



# FELINES

Taunton & Wellington Branch Newsletter  
Winter 2018 (No. 124)



Sky

## In this Issue:

- A Christmas Trapping Tale
- Soldier—home from the hills
- More news of adopted cats and kittens
- Wilfie becomes a published author



# *Christmas time at the Branch Shop*



Lots of present sized gifts large and small.

If not for family, and friends.

Why not treat yourself?

**Shop:**

**19 South Street  
Wellington  
TA21 8NR**

**Opening hours**

**Monday  
- Saturday  
9.30am—4.30pm**



*Hello Friends and Readers,*

*Welcome to the Winter 2018 edition of the Felines Newsletter!*

*Though just how can we be rushing towards Christmas already, when one has hardly had time to register it was 2018 is a mystery.*

*If you haven't visited the Cats Protection Shop in South Street in Wellington recently, do drop in. They have some fun stocking sized presents as well as an interesting range of items sorted by price.*

*You can also buy your calendars for 2019, in two sizes with lovely pictures of cats, as well as desk and handbag sized diaries for the coming year.*

*Wile's book was launched at the shop at the end of October - so another reason to visit to get your copy - it is a collection of Wile's blog contributions tracing his progress from a nearly endangered newborn through his challenging teenage years to the present day - a great read with a lot of laughs. (See details page 19)*

*A recent visit to the shop to get my copy, resulted in an impulse buy of a sign 'No Ouit is complete without Cat Hairs' - how could you resist that?*

*In an effort to reduce the cat hairs on clothing at home, I've made reversible cushions for the dining room chairs—but have come to the conclusion it would be easier to train the cats to turn them over when they sit on them, than explain the system to the other human in the household.*

*So, what are a few (or many) cat hairs?  
A small price to pay for their company in your life.*

## ***News of recent and not so recent adop. ons***



**Monty** (who was one of the musical ki ens - Crochet) has se. led in quickly and he and our daughter are geng on really well. He's become one of the family incredibly quickly.

Here he is in the stair basket — one of his favourite places.

He was a superstar at the vets recently for his vaccina on - what a super place Mount Vets is! S, H and MT

***Yes—they are sponsors of this issue of Felines***



**Charlie & Teddy** - have grown so much and are doing really well.

*Teddy loves to eat but isn't so keen on the great outdoors, whilst Charlie loves it. He has introduced himself to our neighbours, who love him too.*

*Teddy loves my husband, she lies outside his office when he is working and stays as close to him as she can be.*

*Charlie's Mum loves 'our' Charlie, and will sleep on his clothes when he isn't in his bed—they are the best of friends.*

*Not sure I can remember life without them.*

*JS*



## 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  
19 South Street, Wellington TA21 8NR

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** - To qualify for Gift Aid, what you pay in income tax or capital gains tax must equal at least the amount that all charities you donate to will reclaim in the tax year (6th April to 5th April). Please tick the box to enable us to treat all your donations in the last 4 years, and all your future donations, until further notice,

as Gift Aid  OR If you are not a UK Tax Payer please tick this box

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

  

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 and 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.

By all means leave your form at our shop at: 19 South Street, Wellington.

*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), emailing **preferences@cats.org.uk** or writing to us at*

**Freepost Cats Protection , National Cat Centre, RH17 7TT**

## Happy ending for Sky



As featured on the front page, Sky had a difficult start.

Though loved by her original adoptive family, one of their resident cats made her life very unhappy.

So sensibly it was decided she needed a fresh start.

Happily a new family came forward.

*“She copes with Max our dog, (Sky is in charge) and made friends with my sister’s dog when they visited. My daughters love to have her in our home.*

*Sky is now having a great time, growing more confident every day whilst she explores her new home”.*

MH

## Remember Possum ?

### The mother cat who gave birth to three ginger ki. ens in a tree.

Now called Bindi, and adopted by the nder who called us in, she has sel ed very well in her new home.

