



Stranraer & District Branch

SPRING 2014

Dear Member,

We're now well into spring; snowdrops have been, daffodils are out and bluebells on their way. With the spring newsletter comes the usual membership renewal. Renewal forms will be inside for anyone wishing to continue to support our branch.

This will be the second edition of our newsletter that Sonja Brodie has edited. Sonja made the mistake of telling me she was a copy-editor when I delivered two cats to her for adoption. Never look a gift horse in the mouth! This brings me on to thank Don Cook for all the years of editing our branch newsletter and to welcome Sonja into the new role.

– Sally Adam

COFFEE MORNING

We are holding an open garden/coffee morning at Merton Stable on Saturday, 31 May, from 11am to 3pm. Tea, coffee and cakes will be served throughout and soup after noon. There will be a cake stall, bric a brac, tombola, crafts and, of course, the plant stall. Any donations are welcome. Drop-off points are Galloway Pet Foods in Newton Stewart and Sophie Warren, Montpelier Accounts, 46a Hanover Street, Stranraer.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Subscriptions remain £5 a year. Please make cheques payable to *Cats Protection Stranraer and District* and post them to: Don Cook, Ferry Croft, Creetown, Newton Stewart DG8 7JS.

Branch tel **0845 371 2759**

Website **www.stranraer.cats.org.uk**

Email **cpwigtownshire@btinternet.com**

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Cats Protection. Charity number: 203644.

Happy homing so far this year

Over the last year, cats have been in our care for an average of three months before finding their new homes. This is good going for our branch, where cats needing homes are greater in number than homes on offer. Eight months or more in care has been normal in the past.

You may recall Susie from previous newsletters. She's been advertised every which way – all to no avail. She's a black cat and black cats are not a popular choice. Fluffy ginger, tabbies or naughty torties seem far more desirable. After three years of fostering her, we have now adopted Susie ourselves.

So when my last two foster cats came into care I was concerned that they may stick with us for some time. Sparkle was a very small black cat with three legs. My first thought was: 'Oh no, not a black cat.' It took me all of 10 minutes to absolutely fall in love with this special little cat. She had the right name. This happy little character shone like the Star of Africa, but how



would I convince the public of her charms?

Four days after Sparkle, Kizzy came along; a beautiful black-smoke Maine Coon with pedigree certificates. Within a short while it was clear that this cat was very traumatised, with massive stress issues. As beautiful as she was, it was going to take a special and patient person to adopt Kizzy.

To my absolute amazement and delight both cats were out of their pens and into their new and special homes within the month. Sparkle was in care for 24 days and Kizzy for 29 days. If only it was always like that. The following pieces are their wonderful new owners writing about adopting these two cats.
– Sally

Sparkle lights up new home

The addition of a new member to the family is not something to be done on a whim. Our previous cat, Iggy, lived with us for five years and when she passed away at the grand old age of 21, it took us a long time to feel ready to give a home to another cat. However, as the sign outside our door says, 'a home without a cat is just a house' and we have since been popular cat sitters to our friends, offering luxury feline holiday accommodation while their owners were away.

Our Edinburgh friends Jim and Sonja recently moved to the Stranraer area and adopted the gorgeous siblings Poppy and Domino from the local Cats Protection branch. They kept in touch with Cats Protection and when Sparkle's story popped up, Sonja forwarded it to me. Sparkle immediately melted my heart, but it was my husband Martin that needed to be won over. Even though it had been two years since Iggy's death, he did not want to 'rush' into getting another cat. However,



Little three-legged Sparkle

after reading Sparkle's story, he simply said 'Let's go for it!'

Sparkle was the cat for us. There are plenty of cats in need of homes and, of course, there are cat rescue centres closer to where we live, but you can't help when a particular story strikes a chord. At only 10 months old, Sparkle has not had an easy start to life. After an accident at her first home, she had to have one of her front legs amputated, but she has not let this hardship dampen her spirit. She really is a special little soul, filled with joy, playfulness and affection. She cannot help but bring a smile to your face.

After a 3½ hour drive to visit Sparkle, an overnight stay with our friends and then the 3½ hour journey back to Edinburgh, Sparkle had a new home. It was a bumpy, winding journey to Edinburgh, but little Sparkle just curled up in my arms and slept the whole way home.

Once home, she set about exploring her new abode. Within a couple of hours, she was happily leaping about, playing with her toys and keen to learn all about her new environment. Our friend Jim had said, 'With her missing front leg at least she won't scratch your furniture.' Naturally within five minutes of arriving she was scratching the back of the couch!

Clearly, her disability does not restrict her too much. She still manages to reach high vantage



Sparkle on Martin's lap

points and leap about with the utmost of energy.

