



The Cat's Whiskers

Stewartry & District Branch
Summer Newsletter 2015

Welcome to our second newsletter of the year, and we continue to be really busy with our work of finding new homes for cats and kittens, trapping and neutering and giving advice to the public.

Unfortunately, cats also seem to be going missing on a regular basis, and we keep a record of all that are reported to us. Advice on what to do if your cat doesn't come home can be found on our website www.stewartry.cats.org.uk, but do let us know as well. Facebook is also a good place to advertise your missing cat – there are also pages dedicated to reuniting pets with their owners eg SW Cat missing lost finder and Missing pets in SW Scotland.

Most importantly, please get your cat microchipped – you may not think you will ever lose your cat, but it can happen, and it is so easy to reunite you if your cat has a chip! See the article further on in this newsletter.

Purdie's story continued...

In our last newsletter we told you the story of Purdie and her kitten Darra, who were found out in the country. We initially thought Purdie was a feral cat but, once in a pen, she turned out to be a really friendly girl. She was moved to an indoor foster home, and continued to be affectionate, playful and a lovely companion.

Unfortunately, after a while we noticed that she was pulling the fur out on her back legs. Was there a medical reason for this? Was she stressed at being indoors? Several visits to the vet suggested it might be a food allergy or hormonal, and she was treated for both. We also moved her back to a pen, so she could get fresh air in the outside area. The fur started to grow back, then she began pulling it out again. We were really worried about her, though her behaviour continued to be otherwise normal.

Then along came a family who really wanted Purdie to live with them, and they didn't mind that she had this problem. They lived way out in the country, and Purdie had come from a rural area, fell in love with her straightaway, and took her home. We assured them we would pay any ongoing veterinary costs, but hoped when she started going outside the fur-pulling would stop.



She settled down very quickly, and was soon playing and sleeping on the daughter's bed, and being very affectionate with them all. She is now going out and loves being in the garden with them – she has also presented them with her first mouse! We are all so delighted that Purdie is now happy and enjoying her new home.

Brave Banksie



One Saturday morning a few weeks ago, I received a call from a member of the public. She was a bit upset & emotional. The previous evening her sons had been out playing in a barn at the nearby farm. Whilst playing in the hay bales the boys had discovered a nest with 4 kittens. Unfortunately, three of the kittens were already dead but the fourth one was alive! The boys ran to get their Mum. They searched inside & outside the barn but there was no sign of mum cat anywhere. She must have been gone sometime for the kittens to have died.

There was no choice but to take the kitten home & see what happened. Although she had hand-reared baby lambs before, she had never tried to do the same with a kitten! She applied the same principles - she tried to feed the kitten by dripping

cow's milk into his mouth. (We wouldn't recommend this as cow's milk can cause tummy upsets but it was all the lady had that night).

Next she wrapped him in an old sheepskin to keep him warm and he was very cold & listless. She put him back in the shed for the night in case mum did return, and set her alarm for 4am as she wanted to check on him before her boys awoke. Fearing the worst, she set off to check on him. Much to her surprise and relief he was sitting up in the hay meowing very loudly "more like a proper kitten"!

She tried to feed him again but he was having none of it! After a family discussion they decided, much as they wanted to keep him, he had survived the night and deserved the best chance he could at life, so they decided to contact Cats Protection. I spoke at length to her and explained it would be a constant demanding job initially with night feeds and toileting as he was so small. Also we didn't know what had caused the other kittens to die or what had happened to the Mum. He wasn't out of the woods yet and he might not survive. She agreed he needed care from someone with experience.

We arranged for the lady to take the kitten to the vet for a health check and one of our fosterers collected him from there. He was approximately 3-4 weeks old, and was white with grey/black splotches on his body and a grey tabby tail! He was given a clean bill of health.

Once at home with the fosterer his true character came to light! He is a noisy devil - constantly meowing for attention. When you talk to him or pick him up he starts to purr and roll over to have his tummy rubbed. He crawls to the top of his pen and watches everything going on around him. The biggest challenge has been getting him to eat, but he is now starting to eat on his own with some encouragement from his fosterer!

We called him Banksie because, like his human namesake, he likes to leave his mark! We feel it is his spirit and determination which helped him to survive.



