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PUSS IN PARADISE

How to create that dreamy outdoor space

Neighbours

Keeping things friendly

TOP 10 HEALTH CHECKS

Are cats born to POSE?

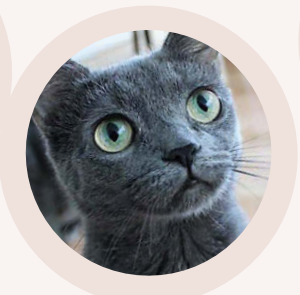
Allergies and how to cope

Feline rivalry

SUMMER SUN
PROTECT YOUR CAT
FROM THE HEAT



ASK OUR EXPERTS ★ NATURAL HEALTH ★ MAGICAL RAGDOLLS



July 2017 • Issue 472

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a furry warm welcome



Considering this is the July issue of Cat World, the weather outside as I write this is very unseasonal. But that's British weather for you! Hopefully by the time you are reading it, the sun will be shining and temperatures will

be much higher. Taking advantage of summer conditions is really the theme of this issue, with lots of advice for summer health, cat-friendly gardens and summer holidays. Who wouldn't want to spend a few balmy hours in the garden relaxing with a feline companion?

From mad cat ladies (and men) to marathon runners, we are a nation of cat lovers and long may that continue. Whatever the political climate or the weather throws at us, our feline companions are there for us, no matter what. We should never take that for granted.

Till next month

Jill & the team

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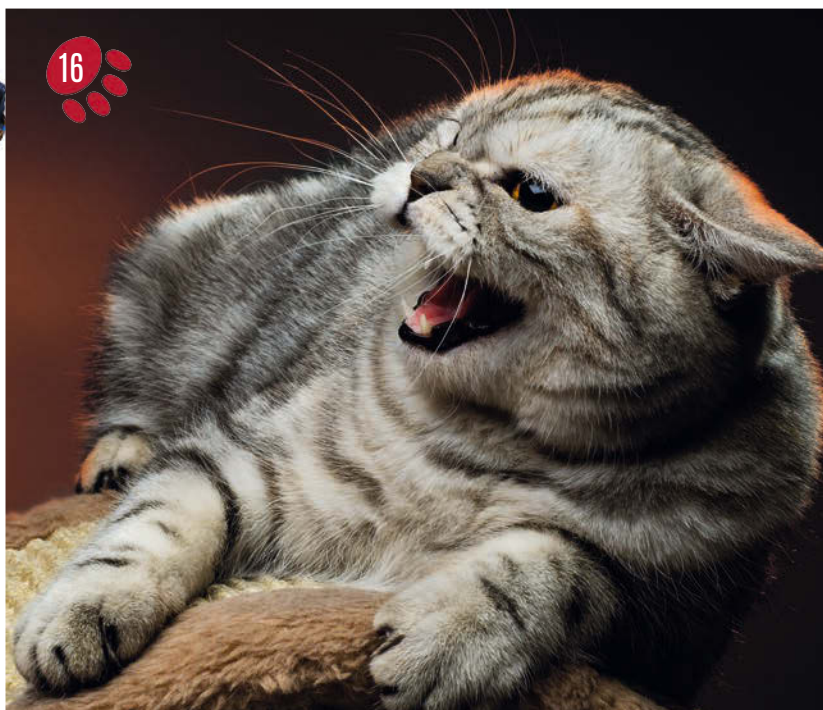
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Want to write or report for CW? We'd love to hear from you. Email jill@ashdown.co.uk

THE MEWS



ROUND

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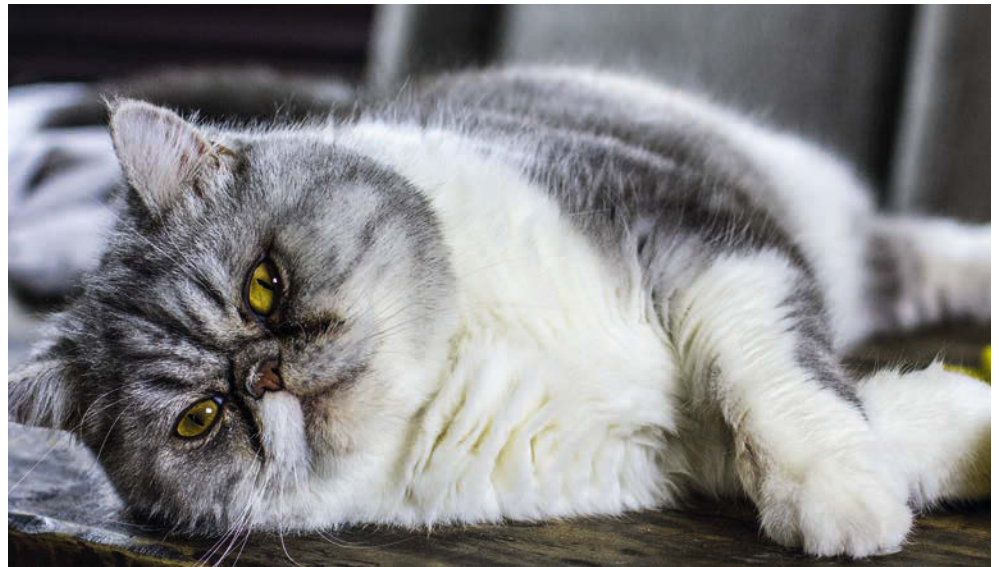
Vote for feline welfare

In the build up to June's General Election, Cats Protection asked all candidates to back measures to improve the lives of Britain's cats. The charity's 10-point plan aims to protect the nation's felines from abandonment, harm and neglect and hopes to see microchipping for cats become compulsory.

Cats Protection's Advocacy and Government Relations Manager, Jacqui Cuff said: "Nearly a quarter of UK households own a cat (an estimated population of 11 million cats) and their welfare will be of great importance to many voters. We are calling for modern legislation to better protect cats from harm and ensure their welfare.

"Cats are not political – they come in all colours of black, white, ginger and many more – yet politicians from all parties can improve their lives immeasurably by tackling some of our 2022 Agenda priorities."

Also high on Cats Protection's action list is cat ownership. The charity is looking to future MPs to help promote responsible cat ownership and tackle the issue of owners being forced to give up cats because their landlord, social housing provider or care home does not allow pets.



Diets are not just after Christmas

Cat owners are being urged not to give their cats too many food treats after a report from a leading insurance company found feline

obesity has more than doubled over the last 12 months. If you think your cat deserves a treat for good behaviour, then a new toy, an extra play

session with you or a few more cuddles is preferable to encouraging your puss to pile on the pounds.

One expensive kitty

Fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld is reported to have collaborated with top toy maker Steiff who have created a luxury stuffed plush version of his beloved cat Choupette. The price? A cool \$545 apparently.

Ninety years of cat care

Congratulations to Cats Protection who celebrated their 90th birthday in May this year. The charity estimates that it has helped around 4.5million cats over the past nine decades. Happy Birthday!



Fears over cat food in Australia

A major chain of pet food stores in Australia has removed all Best Feline Friend cat food from their shelves after customers complained that cats were becoming ill after eating it. Some even claimed their cats had died as a result. Most of the cats had been fed the food for several months before they fell ill.

The American manufacturer of the food has recalled BFF and will carry out tests.



Sumatran Tiger stopped eating

Keepers and other staff at a Mississippi zoo are devastated after one of their two Sumatran tigers died prematurely in early May. Cinta suddenly stopped eating and drinking and despite being under the care of the zoo's medical

team, his heart stopped beating and they were unable to revive him.

The zoo are awaiting results of blood tests and x-rays to see if they will provide any clues as to why Cinta's life came to such a sad and abrupt end.

Stuck at school

When a cleaner at a school in Southwark, London heard mewing noises while cleaning the school, he was unaware of the kitty's plight. When he finally discovered the source of the plaintive cries he had to call the

RSPCA for assistance. The unlucky black male cat was stuck behind the grill over one of the school windows, with no means of escape.

Inspector Callum Issit said: "He must have got into the building as he

couldn't have squeezed in through the grill. He probably tried to get out through the window and then got stuck behind it when it closed. Luckily he was fine - just scared."

Pals abroad

At this time of year many of us are looking forward to going abroad on holiday but for some people, going overseas on a work assignment is all part of the job. Craig Wilmore was working in Angola when he was befriended by this cute feral cat. "She was very playful (after a few weeks of coaxing) and loves Tuna and Chicken Spam." Craig has eight cats of his own at his UK home and said the feral cat really helped to make his off-time bearable.



PAWS FOR THOUGHT

'I had been told that the training procedure with cats was difficult. It's not. Mine had me trained in two days.'

- Bill Dana



Twinkle Trust marathon success

Earlier this year we featured the work of the Twinkle Trust, a charity helping stray and feral cats in Fuerteventura. Gill and Ryan Christie have adopted their cats from the charity and our feature mentioned that Ryan would be running the London Marathon this year to raise funds so that they can continue their work.

Gill says: "Ryan got a great time of three hours and fifteen minutes for his first ever marathon and so has qualified for a good for age place next year. We also managed to exceed our fundraising target and so far have collected over £2900 for Twinkle Trust. It will make such a difference to them as they struggle every day to meet the needs of the islands unfortunate cats."



Longest Maine Coon on Instagram?

The Guinness Book of Records has contacted the owner of a Maine Coon cat in Australia after the cat's photo was spotted on Instagram. It is believed that Omar could measure up to the title of the world's longest cat. The decision has yet to be revealed.

Top tips to keep the neighbours happy

No matter how lovely we think our cats are, sometimes our neighbours may find them a nuisance but there are things we can do to keep things friendly

BY JILL MUNDY

Cats that are allowed outside like to roam the neighbourhood and will mark their territory using natural behaviours. A cat's territory will obviously be your home and garden, if you have one, but it is also likely to include neighbouring gardens which can sometimes cause problems if the cat uses those gardens as their outside toilet. Seeing a cat dozing on the path or wandering across the lawn is not so much of a problem but the sight of one crouching over the newly planted flower bed is not so pleasant.

The following suggestions may help you to keep your cat happy and to remain friendly with your neighbours too.

- Speak with your neighbours when you can to find out exactly why your cat seems to be causing distress. They should be encouraged by the fact that you want to ease the situation if possible.

- If your neighbour also has a cat, the problem could be that your cat is being the infamous neighbourhood bully. If your cat wears a quick-release collar, attaching a bell to it will alert the home cat that he is approaching and they can then make themselves scarce if they don't want to risk confrontation. Keep your cat inside for part of the day or evening and let your neighbours know the timescale so that they know it is 'safe' for their own cats to be outside at that time.

- If toileting on the neighbour's garden is an issue, make a sheltered part of your own garden into a latrine area where your cat can dig the soil. Encourage him to use the area while you are at home with him so he gets used to using it and will do so happily when you are out.

- Your cat may be entering your neighbour's garden on a hunting mission. Try to increase the amount of time you spend playing with your cat each day, either indoors or outside. Hopefully this will tire him more and he will prefer to spend time dozing in his own garden rather than wandering next door.

- If your neighbours are bird lovers, with garden feeders, they may be concerned that your cat is out looking for prey. A bell on a quick-release collar will alert any wildlife to the fact that your cat is approaching. You could also agree to keep your cat indoors for at least an hour after sunrise and before sunset, especially during the early summer when baby birds will be leaving the nest for the first time

Try hiding food and treats around your house for your cat to seek out and discover. Toys that hide treats and puzzle feeders are both good sources of entertainment and mental stimulation which will prevent boredom, tire your cat more and encourage more time spent asleep.

- If you can, give a bit of thought to overhauling your garden so that there



are areas that will encourage your cat to remain there. Catnip and cat mint plants are always popular, as are plants that attract butterflies and other insects as your cat will enjoy trying to chase them.

- Ask your neighbour if your cat is gaining access to their garden in the same place each time. If so, you could suggest that he plants some prickly bushes at that spot as a deterrent. If the access is through a hole in the wall or fence, offer to block the holes.

- If all of the above prove difficult, consider enclosing your garden with a cat-proof fencing system, allowing your cat access to your garden without being able to stray.

- Cats, unlike many other animals, have a 'right to roam' and cannot be seen as trespassers. However, as a cat owner, we have a common law duty to ensure our cats don't injure anyone or cause damage to a neighbour's property.

If you really want to keep tabs on your cat while he is outside, there are now many GPS and other tracking systems on the market. A device fitted to your cat's collar is linked to your smartphone, so you can see exactly where your cat is at any time of the day or night. Not only will you be able to tell how often your cat wanders away from home but you will also have peace of mind that if he gets trapped or lost, you can be reasonably sure of where to find him.



Top 10 checks for



a healthy summer

The summer months are an ideal time to carry out a summer MOT and make sure your pets are in good health and free from injury

BY CORINNE MANSFIELD

This time of year is a great opportunity to spend a little time checking the general health of our cats. All of these checks can (and should) be done on a fairly regular basis and may prevent more serious problems developing

1. Eyes

Eyes should be bright, alert and shiny. They should be free from gunge and should not weep. Cats have an extra 'inner' eyelid too. This should not be visible when they have their eyes fully open, so if you can see it permanently, get an appointment with the vet.