When she rst came, she was frightened of toys and didn't know how to play. Ha ng balls with bells, so ping pong balls were substu ted along with a li le foam ball, which she goes mad for. She now has loads of 'toys' to ll h er day with.

She now hunts and chases everything she can as a normal cat would do, if taught from being a ki en.

She is the most loved, adorable, spoiled and perfect addi on to the family.

*"Thank you to everyone at Cats Protec on for looking a er her and her ki ens unl it was m e for them to be re-homed".*

*LB*



## Away in a Manger - A Christmas Trapping Tale

With Christmas only just around the corner, spending an evening in a stable seemed all too appropriate to get one in the mood for the festivities to come.

A return visit to a farm with the most unbelievably clean yard to trap some more cats that had wandered in from the woods above, saw members of the trapping team, ensconced in a lovely warm stable.

We had previously trapped and returned cats to this site, but the woods above obviously have a large colony of feral cats in need of attention. It was only when they visited the farm for food, that we were asked to return again to continue the neutering programme.

The farm is home to a number of horses in whose barn and stables we take up residence - an empty stall at one end, storage for bedding, is the perfect place to take up watch. With a radio playing soft classical music at one end of the barn, the shuffling, shuffling sounds and smells of horses moving about in their stalls, trapping team members sit on bales of bedding waiting, some evenings to no avail, for the cats we are seeking, to visit.

It is all slightly surreal - quiet but not soundless, pitch dark all around, but inside the illuminated barn, we are warm and dry in our stable.

The three wise men haven't, as yet, come to visit, but instead the owner offers us tea - perfect on a cold night. We wish all such outings to trap were so pleasant.

*We are always looking for homes for feral cats on smallholdings, farms, stables, nurseries etc. Here is the environmentally friendly solution to rodent control - no dangerous chemicals, but efficient hunters who just get on with the work.*

*Our ferals will have been neutered, blood tested for FIV/FeLV and flea/worm treated. All they require in return is some shelter and a regular food supply, and they will keep the rodent population down.*

## **A heart warming homecoming for Soldier**

At the beginning of June 2018, we received a call from a lady in Taunton who said that a cat had been visiting her garden for a couple of months, looking sorry for himself, thin and bedraggled. She took pity on him and started to feed him; he was friendly and she felt he had been owned at some point in his life.

As in many other cases, this bedraggled moggie had wriggled his way into her heart and was now residing in the utility room where he had a comfy bed, a cat flap and was coming and going as he pleased.

The lady rang CP to report him as a 'Found' cat and wondered if we had any information on a cat meeting his description. One of our lost and found team visited and scanned the cat, a long haired black and white male; no microchip was found. He had been well cared for, had been wormed and flea treated and there was definitely mutual affection between him and his finder.

As is usual, a paper collar was placed on him, he would come and go and the collar remained around his neck and he rarely left her garden. He was posted on our branch website and Facebook page and still no one came forward.

The lady continued to care for him and when our volunteer returned she found that he had now been given a name 'Soldier', it appeared that now he and his saviour did not want to be separated and this could become his forever home.

There was just one more task to undertake. Soldier required a little operation, (a man thing) and it was arranged that he should be taken to Mount Vets for this, late in June.

Soldier arrived at the vets but unfortunately when the car door was opened the latch on the basket had released and he escaped and ran across the busy main road into the fields opposite the practice. Soldier's new owner was very distressed, and for days afterwards she and volunteers walked the fields, put up posters, put out food, to try to find him.

As time went by, there was one positive sighting and he was almost apprehended but wriggled free.

Months had passed, and Soldier's owner was still hoping for positive news. His bed and food bowls remained in place for his return.

Then - on 26th October, Soldier walked back into the house and got into his bed, thinner but most definitely Soldier!



He had found his way back to the lady that took him in and gave him shelter, warmth, food and love, and he had obviously remembered. Soldier must have travelled eight miles to get home, crossing busy main roads, rivers, railway lines and faced many more obstacles to get back to where he felt safe.

