



# FELINES

Taunton & Wellington Branch Newsletter  
Spring 2021 (No. 133)



Dillie hitches a ride!



Photos—Emma Forman-Cummings

## ***RUNNING ROUTE 66 TO RAISE FUNDS FOR CATS!***



*See inside for the full story and how you can sponsor  
David Forman-Cummings as he runs 2448 miles for cats!*

### ***In this edition:***

- ***News of our homed cats***
- ***Mamma Mia - Call the Midwife***
- ***Signs of pain in your cat***
- ***Virtual fund raising***



**News of recent residents at our homing pens — Holly, Bowie and Tiger**



Three new residents, all with different characters.  
They have all now moved to their perfect homes



***Hello Friends and Readers,  
Welcome to Felines Newsletter — Spring 2021***

What can one say, still in lockdown. Will it never end?

Branch volunteers are continuing to operate within Covid restrictions with the need to keep a distance from others whilst they ensure the cats in our care are well looked after. Indeed the turnover in our pens is awesome. We have been able to find perfect homes for the cats using the CP 'Hands Free Homing' system. Some have medical problems whilst others, whose early experiences of life and humans might be less than ideal, may mean that they have needed a more settled and quiet environment for a while before homing.

As can be imagined, simply to come into foster care means there is upset in a cat's life. Reasons vary— someone having to move into rented accommodation that doesn't allow pets, or perhaps moving on to a residential home and not able to take their cat with them. Overcrowded homes with far too many pets and people, or just abandoned to fend for yourself. All arrive with baggage so to speak. So it is lovely to see initially shy, timid and/or just plain frightened cats come out of their shells, and start to interact with volunteers.

Part of looking after our foster cats is the importance of observing their behaviour and keeping careful records of changes so that a perfect new home can be found. Read some of the stories of our first and subsequent fostered cats in this edition. Thanks to those who adopt our cats and provide the homes they need.

AP

**Thank you to the Mount Veterinary Hospital for all they do to support the work of the Taunton & Wellington Branch of Cats Protection and for sponsoring this edition of Felines**



## TNR IN LOCKDOWN

Trap, Neuter & Return has been a totally different activity in lockdown. We have been unable to carry out our normal TNR activities such as visiting to reconnoitre site, discussing options with landowners, and then making usually several visits to trap specific cats over a period of time. Instead we have been loaning traps to enquirers as a means of continuing to neuter large and small colonies of feral cats, as the only way to make an impact whilst we are not able to visit ourselves.

Our vets – The Mount Veterinary Hospital in Wellington, have been not only handling the many individual requests we get to neuter cats but have also dealt with the two outstanding larger colonies we had on our books as lockdown was imposed again. With seventeen cats treated so far this year, they have done a wonderful job in what are very difficult times.

Thank you too to everyone who has understood the restrictions we are all working under and their willingness to help by understanding how to trap safely and then convey the feral cats to the vets and then collect them next day for return. We have had a number of requests wanting working feral cats, which we cannot at the moment easily assist with, but as soon as we are allowed, we will be back in action seeking to relocate cats where we can to stableyards, smallholdings etc.

We are well aware that the kitten season will soon be upon us in feral colonies – so whatever is achieved now with neutering will hopefully make a difference in the coming months.

In the dark, cold and often wet winter months, it is a little tongue in cheek to say *“Missing trapping”* - outings spent wiggling one’s toes in boots, gloved hands in pockets trying to stay warm is perhaps not everyone’s idea of fun evening out, but it has been missed.!



Hopefully we will be back out there soon.

AP

## VIRTUAL FUNDRAISING!

David Forman-Cummings has combined his love of America with his love of cats and committed to run the equivalent of Route 66, a 2448 mile run! But instead of pounding the asphalt along America's historic decommissioned road from Chicago to Los Angeles, David will run between 10 and 20 miles each day from his home in Taunton and aims to raise money for our Branch.

Although David will be taking in local landmarks when running, his journey will be boosted by updates from The Conqueror app and website. It tells him what iconic US landmarks he would be passing if he were actually travelling the sprawling route which passes through eight states. He will also receive postcards from the places he would be passing and a medal upon completion.