2. Ears

Ears should be clean and free of wax, bugs, dry skin etc. and there should be no smell. Often cats with ear problems will scratch at their ears or shake their heads excessively. Look for these signs and consult your vet if you're at all concerned.

3. Nose

A cat's nose should be soft, clean and generally a little moist. If your cat seems to have a permanently dry or permanently dripping nose, then this could indicate problems and further investigation should be undertaken.

4. Teeth

Check the teeth out for excess tartar and bad breath. These symptoms can indicate an underlying illness and

should be checked by a vet if found. Long term tooth decay can cause a variety of problems for cats, including kidney disease and heart problems, so their teeth should definitely be looked after properly.

5. Coat

Your cat's coat should naturally be smooth, soft and clean. Groom them to help remove dead hairs from their summer moult or these could be ingested and turn into hairballs. Give him a stroke and feel for knots or any other lumps and bumps; pull the fur apart and check for fleas and ticks. If you spot any problems, you should take him to the vet to get him checked out ASAP.

6. Paws

Check the pads of their paws for dryness, cuts, infections etc. Sometimes splinters or thorns can be lurking in there too and cats can be masters of disguising their discomfort.

7. Claws

Hopefully your cat has plenty to scratch and regularly sheds the top layer of claw but it's worth checking that they're clean and sharp, and clipping them back a bit if necessary. Never clip their claws if you don't know exactly what you are doing and where to cut.

8. Rear

Don't forget to check out the 'blunt'

end of your cat! Most cats are convinced everyone is really interested in seeing their derrière (which is actually a greeting that should be acknowledged by an owner) but sometimes it is necessary and can indicate things such as infections, worms or dietary problems. Stools should be small and firm and should not contain any signs of blood or parasites. If you notice anything unusual, consult your vet.

9. Weight

It should be fairly easy to tell if your cat is over or underweight, simply by knowing your cat. Another good indicator is that you should be able to feel the cat's ribs but each rib should not be well pronounced. Most often, excess weight is directly connected to diet and many companies do 'light' cat food these days. However an underweight cat or a cat that is persistently overweight even after diet changes should definitely be taken to the vet.

10. Brain

Your cat's mental health is as important as their physical health. Take note of whether your cat is active, bright and interested, good tempered and not depressed. Cats that are detached from family life or that hide, who are off their food or that are irritable and aggressive, may well have an underlying illness or stress-related problem affecting them.

Help your cat to love

Summer days are good for exploring but when it gets too hot and you need a peaceful snooze, there really is no place like home

BY CORINNE MANSFIELD

With longer summer days and warmer temperatures if we're lucky, our cats are likely to want to spend more time outdoors. While we would love them to stay close to home, of course we all know that many cats are free to wander at will and this puts them at risk of an accident or injury. By making our gardens inviting and cat-friendly, our cats may just decide that actually, there's no place like home.

Here are a few suggestions of simple ways to encourage your cat to spend his time in your own garden and not your neighbours'.

High point

Cats really appreciate a resting place up high, where they can survey their territory. Provide a high table or platform, preferably in the centre of the garden, where they will have the best vantage point.

Privacy

If you don't have a cat flap you will need to provide an area your cat can use as a toilet. Choose somewhere private and secluded, with plenty of shade, not too far from the house. Put down some material that can be easily raked through, such as loose soil. Cats

like to bury their faeces unless they feel threatened and are marking their territory.

Shy cats will welcome a couple of small shrubs or large planters next to the door so that they can come and go without feeling they are on full view of the neighbourhood.

Boundaries

Fences and hedges will encourage your cat to stay in your garden but a young, inquisitive cat may wriggle through gaps or climb them easily. In this case you may want to investigate specialist fencing options that will prevent your cat climbing out and others getting in.

Planting

Make sure there are no plants in your garden that are poisonous to cats. That said, cats are intelligent creatures and will not chew anything potentially harmful. You can find a comprehensive list of dangerous plants on the iCat-Care website.

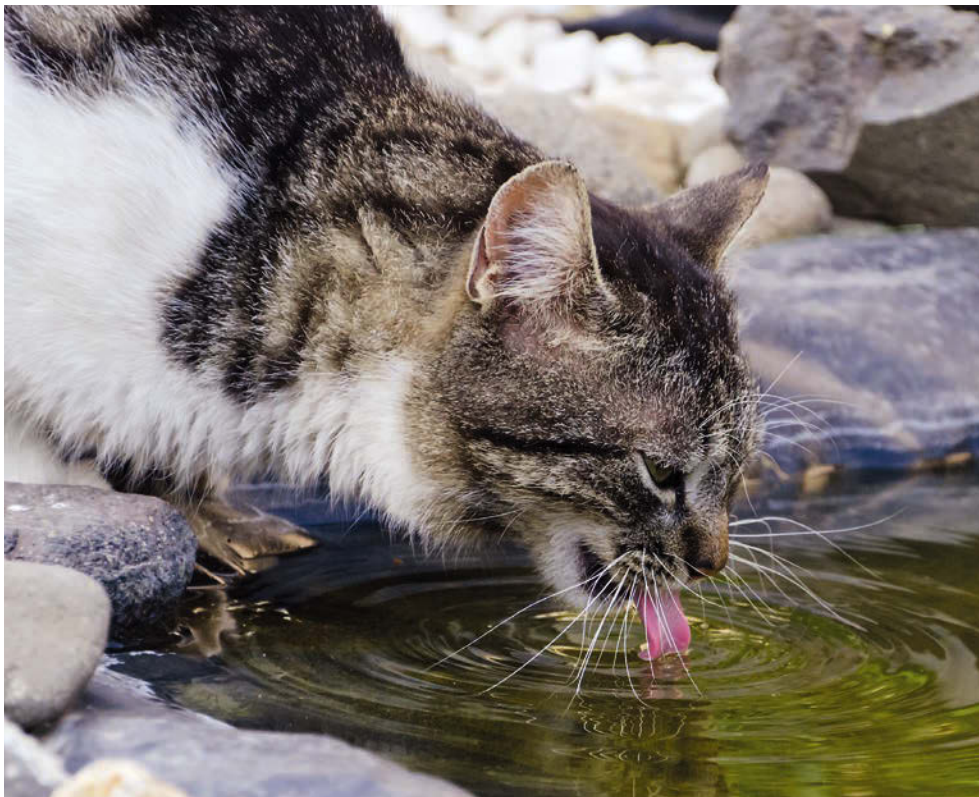
Choose plants that will attract insects as these will provide exercise and entertainment for your cat.

Ornamental grasses or bamboos are also a good choice as they make a rustling noise as they blow in the breeze.

Prickly plants are useful for keeping your cat away from spaces you don't want him to go.

Playtime

Kittens and younger cats will ap-



your garden



appreciate an area where they can weave amongst plants, pots, boulders etc. Have some garden toys to keep them amused too. Rotate these just as you do with their indoor toys to keep boredom away.

Older cats with less energy or mobility will love a spot where they can rest quietly so perhaps a slightly raised area with shallow steps or a slope leading to it, under a shady bush, is worth considering.

Refreshment and relaxation

Provide fresh drinking water outside as well as indoors, especially if your cat is left out of the house for any length of time. Cats need access to fresh water at all times but particularly in hot weather.

A cushion or blanket placed on a step or low wall makes a comfy seat.

Placing it under a leafy shrub will provide shade. If you have space, a small cat house where your cat can while away the hours in peace and quiet makes a great addition to any feline's garden.

On the surface

Try to include areas of different textures and surfaces in your garden to give variety.

Grass will stay cool on hot days, when other surfaces may be no-go areas.

Cats also like to chew grass to aid their digestion. A tub planted with cat grass is sure to be a favourite.

Paving is easy to walk on and keep clean but can get hot so a few paving slabs in a shady area will provide a welcome retreat from the heat.

Decking looks nice but soon gets

slippery when it rains and can take a long time to dry out. Not so suitable for older or frail cats.

Bark chippings are popular in many gardens and are soft enough to walk on but could be mistaken for cat litter. Again, they hold the moisture when wet.

Soil on its own, with no plants, is an invitation for cats to dig and use the area as a toilet. Try to avoid bare patches of soil wherever possible.

Shingle can also resemble litter tray material and is quite sharp beneath a cat's paws. If there are areas or plants in the garden that you don't want your cat to get to, then putting shingle around them is a good deterrent.

Consider your cat's personality and health with the above suggestions in mind and your garden could become one of his most favourite places.

Dealing with the misery of summer allergies

The arrival of balmy summer days usually means a love of being outdoors but for some cats, an allergy to something in the environment can make life miserable

BY SONJA K STEINER

After what seems like months of dark nights and frosty mornings, spring has arrived along with some warmer weather and of course lighter evenings. Many cats will decide that they now want to venture outdoors more and this presents its own dangers. Some cats may be more prone to allergic reactions to things in the environment commonly associated with warmer temperatures.

What is an allergy?

Allergies are a damaging immune response caused by an inappropriate response to a substance which would usually be considered harmless. This means the immune system is more sensitive. It overreacts to certain everyday substances and begins to identify them as dangerous and as a result, mounts an immune response against it. These substances are called allergens or antigens. Whilst these substances or allergens are usually common in the environment and are harmless to most cats, a cat who has an allergy can have an extreme reaction to them.

The purpose of the immune system is to keep infectious micro-organisms, such as certain bacteria, viruses and fungi, out of the body and destroy any infectious micro-organisms that do invade the body. When you put it in context, allergens or antigens are simply foreign proteins that the immune system attempts to remove and as they try to do this, it may result in the cat

showing a variety of symptoms.

Ideally the best way to treat allergies is to remove the offending allergens from the environment but you have to know what allergens the cat is reacting to. If your cat displays the following general symptoms, it could mean they are having an allergic reaction:

- Facial crusty and scabby lesions
- Flaking skin
- Hair loss
- Itchy skin and increased scratching
- Itchy back especially around the base of the tail (this is most commonly seen in flea allergies)
- Itchy and runny eyes
- Miliary dermatitis (seen as a red and crusty rash around the head, neck and back)
- Paw's being chewed and swollen paws
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea

There are a variety of things that cats can be allergic to and it really is a process of elimination. In one cat it may be easy to identify what is causing the allergic reaction whilst in another cat it may be more difficult and require tests to be carried out by the vet. Some common offenders are:

- Cleaning products
- Cigarette smoke
- Dust pollens
- Fabrics
- Fleas and flea control products
- Food





- Grass
- Mould
- Perfumes
- Prescription medication
- Rubber and plastic materials
- Tree pollens

Skin problems

The four main causes of allergies in cats resulting in skin problems are: insects, contact, inhalants and food. The most common is the flea allergy known as feline allergic dermatitis - 'FAD'.

If your cat displays any symptoms of having an allergy it is important to seek veterinary advice. If your cat is scratching their skin and it becomes red and inflamed, the more they scratch, the more likely it is to get infected and this may require a course of antibiotics. However this will only treat the skin infection, which is the result of them scratching, as opposed to what is causing them to scratch in the first place.

If you suspect your cat may have an allergy then you should see your veterinary surgeon who will make a preliminary diagnosis and treatment plan. He will need as much information as possible, for example:

Is there a particular season when your cat has the most allergy symptoms? Which part of your cat's body is the most itchy?

Depending on the severity of the condition your vet may prescribe a medicated shampoo, anti-histamines or steroids to see how the cat responds. Please do not be tempted to give over-the-counter antihistamines to your cat.

There are typically two types of allergies: food allergies and environmental allergies. For example if your cat gets itchy during the spring, summer or autumn then they are probably reacting to seasonal environmental allergens but if you are noticing the symptoms were all year round, this may indicate that the sensitivity they are experiencing is something that is more constant in their environment or in their diet.

When a cat develops an allergy, it can appear as a skin irritation or

‘There are a variety of things that cats can be allergic to and it really is a process of elimination.’

inflammation, a condition known as allergic dermatitis. If the initial treatment prescribed by your vet does not ease their symptoms then your vet may recommend more specific allergy testing. This is done by taking a blood test, performing intradermal skin testing or doing a biopsy of the affected area. Whilst blood tests are relatively reliable for detecting airborne allergies, they are not as good for food or contact allergies. Skin testing is considered as more accurate and involves shaving a patch of hair on your cat's side and then injecting a small amount of allergens under the skin. If the test is positive the skin will appear reddened or show welts.

Once the vet has established what allergens the cat has reacted to, those offending allergens can be mixed together by a laboratory and very small injections (known as hyposensitisation) are given weekly over several months in the hope that it will re-program the immune system so it is not hypersensitive to the antigen and will hopefully

help your cat become less sensitive to them. Unfortunately this is a long process and it may take many months to see the full effect. Even then there are some cats who do not respond to this treatment.

