The Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use (CRRU) UK has the aim to provide farm assurance and point-of-sale control to help ensure the entire supply chain is correctly implementing stewardship measures and the continued access by competent users to professional use rodenticides for the future.

Food chains are where such problems can arise as the deceased remains of rodents who have succumbed to poison can potentially impinge on other predators and carrion eaters if the carcasses are eaten.

We know from the feedback that we receive from landowners who have asked us to 'supply' feral working cats on their properties that it works. One 'adopter' of a two cat team had an enormous problem with rats as they had poultry in their smallholding. Once the cats were free to roam, we have been told that *"We seldom see the cats but we know they are around as the food goes overnight. And we have had NO rats at all since the team moved in!"*

HI – I'M KNUT (PRONOUNCED : K-NOOT)



You may wonder why I am here waving a Norwegian flag! Well later this year I am off on an exciting adventure which will involve me travelling to another country where I am going to be doing amazing things which might take my breath away!

More news soon, but watch out for my blog on the Branch Facebook page soon

Unfortunately Willie can't go with me on this adventure so I am acting as his 'stand in' but rest assured, there could be some adrenalin rushes involved!

More soon!

Med kjærlighet fra

Knut X

Update on a successful rodent control relocation!



Though **Faith, Hope & Charity** all contribute to effective vermin control, only Faith has expanded her working role into a successful supervisory capacity.

Above - ensuring the farmer has, indeed emptied all the cake (dried kibbles for the cows) from the buckets into the feeding troughs.

Why not enjoy the wheelbarrow ride after all the extra effort?

Right — Are those cattle able to reach the silage?



Why the Branch runs regular Neutering Campaigns

The branch runs regular neutering campaigns for domestic /owned cats every year. The aim is to encourage cat owners to get their unneutered pets to the vets, by helping with costs and promoting the benefits of neutering to the cats.

Such subsidized neutering & chipping campaigns are run two or three times a year, alongside with the weekly trapping sessions, where we seek to trap & neuter feral, and semi feral cats.

It is not only farmers who get in touch. We've trapped at the sites of large commercial premises, such as the shopping centre at Hankridge Farm as well as in the vicinity of the cinema and Hollywood Bowl, both on the outskirts of Taunton. Also, as reported in last winter's Felines, the Viridor Recycling site which was home to two mums and their 10 kittens, all of which were successfully trapped, with all the kittens being fostered and socialized before being found new homes.

The majority of trapped feral cats are returned to their home site, but we do seek to relocate where we can, if the original site is not safe or less than a desirable location for cats. Some people view feral cats as pests. Thankfully, many more – particularly farmers, stable owners and smallholders – value them for their role as working mousers that protect grain and feed. A few healthy feral cats can really help to keep the vermin levels down.

So we promote cats as a safer pest control option than poisoning vermin, which can endanger other animals and birds. Pest control in the UK is estimated to cost about £1.2bn each year. Rat infestations tend to follow in the wake of flooding, and a recent request from such a small holding has the TNR team sent up for a relocation to help the owners with their problem with rats eating their feed stores since being flooded.

Neutering campaigns in May & November 2019 - 142 vouchers issued
TNR (trap/neuter/return) in 2019 - 106 (43 were found new homes)

So if you know of anyone who might benefit from some feline pest controllers please ask them to call us.

We will also be running neutering campaigns for domestic cats in 2020 - so please help us to spread the word.

For information about environmentally friendly rodent control and future domestic neutering campaigns:

Call 03452 602 397 for more information.

Update on Ellie & the Poets



At 1 day old



Wilfred and his brothers and sister will be one and a half years old in March, so we thought you would like to see some recent photos of them, compared to how they looked on their day of admission when they were less than a day old.

Rupert and Siegfried (Siggy) are so alike in appearance, real peas in a pod, and have a similar temperament. Pam and Wilfred have similar personalities, but are both fairly quiet. Pam has a little white patch at the side of her mouth, but both have those lovely white socks. And as for Wilfred, well, he's still giving his views on his humans and life in general on our Facebook page. Happy half birthday Poets. AM



Wilfred top left
Rupert right

Pam above
Siggy right

Plus Mum —
the lovely **Ellie**
far right



The siblings



Siggy top le

Rupert top right

Pam bottom right.

