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[www.c-l-a-w-s.org.uk](http://www.c-l-a-w-s.org.uk)



C.L.A.W.S Newsletter No 77 June 2022

Facebook: @ClawsMaidenhead



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Helpline 01189 341699

## NEWS FROM HQ

It has been another challenging three months (when is life at CLAWS anything else ?)

Another enclosure was scheduled to be built during the winter of 2020 / 2021 but the pandemic put paid to that. Due to the shortage of building materials (the price of which had sky rocketed by as much as 25%) it was not until January 2022 that construction began. We have taken in three cats recently and unexpectedly All three had been left homeless. On a brighter note the raffle was a great success as was our attendance at the Cox Green Village Fair. The Most Characterful Cat Competition has been great fun – the winners are announced on Page 2 and the winner published on Page 2



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Matt, Mark and Pelo set to and soon the structure took shape. It is a very large enclosure, so a major undertaking and progress was not helped by the storms and torrential rain. It was completed at the end of May but was left for another week or so to allow the grass to dry out and the cat cabins to be erected.

The first five residents (Ben , Bou, Franky, Georgie and Rosie) are enjoying the fresh air and freedom their new home gives them.



BEN



BOU



FRANKY



GEORGIE



ROSIE

**Thank you to Matt, Mark and Pelo for all their hard work and to all our supporters whose donations have helped make the erection of this enclosure possible.**

## CHARACTERFUL CAT COMPETITION

### WINNERS



**DIDO**

**BRUCE**

**LEMONIA and SMOKEY THE LION Joint Third**

### DIDO THE MOST CHARACTERFUL CAT COMPETITION WINNING ENTRY

In 1960, a friends' cat had a litter of kittens (6 as I remember) and we decided to home one of them. The smallest was a beautiful dark tabby female with some white markings. They all looked fantastic but the choice was easy. After two months of impatient (on my part) waiting, she could finally come home to us. What about a name? The family consensus was for Dido (although having just seen the film I favoured 'Spartacus' – a rather odd name choice for a female cat and fortunately I was persuaded).

Dido settled in quickly and was a lovely, gentle, playful, popular and affectionate family member.

She was mostly indoors but had access to the outside. Her access to the back garden was via the kitchen fanlight window. This was left open permanently, even when we went on our annual summer holidays. At first we put her into a cattery for two weeks when we went away, but on our return we were informed that Dido hadn't eaten anything during her stay. Our tiny cat had got smaller and was clearly overjoyed when we picked her up. The cattery would never be repeated. During subsequent holidays our neighbour came in to feed Dido and the fanlight was left open permanently. Simpler times, can you imagine nowadays deliberately leaving a window open whilst you went on a two week holiday.

Although small, Dido was a ferocious hunter. Many times we would open the back door to find a neat (headless) row of mice carefully arranged as a gift. I think that she was quite surprised that we didn't seem quite as pleased with the gift as she was, but unoffended she continued to do this for her whole life (20 years). Out in the garden, Dido had a friend. He (or she?) was a rather large (slightly tatty – possibly a stray) black cat. We called him Bruce. The other local cats gave him a wide berth but Dido was often in his company in the garden playing together or stretched out on the lawn.

### **DIDO THE MOST CHARACTERFUL CAT COMPETITION WINNING ENTRY (Continued)**

At night she slept in my bedroom. Every night she would follow me up to bed, I would lift up the top blanket and she would disappear to the end of the bed where she would stay asleep all night. She would emerge in the morning when my dad got up to get ready for work. I would be awoken around six in the morning with a gentle tapping on the bedroom door. She wanted it opened. I could hear her run downstairs to greet my dad in the kitchen. There she would leap from the floor onto his shoulder and then wrap herself around his neck waiting for breakfast. Incidentally, this was a time (in the early 1960's) before packaged cat food was available (only the dreaded Kit-E-Kat) and so Dido basically ate what we had (particularly enjoying a boiled potato with gravy). We wouldn't feed our cats in this way today but I would note that for her whole life she was always healthy and her only visit to a vet was her final one in 1980.

Every day when I came home from school (and later work), there she was waiting for me on the corner at the end of the road. Rain or shine she was always there (sometimes sheltering under the hedge), totally unphased by the particularly noisy dog that lived in the corner house. Sometimes she would walk alongside me and sometimes demand to be carried back home.

