



The Cat's Whiskers



Stewartry & District Branch
Winter Newsletter 2013

Welcome to our latest newsletter for the winter period. After a great summer spell of weather we are back to wet and windy days. The good weather was great for our fundraising activities but it was rather hot for the cats in our care. The cats and kittens we look after are not allowed to go outside while they are with us so we need to be careful keeping doors and windows shut. The cats in our cat pens love lying in the sun but even they feel the heat and need to find shade during the hottest part of the day. It is now late October as I write this and we are still taking in kittens that have been abandoned or are otherwise unwanted. We always hope that towards the end of the year, the number of kittens will decline but every year we seem to get a late influx.

FUNDRAISING

Since our last newsletter we have had several fundraising events. In July we went back to Thornhill for the annual Gala day. It was a lovely sunny day but very windy and when we set up our stall we didn't realise we were right outside the back door of the pub! We got plenty of chat but not one offer of a free drink! We had a busy day, and the tombola was very popular as usual. We made £335 in total.

In early August we had our summer coffee morning in Dalbeattie and had a very busy morning. We sold lots of home baking and jams and the bric a brac stall and tombola were very popular as always. Coffee mornings are always well attended in Dalbeattie and a lot of the folk who come are not necessarily there because it's a Cats Protection event – they just like to come up the street and meet friends for a chat over a cup of tea. We don't mind who turns up – they are all welcome and we made a total of £697.

In October we had our regular 3 day charity shop sale in McKenzies wee shop in Dalbeattie. The shop takes a fair bit of organising and we spend weeks collecting, sorting and pricing goods. It's all worth while when we get it set up and ready for opening on the first morning. It's such a small shop but we pack lots of things in and have lots of unopened boxes under the tables, ready for restocking the shelves. A lot of people come in every day on the look out for something new that's been put out. We made a fantastic amount in the 3 days - £667.

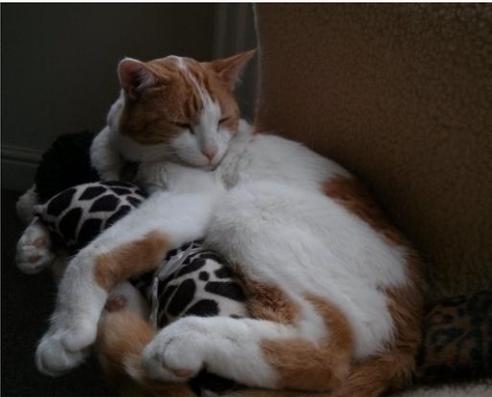


HOME SWEET (NEW) HOME

Since our last newsletter, several of our long stay cats have found loving new homes.



GEM, a beautiful black cat who had been with us for about 8 months, finally found a new home with a lovely family. He was such a relaxed, laid back cat, we couldn't understand why no-one was interested in him. His new owners saw his picture on our website and had decided they would prefer an adult cat rather than a kitten so they went to see him and fell in love straight away. He soon settled into his new home and is enjoying games and cuddles with the family.



home where he is being pampered and spoilt rotten.

SANDY, a gorgeous ginger and white male, came into our care as a stray in poor condition and had to have a lot of his fur shaved off as it was so dirty and matted. However his health soon improved and he became a very handsome boy. He was a very friendly cat and loved nothing better than to curl up on his fosterer's knee or bask in the sun in his radiator bed. His picture on our website was seen by a family from out of our area and they were so keen to adopt him that we asked the Cats Protection branch in their area if they would be willing to do a home visit for us. They were happy to do this, all was fine and a few days later, Sandy was off to his new



by Mickey. A few weeks ago, we received an email from a couple who were very interested in adopting Mickey. It seemed an ideal home for him, out in the country with people who had adopted many rescue animals over the years. They weren't put off by his potential future health problems and were so keen to see him, they picked him up a few hours after we did the home visit. He is settling in well, getting used to the resident dog and looking forward to exploring outside.