Inhalant or 'seasonal' allergy

Inhalant allergy or atopy is estimated to be the third most common type of allergy in cats and is caused by breathing pollens, dust mites, moulds and other allergens in the environment. It is sometimes referred to as a 'seasonal allergy' when related to pollens. Symptoms can be seasonal or non-seasonal and often begin in young cats, worsening with age. Most cats that have an inhalant allergy are allergic to several allergens.

In order to make a diagnosis your vet will need to give your cat a thorough examination and take a complete medical history. They will want to rule out other possible conditions such as mange, a flea allergy*, contact dermatitis, ringworm and a food allergy.

One of the ways to treat an inhalant allergy is to try to avoid the cause but this is often not possible if the allergen has not been identified or you are not able to stop the cat being exposed.

Contact allergy

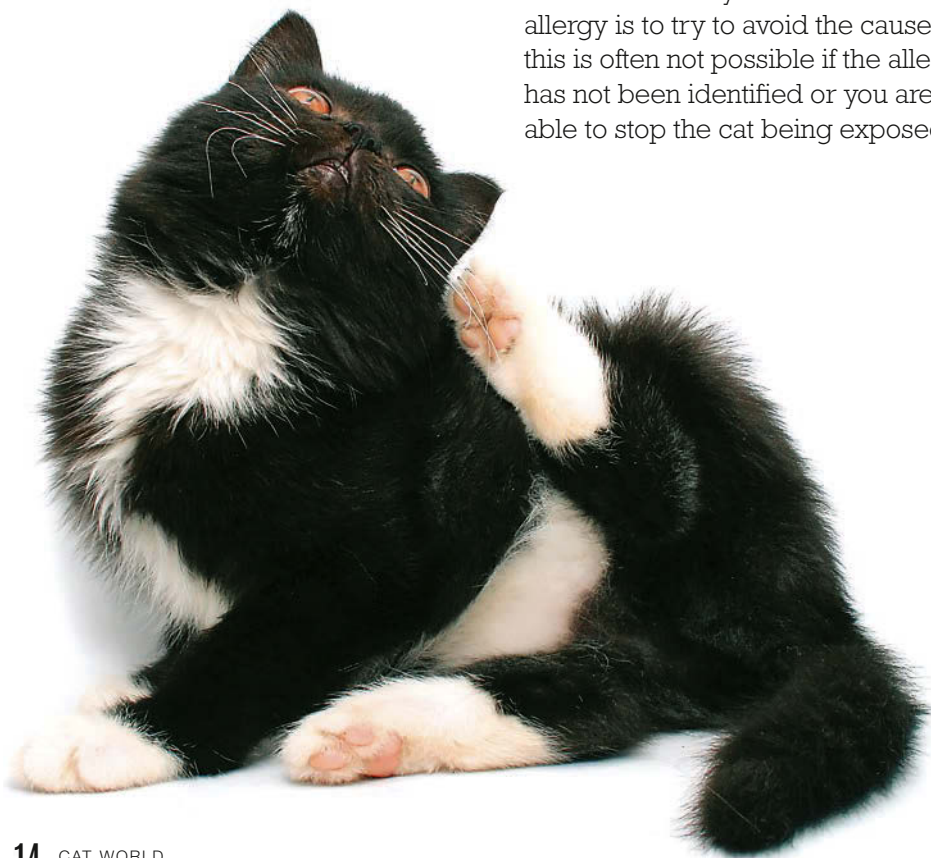
A contact allergy is the least common type of allergy and is caused by something your cat comes in contact with, such as carpet, bedding (especially wool) or detergents. If your cat is allergic to such substances, there will be skin irritation and itching at the points of contact (elbows, bottom of the feet, belly, etc.). Treatment involves identifying and removing the allergen.

Homeopathic remedies may help with allergies and it is down to the individual cat as to what remedies are prescribed as it works on a dual approach. The first is a constitutional remedy which is centred on the animal's psychological makeup, i.e. what their personality is like. The second is a pathological remedy; this is where the homeopathic vet would ask what the scabs looked like, where the cat is itching and what affect it is having on the cat's body.

It might be worth researching Bach Flower Remedies. There is an excellent book called Bach Flower Remedies for Animals by Helen Graham and Gregory Vlamis which gives an insight as to how remedies can help with physical and emotional conditions. One remedy I have used is called Crab Apple. An extract taken from the book says: "This remedies uncleanliness, infection and toxicity; this remedy can be used in conjunction with veterinary treatment. It can be used on all skin conditions where animals are always cleaning themselves, licking, scratching or pulling their hair out including skin conditions such as dermatitis, dandruff, mange and scabies. For animals with fleas, parasites, insect bites or that tend to attract fleas and parasites."

Observing your cat's symptoms, how he reacts to them and noting anything you feel might be causing them will all be valuable information if you seek advice from your vet but don't despair...with the correct diagnosis and treatment, your cat can start to enjoy the summer months too.

● See next month's Cat World for advice on dealing with fleas and parasites





HELP SUPPORT HEALTHY, ACTIVE LIVES

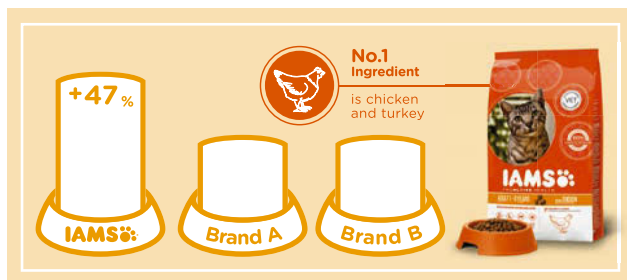
FACT: Protein is important for your cat

Animal protein is necessary for a healthy, active life because it provides a complete profile of essential amino acids our pets need.

Once eaten these amino acids help your cat's body by maintaining strong muscles and supporting a healthy skin and coat. One special amino acid called taurine is naturally found in high amounts in animal protein ingredients (especially chicken and turkey). Taurine is critical for normal heart muscle function and vision.

FACT: IAMS helps support a healthy, active life

IAMS is packed with high quality animal protein because cats are true carnivores. **IAMS Proactive Health* for cats contains 47% more animal protein than the top 2 leading brands****



IAMS also contains high quality ingredients supporting healthy active lives:



HEALTHY URINARY TRACT

Controlled level of magnesium and high quality animal protein



HEALTHY DIGESTION

Special fibre blend of beet pulp and probiotic FOS



STRONG NATURAL DEFENCES

Enriched with antioxidants, vitamins and minerals to help maintain a strong immune system



SUPERB SKIN AND COAT CONDITION

Formulated with a tailored Omega-6 and Omega-3 blend for healthy skin and shiny coat



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* Adult Rich in Succulent Roast Chicken dry cat food compared with GO Cat Chicken & Duck and Purina One Cat Adult Chicken and Rice. ** Top 2 leading brands sold in supermarkets based on IRI data for 52 weeks ending 31 Dec 2016. *** Eldredge DM, DVM; Carlson DG, DVM; Carlson LD, DVM; Giffin JM, MD. Editor: Adelman B. Cat owner's home veterinary handbook. Third Edition p.221, 2007.

Speak up - has the cat got your tongue?

Some cat breeds like to chat and others prefer the sound of silence - all cats communicate with their humans on one level or another but do we understand them?



BY HANNAH BARRICK

A lot of us, as cat owners, like to think we know exactly what our furry felines are saying to us as we know our pets the most intimately. Of course most of the time this may be true, as we each know our cat's personality, habits and routines. But what about their body language? And what exactly is our kitty saying to us when they look up at us and give us that sweet, plaintive meow? Research has shown that cats actually put a lot more effort into communicating with us than they do with each other.

When communicating with other cats, most of the time the subtle visual and body language signals they use are so subtle that they can be hardly recognisable, yet each cat will know exactly what message is being sent. When communicating with us, however, cats will often exaggerate their body language signals much more than usual, in an effort to make it obvious to us what they want to say.

Even meowing is something that they mostly reserve for communicating with us, as they have learned a vocal signal will get our attention. In truth, with maybe the odd exception, cats rarely meow at each other as visual cues and posture is usually enough to understand what is being said. So just how do we decipher what they are telling us, and what are some of the most common mistakes we make?

One of the most expressive ways cats communicate is with their tails.

Most of us are aware that a cat holding his tail straight up is usually a greeting signal. If the tail is straight up and also has the tip curved over, this is also showing friendliness, the same as when a cat wraps its tail around your legs when standing next to you.

When a cat is feeling relaxed, they may just allow their tail to hang straight down in a relaxed way, although, as a lot of us are familiar with, if the tail is tucked between the legs this indicates the cat is feeling fearful or defensive. However it is important to note that a 'wagging' tail does not mean the same with cats as it does in dogs. If a cat is slowly swishing its tail from side to side, it may mean he is curious and trying to decide how he feels about a situation, whereas a fast or thumping tail is usually a good indicator that he is agitated and should be left alone.

Of course, most people know that when a cat has the fur on his tail standing on end and fluffed, similar to the 'toilet brush' tail seen in the famous 'halloween cat' symbols, this means your kitty is feeling very fearful and defensive, as they are trying to make themselves appear bigger and more intimidating.

The eyes

Cat's eyes can also be very expressive. When a cat's pupils are dilated, it can mean they are feeling fearful or anxious, as they are trying to take in as much of what is going on as possible.

In contrast, if a cat's pupils are narrowed or constricted, this can mean in some cases that they are being aggressive. A fixed stare from a cat is a challenge, although if they blink slowly at you, sometimes referred to as the 'kiss blink', this is a sign of great affection and trust, as in a cat's world it shows your kitty trusts you enough to close his eyes in your presence.

Surprisingly, many people can misunderstand what their cats are telling them and miss a lot of the subtle cues their cat is giving them, for example, when you hear people say: "Oh cats are not affectionate or social, they only ever come to us when they want food." In reality, these people are simply missing the subtle signs of social interaction and affection their kitty is giving them.

As well as the 'kiss blink' previously mentioned, if your kitty sleeps/naps or lies down near you, it can be a sign of affection and friendliness, the same as when they follow you around the house and sit down to watch what you are doing (even at inconvenient moments, such as when you are in the shower!).

Of course, most of us believe that when a cat rubs his head or cheek against you, he is being friendly. He is, in actual fact, scent - marking you. Cats have scent glands on their chin and by rubbing against you, they are saying: "You are mine!" Don't be put out though... in a cat's world, that is a great sign of affection. If your cat is sweet



enough to lick or 'kiss' you... even better! Your kitty has officially accepted you as a member of her family. Even playful or gentle biting can be a way of your cat showing her affection for you.

However, it may be necessary to discourage this particular behaviour by simply watching your cat's behaviour and stopping interaction or play if

your kitty is becoming too excited or stimulated by the interaction, especially if there are young children around (playing with your cat with cat teasers and cat toys can also help prevent 'playful biting' – playing with your cat with your hands may only serve to encourage biting and teach your kitty it is ok to bite and pounce on your

hands!). If she does playfully bite you, simply immediately stop all interaction and walk away. As you can see, there are a number of subtle signs our kitties use to show us their affection, and by learning their unique language and behaviour, we can learn to understand our feline friends and what they are trying to tell us on a deeper level.

The art of being a well-groomed puss

Cats generally love to keep themselves clean and looking good but a regular grooming session from their owner will help them bond and there are health benefits too

BY MANDY WILLETTS

Many cats are well equipped to care for their grooming needs themselves. How often do you see your fab feline giving their coat a rigorous rake through with their barbed tongue or delicately smoothing over their ears with a well-licked paw? Their natural flexibility allows them to reach almost every part of their body with their tongue.

Dead hairs are removed in the process, leaving their coat looking glossy and smooth. However, licking their fur will mean loose hairs are ingested, building up in the cat's digestive system and forming a fur ball that eventually will need to be eliminated. All very unpleasant. So a regular grooming session from you can help prevent the build up of fur balls and at least reduce the number of times your cat needs to get rid of them.

Grooming performs a number of important functions besides removing loose hair. Dead skin cells and parasites will also be cleaned out and the massaging action stimulates the skin glands, producing a light film of oil which waterproofs the skin. Evaporation of saliva from the coat helps to keep a cat cool when the weather is hot.

Helping your cat to keep in tip top condition will not only benefit his coat but by brushing and stroking him you can be aware of any strange lumps and bumps or scratches that may appear. The earlier you start this process

with a cat, i.e., as a kitten preferably, the more they will accept it as a pleasurable and normal experience.

What do you need?

Some basic equipment is all that is required for most cats.

Brush - a pure bristle brush lifts the fur without breaking the hairs, allowing the slicker brush to remove any loose hairs from the coat.

Comb - a wide-toothed wire comb is better for grooming longhaired or semi-longhaired cats as it will deal with knots and help check for parasites hiding in the coat. Shorthaired or Rex breeds will need a fine toothed wire comb as well as a soft bristle brush.

Mitt - A rubber mitt is particularly useful if your cat isn't keen on being groomed but will tolerate you stroking him. Also useful for shorthaired cats and Rex breeds.