It's 1980. What's wrong with Dido? With no previous signs of a problem, she's come back indoors from the garden and collapsed in front of the fire. Not very responsive (but still purring bravely) she was taken to the local vet. Sadly I didn't see her again. She was 20 years old and the vet thought that there had been some kind of kidney failure. She had to be put to sleep.

The whole family was devastated for our girl after 20 years of fun, loving affection and characterful companionship. Dido was an absolute treasure



This is the only photograph that I have of our lovely little cat Dido (she's the one on the right !). It was taken at Christmas 1962 at my grandmother's flat in the East end of London and we had all travelled from our home in South Hertfordshire in the family transport (a motorcycle/sidecar combination). Pet carriers weren't widely available at the time, so she sat on my lap in the sidecar with no sign of discomfort. Dido was two years old at this time (and I was twelve).

### SENDING GOODS TO POLAND FOR ONWARD TRANSMISSION TO UKRAINE

Beverley started collecting goods to go to the Ukraine to help the cats (and dogs) which were in desperate straits.

She mentioned what she was doing on one of her trips to Kelperland Vets and the donations poured in. Soon her lounge was piled high with cat beds, blankets, toys and so much more.

Now all we had to do was find out how to send it. Easy ? Wrong !!! It took hours of research and several “false starts” until we contacted Parcel Force and finally found a customer service agent who not only knew “the ropes” (not all of them did) but was very helpful and patient.

We explained we were a charity, what we were doing and it was the first time we had sent goods abroad.

The goods had to be packed (14 parcels) weighed, measured and a document prepared for each parcel listing all the relevant details and a master copy created.

A representative of Parcel Force came and transferred the necessary information onto Parcel Force documentation and departed to the nearest depot with the 14 parcels to send them on their way to Poland.

We thought it would be simple but it took hours and hours to navigate our way through the complexities of the system but we did it !

So worthwhile ! Thanks to all the people who donated. We already have goods arriving for the next consignment – we are sure our experience will make this one much easier simpler !





### BOU



In the summer of 2021 the helpline rang, It was Carol. There had been a fire in one of her neighbours' houses which had left it uninhabitable.

The lady was taken to hospital and subsequently transferred to a care home. In the meantime Carol had been visiting the property twice a day to feed BOU

She was about 10 years old – a moggie / oriental / tortoiseshell overlaid with grey - tiny and very vocal.

The relatives of the lady got in touch to say that unless the cat was removed from the house by the coming weekend they would either throw her out or have her put to sleep.

So that was when Carol rang CLAWS. She would have been happy to adopt BOU but she already had 4 dogs, 4 cats, a guinea pig and some chickens so it wasn't possible.

Fortunately we had a space so Carol brought her over.

Next day she had hardly got her paws "under the table" when the phone went. It was Carol to say that BOU's owner had returned home and was desperate to have her back so home she went.

At the beginning of May 2022 Carol rang again. Sadly Bou's owner had become very ill and had been transferred to a nursing home with no hope of returning to her house. This left Bou homeless.



Fortunately we were able to accommodate her in a pen in the run of six. She took a while to settle in, hiding behind her bed.

When the new enclosure was completed in May she was one of the first cats to enjoy the freedom and fresh air it provided but to start with she did this from the vantage point of the roof of her cat cabin.

It wasn't long before she came down and joined the others playing with their toys

## NEW ARRIVALS

### KUVO

The help line rang. A lady had been feeding a cat for some time. It was OK with other cats so we thought it unlikely to be a feral but yet another abandoned domestic. She had noticed recently that it had developed a “cauliflower” ear. Could we lend her a trap so that she could it and take it to the vet for treatment ?

It was Easter weekend so it was unlikely that it could be treated until Tuesday so we contacted the nearest vet (the Pines) and made arrangements for it to be admitted on Tuesday. We dropped off the trap and told the lady about the arrangements we had made.

It wasn't long before the lady rang again. The cat was in the trap so it was taken to the out of hours vet for an initial assessment and stayed until Tuesday when it was returned to the Pines.

It was an elderly tabby and white male, scruffy and thin, between 12 and 15 years old, but very loving and very fond of his food. The vet thought he had been “on the road” for some time.

We were delighted to learn that Agnes had decided to adopt him.

He was castrated, had his ear treated, was tested for FIV / FeIV (the result came back negative – we were very relieved ), was de-matted and a panel of “old cat” blood tests were carried out one of which showed a high level of sugar in his blood which meant that he was diabetic.