His owner is over the moon, she never gave up hope. Soldier is getting lots of treats, good food — his favourite treat is being allowed to lick out a yogurt pot!

A heart warming and amazing story of devotion and determination. Soldier had returned to the human who took him in and loved him.

**SM**

Wishing Soldier all the happiness he deserves  
in his forever home.

P.S. Soldier has now been back to the vets and undergone his 'operation' and is none the worse for it!

# Neutering Update

October saw the third of the 2018 neutering campaigns run by the Branch and the most successful yet.

Figures for October: 235 cats neutered.

Which when added to the campaigns earlier this year:

January - 81 and May – 73

Gives us a grand total of 389 for the year.

Well done to Evie, the volunteer running the campaign, - something of an administrative nightmare, issuing vouchers and recording successful outcomes.

The cost is not insubstantial, somewhere between £16,000 - £17,000. On top of which we also offer free microchipping to those taking up a voucher, which adds a further cost to the Branch. As with Soldier's story in this edition — a lot of heart ache can be avoided if your cat goes walkabout, or is lost, if it has been microchipped as soon as old enough. Most importantly, please remember to keep the database record up to date should you move house!

Hopefully, together with the regular trapping sessions where we trap & neuter mostly feral cats in our area, the neutering of them and domestic cats, will take some of the pressure from the need for emergency admissions of abandoned kittens, in the coming year. We wait to see what 2019 brings.



2 feral cats  
investigating  
one of our  
traps.

## Some news of recently adopted kittens



*Beautiful Acer (left) was recently homed.*

No longer waiting:

**Minim** (left) and

**Quaver** (right) two of the three (musical kittens) who were hand reared, have gone to their forever home together.



## ***Purrfect Landlords***

A campaign to help tenants and landlords to welcome cats into a home.

Cats Protection has a new website:

**[www.cats.org.uk/purrfectlandlords](http://www.cats.org.uk/purrfectlandlords)**

To help more people living in rented housing to own a pet cat. Too often a move means having to give up your pet.

Free advice to help tenants speak to their landlords.

## **International Companion Animal Welfare Conference (ICAWC 2018)**

Branch members Ann & David attended with CP staff the twentieth ICAWC conference, held this year in Krakow.

This is the leading conference of its kind - bringing together experts from around the world to discuss companion animal welfare and providing a platform for networking where hundreds of delegates can exchange knowledge, gain support and be inspired.

Though run by Dogs Trust, many of the presentations were easily transferable to working with cats. Topics included using social media to aid fundraising and covered such emotional issues as animals caught up in conflict.

A presentation by Sarah Heath, a vet who specialises in Behavioural Medicine, on the welfare impact of housing cats in a shelter environment, was of special interest as sometimes the Branch has cats and even kittens in our foster pens for months before they find their forever home.

Some of the most inspiring and heart warming presentations came from the most challenging areas of the world, whether geographically or politically. We heard how teams from the Bali Animal Welfare Association rushed to the area when Bali's Mount Agung erupted in late 2017. Tens of thousands of people were evacuated and many had to leave their animals behind. The teams set up emergency shelters in safe areas, and staff rotated through evacuated villages, providing food and fresh water every day and treating those in need of veterinary attention. In Kabul, Afghanistan, the Mayhew Animal Home organised a mass rabies vaccination programme, with the help of the authorities—and the first ever dog population survey.

Often all one hears about is the negative aspects of animal welfare, so reports of the importance of 'community' involvement and efforts around the world is refreshing.

As for Krakow - We never saw it! - The conference was so full and interesting we never got to see the city or the countryside around—another maybe.

**A&D**



## A Happy Ending for Jovi

Jovi was taken into our fosters pens in the summer, as a result of multiple litters.

She is now doing really well in her new home. Enjoying a wood burner and an Aga.

Boss of the dogs.

A while later we took in four of Jovi's kittens for homing.