Cloth - A damp chamois or velvet cloth is great for giving any cat, including the Sphynx, a final 'polish'. Not only does it feel good but it also gives a good shine to the coat.

Cotton buds/wipes - Moistened cotton pads are perfect for cleaning the corner of the eyes. Cotton buds dipped in a little warm olive oil help to keep ears clean - be gentle. Veterinary surgeries and grooming salons sell specialist eye and ear wipes too that are a useful addition to the grooming kit.

Talcum powder

Unperfumed talcum powder or specialist coat powder is useful for untangling a stubborn knot in a longhaired cat. Sprinkle a little over the knotted area and gently tease it out.

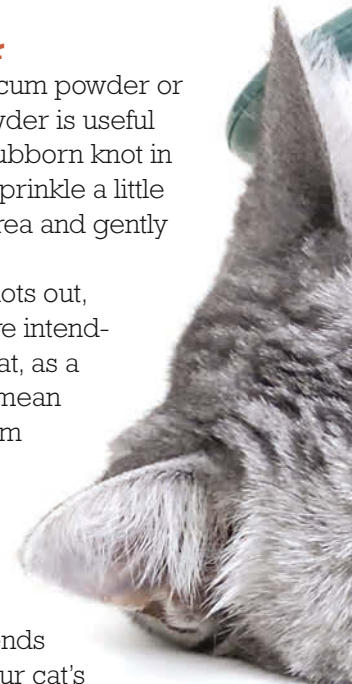
Try not to cut knots out, especially if you are intending to show your cat, as a clipped coat may mean disqualification from the competition.

How often should I groom?

This really depends on the length of your cat's coat. Longhaired cats such as Maine Coons grow thick winter coats which they will start to shed as soon as the weather begins to warm up. Of course this will mean more loose hairs and these will need to be removed frequently to prevent the build up of hairballs. Around 15 minutes each day will be adequate with a thorough grooming session once a week.

Shorthaired cats moult too but don't suffer from knots in their coats. A once-a-week groom will suffice.

However, if your cat is elderly or unwell, he will probably be less able to reach all areas of his coat by himself and will appreciate a little more help from you and will probably be pleased to get some welcome attention.





What is involved?

The best recipe for success is to keep grooming sessions short and pleasurable. If you are grooming your cat for the first time, sit him on your lap or a table and just stroke your hands over his head and body praising him as you do so if he is happy and calm. As soon as he seems to have had enough, let him go. Forcing a cat to remain still will only cause more resistance next time you want to groom them.

Try to groom your cat after he has eaten as he is more likely to be relaxed and will naturally be keen to get clean at this time.

Eyes, ears and claws

A gentle clean with moistened cotton pads will remove matter from around the eyes while cotton buds dipped in a little warm olive oil keep ears clean. Don't ever poke these inside the cat's ears... just gently wipe the inner ear area that can easily be seen.

Claws will need to be kept trimmed but if you allow your cat outside or provide a good scratching post indoors, there should be no need for any further treatment. A cat's claws contain scent glands and he uses them as a marking tool and also to leave 'messages' for other cats in the area. If

you feel you need to take off the sharp points, special clippers or scissors are available. Your veterinary nurse can show you how to do this.

Shorthaired cats:

Place your cat on a towel or blanket on a table or work surface. Start by grooming with your hands to keep your cat relaxed. Take your soft slicker brush and, starting at your cat's head, brush along the lay of the coat to his tail. Work along his back and then each side. You will probably be amazed at how much loose hair is shed from a shorthaired cat's coat.

Finish with a wipe with a damp



chamois or velvet cloth to give the coat shine.

Longhaired cats:

Place your cat on a towel or blanket on a table or work surface. Run your fingers through the coat, feeling for unusual lumps and bumps and any matted areas. If you find any matts, try to tease them out with your fingers first before you start using the tools.

Start with your wide-toothed comb and work through the entire coat, removing loose hairs and any debris caught in it. Begin at the head then focus on his back and both sides. Always

work in the direction of the coat, never against it.

Turn your cat over and groom his chest, belly and inner thighs. You may need someone to help you hold the cat firmly while you do this.

If your cat starts to show signs of stress at any time, call it a day.

Finish by combing the cat's tail, a little at a time, from the hair root outwards.

A soft slicker brush will finish the coat off nicely, giving it a good shine.

If your cat doesn't like being groomed you may be best advised to seek professional help. Signs that

he is uncomfortable with the situation include:

- A twitching or vigorously swishing tail
- Flattening his ears
- Being tense or crouching
- His body or head shaking
- Sudden scratching or self-grooming

Praise your cat throughout each grooming session and give him a treat when you have finished if you think he deserves it. Talk to him calmly and reassuringly, with the occasional chin-tickle, and hopefully he will find it an enjoyable experience.



Teeth and gums

Not exactly grooming as such but when you have your cat settled on the table or your lap for a grooming session, it is the ideal time to see if he will allow you to examine

his mouth. If you can, check his gums for red areas that might be inflamed and causing him discomfort.

Not many older cats are keen to start a dental routine so it is best to start cleaning a cat's teeth when they are a kitten. Use a soft, small

toothbrush or finger brush specifically designed for cats and only use a pet toothpaste. Human toothpaste is too strong and contains too many chemicals. Ask about toothbrushes and toothpastes at your veterinary surgery if you are in any doubt.

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Stay safe while enjoying the summer sun

There is no doubt that soaking up some warm sunshine has the feel good factor but too much of a good thing can have serious consequences

BY SONJA K STEINER

Cats are known for lying around in their favourite spot sunbathing for hours on end so whilst they may look comfortable basking in the sun, staying out for too long may result in them suffering from sunburn, dehydration and heatstroke.

It is important that your cat has access to fresh water at all times but this is more prevalent especially in the summertime when rising temperatures can cause dehydration more quickly. If your cat likes to spend their time outside then place water bowls in different places or perhaps consider purchasing a water fountain as some

of these will keep the water fresh and cool. Try to provide a cool and sheltered area, especially if the cat does not have access to the indoors whilst you are out.

If you have a greenhouse make sure there is no way they can get inside and get locked in. It is also worth checking your car as many of us may leave a door open to try to cool the car down and without knowing your inquisitive bundle of fluff has jumped in for the ride. Also never leave a cat in its carry basket in the car, even if the window is open.

Heatstroke

Heatstroke can be a life threatening condition and is considered an emergency which requires urgent veterinary attention. If treatment is delayed then the cat could develop severe neurological problems.

The symptoms of heatstroke include anxiety, diarrhoea, dizziness, increased heart rate, panting, shaking and vomiting and could lead to your cat falling into a coma. If you suspect your cat has heatstroke then you need to cool them down by wrapping them in a towel soaked in cold water, avoiding the ear area. It is very important to cool them down slowly to avoid reducing the core temperature too much and causing hypothermia and shocking which can be just as harmful as hyperthermia and take them to the vets immediately.



Dehydration (Hypohydration)

This is a serious and potentially life threatening condition which requires immediate veterinary attention. Dehydration is caused by an excessive loss of water and electrolytes (minerals such as chloride, potassium and sodium) from the body. Most animals are made up of 60% water so when that ratio falls just 5% below normal, that is when cats can start showing signs of dehydration. This in turn can lead to illness such as kidney disease. If your cat has recently had diarrhoea or vomiting this may also cause dehydration so it is important to monitor them closely for signs of dehydration.

So what are the signs to look for?

Symptoms of dehydration include: constipation, depression, dry, tacky gums, increased heart rate, lethargy, poor capillary refill time, poor skin elasticity, sunken eyes.

One of the ways to check for dehy-





dration is to perform a skin turgor test. Simply grasp some skin at the scruff of the neck and gently pull it up. In a hydrated cat, the skin will immediately spring back but in a dehydrated cat the skin will be slower to retract and the longer it takes, the more severe the dehydration is.

Another test is the capillary refill time which helps to test your cat's blood circulation and is also an indication of dehydration, heart failure or shock. To do this test, lift your cat's upper lip and press the flat of your finger against the gum tissue. Remove the pressure and you will see a white mark on the gum where your finger was placed. In a healthy cat it should take 1-2 seconds for the white spot to return to pink.

Your vet may want to perform tests to try to establish why your cat is dehydrated. Dehydration is treated by giving fluids intravenously via a cannula or subcutaneously (injection).

Sunburn in cats

Just like people, cats can get sunburn, whether that be from strong sunshine or when it is warm and cloudy. White cats, cats with white ears, noses, pale coloured cats or cats such as the Sphynx are the most at risk. This is because of the lack of melanin, a skin and hair pigment, and protective hair in these areas. Cats with sunburn may not allow you to touch the affected area as it is painful, the skin may appear red and where severe sunburn has occurred, scabs or lumps could appear. If this is the case you should seek advice from a vet as over time the damage caused can increase the risk of developing squamous cell carcinoma which is a form of skin cancer.

It is advisable to use a waterproof, non-toxic sunscreen applied to the cat's ears and nose which are the two areas most likely to burn and one which your cat can't lick off. If possible, apply the sun cream about 20 min-

utes before your cat is due to venture outside and, if you can, reapply the cream throughout the day. Sunscreen for humans may contain chemicals or perfumes that can be harmful to your cat but there are specialist brands of sunscreen that are suitable for your cat and your veterinary surgeon will be able to advise which ones to use.

If at all possible, try to keep your cat indoors between 10am and 3pm as this is when the sun is hottest and at its most dangerous. If you can, provide a shady area where your cat can hide and keep cool, as well as fresh water.

A quick checklist for the summer months:

- Shelter
- Sun cream (non-toxic)
- Water
- Check your greenhouse, shed and car in case your cat has snuck in.

A skilful predator, the leopard earns his spots

These secretive, elegant spotted felines may be the most solitary cats, but they are excellent hunters and the strongest climber. They are proudly part of the big five

BY YOLANDA WESSELS

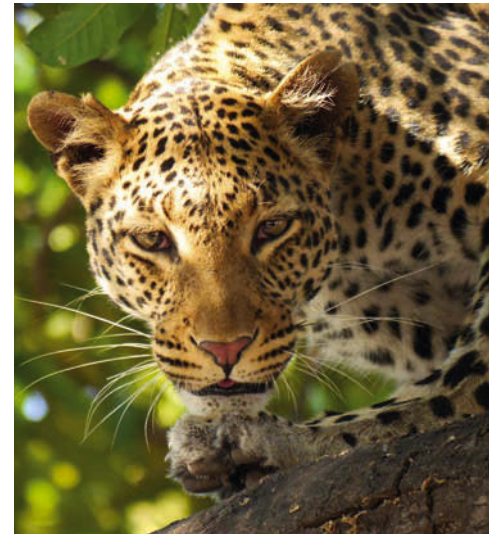
Leopard means 'predator of all prey'. It is one of five extant species and the genus *Panthera* which includes the jaguar, lion, snow leopard and the tiger. They have the largest distribution of any wild cat and are exceptionally adapted, thus having the widest habitat range of all the large cats. It includes desert, forest and mountainous regions.

They are found over many countries including Africa, the Middle and Far East, Siberia, Sri Lanka and Malaysia. Half of the leopard population is

found in Africa. Leopard populations are declining and fragmented outside sub-Saharan Africa. Leopards are nocturnal animals but also seen early morning and late afternoon. They are mostly solitary except during mating season.

Territory

Leopards are extremely territorial and each cat has a range that overlaps with neighbours. The male's range is much larger than the female's and usually overlaps with several females,



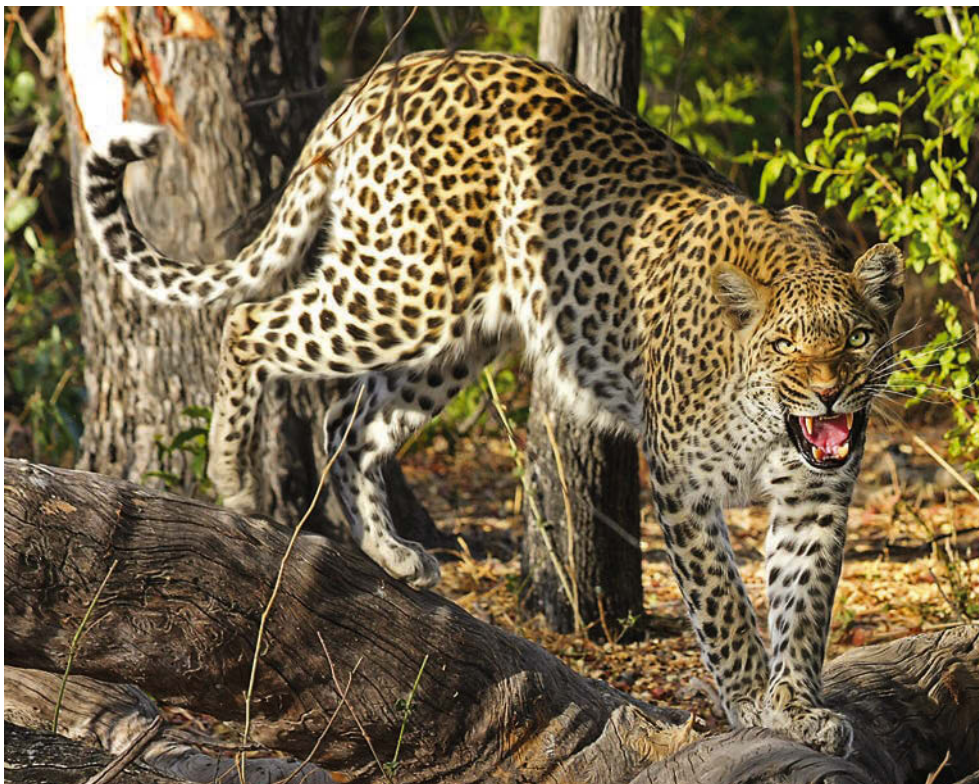
determined by the number of females present. The female territory size is determined mostly by the availability of prey. The male leopard will have exclusive breeding rights to the females that are found within his territory.