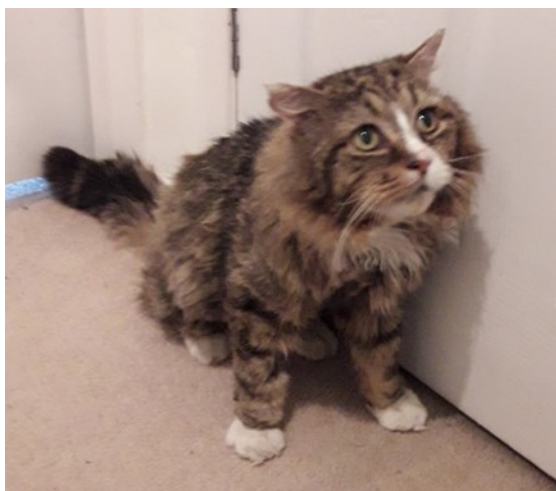
As soon as she was told Beverley immediately went round to see his owner taking a supply of syringes so she could show her how to inject him with insulin. Agnes managed the injections very well and Kuvo was a very good boy seeming to realise that this procedure was for his own good.

The vet recommended he be transferred to gastrointestinal food as this might help reduce the insulin in his blood.

He will need to go back to the vets on a regular basis to have his blood sugar levels checked so that his food intake / insulin can be adjusted if necessary.

Sadly Kuvo and the resident cats did not get on so we have taken him in.

We are sure that with peace, quiet and good care he will settle down and become a happy member of the CLAWS family.



### BERTIE

"We first spotted the cat in April and it has been coming twice a day for meals ever since. Our cat doesn't like it. Can you take it in please?"

It was arranged that they, long time friends of CLAWS, set a trap and when the cat was caught they would bring it over to CLAWS.

We scanned him and the microchip made it possible for us to trace its owner who didn't want him any longer. He completed a waiver of ownership form which enabled us to take him in and start looking for a permanent home for him.

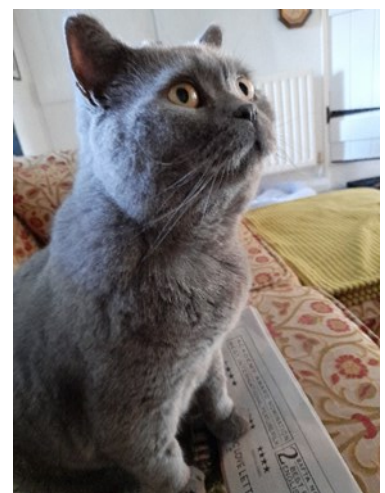
We called him BERTIE. He is a beautiful boy, very friendly and loves a cuddle. Two of our supporters decided it was time for them to adopt another cat and had spotted Bertie on our web site. They came to meet him and, after some initial hesitation, he relaxed and graciously accepted a few treats.

A number of other visits followed so that they could get to know each other better and, eventually after the refurbishment of their house had been carried out and Bertie had had a dental, he set off to enjoy his new life just a short while ago.

First reports (March 2022) are encouraging - he is settling in with his new mum and dad and exploring his new domain.

And another update on 5 April :-

Bertie continues to settle in well as we all get to know one another (4 weeks tomorrow). He's a lovely boy who's finding his favourite spots around the house. Loves to be stroked and enjoys boisterous games with a fish on a line and some balls. He also enjoys quiet time on his own snoozing. He jumped onto my lap (the first time) a couple of nights ago for a 15 minute visit and spends a couple of hours each night on our bed (this includes a lot of stroking and loud purring). All going well and we are moving forward at his pace.



## ADOPTIONS

### GREGORY



At CLAWS we are very lucky as we have our own isolation unit (purchased with money raised by a specially organised fund raising event).

In the summer of 2020 we received a call from a local cat rescue group that had an injured cat needing to be isolated and were unable to take him in.

That was when GREGORY, as we named him, a beautiful big ginger boy, came to CLAWS. Sadly he had deep puncture wounds in his back and thighs, inflicted by a dog.

We put him in the isolation unit with an igloo, food and water and left him to get used to his new surroundings. During the following days he settled in quite well – eating, drinking and sleeping. Slowly but surely the hissing and spitting stopped and his pupils did not dilate when he was spoken to.

After four weeks he was transferred to a pen in the run of six. He came on in leaps and bounds allowing his carer to stroke his chin and head and then one day he put his head in her hand and purred. We were elated !

In September 2021 we noticed his left eye was weeping so we took him to the vet. The eye was cloudy and had a slight cataract but a course of cream applied twice a day soon brought the infection under control and he has been fine ever since. The left eye remains cloudy but the right one is fine.