National Microchipping Month

June was national microchipping month. We are always trying to encourage people to get their cats microchipped, as it really does help if your pet goes missing. Here is a story of how having a cat microchipped helped with getting him reunited quickly with his owner.

We recently received a call from a woman in Dalbeattie - her cat had been missing for a couple of days. This was unlike him as he didn't usually venture far from home and she was worried about him. We took his details - he was a 3 years old neutered male tabby cat - and gave her the usual advice about checking in neighbours' garages & sheds, notifying vets, putting up posters, putting pics on lost & found websites and on Facebook etc. I asked her to let me know if he came home.

Three weeks later I had a call from the Central Dumfries Branch of Cats Protection. A man who lived in a village outside Dumfries had been looking after a stray cat for about a week. He was very friendly and they would have kept him, but were worried he might have an owner. It had been suggested that they take the cat to a vet for a health check and to see if he was microchipped and indeed he was! The vet contacted his owner and he was happily reunited the same day! There were tears of happiness and relief!

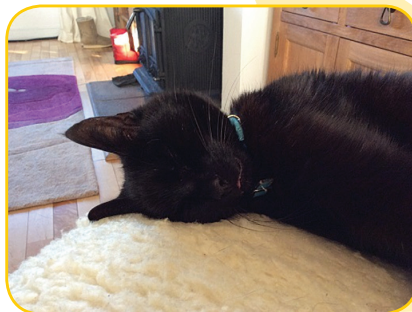
It turns out the cat had got into the back of a tradesman's van - he lived near the cat but was working on house renovations in the village near Dumfries. The story might have had a different ending if he hadn't been microchipped, so please consider this if your cat is not yet chipped. It doesn't cost a lot, but could save a lot of anxiety for both you and your cat.

Adopted cats

We love to hear about the cats and kittens that have been adopted from us, here are some photos of our recent successes.



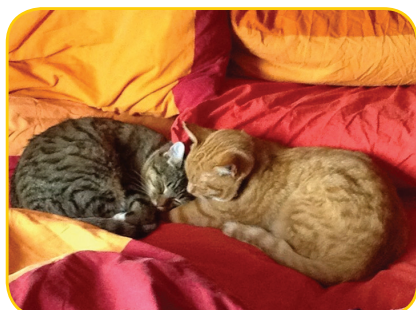
Tazi & Ember



Fergus (adopted as a kitten - now 21!)



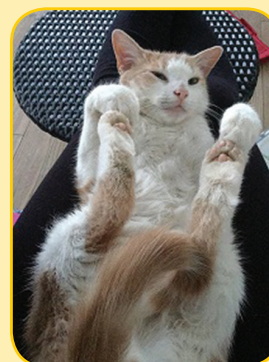
Melon



Rosie & Rory



Jenson



Toby

Kirkcudbright Children's Festival

We recently had a stall at the Children's Festival in Kirkcudbright. Unfortunately the weather was not kind to begin with - have you ever tried putting up a gazebo in heavy rain?! However, the sun came out late morning and families with children had a great time wandering round. There was also a produce market in the Harbour Square, but our home baking still disappeared quickly, and we made over £250 for the branch.

Felix tokens



The scheme for exchanging Felix tokens for money will soon be suspended by Purina, so we shall not be taking any more of them. Many thanks to all those who diligently cut out the tokens and sent them to us over the past years - it is much appreciated.

Events



25 July - Coffee Morning
Dalbeattie Town Hall, 10-12 noon

21 Nov - Coffee Morning
Dalbeattie Town Hall, 10-12 noon

Volunteers

Would you like to help us with our work? There are many things you could do, from helping out occasionally at fund-raising events, to fostering cats or kittens – it all depends on how much time you have to give. We are urgently looking for another fosterer of adult cats, either in a pen situated next to a house, or indoors if you have no cats of your own. Fostering is a real commitment, but very rewarding when a cat goes to a loving new home. Or could you be an emergency fosterer for when someone goes on holiday etc?

More details are on our website www.stewartry.cats.org.uk.

Subscriptions



These are now due for 2015, **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. **Tel: 01557 339233**

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