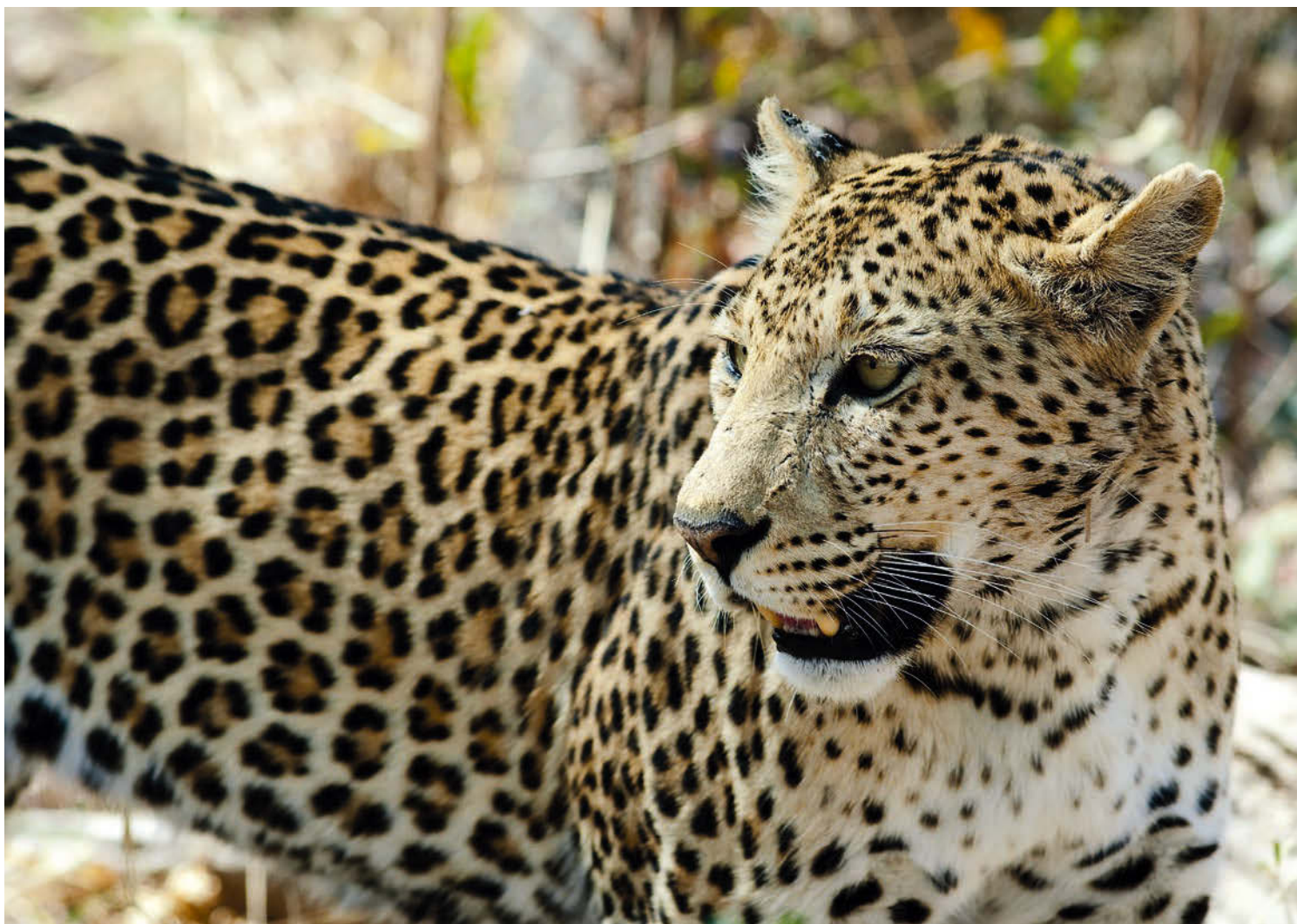
Females will defend their territory from unrelated females and males against other males. They mark their territory with scent marking (spraying of urine in an upwards motion to facilitate marking at head height) and loud calls, making their presence known, without coming into contact with each other. Territory may also be marked with droppings and tree-scratching. Other sounds include cough, puff, meow, grunt, spit and rasp.

Appearance

The second largest living cat, size varies considerably but males tend to be bigger (31-91 kg) than females (17-58 kg). Colouring of leopards varies from white to bright golden brown with black rosettes and spots. The rosettes usually do not have a spot in the middle and are found on the sides of the body, back and upper tail. The rest of the body (legs, belly, neck and face) is covered with small to large black spots. The rosette patterns and spotted whisker bases are unique to each leopard and used to identify individuals.

The back of the ears are white at the top and black below. Some leopards appear to have a completely black





undercoat (panthers) due to the high production of melanin. However, they still have rosette patterns which are visible under certain light intensities.

Hunting

These athletic cats have stocky, muscular bodies, short powerful legs, a big head and a long tail with a white tip. This is used to provide direction to a female's cubs when moving through their territory, with the cubs following mum. They can jump to a height of more than 2.5 metres above the ground. The large, sharp retractable claws help them to defend themselves, trip fleeing prey and climb trees.

Large eyes provide them with binocular vision to determine distance accurately. The large pupils assist to see in dark nights. The narrow white line below the eyes help reflect light into the eyes for improved night vision. A leopard's night vision is six to eight times better than that of humans.

The ability to climb trees from a young age, enables them to be safe from lion and hyena attacks. Large jaws and canines are used to kill their prey and carry or drag it from one place

to another. The large head and neck allows them to carry prey weighing up to 125kg up a tree. They feed on small animals such as rodents, hares and baboons and medium size antelope. They also favour fish, reptiles and birds. Strong swimmers, they are very much at home in the water.

Reproduction

Males reach sexual maturity between two and a half to four years and females between two and a half and three years. They breed throughout the year and are polygamous (males mate with more than one female). To indicate her readiness for mating, the female will approach the male and sway in front of him, swat him in the face with her tail while emitting a low rumbling growl. When mating is complete, the female will roll over. To ensure that conception takes place, leopards will mate repeatedly during the female oestrus cycle. After mating, they separate.

Following a gestation period of 100 days, she gives birth to 2-3 cubs which she raises on her own. Fathers may interact with their partners and cubs

at times. She keeps her young hidden for the first eight weeks, often moving them to new locations if she senses danger. The mother brings them prey when they are around six weeks of age and they are then taught to hunt. They continue to live with their mother for up to two years.

The males move away from their natal area while the females tend to remain resident at the borders of their mother's territory. The typical average lifespan in the wild is between 12 and 17 years and around 20 years in captivity.

Conservation status

The leopard is classified as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List. Leopard populations are threatened by habitat loss (agricultural developments), fragmentation and being hunted illegally, mostly as trophies or for medicinal practices. They are protected under national legislation throughout most of their range. Several organisations, like the Cape Leopard Trust in the Western Cape in South Africa and Panthera, have taken up the task to protect leopard populations and raise awareness.



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firmation pack. Among other items, the pack contains a wallet card and information document letting others know they have chosen Cats Protection to care for their cat in the event of their death.

Once notified that a registrant has passed away, Cats Protection swiftly arrange for any cats they own to be brought in to one of their 34 centres or over 250 branches around the country.

With more than 90 years at the forefront of cat welfare, Cats Protection's volunteers and staff give each cat the individual care they need until they find a suitable, loving new home.

Bobby's story

Ten-year-old Bobby's owner had registered with Cat Guardians, so when she sadly passed away she knew he would be well cared for. Once notified of her death, Cats Protection arranged for Bobby to be taken into their Derby Adoption Centre. Bobby's owner had provided information about his likes and dislikes so the centre's staff and volunteers could make him feel at home straight away and find him the best possible new owner.

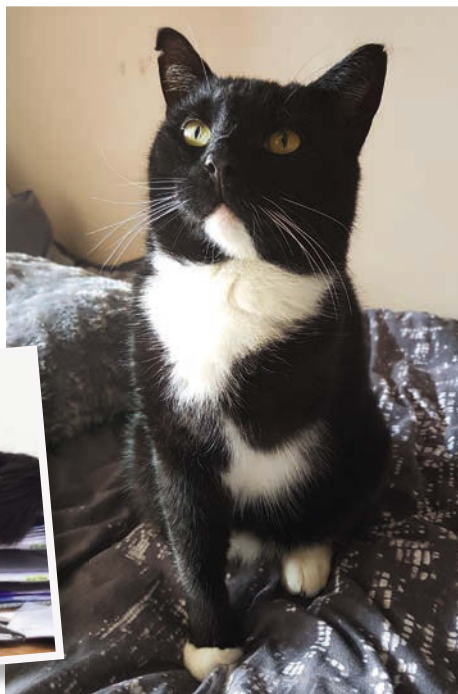
Bobby is missing his front left leg but that didn't stop this inquisitive cat from playing, jumping up in his pen and greeting visitors at the centre. After just a few weeks he went home with Rachael and her family.

Bobby quickly became part of the family in his new forever home and formed a bond with Rachael's blind cat Stevie. Rachael is delighted by how well he settled. "Bobby is such a lovely cat, very loving and funny," she says. "He tends to spend a lot of time upstairs in the kids' room, sleeping on the bunk bed mostly. When he comes down he likes to run through the lounge – you always know he's coming because of the three-legged noise bounding through. We're very happy to have Bobby as part of the family."

The future's certain for Willow and Wolfie-Pumpkin

Sarah Lancefield and her partner Ian rehomed their cats, Willow and

“Cat Guardians has given us peace of mind that our beloved cats will be rehomed and cared for.”





Wolfie-Pumpkin, from their local animal rehoming centre. Both cats had suffered traumatic early lives.

Willow had been used to breed litter after litter of kittens. Unsurprisingly, given her ordeal, she was cautious around humans but over time Willow learnt to trust Sarah and Ian and blossomed into the loving, majestic cat she is today. "She pads gently on my chest for a cuddle at 4am but I never mind that special time with her every day," says Sarah.

Wolfie-Pumpkin, a Maine Coon cross, was found wandering alone along a main road, just three weeks old and with a broken leg. He needed weeks of intensive treatment and care but Sarah and Ian fell in love with this adorable bundle of fluff at first sight.

Although he has recovered from his broken leg, muscle and nerve damage has left him with a limp but this doesn't stop him from flying up and down the garden – usually chasing Willow around!

Sarah found peace of mind with Cat Guardians

One day, while looking around the Cats Protection website, Sarah came across information about the Cat Guardians service. With personal experience of how difficult it can be for pets when their owner suddenly dies, she decided to register and make sure Willow and Wolfie-Pumpkin would be provided for, no matter what happened.

Sarah says: "After my sister and her husband passed away quite unexpectedly, I had to help rehome

her two Bearded Collie dogs, Grub and Gabriel, which was quite a difficult and traumatic thing to have to deal with. So I don't want the same to happen to one of my family members should anything unfortunate happen to us!"

"Registering with Cat Guardians has allowed us to plan for how we would like our cats cared for in the event of our death," she continues. "We have been able to give specific details, likes and dislikes and what kind of homes they would be suited too. The service has given us peace of mind knowing that our beloved cats will be rehomed and cared for appropriately in the event that we are not around and able to do this for them any more. We would thoroughly recommend this service to any cat owner."

Discover peace of mind for yourself

To find out how Cat Guardians can provide for your cat's future, please visit www.cats.org.uk/catguardians or telephone 01825 741 291 to request a free information leaflet.

Although there is no charge for this service, many supporters do choose to remember Cats Protection in their wills. These special gifts fund more than half of everything Cats Protection do to

help cats and kittens across the UK. Above all, gifts in wills help Cats Protection keep the special promise that underpins all of their vital work: that they will never put a healthy cat to sleep.