About this time we had a phone call from one of our supporters. Not long ago her mother had lost her beloved cat to cancer. She was feeling lonely and was looking for a feline companion to keep her company. Had we a suitable candidate ?

We thought of GREGORY, He is a gentle boy, and although shy, we felt with time and patience, he would settle in and become a loving feline companion.

So we took him over and introduced them. He had a quick look round and then went behind the sofa and that is where we left him.

A few days later the lady rang to say that he was doing OK although he did spend a lot of time behind the door.

The next update was very encouraging – if he was lifted on to his “mum’s” lap he was content to stay there. She feels sure it won’t be long before he jumps up of his own accord.





### BEN



We became worried when Ben stopped eating and began to lose weight.

We took him to the vet – no wonder he had stopped eating ! He had a large ulcer on the tip of his tongue.

Antibiotics, pain relief and an esophageal tube inserted in his neck (he didn't think much of that !) allowing him to be fed whilst bypassing his mouth and he was soon on the road to recovery. It wasn't long before he was eating soft solid food (fish !!)

The vet gave him a clean bill of and he is now back to his old self.

### DINKY



Beverley was asked by Simon at Kelperland if she would take in a 17 year old cat whose owner, a valued client of his, had died without making any provision for her cat.

She suffered from hyper-thyroidism for which she needed medication. And that was the problem. You risked a sharp nip if you try to put a pill in her mouth and she refused to eat any food which contains even a hint of a crushed up tablet !!

A gel applied to the inside of her ears helped but didn't solve the problem so it was decided that she should have her thyroid gland removed. She came through the operation with flying colours and now a monthly long lasting steroid injection keeps her in good health.

Although she is still feisty, and screams a lot, she has calmed down and can sometimes be seen sharing a bowl of food with members of the Bear Cottage gang. Mostly though they just ignore her – the ultimate compliment ! She even sits on Beverley's knee.

She has become "famous" ! People who ring up on a regular basis say "Is that Dinky I can hear shouting in the background " ?

Life with Dinky can be challenging but it's never dull !

### FUND RAISING

#### RAFFLE

FIRST PRIZE        1214

SECOND PRIZE      136

THIRD PRIZE       880

Thank you to Sandra and David for donating the first and second prizes and to everyone who bought tickets.

We have raised about **£1,335.00** which will go towards the cost of the enclosure which will be finished by the middle of May.



**SATURDAY 14 JUNE 2022**

Thank you to our helpers and supporters who attend Cox Green Village Fair.

We raised **£408.00** - an excellent result.



**ARTICLE IN MAIDENHEAD ADVERTISER 12.5.22.**

This article appeared in the Maidenhead Advertiser to help publicise **THE MOST CHARACTERFUL CAT COMPETITION** which we are running to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

26 The Advertiser, May 12, 2022 01628 680680

**News**

**East Berkshire: Rescue group calls for photographs of pets**

# Charity is seeking a 'characterful' feline

By Kieran Bell  
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**Speed read...**

A Berkshire cat welfare charity is on the look-out for the most characterful feline. CLAWS has launched the contest and is inviting entrants until next month.

A Berkshire charity caring for elderly, infirm and abused cats is asking feline owners to submit photos of their pets for a Platinum Jubilee-themed competition.

CLAWS (Cat Lovers' Animal Welfare Society), is an independent cat rescue group which has been working in East Berkshire since 1995.

It receives no Government funding and so has to raise its own money needed to look after the 35 cats resident at its sanctuary in Shurlock Row.

The charity has launched its 'Characterful Cat Competition' to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and give cat owners the chance to show off the quirky nature of their feline friends.

Prizes – which have been donated by charity supporters – are a £40 voucher for first place, £20 for second place and £10 for third place.

Written entries can be a light-hearted first-person account from the cat themselves about why they are most characterful, or a description of the pet from the owners who know them best.

Those entering are also encouraged to give a donation to CLAWS, details of which are on the website at [www.c-l-a-w-s.org.uk](http://www.c-l-a-w-s.org.uk)

Charity volunteer Sue Collins said that the charity had jumped through several hurdles throughout the last few years.

"The pandemic and accompanying lockdown presented multiple challenges to keep the cats safe and well fed," she added.

"A combination of the effects of Brexit and the pandemic made it difficult to obtain food and even litter was difficult to come by.