We have fallen in love with Sparkle, and our flat has become a happier place since Sparkle's arrival. It is true that a home without a cat is just a house! – *Karen Watts*

National Cat Awards seek nominations

Every year, Cats Protection seeks to reward special cats at the National Cat Awards. You can nominate any UK cat until 30 May in one of five categories: hero cat, most

caring cat, most incredible story, outstanding rescue cat and Purina Better Together. For more info, visit www.cats.org.uk/national-cat-awards

Kizzy regains her nerve

Introducing Kizzy to her new home involved more than we had both anticipated. For a start we had to create a bonding room and make it cat-friendly: Remove the plant on the window as it may be poisonous to our new addition, give her high platforms from which to assess her new situation and have short but frequent visits to introduce myself and my partner.

Getting information and advice from Sally was a great shortcut in our learning and preparation curve. The Cats Protection online learning module on understanding feline origins (learnonline.cats.org.uk/content/lufo) gave us an insight to the natural nature and behaviour of our new addition in a very interesting way. Little details about separation of food and toilet areas may seem trivial, but it made for a smooth transition. Kizzy became more confident, curious and all things cat in a very short time.

Keeping Kizzy in the room allows her to hear all the noises



Beautiful Maine Coon Kizzy

from the other rooms in the house and a good window gives her a view of her new outdoor territory. This has given her a calmness that reinforces that what we are doing is going well. We put up a baby gate and opened the bonding room door to let her view our two dogs who are cat-friendly. After five days of hearing the dogs from behind the bedroom door she walked straight up to them individually and nosed each one on their nose to a point of confidence where she now struts past.

She has stopped the odd hiss and growl and has become more trusting and affectionate, giving a little meow when you

speak to her and lots of purring. She now accepts being picked up and sometimes even drapes herself around my partner's neck.

Kizzy also loves playing. Out of all the toys she came with, her favourite is a pheasant feather that she pounces on and charges at as if it were alive.

We feel it will be about a month before we should let her venture outside during the day as she has always been a house cat. We are three-quarters of a mile from the main road and down a farm track surrounded by rolling hills and the sea. We can only describe it as cat's paradise and feel that once Kizzy goes outside she will have so much fun hunting and playing.



All in all, we feel privileged to have seen Kizzy on the Cats Protection website and for Sally to have come all the way to do a home visit and let us adopt her. We can't thank her enough. We look forward to enjoying the rest of our beautiful feline friend's life in our home and garden.

– *Sonja Blake*

New ideas on cat behaviour

Some of our volunteers recently attended a Cat Behaviour Module in Dumfries. It's a bit like gardening, the more you learn, the more you realise you don't know. It was well worth it and a great introduction to Cats Protection for our new volunteers.



Sophie, Sonja, Christine and Alan

Another course, Understanding Feline Origins, is available at learnonline.cats.org.uk/content/ufo. More are to follow shortly.



Quiz night raises £400 for branch

We held a pub quiz with the help of the Bruce Hotel on 28 February. Callum, who manages the Bruce, had offered to set up a quiz night for us; all we needed to do was provide the raffle and competition prizes.

Callum persuaded some of his quizzers from the weekly quiz to attend and through facebook and advertising we had 74 people at the event.

The quiz itself was very entertaining and the teams' name choices even more so. Callum put on a great night for us. Everyone had a good time and helped raise £400 in the process – the easiest money I have raised for this branch so far.

I would like to thank Callum and his staff at the Bruce Hotel for the hard work and enthusiasm they put into the evening and all the local businesses who generously donated raffle prizes, in particular Bladnoch Distillery, who donated a bottle of their single malt whiskey – that really helped to sell the raffle tickets. The Co-operative, the Cinema, Boots, Galloway Pet Foods, Avocet, Home Hardware and several others are also very much thanked for their donations.

We are in the process of organising a quiz/curry night at the Bruce Hotel in October. Ticket price will be £5 a head.

– Sally

Cute Button needs a home



Are black cats really lucky? Most rehoming charities would disagree. Black cats are always the last to get chosen and spend the longest time in care. We hope someone out there will change Button's fortunes and offer him the permanent and loving home he deserves. He came in at the same time as Kizzy and Sparkle but unfortunately has been overlooked by potential adopters so far.



Button is a young and boisterous cat. He is 10 months old, so still very much in his kittenhood. He loves to play and is very friendly. He has been used to living in a family situation and would make a great pet. We are looking for a home with a large secure garden away from busy roads where he can release his energy.

New facebook address

Our facebook page has moved. Search for 'Cats Protection Stranraer' or go to www.facebook.com/pages/Cats-Protection-Stranraer/226991624156292?ref=ts to find the new page.

Once again can I please ask you to like this page and help it to continue with its success.

All placings are subject to a home visit.

Please send any stories or photos to: cpwigtownshire@btinternet.com

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