



# *The Scratching Post*

*The Newsletter of the Peebles and Biggar Branch of Cats Protection*

*Catline 0707 4357228*

*Autumn Issue 2015*



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

## How to join

Contact any of the committee members who will be happy to send you an application form.

Alternatively, you can download the application form from our website.

## How to donate

We are always grateful for donations of:

- Cat Food (can be left at Vet surgeries, Tesco in Peebles and Co-op in Biggar).
- Items that can be used for tombola prizes, such as unwanted gifts, chocolates, bottles of wine etc.
- Home-baking, jams, pickles etc for coffee morning stalls.

It's called 'recycling the Cat way'.

A huge thank you as always for the tremendous support you give us.

## How to contribute

If you would like to contribute to The Scratching Post, please contact the committee by email as listed opposite, or write to the Branch Coordinator, details also opposite. Photographs and tales of cats we have homed with you are especially welcome.

Please be aware that content may be edited at the discretion of the Editor.

## Committee Members

If you would like to speak to a member of the Committee, please call the Catline number - 0707 4357228, send an email to: [catspeebles@gmail.com](mailto:catspeebles@gmail.com)

Or visit our website [www.cats.org.uk/peebles](http://www.cats.org.uk/peebles)

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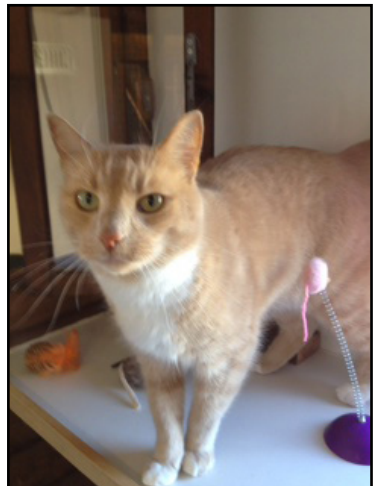
## COMMITTEE NEWS

Our newsletter has been a long time coming, but we are back at last. We have been coping for some time with a 'man down' so to speak due to family issues. As we are such a small branch, it was not easy operating with an arm missing! However, we have come through the difficulties and are back to full strength. In fact we have a new co-opted member in Stephanie Smith, the vet nurse at Two Rivers. Stephanie will not only be contributing articles to the newsletter; she has also taken over the role as Membership Secretary from Cath. This will be a huge load off Cath's shoulders while she is busy with other roles within the committee. Welcome Steph!

We hope to be starting some long-awaited fundraising again soon. Watch our website for any details

We have been busy with the building of Sharon's new pens thanks to a generous legacy from a lovely local lady as you will see further on, plus the refurbishment of Carol and Jean's pens. Sharon had a Mum and kittens in the new fancy abode in the late summer. The kittens have now all gone to new homes. Jean and Carol are both filled up with residents as we speak.

Talking of which, here is Benson who is with Jean at the moment. This beautiful peach coloured 8 year old boy is looking for his forever home. Due to a change in circumstances Benson has come in to our care and would like to be with a loving family again. He has grown up with a dog so that would not be a problem in his new home. He likes to be brushed but will gently let you know when he has had enough. He is an outdoor boy so must have access to a garden. If you think you can give Benson the new start he deserves please contact our branch by emailing us on [catspeebles@gmail.com](mailto:catspeebles@gmail.com)



**\*\* Regrettably Benson cannot be homed in the Peebles area \*\***

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# A Highland Spring in his step!

Just a note to say that we still have Aslan, who we adopted from you in May/June 2003, and he is in good health. He stays with my daughter and grandchildren. They have recently adopted a beautiful grey cat called Beau from our local CP branch. Sadly Tigger, who we adopted from you in September/October 2003, died last September. I now have a rescue Greyhound who, amazingly, gets on with both of the cats.

Anne McIver Elgin April 2015

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## Birthday Wishes for Clio

I've just left a message on your ansafone to say that a cat we adopted from you twenty years ago next week celebrates her twentieth birthday.

We were on our way back from the British Grand Prix at Silverstone in 1995 and as we were travelling near Moffat we saw a small object in the road. A few seconds either way and the object – which turned out to be a cat – would have been killed.

It was a pretty black and white kitten, feral and with badly runny eyes. We brought it to you and you said you would try to nurse it. We said that if it could be saved we would be happy to adopt her. You subsequently came to inspect our house in Leith and having passed with flying colours Clio became a member of the family. Sadly, one of her eyes couldn't be saved, but the other is most beautiful.

Over those twenty years she has had brothers and sisters, moved down to London, lost her hearing and is often to be found staring into space. However, she enjoys her food, company, sitting in the sun and is always ready with a purr.



We had to let you know that this is a story with a happy ending. When she does go we will miss her terribly, but at the same time realise that, with your help, we were able to give her twenty years she would never have had if she had remained on that bit of road.