"However, thanks to a magnificent team effort and our supporters who were unfailingly there for us through thick and thin it was life as usual for our residents- spoil rotten."

Written entries should be no more than an A4 sheet plus a photo of the cat, and these must be submitted by Friday, June 10.

The winners will be announced in the CLAWS newsletter at the end of June and the charity's social media pages.

Email entries to [info@claws.org.uk](mailto:info@claws.org.uk) or post to: Warwick Close, Maidenhead, SL6 3AL.

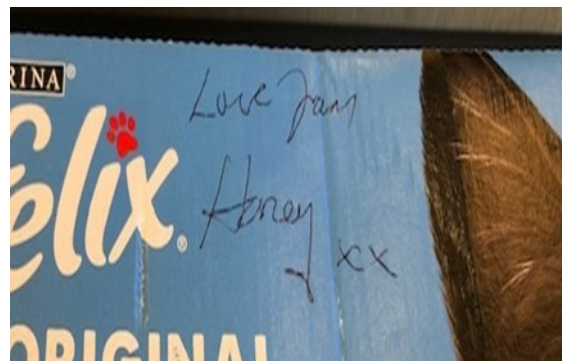


Fenton Tyrrell and cat, Gorgeous Boy. Ref:134470-4

### BUMPER COLLECTION OF FOOD FROM ASDA AT EASTER

"Many thanks to everyone who donated so generously to our supermarket cat food collection bins over the Easter period.

Special mention to Honey, who donated a jumbo box of fish-flavoured Felix. Thank you, Honey".





### PICKLE



The phone rang. “Hello – my name’s Jane. I live just down the road from you and wondered if you could help me.”

“There’s been a stray cat wandering around my garden. It looks in a pretty bad way with a bad ear and a swollen eye – I’m wondering if it’s been involved in a RTA. Could you let me have a trap ? I’m happy to take it to the vet to have it checked out”.

Beverley agreed to take a trap round right away and rang the vets to alert them to the situation.

It didn’t take long before Jane rang again. “It’s in the trap” so a quick phone call to the vets and it was off for a thorough check up.

He was an elderly tabby boy that looked as though he had been living rough for a while. The damaged eye had to be removed but apart from that he was in pretty good shape.

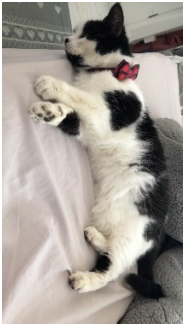
No owner came forward so CLAWS took him in. We called him PICKLE because he looked as though he was in a pickle when he arrived.

He settled in well enjoying the peaceful atmosphere, comfortable bed and good food.



## MEMORIES

### POPPY



Poppy came to us when her owner died. She was 14 years old, weighed under 2 kilos and was arthritic

She soon settled down, put on weight (reaching 3.5 kilos) and her coat became thick and glossy. She had regular sessions of acupuncture to help her arthritis. It was during these visits that one of the nurses got to know her and grew very fond of her. We were delighted when she offered Poppy a home where we knew she would be very happy and much loved.

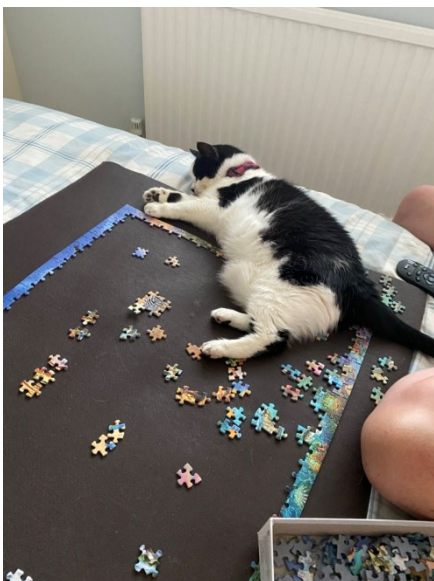
We received lots of updates and photos and even a video !

“Poppy is doing so well and has settled in amazingly! We spend every minute I am at home together. She sleeps on the bed with me every night and wakes me up for her breakfast in the morning before work!!



We are completely inseparable and she follows me everywhere! My dad has made her a ramp so she is able to get on to the bed (her favourite place) all on her own! “

She goes into the garden and stays with her until it's time to go in. She also joins in with some of their activities as you can see from the photos.



Recently Poppy's gastrointestinal problems have worsened.

Despite trying a number of medications she continued to lose weight and a tumour in the intestine was suspected. So on 15 May she was gently put to sleep.

