



North Walsham and District Cats Protection

Branch Newsletter – Summer 2013



Even more delayed than the previous one, the summer edition of the North Walsham and District Cats Protection Branch Newsletter is finally here, on the verge of autumn. I'd like to apologise to all our supporters for this delay; it is down to my workload this year that has much increased now I'm not only a full time high school teacher, but also a GCSE examiner.

Fundraising Update March – September 2013

After the not-so-brilliant start to the fundraising year, with our first collection having to be cancelled due to snow, there has been some improvement, but 2013 has hardly proven to be our most successful fundraising year ever. Most of our collections and sales have been down comparing with the previous years. It is most likely due to the fact that more and more charities are asking for more money and the economy really can't cope with the demand. It also seems that other charities picked up on our fundraising ideas, to the point where there was another plant sale in North Walsham on the same day as ours! The one event that proved to be more successful than last year was our annual Hog Roast; we'd like to take this opportunity to thank all our supporters who were prepared to battle the elements to attend the event.

Since the last newsletter was published, we raised the following to date:

- Car Boot in East Runton, 27th April (Rachel and Ant) - £95.10
- Car Boot in Beeston Regis, 5th May (Rachel and Ant) - £81.10
- Garage Sale at Gressenhall, 6th May (Val and Barbara) - £135.55
- Plant Sale, St. Benet's Hall, North Walsham, 18th May - £593.64
- Table Top Sale, Dilham, 15th June - £90.80
- Hog Roast, Dilham, 24th June - £1527.50
- Street Collection at Hoveton, 29th June - £162.10
- Car Boot in Beeston Regis (Rachel and Ant), 30th June - £101.70
- Plant Sale at High Hedges, received on 2nd July from the sales by Roger over the Summer months – £125.80
- Car Boot at Dereham Cats Protection (Val and Barbara), 6th July - £51.50
- Car Boot in Beeston Regis (Rachel and Ant), 21st July - £83.50
- Sheringham Street Collection, 10th August - £167.88
- North Walsham Street Collection, 15th August, £126.71
- Sale at Dereham Cats Protection (Val and Barbara), 17th August - £158.20
- Money raised by staff at Westover Veterinary Centre at North Walsham Fun Day and Worstead Festival, 22nd August - £182.62
- North Elmham Sale (Val and Barbara), 26th August - £126.55
- Sales of goods by Sharon and Roger at High Hedges, received on 9th September - £83.65
- Donation received from Petrofac and Enui from their Charitable Safety Awards, 10th September - £1236
- Holt Street Collection, 21st September - £135.75



Hog Roast, Dilham, 24th June

As always, we would like to thank anyone whose generosity and hard work made the above fundraising successful. We would especially like to thank Rachel, our new Fundraising Officer, who has worked very hard to organise many of these events.

The fundraising year is drawing to a close now. Unfortunately we were unable to hold an Open Morning in Dilham this year, but we will have our usual Christmas sales, in St Benet's Hall on Saturday 16th November and in Dilham Village Hall on Saturday 7th December.

Re-homing Update

In 2013 so far, we have 225 cats coming into care and we have re-homed 157, compared with 133 this time last year. Some of our long-term residents have left us: Clarissa, formerly known as Ginger Biscuit, whom I mentioned as being booked in the last newsletter, is now settled in her new home; Golly, who joined us as a kitten with his mum and brothers and sister, has also gone to a new home, even though his leaving us was tinged with sadness, as the family who adopted him had previously given a home to his brother Farley, who sadly went missing. Many of the cats re-homed were 2013 kittens you can read about in the next section.

Kitten Season 2013

Just like everything this year, it was late starting, but eventually it became as busy as any other kitten season. Even though we neuter a significant number of cats every year, the story seems to be repeating itself every time, especially when it comes to very young cats becoming mothers for the first time. What many people don't realise is how early a female cat can get pregnant: in extreme cases, they can be as young as four months, but typically it is six months. When the mothers are this young, they very often struggle when it comes to giving birth to their kittens. Last year we had one young mother who gave birth to seven kittens, none of whom survived, as they were too small.

We have had some very young mothers coming into care this year, the smallest being Bijou, who joined us with five of her kittens in August. As you will see in the pictures below, once the kittens started growing, it was difficult to tell the difference between the mother and the kittens, as they were all the same size. Now Bijou has been neutered and her kittens have all been booked, we can see that she is still growing, which again indicates how young she was when she became a mother.