David explains: "I chose the Route 66 Challenge because of the location, my love of America and of course my love of cats. I particularly wanted to raise money for Cats Protection because I know it's been difficult for them over the past year. I've been doing various events and virtual runs to help with funds. I even got Emma to shave my head last year much to the amusement of our neighbours!

"Of the places along my route, I can't wait to get to the 20 per cent mark, as that's the Mark Twain National Forest, so I should get a virtual postcard from there. Then passing the 60 per cent mark will be amazing as it's in Albuquerque and I love Neil Young's song with the same name! I'll also pass the Mojave National Reserve, before finally reaching the finishing line in Santa Monica after running through LA.

Anyone wishing to help David beat his £400 target and support local cats should visit:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/david-forman-cummings>



## Recent Homing Pen Residents



Two lovely boys, **Derek** (tabby) and **Dennis** (black) were soon on their way to a new home - see them settled opposite.

We have five pens in our homing unit, however we often have more than five cats in residence if they arrive as well bonded 'families'. Recognising that cats are truly bonded can often require some careful observation. If they sleep touching, they can be deemed a 'bonded pair'.

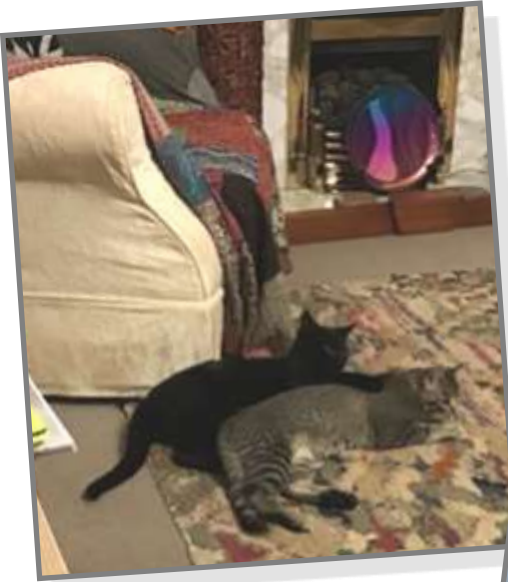
**Bryan** (large grey) and **Nancy** (black).

Bryan was very protective of Nancy and initially only he was happy to interact with pen volunteers, but before being rehomed, Nancy at last became confident enough to come out and say hello when visited.

They have now gone to their forever home together.



...and those that have moved on to new homes



Above left **Derek & Dennis** - how they have grown since moving on. At 5 months they were almost their mother's size.



Whilst above right and below is **Lala**, (*Derek & Dennis' mum*) now called **Winnie**. She too has moved on to her new home - her adopter's refer to her as a 'little pocket rocket'.

Pictured here in one of her restful moments.



## More news about our recent foster cats in their new homes

Another happy homing.



**Shoo**, now known as **Shoo Shoo**, prefers her home comforts and though having access to lots of outdoor space is very much a lap cat.

Happy to remain in situ most of the day.

Luckily her resident staff are great readers so she can be sure of a lap whatever the time of day.

**Loki**, was one of our first residents, and spent Christmas time in 'special care' as he needed medication twice a day.

Close contact allowed a better understanding of his character which enabled the perfect home to be found for him

He now gets all the attention he needs and deserves. and has plenty of outdoor space to hunt. He has settled well and is now practising his hunting skills and will fetch and carry his favourite toys.





## Pen Sponsorship

If you are a regular reader of Felines, and have subscribed to the Friends of the Branch in the past, you will recall that last year we decided to stop annual subscriptions.

We suggested instead that you may wish to make a donation to support the Branch, but that we would not ask for a specific amount but leave it to our readers to decide how much to donate, and how often. It really is up to you.

We also suggested that you may want to think about sponsoring a pen by way of a plaque, and we said we would let you have more information about how to do that. We provide a metal plaque with a silver background, 15cm x 5cm, with wording of your choice. It could be a family sponsorship, as shown here, or a commemoration of a much loved cat, past or present.