Demonstrating the need to neuter

Not having your cat neutered at an early age can have disastrous and upsetting consequences, as BCWR witnessed recently on two separate occasions

BY SONJA K STEINER

Bradford Cat Watch Rescue believe that rescues should work together. They are fortunate that they have the skills, expertise, knowledge and equipment to provide specialist nursing and intensive care. This is in addition to having a locum vet who is happy to provide out of hours veterinary support and intervention.

BCWR believe that each and every rescue has its own strengths and specialisms and if all the rescues work together, their strengths are combined which in turn could potentially save more lives... and Chester's story is testament to this.

One of two particular cases who have come into the rescue and really reinforced the importance of neutering.

Chester

This adorable little man was transferred to BCWR by another rescue. He was nearly 14 weeks old and had been under veterinary treatment for three weeks as he was suffering from bowel problems including chronic diarrhoea which made his bottom incredibly sore. He weighed only 700g which is the ideal weight of a six week-old lactating kitten.

Chester was very poorly; he was given pain relief and antibiotics and was on hourly observations. A visit to the vets was planned the following day. Due to Chester's condition, he was fed little and often and within 24

hours had been to his litter tray and produced a small formed soft stool. It was such a thrill for the volunteers when he started to pass small amounts of normal faeces!

Then...Katie had been closely monitoring Chester but nothing could have prepared her for what she would see. She discovered that worms were coming out of his eyes. She has never seen this before and it was one of the most horrific things she has witnessed. She immediately sought veterinary intervention and Chester was given treatment.

After a few days, Chester was slowly showing signs of improvement, gaining weight and confidence. From the outset, his clinical health and behaviour have been closely monitored and from these observations it appeared that Chester was blind. If the blindness was confirmed it would piece together the other neurological symptoms that Chester had displayed such as twitching and staring. His care plan was adjusted as if he was blind and prompting more responses from him.

Chester visited the vet for a lengthy and in-depth examination and it was confirmed that he is blind. He was booked in for further tests and procedures in relation to his bowels. Fast forward a few days and Chester was due to have a general anaesthetic so he could have irrigation of the bowel. This would also enable the vet to see exactly what was going on. In the last



Carrots

five days he has made a vast improvement and has been weaned off all his medication and the distended abdomen and bloating has virtually disappeared.

Whilst he is still having issues with his stools, it was decided that the risks of the general anaesthetic were not justified so it was decided to put Chester on a strict hydrolyzed protein diet whereby he has access to specialist food for 12 hours a day then the bowel rests and repairs for the next 12 hours.

Hydrolyzed protein is protein that has been broken down into its component amino acids prior to consumption. This food trial is extremely expensive and will be carried out for at least the next four weeks. It is highly likely that Chester will experience inflammatory bowel symptoms throughout his life and it is vital that he receives strict parasite control throughout his life to minimise further damage.

Fast forward again and now six months old, Chester is doing really well. His reactions are that of a normal cat and he is lively and cheeky. He is with a long-term foster carer who is experienced in dealing with cats with sensory problems so he is coming on leaps and bounds. He is currently being fed a veterinary diet of both wet and dry food, to try and keep his condition under control.

Chester will remain in the care of BCWR due to his complex needs.

What caused these symptoms?

It emerged that Chester's mother had arrived at another rescue where she was confirmed as being pregnant. It would appear that she had not been treated for fleas, worms or parasites. As a result, Chester had a very heavy worm burden which caused inflammation and a lot of scarring on his bowels and resulted in irreversible damage to his bowel plus permanent sight loss. This could all have been avoided had Chester's mother been treated.

Elle – a tragic loss of life

Elle was already heavily pregnant when she came into the care of BCWR at around seven months old, having been found living as a stray. Despite only being at the rescue for a short period of time she became a secret favourite of the volunteers due to her sweet and endearing nature.

One morning Elle passed a very odd thing in her litter tray. It resembled a ribbon but was fleshy to touch. Elle was relatively bright though she was a little bit off her food which is not unusual in late pregnancy.

However, the next morning she was very pale and her breath was smelly. She was immediately taken to the vet who was extremely concerned and Elle was prepared for an immediate caesarean section.

Within a very short space of time Elle's condition deteriorated rapidly, she was on fluids and given intravenous antibiotics. During the procedure, the vet found she had eight malformed kittens inside a severely infected uterus. The infection was evident elsewhere so the vet continued to flush out the infected area and finally the surgery was complete. Elle's condition was critical as she had septicaemia.

Whilst Elle was in recovery in the oxygen tent, Katie was contacted by the vet to discuss an intensive care plan required for when she came back to the rescue. One of the volunteers at BCWR was on their way to the vets to collect Elle when they received a phone call to say she had passed away.

Such a needless, sad and utterly preventable death for a young cat who



Chester



Elle



Carrots

had her whole life ahead of her.

Please do neuter your cats to prevent unwanted pregnancies and, in the event there is an accidental pregnancy, please do take advice from your veterinary surgeon about what flea and worm control is safe to use in pregnancy.

Working together

Bradford Cat Watch Rescue has had a very busy few weeks with the launch of two new initiatives as well as fundraising over the bank holiday weekends while looking after the many cats and kittens in their care.

BCWR Barn Cat Project

BCWR Barn Project is a new initiative to give cats who are not house cats a chance at having a good life. All cats that come into the rescue are assessed and given a chance for socialisation with humans. If they seem to prefer a more independent life than that of a family cat, we will endeavour to seek suitable barn/farm home situations for them. Some of these cats are somewhat friendly and like to be petted. Some are more removed and prefer not to be touched or approached. But they are all natural hunters. Sometimes

we rescue a cat that is not suited to a family home and would much prefer independent living.

BCWR rescue the cats, have them spayed/neutered and also micro-chipped.

An adopter of a BCWR Barn Cat will need to provide food and water for the cats each day, as well as a cosy shelter where they can be warm and safe. They will also need to be provided with health care as needed and BCWR will continue to offer support with this.

In exchange for these basic essentials, the cats will help control the rodent population in the adopter's barns, outbuilding, gardens and around homes. To get the cats started, BCWR will bring them to your home and get them set up for a 'settling in' period that will last two or three weeks.

BCWR do not charge an adoption fee for barn cats but they do require an adoption contract to be signed and donations are always appreciated.

Topples Trust

A tribute to Toppie appeared in the March 2017 edition of Cat World. Toppie was known and loved for his big

personality and even bigger heart, so it was decided to set up Toppie's Trust.

The primary objective is to respect and preserve the relationship between owners and their cats and BCWR hope to work in partnership with owners to overcome any difficulties that might arise.

Toppie's Trust was established to provide help when any aspect of care for an owned cat poses a problem - for example, providing cat food or seeking vet care for a cat during an owner's period of adversity. Please contact us for further details.

Carrots update

Carrots also appeared in the March edition - this brave little kitten had to go through major surgery to remove his eye. I am delighted to say he is coming on leaps and bounds and amazes everyone with his zest for life despite being blind. Everyone who meets him falls in love with his personality. Katie thought readers may like to see these stunning photographs of him.

This article is dedicated to Bonnie and Elle.

For more information on BCWR please visit www.bcwr-kittens.co.uk

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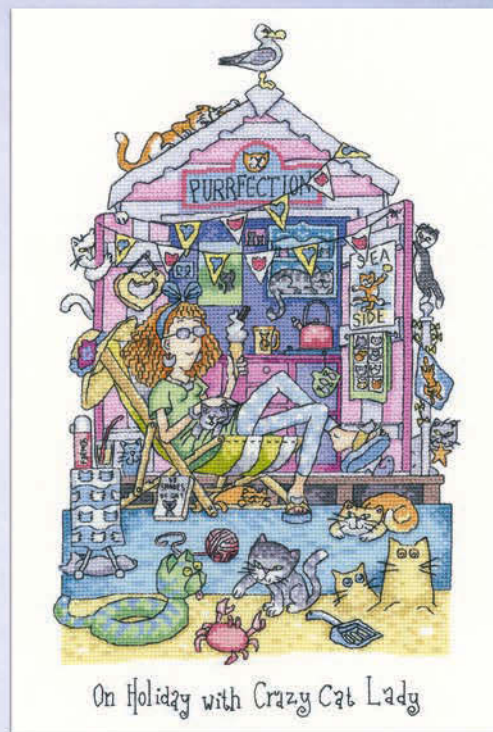
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Behold the beauty of the Ragdoll

Large, lovely and devoted to their owners, the Ragdoll breed is simply stunning to look at and a pleasure to own either as a pet or to show

Stunning to look at, Ragdolls have wonderful temperaments too and if you are prepared to groom them regularly and keep them entertained indoors, they will make a loving and loyal addition to any household.

Simple beginnings

The story of the Ragdoll begins with Ann Baker of California who bred experimental Persians in early 1960s' America. Ann worked in a Laundromat owned by a Mrs Pennels, who had many semi-feral cats roaming her land - one being the legendary 'angora-type' white cat called Josephine.

Nursed back to health after being hit by a car, this may possibly have accounted for Josephine's relaxed friendly attitude towards humans and, according to Ann, her future litters of kittens were similar - large and docile, with non-matting fur and a high pain threshold. Josephine had several litters of kittens before she was sadly put to sleep by Mr Pennels after proving a nuisance to his dog, whilst protecting her kittens. However, Ann gained possession of three of Josephine's offspring she deemed suitable to breed from and began line breeding to produce the breed she named 'Ragdoll'.

From these three cats: Daddy Warbucks - a seal mitted with a white nose blaze and tail tip (whom Ann considered the epitome of the Ragdoll - the 'prize!'), Fugianna - a

seal bicolour, long and lanky like her mother and thirdly Buckwheat, a thick furred black self (solid), the foundations of the Ragdoll breed were laid. Ann operated a regimented breeding programme producing colourpointed, mitted and bicolour patterns from the three original cats and their offspring and although comparisons have been made to other breeds, Josephine and the fathers were semi-feral, therefore their parentage is unknown.

Ann set up her own registering body in 1971, called the International Ragdoll Cat Association (IRCA). In 1975 she patented the Ragdoll name and franchised breeding stock under very strict contracts. Time passed, with Ann's increased eccentricities causing several of the original purchasers of her Ragdoll cats, including Laura and Denny Dayton of the Blossom Time Cattery, California, to break their ties with her. Meanwhile, Ann lost many of her original Ragdoll breeding lines, claiming amongst other things, that her 'enemies' poisoned them - fortunately the Daytons continued breeding with those original lines until the early 80s.

Ragdolls in the UK

March 1981 heralded the arrival of the first Ragdolls reaching British shores. Pioneers of the breed - Lulu Rowley (Petil Lu cattery) and Pat Brownsell (Patriarca), imported 12 Blossom Time Ragdolls and set with a good diverse breeding foundation, the





UK embraced its own 'home-grown' Ragdolls.

Cats bred purely from the 12 original Blossom Time imports (in the original colours of seal, blue, chocolate and lilac) are commonly known worldwide as 'Old English' Traditional Ragdolls and still to this day, are celebrated to retain the look and temperament of those first imports and in turn, the primary Raggedy Ann foundation Ragdoll cats.

Towards the late 80s and early 90s further early American Ragdoll imports arrived in the original recognised colours and these are universally known as the Older American Traditional lines. The Red and Tabby Series Ragdoll imports followed in the mid to late 90s adding more variation of colour to the breed in the UK.

Appearance

Ragdolls are 'pointed' cats, in the three recognised patterns of Colour-pointed, Mitted and Bicolour in the colours of seal, blue, chocolate, lilac, red, cream, tortie and tabby. Chocolate and lilac are extremely rare in the breed although there has been a recognised outcross programme within the UK to endeavour to reintroduce these two colours.

With endearingly sweet expressions and beguiling trusting blue eyes, one could wax lyrical observing their many charms, including their silky semi longhaired coats, with ruffs, knickerbockers and plumed tails! Overall they give an impression of majestic elegance, power and strength, particularly the male - some reaching 20lbs or more, with the female generally much smaller.

A Ragdoll should have a body of good length with a long tail, strong bone structure and large, round, tufted paws to support his frame. The head silhouette shows a broad flat plane across a wide ear, set with good width of cheekbone, tapering down to a softly curved muzzle which depicts the famous Ragdoll smile on profile. A gently curved 'retrousee' nose completes that magic which is the Ragdoll cat.



Temperament

Large, placid, relatively undemanding and tolerant to most situations, the Ragdoll temperament is probably its most popular characteristic. They bond well with their owners but, due to their trusting nature, are not streetwise and are definitely indoor cats. Kittens are lively, inquisitive and full of fun. As they mature they become completely devoted to their owners and make the perfect house pet, being good with children and very keen to play. Fortunately, globally, Ragdoll cat breed clubs have striven to educate the public against the myths that these cats feel no pain!

Ragdoll colours

Originally only four colours were included in the standard – seal, blue, chocolate and lilac, all solid pointed. Seals and blues have always been the most popular, with the elusive chocolate and lilac rarely seen. Since then red and cream, tabbies and tortoiseshells have been introduced. Ragdolls come in four colour divisions - Solid Point, Tortie Point, Tabby Point and Tortie Tabby Point.