Very best regards Chris Balfe

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# Reducing Stress for Cats and their Cat Carriers

At times, you will need to take your cat to either the vet or a cattery – and things can get heated as soon as you begin dusting the cobwebs off their cat carrier. The following tips are aimed at making your cat's relationship with their carrier as positive as possible, to reduce stress during travelling. Your goal is to teach your cat to associate their carrier with positive experiences, and to enter of their own free will; sceptical? Try this out for yourself:

- Place the carrier in a room where your cat spends a lot of time (not in a corner)
- Place familiar, unwashed (so your/their scent remains present) bedding inside the carrier
- Leave the door off for easy access/exit
- Place your cats favourite toys/treats inside the carrier
- Remain patient and calm; never force your cat to go inside

At first you might notice that treats are removed from the carrier during the night. It may take weeks, even months before your cat starts to trust the carrier. Remain calm, patient and reward desired behaviours. If you still have trouble, you may need to use Feliway spray inside the carrier (always wait 15 minutes before allowing your cat inside to allow the alcohol in the spray to dissipate), or invest in a different carrier design. The best carriers are



hard-sided carriers that open from the top and the front, and which the top and bottom can be easily separated. An easily removable top allows a cat which is fearful, anxious or in pain to stay in the bottom half of the carrier during veterinary examinations. Avoid carriers that require a cat to be pulled out of the carrier. Some cats like to see outside, whereas others prefer to be “hidden” (I can't see you, so you can't see me!) by placing a towel over the carrier. Always secure your cat carrier in your car by using a seatbelt.



By Two Rivers Vet Nurse Stephanie Smith  
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## Mary McKimmie Memorial Pen

Thanks to a lovely local lady's generosity, we were able to build this fantastic state-of-the-art cat pen at Eshiels for our kitten fosterer Sharon. The late Mary McKimmie left our branch a legacy in her Will. Mrs McKimmie was a long-time supporter of Cats Protection, and in particular Peebles and Biggar branch. She liked the way we worked in our support of local cats and how we looked after their welfare.



Her generosity means, that not only were we able to build this beautiful cat pen, but were able to refurbish two other large pens and are planning another major overhaul.



The new pen has everything that is required for a pregnant female cat to give birth in warmth and comfort. The kittens are in a safe, healthy environment as the pen is completely hygienic and easy to clean. There is a separate wash area for the fosterer with a window that looks in to the secure area where the cats and kittens reside. They can be monitored without disturbing them at times when the Mother cat is feeding the kittens for example.

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## Mary McKimmie Memorial Pen



The pen is fully insulated, has secure lockable doors, double glazed windows, heating, lighting, wipe clean good quality floors and walls, beds and toys and climbing frames to keep them active and entertained. Mother cat even has a high level bed so she can escape from the youngsters for a well-earned rest for a while.

There is a separate area where Sharon can sit with the kittens and handle them and play with them so that they are socialised

with humans. This is an important part of their rearing so they are able to interact with people when they are ready to be re-homed. Sharon had her first residents in the summer when Keira arrived and gave birth to her four gorgeous kittens. They have now gone to their new homes.

Thanks go to Kenny Mason Joinery and his team for interpreting Sharon and Lloyd's dream pen and building it to such high specifications.



Our biggest thanks go to the late Mary McKimmie and her family.

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# FREE NEUTERING CAMPAIGNS

Cats Protection Peebles & Biggar Branch, in collaboration with Two Rivers vet practice, carried out a successful FREE NEUTERING CAMPAIGN during the month of July 2015. We used Two Rivers in Peebles and Biggar exclusively.

**We are pleased to announce that we will continue with our free campaign during November. Watch our website for news.**

Neutering is a safe, painless way of controlling the cat population. It is much better for your cat's health too. An un-neutered cat is more likely to contract diseases during the long breeding season. It also helps reduce your household costs as caring for a mother and kittens is very expensive. Although some owners try and recoup this cost by selling kittens, there are already thousands and thousands of unwanted cats and kittens out there, we don't need more! Many owners also find that kittens are harder to sell than they first thought.

**If you live in the Scottish Borders, in the areas around South Edinburgh, Peebles and Biggar, taking in post codes EH26, 43, 44, 45, 46 and ML12, and you would like to have your kitten or cat neutered for FREE (all inclusive) during these months only, please contact us by email at [catspeebles@gmail.com](mailto:catspeebles@gmail.com) or contact us via our website at [www.cats.org.uk/peebles](http://www.cats.org.uk/peebles)**

The neutering offer is free, but if you would like to give a small donation, it would be much appreciated.

Thank you!

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# Thank you!