The missing cat of
the original four is
of course Wil e!

His latest blog can
be found on page
17 plus picture.



After Cats as Artists - as reported in *Felines 2019*

Well known writer T.S. Elliot wrote a book of light verse called *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*. A collection of 15 poems, dedicated to his godchildren, regarding the different personalities and eccentricities of cats.

Names like Old Deuteronomy, the Rum Tum Tugger, and Mr. Mistoffelees - familiar to anyone who has seen the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical: CATS.

Polydactyl felines are sometimes called "Hemingway Cats" as the writer's cat 'Snowball' was a 6 toed cat and lived with the family originally in Cuba and then when Hemingway moved to his famous home on Key West in Florida in 1931, Snowball went too.

Descendants of Snowball, all polydactyl cats, roam around the estate to this day.



Charles Dickens was one of our most important and influential writers and once said

"What greater gift than the love of a cat?"

He would sit entranced for hours while writing.

In *The Life of Samuel Johnson*. Boswell (who was not a cat lover) writes of Johnson's cat, **Hodge**,

"I never shall forget the indulgence with which he treated Hodge, his cat: for whom he himself used to go out and buy oysters."

Samuel Johnson called Hodge

"A very fine cat indeed."

Hodge is immortalized, with his oysters, with a statue of his likeness that stands outside Johnson's house at: 17 Gough Square in London.

VW

Last evening I was faced with a dilemma. I had strolled into the kitchen and spotted Rupert sitting outside the door in the dark and rain, waiting to come in. Now, what to do? I had the choice of alerting Mrs Person so that she could let him in, which would award me brownie points for being a Good Boy - or should I leave him out there in the rain? Ha ha!



I pondered the situation for a few minutes from the other side of the glass where I was warm and dry. Can you guess what I did? Anyone want to make a bet? I went and told her so that she could let him in! Smug or what?

Love, Wilfred x

PS. Rupert WAS rather wet!

FRIENDS OF THE BRANCH

'Friends of the Branch' is available to anyone who cares about cat welfare in our area. Minimum membership is £7.50 a year.

Please make cheques or postal orders payable to:-

'Cats Protection T&W – Friends of the Branch'

and send to :- Friends of the Branch

51 Yarlington Close, Norton Fitzwarren, Taunton TA2 6RR

Please enrol/re-enrol me as a 'Friend of the Branch'

(One year membership)

I enclose a cheque/postal order for £ (£7.50 minimum)

Gift Aid - I confirm that I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year (6th April to 5th April) it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Please tick this box if you want to Gift Aid this donation and any other donations you make in the future

or have made in the past 4 years to Cats Protection, ☐

OR If you are not a UK Tax Payer please tick this box ☐

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

If you would prefer to receive Felines by email, please tick this box ☐

Please do not leave your renewal form and subscription at the Homing & Information Centre at Blackdown Garden Centre. This is not a Branch facility, and has different staff on duty each day, so it could be very easy for paperwork to be mislaid, as volunteers may not understand its significance.

*If you'd prefer not to receive information by post, or wish to change the ways we contact you, please contact Supporter Services by telephoning **0800 160 1012** Monday to Friday during office hours (9am-5pm), or by emailing **preferences@cats.org.uk***

*or write to: **Freepost, Cats Protection, National Cat Centre, Chelwood Gate, Sussex RH17 7TT.***

Please visit www.cats.org.uk/terms-privacy if you have any questions about how we use your data.

**Never let it be said, cats don't help
around the house**



Question:
Add something
warm & heavy
to a pile of
ironing.
What do you
have?

Answer:
Bagpuss
helping with
the
Ironing!

Stan checking out the 'use by dates'
for items in the fridge



Custard: "As it is getting dark
outside I'll draw the curtains."





Custard fascinated by a wildlife programme



Taunton & Wellington Branch

Call 03452 602 397 (standard rate)

Please note our new email address
enquiries@taunton.cats.org.uk

Plus for lost and found please use:

lostandfound@taunton.cats.org.uk

www.taunton.cats.org.uk

Taunton & Wellington Branch offers help in the following areas: TA1, TA2, TA3, TA4, and TA21



We are on Facebook and Twitter!