Solid point Ragdoll colours:

Seal: Matching deep seal brown points with a contrasting beige body colour

Blue: Grey-blue points with a bluish white body colour

Chocolate: Milk chocolate brown matching points with an ivory coloured body

Lilac: (sometimes known as 'frost' in the USA) with pinkish grey points and a magnolia body colour. Two further solid point colours have been added:

Red: (often called 'flame' in the USA). Here the points may be of any shade of red but although they may match in tone, the legs and feet are often of a lighter shade. The body colour is a pale cream.

Cream: The cream points may match in tone but, like red, the legs and feet will often be paler. The body colour is off-white.

Tortie point: The Tortie Point exhib-

Right: *Bludiamonds Tygra* - blue colour-point neuter female who won overall best in show at *The British Ragdoll Cat Club Show* in 2014 as a kitten and 2015 as a neuter. In this photo she is displaying the unique Ragdoll *retroussé* profile perfectly. She is also the daughter of *Dizzipaws Bruce*.

its a mixture of the four traditional solid colours with red and/or cream. Breeders aim for the 'broken' tortoiseshell effect in order to meet the show standards, although large areas of red or cream may show a few bars or stripes.

Tabby point: The Tabby Point must show distinct markings for showing – a clearly defined 'M' on the forehead, spectacle markings around the eyes, broken stripes or rings on the legs and rings on the tail with that all-important solid coloured tail tip. Tabby Pointed colours include Seal Tabby Point, Blue Tabby Point, Chocolate Tabby Point, Lilac Tabby Point, and Cream Tabby Point, giving points in Seal Tortie Tabby and Lilac Tortie Tabby.

Ragdoll patterns explained

Colourpointed: Colourpointed has deep matching points on its mask, ears, legs and tail, showing a softer hue on its body with no white colouring whatsoever.

Mitted: Mitted is similarly marked but with white chin, possible white nose blaze, white ruff and underbody, white mittens to the front paws with white socks up to the line of the hock or beyond on the hind legs.

Bi-Colour: Bicolour shows a striking white inverted 'V' to the mask, white ruff and underbody with clear white legs. A soft muted coloured saddle, often broken by white patches. Tail colour matching the ears and mask points.

Showing

Following the arrival of the first Ragdolls in the UK, in 1981, it took some time for the breed to achieve recognition under GCCF rulings.

A small and dedicated group of breeders worked tirelessly to attract Governing Council's interest and



by the late 80s it eventually became possible to exhibit Ragdolls at GCCF shows, leading to the breed being granted Preliminary Recognition in 1990. 1996 saw the Bicolour rise to Provisional Status with the Colourpointeds and Mitteds following suit in 1998 - they were on their way!

Twenty years later, in June 2001, the UK celebrated the Ragdoll breed - in all three patterns and the original four colours - as fully recognised at GCCF Championship level, with the Red and Tabby Series Ragdolls following in June 2003 – they had achieved their goal! Many outstanding Ragdolls have



Top left: *Ragshaven Targaryen – ragdoll of the year 2016 for The British Ragdoll Cat Club.*

Left: *Dizzipaws Zemo – overall best in show at The British Ragdoll Cat Club Show 29.4.17.*

Below left: *Dizzipaws Bruce – overall best in show at The Progressive Ragdoll Breed Club Show 2016 (two photos) also father of Dizzipaws Zemo.*

been shown in the early years, to be remembered in the archives of Ragdoll history, alongside the diligent work of their breeders and owners, past and present, who helped elevate the breed to where it stands today.

Standard of points

The overall impression given by a Ragdoll is that of a large, powerful, imposing cat, distinctively marked and striking in appearance. The cats should be relaxed in temperament, gentle and easy to handle.

Head: Broad head with flat plane, not domed and width between the ears. Cheeks well developed, with a rounded, well developed muzzle and firm chin with level bite. The nose

should be of medium length with a gentle dip and slightly retrousse tip.

Ears: Medium in size, set wide with a slight tilt forward. They should be well furnished and rounded at the tip.

Eyes: Large, well opened, slightly oblique and set well apart. Blue in colour - the deeper the blue, the better.

Body: Long and muscular. Short neck, heavy set. Broad chest.

Legs & paws: Medium in length and of substantial bone. Paws large, round, firm and tufted.

Tail: Long, bushy, slightly tapered towards the tip and should at least reach the shoulder and be in proportion to the body.

Coat: Silky texture, dense and medium in length. A ruff and knickerbockers are preferred on mature cats. A short coat in the summer is acceptable.

Note: Cats may not reach full maturity until between three and four years of age and therefore some degree of body shading is to be expected and cats should not be penalised as long as there is still contrast between body and points.



Grooming

Ragdolls require weekly grooming and maintenance to keep the long, dense, soft, silky coat tangle-free and free from stains, especially in the area of white fur in the mitted and bi-coloured varieties. Excess dead hair, especially during moulting, can cause potentially harmful hairballs if not groomed out on a weekly basis. Although nowhere as demanding as the Persian, a thorough combing with a widetoothed comb weekly is recommended for general maintenance.

Those intending to show their 'Rag-gies' must take special care to control the build-up of grease in the fur and prevent staining, especially on those white paws! Bathing is therefore recommended for cats competing on the show bench. As with all cats, the claws should be checked and clipped every week or so and the ears examined and kept clean. A scratching post is an essential item and will help prevent damage to furnishings.

Worth the wait

Ragdolls mature very slowly – often

taking up to four years before reaching their full legendary beauty. Kittens are born white with the pattern becoming apparent within a couple of days, deepening as they pass through different stages of growth ie: that lanky, rather plain adolescent phase of the pinched face and big ears, bearing little resemblance to the magnificent creature the Ragdoll is destined to be – not unlike the cygnet that blossoms into the graceful swan – the Ragdoll becomes more enchanting with age. And remember - this beautiful breed is addictive; one is never enough.

With thanks to The British Ragdoll Cat Club

- some of their recent prize winners are pictured here. For more details of the club, see page 40.

SCALE OF POINTS

Head	20
Ears	5
Eyes	10
Body & neck	20
Legs & paws	10
Tail	5
Coat length, texture & condition	10
Colour & markings	20
Total	100



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The British Ragdoll Cat Club

Mitted • Bicolour • Colourpointed

(Founded 1987)

Member of GCCF

Founded in 1987, The British Ragdoll Cat Club is the largest Ragdoll Cat Club in the UK and formed the Ragdoll BAC.

We are a very friendly and active club which caters for everyone who has an interest in Ragdoll cats, from the potential pet owner, to the show scene, to the most professional breeder.

For a reputable breeder list and a regularly updated kitten list please visit the TBRCC website www.tbrcc.co.uk. Our next breeder seminar will be held at Plumley, Cheshire on the 10th & 11th June 2017. Call Anne on 01677 425929 or see the website for more details.

To join our friendly club or for further information please contact: Anne Bradley 01677 425929 or Margaret Lynch 0161 2488940 (evenings only). You can also find us on Facebook! WWW.TBRCC.CO.UK



ON THE EDGE

THE ADVENTURES OF TWENTY-SOMETHING CAT LOVER KATY EDGE

It's a long way from pantomime season but shouts of 'he's behind you' are common and Snow White and the Seven Cats seems appropriate for now

This month I have Big News. You might want to sit down. And drink this cup of tea (passes mug). No, I'm not pregnant. No, I'm not engaged. It's SO MUCH BETTER THAN THAT*.

I've become a kitten fosterer.

A fosterer. Of KITTENS.

Yep, it's exactly as good as it sounds. Our local rescue centre has a list of volunteers who they call when stray kittens come in and these people look after the tiny squishbeans – I mean, ahem, infant felines – until they're old enough to go to forever homes. They might be six weeks old when they come to us or they might be only one day old! (ahhhhhhhh).

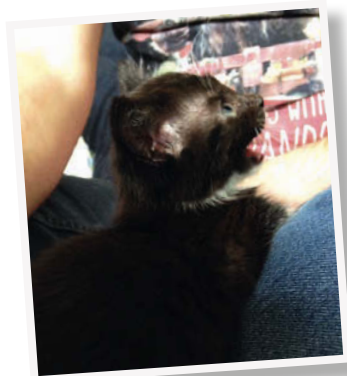
Our first set are four weeks old and they'll be staying with us until they're twelve weeks. That's two months of pure, blissful, froggppy, leg-flaily, needle-clawsy kittendom. And we're a week in.

The first rule of kitten fostering, they say, is not to name the kittens. Because then you get attached and they never leave. Well, ours have to leave – I'm sure Happee, Widget and Charlie would

have something to say if they didn't – but they came with names. Names that got swiftly changed, I might add, after it turned out three girls and a boy were actually three boys and a girl. So, ladies and gentlemen, may I introduce our guests for the next few issues... George, Pearl, Cody and Reuben!

George

Serendipitously named, 'Curious George' is into everything. He's the clown of the gang and super confident. Usually to be found with gravy on his nose looking wistfully at an empty plate, we predict that George will weigh the same as the other three put together by the time he leaves. He's mostly white with tabby and black splodges. His hobbies include food, scaling people like they're moun-



tains, food, sitting on Reuben's head, food, complaining about not having food, sitting somewhere high up and pretending he's a huge scary animal - and food.

Pearl

Like Marie in *The Aristocats*, Pearl is the lady of the bunch. Unlike the other three, whose eyes are starting to turn green, Pearl's eyes are still bright baby blue. She looks a bit like Batman with a black face (down to the nose) and white ruff. She terrifies us by jumping all over the place but makes up for it by being very sweet and cuddly. She keeps falling asleep on us, which is adorable. (I think Phil would totally let her stay.)

Cody

Cody is also mostly black with a few white bits – most noticeably a white splodge over half his nose – and looks a lot like Pearl

from a distance. Where Pearl is a jumper, Cody's a climber. Other than that, he doesn't really have any funny quirks but he's a good all-rounder. We like him.

Reuben

When Reuben first arrived he was noticeably more detached and withdrawn than his siblings, hissing when we tried to touch him. To start with he didn't eat or play as much and we were quite worried about him. He's beginning to come out of his shell now and he's been playing more with the others, although he still doesn't like it when George sits on his head. He's almost entirely white with a couple of black spots that make him look anxious.

So, you'll be pleased to learn that – as I count down the days to my thirtieth birthday – I'm every bit the batty cat lady I was when I started writing for *Cat World* in my early twenties. Check back for more updates on the kitty quartet (not to mention our resident trio of senior pusses) next month...

*OK, OK, it's on a par with those things.

Missing but all safe and

Cats have a habit of wandering wherever the fancy takes them, and while they usually come home like clockwork, says Pat Clements, sometimes they give us cause for concern

Well, there is good news and bad news, though very little of the latter, thank goodness.

The good news is very encouraging and concerns two missing cats. Dave (yes, that really is his name) is a black Siamese first cross and lives with his mate, Blue, in a busy suburb of Oxford. Three months ago he went missing and, despite lots of advertising and searching, he was nowhere to be found.

This was particularly sad as some years back another cat of the family was stolen, never to be seen again. Even more unfortunate was that someone saw him being taken but didn't know anything about the cat or the family and didn't realise what was taking place until it was too late. As Bimbo was suffering from a very bad flea allergy at the time and looked particularly ill-kempt, it was hoped it was assumed he was a poor stray who needed a home and care.

Back to Dave. This last week, much to everyone's delight, Dave reappeared at his home and, apart from being extremely thin, he was fine. When I worked in rescue in the Oxford area quite a number of cats came to grief when students went down for the vacation. And Dave lives in an

area packed with student lodgings.

It is possible he was accidentally shut in, perhaps in such lodgings, or someone was left to feed him and gave up. The former seems likely and, when released, he made his way home.

Cosy is a beautiful grey boy who had clearly had a home once but is now rather timid. Someone had been feeding him and managed to catch him and get him neutered. Unfortunately they had booked a three-week holiday and had to leave a friend to care for him. By the time they returned, although the carers and neighbours had seen him, Cosy no longer arrived for his regular evening meal.

Determined not to give up, everyone kept an eye out for him and left out food. He has now returned to the area and even allows one or two people to stroke him if he's in the mood - we won't mention the blood! His accommodation is all ready for him and hopefully it will be only a matter of time before he realises the love that awaits him.

Now for the bad bits - but I promise, you will laugh. All the animals watched with interest as I packed an overnight bag and Yvonne arrived to care for everyone while I went on my merry





and well in the end

way to watch my grandson when he was a mascot for West Bromwich Albion. There is no doubt the four-leggeds were relieved I was watching the match live rather than on the television.

Actually they were quite right, as I joined the spectacle of waving arms, shouted and leapt from my seat each time the Baggies got close to goal. When they scored, twice, I was glad to be among others who also went wild with joy.

Ah, but the animals didn't get it all their own way as, shortly after my return, England played Wales and I set aside my Saturday afternoon to watch. No-one is speaking to me at present.