If we should fill the space above the pen doors, then we have a large fenced garden around the pen site with plenty of space for many more plaques if needed. So it could become a memorial garden in the future.



We understand that people may like to have some guidelines before they donate, and we can say that a plaque of this size would cost the Branch approximately £15 to produce.

So, if you would like to support the Branch in this way, please get in touch with us by email at [coordinator@taunton.cats.org.uk](mailto:coordinator@taunton.cats.org.uk) or speak to our answering service at 03452 602 397 and mention sponsorship plaques, and one of our volunteers will call you to discuss.

## Where are they now?

### Tilly and Cassie, rehomed

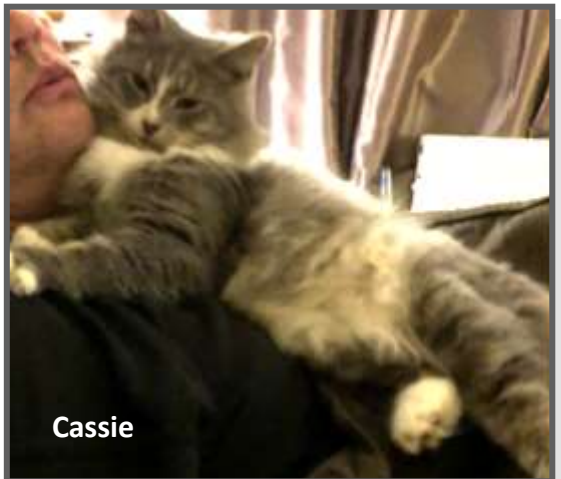


Tilly

**Tilly and Cassie are** well settled in their new forever homes.

**Tilly** was very fond of her food whilst with us, and from reports this hasn't changed since she moved on and she also spends time resting on her new owner.

Both she and **Cassie** are very much 'Daddy's girls' as can be seen.



Cassie

## Maddie, an unclaimed stray



Lovely, sweet **Maddie**, is such a beautiful girl. A stray who came to us, and thus with no background information.

Strays have to be held for two weeks, whilst we attempt to trace possible owners.

Apart from treating for fleas & worms, we have to hold off undertaking any treatments unless the reasons are life threatening.

This also allows time for observations whilst in our homing pens.

Maddie initially didn't seem to have much idea of what a litter tray was for, nor did she appear to know how to play with toys.

However, once she overcame her initial anxiety of being in a pen, she purred and loved attention.

Maddie did show some worrying health signs and we had to make some investigations and some essential blood tests. The results were indicative that she had some significant inflammatory conditions, but over time, with dietary control, these have resolved and test results are back to normal levels. It is thought possible that as a result of her fending for herself before we took her in, she could well have eaten something that caused an upset to her system.

We still don't know her background, and no-one has come forward to claim her. She has now been spayed, undergone her vaccination programme and moved to a new home. It was important to look for a quiet rural home for her where she will be loved and has the space she needs to settle.

## Update on Twix (AKA Roger the Lodger) and Gemma



Remember Roger who was, living under a shed? Renamed **Twix**, his new owners say they can't remember what life was like before he arrived.

*"He's everything to us, we love him. He knows the family is his, and has great fun with the children, loves TV and cuddles and has learnt to play. He is a cuddly sappy boy. The kids love him as do we."*

*He has been keeping an eye on the birds outside"* SF

**Gemma** was adopted from us in 2019 and is a much loved cat.

*"She loves being out in the garden trying to hunt things, but with the colder weather, her preference is to find a sunny spot to snooze in all day., hoping all the meantime to persuade us to feed her extra snacks."*

*I am so glad to have adopted her, she is so sweet".*

AH





## Common signs of pain in your cat

It is sometimes difficult to notice the signs of pain in your cat, as their instinct is to hide any infirmity.

Descended from the wild cats of Africa - to give any sign of injury or illness could advertise to a potential predator you are fair game to be hunted. Therefore cats instinctively seek to hide any signs of pain or suffering.