*From all of us in  
Peebles and Biggar branch*

**Thank you to all our current members for their unwavering support and kind donations. A special thank you goes to our long-term donors, namely those who 'Sponsor a cat pen', Pauline Robinson (Martin) and K and J McLaughlin; also W H Booth and others for Gift Aid donations. Not forgetting the support of our fantastic Vet practices and all those volunteers, family and friends, who bake, make and help with our fundraising. We couldn't do it without you.**

**It means a lot to us that you support us through thick and thin. Your generous donations help us to provide a safe haven for the cats and kittens that come into our care until they find a nice new home.**

***Thank you.***

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# Remembering Tommy



When I wrote my little story in the Spring of 2013 news about our Tommy dealing with kidney failure, he was still going strong and pretty hale and hearty for an old boy. As the summer progressed his health was not so good, he lost a bit of weight through being faddy about his food, but he was still enjoying being out and about, and still doing the odd bit of hunting. He was really pleased with himself if he caught a mouse. Everyone

in the area must have heard his loud yodels! He enjoyed being in the garden with us during the lovely summer weather, even though he ambled along a bit more slowly than usual. In fact, Tommy was always so laid back, even when he was a young whipper-snapper, he usually dawdled. We were taking him on regular visits to Two Rivers to be checked out and given treatment if he needed it, which he invariably did.

August 2013 arrived and it got hotter. In the middle of the month, Tommy's health started to deteriorate very quickly. Within a week, he suddenly became very jaundiced, stopped eating and became like a wee bag of bones. We knew he had come to the end of the line and started to say our goodbyes to our lovely boy. It was just as well we did, as when the day came for the vet to do the final treatment for Tommy at home, in our garden; much to our distress, he passed so suddenly that we had no time to pick him up in our arms for a final cuddle before he left us. Maybe it was supposed to be. Tommy was so loving and liked nothing better than sitting on your lap, or walking round the garden with us, but he hated being picked up, and wriggled like an eel to be put down. It took us a long time to get over losing our gorgeous boy.

We now had no cats left, and the house felt so empty without him. This last stage of life is so sad, but we would not change a thing about sharing our lives with our boys and girls. They have all given us so many years of much love and affection, and a lot of happiness, love, laughs and amusement along the way. It was a real privilege to have their friendship.

Our house was empty of puss-cats for a year until a certain little lady decided to adopt us, but that's another tale.

Cath & Stuart Mitchell

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## Dusty's Ideal Home



Here is the other tale! Readers may remember Daisy from my cat stories during my stint as Newsletter Editor. Daisy was our neighbour's cat who decided she had enough of the other cats, plus too many dogs. She left home and adopted us whether we liked it or not. Daisy remained with us for several years until she

passed away four years ago. Well, it's happened again! Dusty, who is a lovely, good-natured Peaches and Cream Tortie and White girl from next door (same neighbours), has moved out.

Dusty grew bolder after our Bramble and Tommy died within a year of each other; Tommy in August 2013, and we became a no pet home. (They used to chase her regularly.) She started to wander round our garden at her leisure. For several months, she flitted between us, our neighbour down the road, and the couple who are renovating the church into a home. Everyone was feeding her, which has turned her into a bit of a plump girl. We thought she was about to adopt the couple with the church, but no, she eventually made up her mind and chose us. We had decided after Tommy died, that we weren't ready for another cat(s) just yet. 'No choice in the matter, you're stuck with me' says Dusty. So, in mid 2014, we went on a visit to the vet for a health check, update on vaccinations, worming, flea treatment and micro-chipping. She behaved impeccably even though she had not been near a vet for years. Clever girl!

She is now a permanent fixture, and throws herself at us at every opportunity, purring like she's fit to burst; doing pirouettes on her hind legs. We think she might just be the biggest sook in Peebles. We have a large garden to play in. Plenty of trees to condition claws on; places to hide and lots of sitooteries for her to sun herself on; good food and loads of TLC. We may be enjoying the company of a lovely feline friend once more, but Dusty's found her ideal home.

Stuart & Cath Mitchell

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# CATS PROTECTION PEEBLES & BIGGAR

## 2016 CALENDAR



We're back at last! After a few years missing, our new Cats Protection Peebles & Biggar 2016 calendar will be on sale soon, cost will be £6, plus postage if required. You can find copies in your local vet surgeries or from any Committee member. If you would like a copy of our calendar, please email us at [catspeebles@gmail.com](mailto:catspeebles@gmail.com). We will be happy to arrange collection or post it to you on receipt of your payment.

We could not choose an overall winner, as they are all good, so all entrants whose cat appears in the calendar will receive a free calendar each.

You can give cats some TLC by buying one of our calendars. The proceeds go to help cats in need in your local area. Your continued support is always amazing, so a big THANK YOU!

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## An Ageing Cat



He blinks upon the hearth-rug,  
and yawns in deep content,  
accepting all the comforts  
that Providence has sent.

Louder he purrs, and louder,  
in one glad hymn of praise  
for all the night's adventures,  
for quiet, restful days.

Life will go on for ever,  
with all that cat can wish:  
warmth and the glad procession  
of fish and milk and fish.

Only the thought disturbs him  
he's noticed once or twice,  
the times are somehow breeding  
a nimbler race of mice.

Alexander Gray

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We like this little poem we found about a departed feline friend.

*Look not where I was, for I am not there,  
My Spirit is free, I am everywhere.  
In the air that you breathe, In the sounds that you hear,  
Please don't cry for me now, my Spirit is near.  
I'll be the one running, new friends by my side.  
Smile at my memory, remember in your heart,  
this isn't the end, it's a brand new start.  
I'll watch for you from the other side*



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