**LOVED BY EVERYONE WHO KNEW HER – SHE WAS A JOY !**

### THE ADVENTURES OF MAU MAU PART 3



With the exception of a couple of emergency trips to the vet (all sorted now), Mau Mau's recent adventures have been relatively unadventurous.

Her daily routine is still very much set; beginning at around 6am, at which time she will wake her lazy humans and put them to work. First of all comes the food (which is usually inhaled in a matter of seconds), then the litter tray must be cleaned (she will only use it if it is cleaned after every single use, and yes she does inspect the tray to ensure it is cleaned to her satisfaction), then comes a play time (her favourite game is some kind of chase between her and Francisca, I'm yet to work out exactly what the rules are), and then finally finish off with a grooming and pampering session involving lots of brushing, cuddles and tickles.

You would think that all this attentiveness would lead to a well-behaved cat, and for the most part, Mau Mau is a well-behaved cat. However, there are certain foods that seem to bring out the naughtiness in her; and so, the question we have been pondering, is which food does she want the most.

Just to clarify, in an ideal world we would give Mau Mau which ever food she wanted (as long as it wasn't bad for her of course), but sadly she has poor little kidneys and so can only eat specially medicated food. We know this, the vet knows this, but **sadly**, Mau Mau does not know this.



The main trigger foods are tuna, ham and chicken. It starts the moment that the pack or tin is opened in the kitchen. We have an open plan downstairs and so Mau Mau's lounge, while separate from the kitchen, is still within smelling distance.

The first sign of danger (for us) is when her little nose starts to quiver, sometimes even before she has woken from her afternoon or evening snooze. Then her head shoots up and she looks around, quite frantically at times, sniffing the air for the source of the tasty smell. And then she's off, quick as a flash, down her little disability steps, racing into the kitchen and to wherever the food is being prepared.

Her first approach is to pretend that she has never been fed before in her life. We get the pleading eyes, the little huddled body, the longing look in her face that we're pretty sure she has been using since she was a kitten.

When this doesn't work, Mau Mau begins to shark us, weaving in and out of our legs and brushing up against us. We've learnt that this is a distraction to have us dancing around her, so that she can make a sudden attempt to get to the kitchen counter and more importantly, the food itself. Usually at this point, one of us (generally me) will have to usher her out of the kitchen like a bouncer at a nightclub. She never goes willingly and quite often she gets to the edge of the kitchen, turns and then wriggles her way back past me. She's deceptively quick and agile for such an elderly cat.

### THE ADVENTURES OF MAU MAU PART 3

This will continue until we get to the table, which is where Mau Mau will make her last daring attempt. From her own seat at the table, she will reach out at full length, using our legs as a ledge, until she can get her face right up to the plate. We have tried lifting the plate away, but she isn't one to take a hint and there have been occasions where the plate has been held high above our heads and Mau Mau has attempted to use us as a human climbing frame.

To date, we have managed to keep the tuna, chicken and ham from her, but we believe (and we're pretty certain she believes) that it is only a matter of time before she out smarts us.



### AMBER



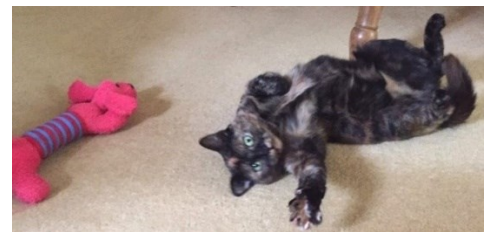
Not much is known about our little girl Amber, except she had a pretty tough start in life. She was found living under a shed with her two little kittens and she was only about a year old herself.

Our desperately shy little girl wants to be loved but just isn't quite sure how this all works. She's becoming very affectionate when all four feet are on the floor but try to lift her up and she wriggles like a wild thing.

The staircase was a complete mystery to her and it took her a little while to master it. Soft beds and duvets are avoided... but she has two favourite chairs and woe betide you, if you sit there when she wants to.... I still haven't seen her sit in a box and paper bags are only for shredding.

Her foster mum warned us that she was only just learning how to play (and her strong survival instinct means any soft toy is shredded in a matter of minutes... although balls do survive for much longer !) It feels like she has missed out on the rule book of "how to be a kitty".

Thankfully both Phil and I grew up with cats, so we have masses of patience and love to share with her. With time, she is slowly lowering her defences and this beautiful, gentle soul is gradually coming out of her shell. She has wriggled her way into our hearts and is adored by us both. Finally our little girl feels safe and I suspect she may even turn into a cuddle monster with time.