MICKEY is our real success story this year. We told you about him in our last newsletter as he had been in our care for over a year and because of various health problems no-one was interested in giving him a home. He had had long term problems with ear mites and also developed diabetes though this went into remission. Despite his troubles, he was always ready for human interaction and had his daily routine of being brushed, having his meals and his treats. Any visitors weren't allowed to leave without being inspected and approved

How to survive TNR!

(By our Co-ordinator & Chief Trapper)



One of the aims of Cats Protection is to neuter as many cats as possible, to prevent unwanted kittens and because cats are much healthier and more settled once they have been done. TNR stands for Trap-Neuter-Return – feral and farm cats, and a lot of strays, are too wild to socialise and rehome, but if the kittens are young enough we can take them in and find them new homes. Adults are usually blood-tested to make sure they do not have FIV or FeLV, and we dread positive results as the kittens also would usually have to be put to sleep. Much of this work is done on farms, steadings and out in the country, so when we go out we have to be prepared. Equipment required includes humane cat traps, restrainers (crush cages), carriers and lots of tuna (the smell is stronger than cat food!) If possible, we ask people not to feed the cats the morning we arrive, so that they are hungry and more likely to go in the trap. It is also worth taking waterproofs and wellies, bottles of water, cleaning wipes, a book and some snacks – it can take a long time! Sometimes you feel the cats are teasing you when they sniff around the trap and just won't go in!

The traps can be set automatically for adult cats, but kittens are not heavy enough to release the door when stood on the plate, so sometimes it must be done manually – one way is to tie some string (I use washing line) around the inside of a cardboard tube eg the inside of a kitchen roll, prop up the door, move away and hide holding the line, which you then pull to release the door when a kitten (or hopefully more) goes in the trap.

There have been some mishaps along the way – I once let a kitten out of a trap when distracted – it's amazing what a small space they can get out of! Luckily, the kitten was caught by farmworkers later. I have also had to remove dead rabbits and mice brought to kittens by a mum cat who was far too good a hunter! I've had to trap near compost heaps in the company of pet sheep, in donkey stables, and two of our volunteers once had a great afternoon removing piles of wood to get to some kittens – always best to wear your oldest clothes!

TNR is very time-consuming, can be uncomfortable and a bit boring, but the reward of knowing you have prevented a kitten explosion and given kittens a chance of a loving home makes it all worth while.

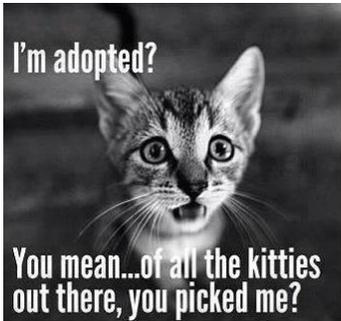
CHRISTMAS CAT FOOD COLLECTIONS

Every year in early December, we have cat food collection bins in several local supermarkets. When you are out shopping, please consider buying an extra item of cat food for the cats in our care. We know they will also appreciate an extra treat for their Christmas dinners. We hope to have the food bins in the usual places, the Co-op, Tesco and Wilkinsons in Castle Douglas. Thank you from our hungry moggies.

EVENTS 2013-2014

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| 16 November | Coffee Morning Dalbeattie Town Hall 10 -12 noon |
| 7 December | Coffee Morning in Gatehouse Parish Church 10 – 12 |
| 22 March | Coffee Morning Dalbeattie Town Hall 10 – 12 noon |
| March/April | 3 day Charity Shop in Dalbeattie |

THESE CATS ARE LOOKING FOR A NEW HOME (sorry No.1 is taken!)



Ty – 2 year old male

Bicci – 6mth old female



WE WISH ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS & SUPPORTERS BEST WISHES FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON AND FOR 2014. WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL FOR YOUR HELP WITH OUR CAT WORK.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

These will soon be due for 2014, please send a cheque for £7 to: Stewartry & District Cats Protection, PO Box 7470, Castle Douglas DG7 1YE or you can pay online at our website www.stewartry.cats.org.uk by clicking on the DONATE icon.

We rely on donations to continue our work for the cats in our area and your support is greatly appreciated. To keep costs down we will not send a receipt unless requested. If you are not sure if you have paid for the current year, please ring us to check.

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