So it is well worth noting any behaviour that seems out of the ordinary, as this may be an indication that your cat may have a problem that needs attention.

Check out the following:

- becoming less tolerant of people
- becoming more withdrawn or hiding more than usual
- sleeping more than usual, or slowing down
- becoming more reluctant or hesitant in jumping down from furniture or going through the cat flap
- being stiff after resting, or using a particular leg when going up and down stairs
- crouching in a hunched up position with squinty eyes
- reduced eating or drinking
- increased anxiety or fear
- Sleep disturbance

Unfortunately cats, like humans, can suffer all the physical changes associated with ageing - arthritis & stiffening joints, diabetes and sadly cats too can suffer from dementia. With cats living so much longer than in the past, some of these changes are more common.

So speak to your vet about what medication is available to help - no reason for your cat to suffer pain in silence.

## **FRIENDS OF THE BRANCH**

'Friends of the Branch' is available to anyone who cares about cat welfare in our area. Membership is free, but we welcome a donation towards the printing costs of 'Felines'.

You can either donate by cheque or postal order 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' for one year.

**Name:**

**Address:**

**Phone:**

**Email:**

I enclose a cheque/postal order for £.....

OR donate by BACS payment using sort code: 20-42-66

Account number 90478105 - Cats Protection Taunton & Wellington  
mentioning 'Friends of the Branch' as a reference.

**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 ☐

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

*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](http://www.cats.org.uk/terms-privacy) if you have any questions about how we use your data.*

# Wilfie's Blog

As featured on  
the branch Facebook page!



Ta da! It's me again - Wilfred!

*I spent a very tedious day this week watching Mrs P darning her bedsocks.*

*Watching paint dry would probably have been preferable. Frankly, there seemed to be more darning than bedsock, but she explained that she can't possibly throw them away because they were hand knitted in Norway so are therefore lovely. Hmmmm!*



*However, today I've found something exciting to do.*

*I'm helping with the jigsaw. I feel the urge to be naughty; not deliberately of course.*

*But I wonder how many pieces I could "accidentally" sweep onto the floor with my tail?*

*Do you dare me?*

*Love, Wilfred X*

## Paws to Listen

Cats Protection's '**Paws to Listen Service**' is a confidential phoneline where owners can speak to trained volunteers offering emotional support in coping with cat-related grief.

The service also offers a range of practical information, including understanding euthanasia and how to help children deal with the death of a much-loved pet. The service has been expanded to include email support. A volunteer who offers their time to this service, when asked why, said that having suffered themselves from the loss of a pet they recognise how few people really seem to understand how distressing such a loss can be. They therefore feel able to help support others going through a similar experience. and comment:

*"I think our callers are really brave to pick up the phone and start a conversation".*

The service will call back distressed people who have suffered or are anticipating the loss of a much-loved cat. This could involve a natural death, euthanasia, an accident, or indeed the need to rehome a cat, or perhaps almost worse a missing cat - loss comes in many forms.

As well as the support line and information guides, Cats Protection also offers a memory wall on its website, where owners can pay tribute to their pets, and a page where people can offer support to other upset cat owners

To find out more, please visit [www.cats.org.uk/grief](http://www.cats.org.uk/grief) or to speak to a volunteer on the *Paws to Listen* phone line, call 0800 024 94 94. The line is open from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday excluding bank holidays.

*Cat poem:*

*I'm only a cat and I stay in my place*

*Up there on your chair, or your bed or your face,*

*I'm only a cat and I don't think much*

*I'm happy with cream, anchovies and such,*

*I'm only a cat, and we'll get along fine*

*As long as you know, I'm not yours, you're all mine.*



## Call the Midwife! - Quads with 3 birthdays !

**Mia** came in to foster care from a multi-pet household, without any suggestion she might be about to become a mother - however a vet visit soon confirmed what was suspected. She was indeed expecting kittens, three healthy heart-beats were detected on ultrasound scan, with the possibility of perhaps a fourth!