The joy of adopting her and watching her slowly blossom, is worth every shredded financial report and the destruction of my sofa... oops !

She is completely adorable, brings a whole new meaning to "torti attitude" 😊



**ELSA AND INNOGEN PART 2**

Recently, Elsa became unwell in a way which led to my having a very unsettled Christmas. Over the weekend of December 11th/12th I noticed that a lot of food was being left uneaten and on the Sunday I thought that Elsa was making wheezing sounds sometimes. She slept on the bed with me and Innogen as usual and the wheezing seemed to continue, and when I watched them both at breakfast on Monday 13th I saw that Elsa just had one biscuit and then went upstairs. Her appetite is usually very strong so I let her rest for an hour and then went to see how she was. She seemed to be having real difficulty in breathing and so I made an emergency appointment with my vet for that afternoon.

What my vet said was most alarming as he thought there was something wrong with her heart and wanted to take an x-ray. However, to do this he had to transfer her to another vet in Maidenhead because it so happened that my vet was having a new x-ray machine installed that very afternoon, but also because he thought she would need an overnight stay in intensive care and my vet can't have pets overnight.

On the Tuesday, the second vet told me that her stomach was distended because it was filling up with gas, and this was causing the breathing trouble because it was limiting the capacity of her lungs. The whole day was spent doing countless tests and measurements. They had several theories about what might be wrong, most of which sounded really bad, but the tests found no evidence for any of it. They also fitted her with an external feeding tube, because it seemed likely that she hadn't eaten much for several days and she would be losing strength. I was beginning to think that I might not see her again.

On the Wednesday, they asked me for permission to open up her stomach to see if anything was blocking it and asked me if she might have swallowed anything. I said that she wasn't a cat who tends to nibble at anything she shouldn't, but she is a very conscientious groomer, so it was possible she might have lots of fur in her stomach. They opened her up that afternoon and sure enough found a small ball of fur which they removed. When I rang them later that night they said that she was conscious and stable, and I was able to get my first good night's sleep that week.

However I was woken up on Thursday morning the 16<sup>th</sup> by a call saying that she had had two episodes of her stomach filling up with gas again overnight. The second vets had run out of ideas by now and the morning was spent ringing round their specialist contacts. Eventually they found a place over near Luton who could admit her. She was driven over there by a vet and a nurse as they wanted to be able to keep an eye on her during the journey.

With hindsight, that was the turning point. Once she got to the third vets, her stomach remained normal, and all the tests and measurements steadily began to turn towards normal. After a couple of days, she started to eat for herself, though not normal amounts. A few days before Christmas it had reached the point where she was stable and they were no longer actually giving her any medicines. The vets thought it would be OK for me to take her home. We hoped her eating would return to normal once she was in her home environment.

This would have meant my feeding her through the tube in the meantime, which I was absolutely dreading, though of course I would have done it if it had been in her best interests.

## ELSA AND INNOGEN PART 2

On Boxing Day, Elsa took matters into her own hands (or, I should say, her own paws) and managed to remove the feeding tube all by herself. (She'd already managed to remove a catheter and I've never managed to keep a collar on her for more than a few hours so I think it's clear that she doesn't like having things attached to her!!) From this point, she started to eat normally all by herself!



The drama wasn't quite over yet, though. Although I brought her home on Thursday 30th, she still had staples in her stomach where they had opened her up, and a wound in her neck where she had pulled out the feeding tube, so she had to have a blue buster-collar so that she didn't do any more harm to these. She was supposed to take it easy while she had the staples in, and so I kept her in isolation until my vet took out the staples on Tuesday January 4th. She still had the collar, as the wound in her neck was still raw. The day after, I let her into the house again hoping to return to normality. In the event Innogen spent about eight hours alternately spitting and hissing at Elsa, and then hiding behind the television. Elsa seemed completely unmoved by any of this, as she is by most things, but it was very stressful both for Innogen and for me, and so I decided I had to put poor Elsa back into isolation again and think again. On reflexion, I thought it likely that Innogen was probably spooked by the collar, and so I decided that they would have to stay apart until the collar could be removed, which it was finally on Tuesday January 18th, when my vet said that the neck-wound was sufficiently healed. All the while Elsa was in isolation in the spare room, I was spending a few hours with her each day as she hadn't had much company otherwise for so long, so this was very disruptive to my normal routine.