Another problem which also happens every year is when people let their cats breed and then the situation gets out of control. This year, we took two cats and ten kittens into care just from one household where the owners couldn't cope anymore because of the number of cats and kittens they ended up with. Unfortunately, we can't help every cat owner in this situation. At the height of kitten season, we had 68 cats in care, 40 of whom were kittens. At this sort of number, we are stretched to the limit and sometimes we have to turn people down and advise them to get in touch with other animal charities. It is slightly easier if the people who found the kittens can feed them until a pen becomes available, but obviously not everyone is in a position to do so.

There have been some really good things about this year's kitten season, though. In one case, the person who found a litter of kittens was prepared to bottle-feed them until we could take them into care, as the mother couldn't be found. Also, even though most of the kittens were black or black and white (as it happens every year), a significant number of people have been prepared to give them a loving home, with only the minority of people enquiring after ginger ones or tabbies.

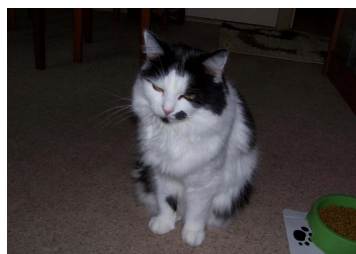


Success Stories

Fergie

Fergie used to live with one of our fosterers in Briston before she was adopted by her new family just over a year ago. She was 10 years old at the time, so we were overjoyed when she was chosen after just six months in care, as cats of her age are always so much more difficult to re-home. Fortunately, Fergie's new family were looking for an older cat who was happy to stay indoors most of the time and who would travel in her basket to go on holiday with them in their caravan, as their previous cat used to do.

Fergie is 11 years old now; she is still a bit shy and has her favourite hiding places, the best being the bottom of the wardrobe on a pile of jumpers. However, she is also very happy to sit and look out of the window at home and in the caravan watching the world go by. Other holidaymakers take a double look when they notice her. On a warm day she will venture into the garden for a breath of fresh air. All in all, it's been a happy outcome for all - Fergie is happy in her new home and she loves to send her ex fosterer a postcard from her travels.



Roger

When Roger came back into our care, we didn't think he would be with us for much longer, as he was extremely unwell. His owner, who was quite elderly, decided to return him because, as a result of his condition, he used to get under her feet all the time; on one occasion she fell over because of it and she was worried it would happen again. The problem with Roger was that he kept going round in circles with his head tilted to one side and he would shake violently at times. At first, his condition seemed to be deteriorating rapidly and all the tests, carried out to establish what the problem was, proved inconclusive. However, once he was prescribed a treatment, Roger started recovering and soon after that he found a loving home with one of the veterinary nurses at the Bridge Veterinary Practice in Wroxham, where he had been treated. Renamed as Jerry, Roger is enjoying his life as the only indoor pet of the family. He is much better now, except for the head tilt, which proved to be a result of a spinal injury he had sustained. He is very active, runs around a lot, but he is also a real lap cat who enjoys a cuddle. As his family are planning to move to a new house with a large garden, life is likely to get even better for Jerry, with the great outdoors waiting to be explored.



Waiting to become a success story

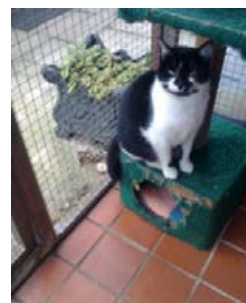
Bentley

Bentley joined us as a kitten with his mother Bella and three siblings three years ago. Both mum and kittens were extremely shy and it took a long time to find them new homes. Now Bentley is the only one remaining and he is very lonely; he keeps making friends with other cats in care (like Golly, mentioned above), but they invariably get chosen and he is left on his own yet again. Currently he is enjoying the company of Bijou and her remaining three kittens, but the kittens are about to leave us and it will just be Bentley and Bijou waiting for a new home. As Bentley loves other cats, we would love for him and Bijou to go to a new home together.