As we had so little information about her background, whether she'd had kittens previously or was to be a first-time mother, she was moved into special care for round the clock supervision and observation .

The prediction of a likely birth was within a few days, perhaps a week at most, stretched to ten days, and then over three calendar days four kittens were born. The first in the late evening of Thursday Feb 4, two more during the early hours of Friday morning, Feb 5. Then perhaps the most surprising of all a fourth, not arriving until Saturday Feb 6 over 28 hours after the third kitten was born!



Four kittens with birthdays over 3 days - a huge task for their foster parents - supposedly recently retired branch coordinators - some retirement!

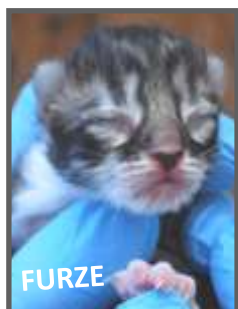
Acting midwife for such an extended period would have been exhausting, then there is the ongoing care of such a new family for both mum and fosterers.

On the next page is more about Mia's new family.

**Mia** *having a well earned rest. Her kittens safely tucked in beside her with her tail curled in round them.*

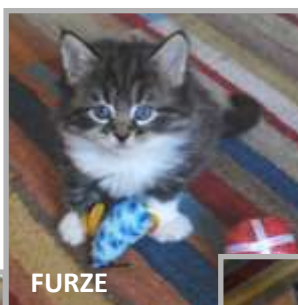
## Caring for mother and kittens

Mia's kittens are now five weeks old in these photos, and we know that we have three boys and a girl. They have all been named after places on Dartmoor, - Fingle, Furze, Puggle and Ingra. All of them, and their mum Mia, have homes to go to when they have been through their neutering and vaccination programmes.



*Three days old*

Fingle, like other members of his family, is polydactyl with an extra toe on each foot. The kittens' fosterer was so convinced that Furze was a girl because he was so pretty that she stopped checking! Puggle is the only short haired kitten and he follows mum around like a little shadow and runs to her to have his face washed. Ingra has the most extraordinary colouring. She was definitely black and white at birth, but her coat is now three colours — dark grey at the roots, silver grey in the middle and brown in the top layer. It will be interesting to see which colour she eventually turns out to be!



*Five weeks old*



**Meet James—  
our youngest  
volunteer!**



**James with Tiger**

*Hi my name is James and I go to the Cats Protection.  
I volunteer to socialize with the cats. I go with my  
mum. The cats go to new homes and need to get used  
to people including children.*

*I do things like  
Play with them  
Feed them  
Love them*

*I also learn about what is needed to look after a cat.*

*From James C Age 8 years*

### **Frankie (a.k.a. Mr Fluffbum)**

*March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 – the first day of lockdown, and for us a day of great sadness, as we had to say goodbye to our darling Daisy May. We were now a house without a cat, a very empty place. Rehoming was then in limbo, and no strays walked into our garden. Then, in August, came news from the Branch of a cat in need of help.*

*His owner of eight years had died, and a most unhappy year had followed. Of course, we took him.*

*And what a change for us – from a 2Kg nineteen year old to a big lad of 6Kg, with very long cappuccino coloured fur, crystal blue eyes, and a very forceful personality.*

*Although much of his day is taken up with “resting”, his playtime is very active, and he can dribble a ball faster than any footballer.*

*He has taken over completely, and once more we are a home full of the joy only a beloved cat can bring.*

G&PO

*Thank you Cats Protection. G&P*



### **Taunton & Wellington Branch**

Call **03452 602 397** (standard rate)

Email—[enquiries@taunton.cats.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@taunton.cats.org.uk)

For lost and found—[lostandfound@taunton.cats.org.uk](mailto:lostandfound@taunton.cats.org.uk)

Website [www.taunton.cats.org.uk](http://www.taunton.cats.org.uk)

Taunton & Wellington Branch covers in the postcode areas:

TA1, TA2, TA3, TA4, and TA21



Facebook— [www.facebook.com/cpTauntonandWellington](https://www.facebook.com/cpTauntonandWellington)