Once again, Innogen was wonderful company for me while Elsa was away, and seemed to stay closer to me than ever, seeming to sense that I needed her company more than ever. Since Elsa returned, things have been fairly normal. Innogen has taken a little while to get used to Elsa being around again, and has been a little reserved, but I think we are over that stage now. My main concern now is that we don't actually know what caused Elsa's problem, so we have no way of knowing whether it might all happen again sometime. It might have been the ball of fur in her stomach, but the vet thought it was really not so much that it ought to have caused such a big problem, and in any event she had two episodes of her stomach filling up after it had been removed. The third vet thought this might have been a response to the surgery. But at the end of the day we just don't know. This is making me rather unsettled; as we know cats are creatures of habit and at the moment whenever Elsa behaves unusually, I tend to be concerned that whatever the problem was might be returning. Only the day before I wrote this, she didn't seem her normal self at breakfast, and unusually sat quietly under the dining room table apparently staring at the wall for about fifteen minutes. Just as I was becoming rather alarmed, she suddenly started hunting around behind one of her cat-baskets and found one of her favourite tinsel balls, which she then kicked around the living room until she had worked up enough appetite to want her breakfast. I was reassured that she was in fact feeling fine.



### ELSA AND INNOGEN PART 2



So at the moment I can only hope that she has fully recovered from whatever it was, and that she and Innogen will continue to share long and happy lives here. Just as they were when I set out to write this, they are both fast asleep within a few feet of where I am sitting. I guess like all cat owners, I sometimes wish that they could talk, and tell me what they think of each other. But if it's true that cats



are solitary animals, I am still sure that they are adaptable enough to be able to enjoy living with others of their kind, and I am convinced that Innogen and Elsa's lives are more enriched through sharing my home than they would be on their own.



### PUMPKIN, MARMITE AND ZAC

Lauraine says : -

All of the kitties are doing well. Marmite is the only one who refuses to let Sam( their baby son) stop her from sleeping where she wants to. So she and Sam's toy collection are often competing for the same cat tower.

Pumpkin is enjoying the sunshine now, which is great to get him outside as he has a habit of gate-crashing my zoom meetings when I'm working from home.

Zac still timeshares upstairs/downstairs with Sam, the second Sam comes down in the morning, he darts upstairs! He does love a good stroke and makes up for it in the evening. He can cajole any visitor into giving him a good head rub.



**THE PETS' CEMETERY**

Written for a lady in London who ran a small Old Folks' Home and any stray cat that was given shelter, warmth, food and love in shed, greenhouses and any other facility available. When they eventually died of old age she laid them to rest in a very ornate Pets' Cemetery surrounded with flowers and animal statues.

We thank you for our garden you so lovingly have made –  
Our "Garden of Remembrance" nestling in the shade  
Surrounded by the beauty of the shrubs. The trees and flowers,  
Did you know we sit and watch for, oh, so many hours !

We know our bodies rest there, but the day you saw us die  
Was the time each one of us was brought to live here in the sky,  
We are in a sunny land just filled just filled with warmth and love  
And as the make our Garden pretty we watch you from above.

We are now as we were, but sadly you can't see  
Because from our poor sick bodies God allowed us to be free  
We see all you do for our earthly friends, to help them live from day to day  
And each time you think of us you'll know that by your side we stay.

One day your time will come to join us in the sky.  
The day you really start to live is the day you seem to "die"  
You'll see your "Garden of Remembrance" which will be beautiful as well,  
As the flowers on your grave will thrive, where your friends' tears once fell.

All our love until we meet again.

Your babies

XXXXXX

VERA

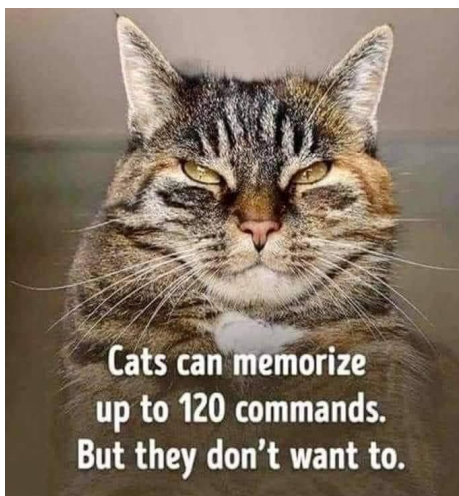
## ON A LIGHTER NOTE

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Close to Home by John McPherson for April 03, 2020



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