Fidget

When she first joined us, Fidget became a bit overweight, as she seemed to have been comfort eating. Once she was put on a diet, however, her weight went back to normal, but she developed a little bit of an attitude, even though she is a real lap cat and her attitude only results from having to live in a pen for such a long time. She is a very inquisitive cat who always wants to see what is going on around her. An ideal home for Fidget would be one with no other cats, where she would get the undivided love and attention she is craving so much.



Hester

When Hester joined us, we were told she was male, so we originally named her Hugo. She had been a stray, fed by a lady who unfortunately died and her neighbour contacted us, which is how Hester came into our care. To start with, Hester was a very shy cat who would hide underneath the blankets all the time. With time, however, she has learnt to trust us and proved to be a very loving cat who demands attention every time she knows one of the volunteers is around. Hester is overweight, as she tends to gobble up all her food, which is a problem frequently occurring in stray cats who don't know where their next meal is coming from. However, once she receives the love and attention in her new home, we are sure it will be easy to get Hester's weight under control.



Matilda

Matilda has been with us for two years now and has replaced Clarissa as the feature cat on our website. She is a friendly little cat, but gets excited when stroked and can grab your hand with her teeth or claws; however, it doesn't hurt and she never draws blood. Most likely, like Fidget, she does it out of frustration of living in a pen for a long time. As she was originally found as a stray in fields near Coltishall, she would love to go to a house with a large garden where she would be free to roam. She doesn't like dogs or other cats, so ideally she would like to be the only pet. We think that, once offered a home, she could turn into a real lap cat.



Cats we will always remember

Rory

When Rory and Lucy came into care four years ago, we were absolutely horrified by the condition they were in. In spite of both of them being Persian cats, their coats had never been combed or brushed by their owners and were so badly knotted that we had to have them shaved off. Their coats weren't the only sign of neglect they were living in – their claws were so long that they were in-growing into the pads of their feet. Before Rory and Lucy came into care, we had had another cat from the same household, who also was very poorly and required surgery. Ironically, the cats' owners brought them to Stephanie in a classic car that was absolutely immaculate – if only they had applied the same level of care to their cats!

Very quickly, Rory became our favourite. As his beautiful ginger coat grew back, so did his confidence. He soon started demanding attention, calling for it loudly every time he knew one of us was around. I have never seen a cat that was so dog-like – in the way Rory enjoyed his fuss and his walks – yes, he used to go for a walk on a lead and he couldn't wait to get into his harness, as he knew it meant he would get some freedom and a break from his life in a pen. Lucy was much quieter a cat, who always lived in Rory's shade. It took us a long time to realise that she was deaf, which is quite a common occurrence in white cats; she followed Rory everywhere and learnt to survive that way, which is why we didn't notice her condition at first.

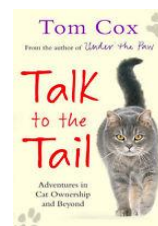
After a few months with us, both Rory and Lucy left us for new homes. Initially, their new owners sent us pictures and updates telling us how they were doing; we know that Lucy was re-named Lola, as her new owner had a niece called Lucy. However, after that, we lost touch with her owner, but we sincerely hope Lucy is still well.

Unfortunately though, Rory has succumbed to a kidney condition that is common in Persian cats. Although we will miss him, we will always be grateful to Christine who decided to give him a home and make the last three years of his life extremely happy ones.



Cat book corner

If you remember reading the second newsletter over a year ago, you may recall me reviewing a book called *Under the Paw* by Tom Cox. The book has a sequel called *Talk to the Tail*, which I was so desperate to read that I even got it in hardback. However, the book proved to be a little bit of a disappointment. The cat stories were just as entertaining as in *Under the Paw* and so was the chapter devoted to Tom Cox's father, but other parts of the book dragged on a bit – especially the chapter about horses and horse riding. However, if you enjoy Tom Cox's writing style, the book is still worth reading, just for the humour and the brilliant cat stories. I am very much a fan and in fact I have already pre-ordered the next cat book by Tom Cox, which is to be published next month – *The Good, The Bad and The Furry; Life with the Most Melancholy Cat and Other Whiskery Friends*. If you are as hooked on as I am on Tom Cox's writing, you'll read it before the next newsletter is out. Otherwise, await the review in the winter edition.



Get in touch

If you have got any cat or fundraising news you think should be included in the next newsletter (planned for winter 2013), get in touch. You can email me on justyna90125@wp.pl or let Stephanie or Christine know and I will contact you.