The only female, Coco, is a tortoiseshell. She, Dylan, black and white (very similar to his mother in colouring) and Dennis and Sam all have new homes.



Sam



Coco



Dennis



Dylan

## **Cat cuddling or cat socialization for Cats Protection**

**Cat cuddling or cat socialization** is an important role in Cats Protection. Those of us doing this will have seen the positive impact we have in terms of changing a fearful and stressed cat into a relaxed purr machine. We all use positive reinforcement or reward based training with our own felines and in fact in everyday life.

Our cats learn to link the sound of a certain cupboard opening or the sound of a bin opening with a feed and come running. They learn that looking at us and meowing often gets some sort of reward from the human! We can utilise some of the basics of positive reinforcement to help our cats adapt to life with humans and make life, especially in the foster environment, more enriching and less stressful.

Rewarding a behaviour with something that the animal has decided is rewarding (generally food, but could be lap time, a catnip toy etc) alters brain chemistry and promotes feel good chemical messengers which in turn help reduce stress behaviours and harmful (if long term) stress hormones. With our foster cats, we are now using part of the daily allowance of the cats own dietary kibble as treats. This has the added benefit of making their feeding times less predictable and more frequent over the course of the day, thus more natural and in itself enriching. As well as ensuring each cat has its specific dietary needs and not any extra calories!!

### **So a few of the ways you can use the kibble:**

With a nervous cat who does not want to approach, sit, without making direct eye contact, and if the cat starts to look a little more relaxed or moves a little closer then throw down a few kibble to reward that more positive behaviour. Don't move towards the cat or try to hand feed!!

With younger cats and kittens who need exercise and entertainment, try hiding small amounts of kibble, or use puzzle feeders which are all good ways of utilising the hunting/seeking behaviours which themselves lead to the release of more feel good hormones and chemical messengers in the feline brain.

Cats who are only tolerant of small amounts of human touch initially should be rewarded with a bit of kibble for tolerating (with relaxed body language) a short, gentle stroke of head. Often such felines find body, back and tail strokes more displeasing at first and only gradually build confidence once they realise we understand and that actually gentle human touch can be rewarding!

Always of course watch the body language and remove yourself before the cat decides he or she has to defend themselves. Also always ensure a nervous cat is able to move away if he/she feels the need.



### **Crate/carrier training**

This too can use the above techniques and is valuable to change the cat's perception so that he/she starts to find it a comfortable, stress free place to be.

Also hopefully therefore ensuring that humans will be safer when trying to get their cat to vets etc! It has to be done in very small steps, ensuring the cat does not become worried or fearful.

You can help with this by using 4-5 pieces of kibble and feeding one piece just outside the carrier. Then place a piece inside. Then another couple of bits further inside. Don't attempt to shut the door at the moment as again ideally this will need to be done in small stages (known as shaping), in order to keep fear levels low. Reward with a head stroke and some lap time.

All such training needs to be kept very brief and just one short session is quite enough for most cats.

Hope these posts are useful, enjoy your cat cuddling.

JE

# Wilfie's Blog

As featured on  
the branch Facebook page!



Wahay! How exciting.

Mrs Person has got her sewing machine out of the cupboard. I like it when that happens as it means there will be lots of things for me to help with. Although I did hear her say that for "help", read "interfere." She appears to be making



curtains and is currently sewing the linings. They look really boring - just plain

cream - and they obviously need a bit of embellishment. She has already found me nesting inside the folds so there are obligatory cat hairs on them, but I think they need a few more pawmarks. I'm just off into the garden to scoop up a bit more mud.



Love, Wilfred x



## **Lolly - 1 year on**

*We celebrated Lolly's first birthday recently (we knew it must be coming up) with cards, gifts and cake!*

*She loved the box more than the gifts, in true kitty style!*

**JB**



## **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](http://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!



**[www.facebook.com/cpTauntonandWellington](http://www.facebook.com/cpTauntonandWellington)**



**[www.twitter.com/CPTaunton](http://www.twitter.com/CPTaunton)**