No-one – and that includes me - is speaking to the pig either, as she is the other bit of bad news. Just after I got back she escaped and ate a whole £14 bag of dried cat food before I spotted her asleep at the end of the barn.

Hell hath no fury like a feline stirred



Many people have more than one feline and they live in perfect harmony so why do these two continue to dislike and antagonise each other unless they're asleep?

BY MARIA OWEN

Cuddly and charismatic, cats bring much joy to the folk whose lives and homes they share. How relaxing it is to wallow in the company of our feisty furry friends! Imagine life without the calming influence of a happy, contented puss or two....

Angry felines, on the other hand, are not beasts to be trifled with. Flattened ears, slow 'side-stepping', screeching, snarling, claws and teeth bared and ready for action? These are sure signs of an enraged cat - a far from charming creature that should be given a wide berth wherever possible. Far removed from the mild irritation seen when sleep or ablutions are rudely interrupted for a tickle, I'm talking about full-on fury here! (Or is that 'furry'?)

Domestic moggies love human company but are not natural pack animals. Faced with another of their own species, they are capable of producing displays of quite gruesome ferocity! I realised this, some years back when we welcomed into our home two brothers, Coco and Fizz, both now sadly departed. We expected the boys to enjoy each other's company and they did indeed play-chase, sometimes curl up together and even, on the odd occasion, wash each other. However, this usually ended up in a fearsome fracas with paws and claws flying to an accompaniment of strange wailing and hissing sounds.

Our current cat companions, Maisie and Theo, came to us from a local rescue centre a year and a half ago. The main reason for getting two cats was a desire to have at least one within cuddling distance but we had hoped, once again, that each would be company for the other. Roughly four months apart in age and unrelated, our young cats are entirely different in looks and temperament...and their mutual dislike is intense. They regularly chase each other and project themselves at great speed around the house, wreaking havoc along the way. These noisy whirlwinds of aggressive play usually culminate in vicious bloodcurdling brawls and attempting to separate them means their fury extends to us, with a risk of laceration to any parts of the body within lashing distance.

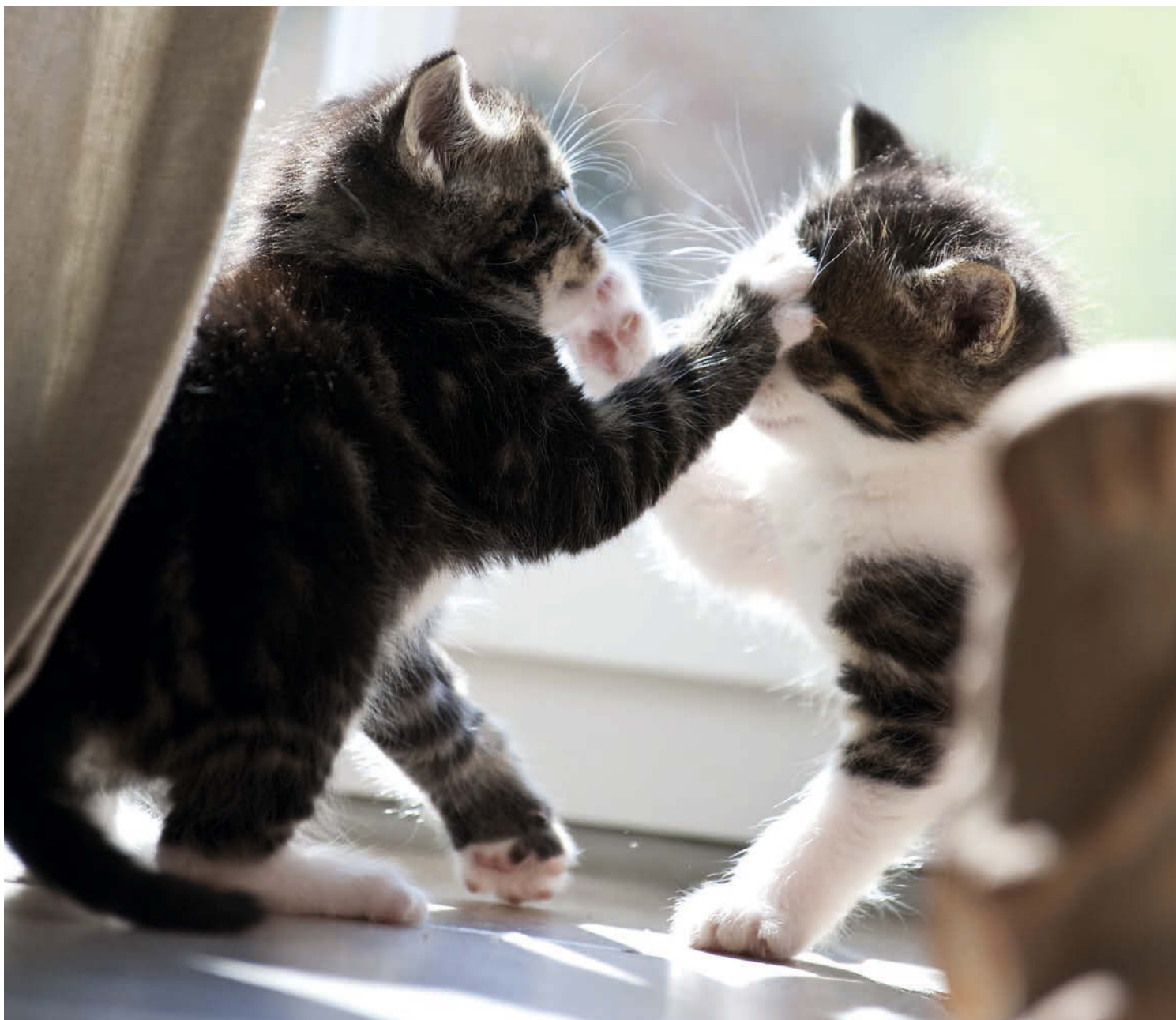
There's still little love between my boy and girl, although I live in hope that I might one day find them snuggled up together in feline domestic bliss. They grudgingly tolerate each other's presence but don't much embrace the concept of sharing, whether beds or food - or their humans, for that matter.

This is also true of any poor creature caught by a puss on the hunt. Maisie, black, lithe and fast as a puma, is the hunter from hell, often found guarding a freshly killed mouse or bird by the back door. Should Theo consider stealing her pickings, our

normally quiet, lovable girl growls menacingly, grabs the limp corpse in her jaws and disappears at the speed of light over the fence.

Likewise, an overly territorial cat can turn into Godzilla at the sight of an interloper. Our previous cat, Fizz, was a demon when it came to guarding the perimeter fence. Many a visiting feline was seen off the premises, quivering with fear and rarely giving it another go. These days, Theo is the self-professed keeper of the castle and an alien cat cheekily setting paw on his turf sends him into an incandescent rage. I always know there's an intruder in Theo's garden when his tail starts swishing furiously and a low growling emanates from deep within that orange hairy body.

Theo was a former stray who came to us as an angry, traumatised puss, with a strong dislike of enclosure in any shape or form, especially cat carriers. Being bundled into a basket from which no escape is possible is too much for an enraged tom to endure, and his displeasure is always voiced very audibly during the odd hated car journey to the vet. For this year's routine jabs trip, I'd cajoled Maisie into her carrier but feisty Theo was adamant he wouldn't be going into his. I was equally adamant that he was. "Theo, sweetie, you can go back to bed very soon", I reminded him firmly. Theo, having none of it, growled, hissed and even spat at me!



Over time, he has become a very lovable cat, though his language does still occasionally fall short of pleasant. Wilfulness on both sides means conflicts of opinion between us do crop up now and again, usually in a medicinal context.

Administering flea drops is a relatively hassle free job these days, with 'spot on' products replacing those powders of yore that sent our feline friends into such turmoil. Vital to the task, however, is having the pipette pierced in readiness before lifting your victim onto a makeshift treatment table. Forgetting to do this means fumbling with said pipette in one hand whilst constraining an increasingly frenzied

cat in the other.

Maisie is reasonably tolerant of my parasite-prevention tactics, with drops soon dispensed and cat quickly released from my clutches. Theo, stronger and more defiant than his adoptive sister, is harder work. The nano-second he susses what I'm up to, he's off like a shot. Being clever and resourceful, I thought I'd try a different tack recently and bag him while he was asleep. With hindsight, I realised this was a monstrously stupid idea. It took more than the required few seconds to locate skin amid his forest of long ginger fur, and by the time I'd squirted that final drop, he was not only wide awake, but outraged. Glar-

ing at me with hatred, he shot off the bed like a ballistic missile, heading for the door. No sound emitted from my furious cat but the glare said it all. The first unspoken word was unrepeatable. The second was very definitely 'Off!'

Right now both cats are, unusually, dozing peacefully on the same bed - a couple of feet apart, of course. Reaching out, I stroke each soft velvety head and hear that familiar rumbling stereophonic sound. Such cosy times are but a temporary truce that will only last until one of them wakes. Tweaking slightly the words of the great bard himself, at some point later will be heard: 'Cry 'Havoc' and let slip the cats of war!'

Boredom sets in on a rainy day

The weather outside is frightful and Tabs looks for something to do but Kim seems to find everything he chooses less than delightful so why won't she play with him?

BY HANNAH BARRICK

Looking sullenly out of the window, I could tell that today was going to be a very boring day. Even the birds were quiet, preferring the shelter of the nests in their trees from the drizzling rain outside.

Maybe I could try going out, I thought. After all, there was nothing to do in here. I jumped off the windowsill and padded over to the cat flap. The paw I had cautiously stretched out to test the outside weather was quickly pulled back in as I felt the patter of raindrops on my fur. I hadn't heard Kim come into the room and she giggled and shook her head as she watched me. I glared at her. I would like to see you stand out there, then!

"It's only a bit of rain, Tabs." It's an evil twist of nature, is what it is. I shook my wet paw, making sure some of the expelled water from my fur travelled in Kim's direction and smiled to myself as she shrieked in surprise. Its ok, Kim, it's only water. Considering she was glaring at me I don't think she appreciated the joke as much as I did. Again she shook her head at me before leaving the room and I started looking around to find something to amuse myself with. It didn't take me long.

I spied a plastic carrier bag on the floor that Kim had forgotten to put away after shopping and it presented an excellent opportunity. Stalking towards it as if it was prey, I pounced on it and enjoyed the satisfying loud rustle it made. Coming up with another

idea, I climbed inside the bag and it slid along the floor as I tried to get as much of my body into it as possible. Kim had come back into the room at hearing all the noise.

"Tabs! What is it with you and bags! Come on, get out of there now, I can't think straight with all that noise... and it's dangerous." Now this was even more fun! I pushed my nose into the bag again, using my back legs to push it along the floor. Suddenly, the bag was gone as Kim grabbed it and lifted it off the floor. I narrowed my eyes at her. Spoil sport. Satisfied she had ruined all the fun she could, Kim left the room again, as I started again to look around for something to amuse myself with.

Not finding anything to do where I was, I decided to follow Kim and see what she was doing. I found her sitting in the study, studiously concentrating on what she was writing on the computer. I sat watching her for a couple of minutes but she didn't look my way or take any notice. Maybe if I had a better vantage point... I might be able to see what she's doing better then. Glancing around the room, I spotted a small space on the sideboard. It offered the perfect viewing spot! I jumped up and landed in the small space, only to find my path blocked by a picture frame, tea light candle and other odds and ends. I reached out my paw and pushed the picture frame slowly to the edge of the sideboard. A quick glance over at Kim showed she still wasn't



paying attention and hadn't noticed. With one final nudge, the frame fell to the floor with a clatter.

"Tabs! Get down from there you will break something!" What? I was only making more room. I reached my paw out again, ready to administer the same fate to the tea light candle.

"Tabs! You dare!" I froze where I was and stared at her for just a heartbeat, before I nudged the candle on to the floor. Kim huffed in frustration, walked over, picked me up and placed me on the floor before replacing the



fallen items on the sideboard again... this time making sure there was no space for me to jump up there again. I mewed at her as sweetly as I could but rather than playing with me, she just gave me a quick pet on the head.

"Not now, Tabs, I'm working. Later, ok?" and with that the fixed focus on her laptop resumed. I tapped my tail on the floor in frustration. Animal neglect, that's what this was! I could report her to the RSPCA, I thought meanly.

My spirits soon rose again, however, as I spotted a space on the other side

table, next to the lamp. Another excellent vantage point! As I jumped up next to the lamp, my paw touched it and it turned on. I stared at it in surprise. How did it do that? I touched it again, and it turned off. This was brilliant, I could do magic! Again I touched the lamp base with my paw and it turned back on again. Suddenly, Kim's hand reached over and turned it off again. I hadn't even heard her approach. There was a look of resignation in her expression.

"What is it you want? Are you bored?" No, I just don't have anything

to do. I stared back at her and gave another meow. Kim reached down, picked a feather cat toy off the floor and held it out.

"Come on then, hopefully this will tire you out!" With that, she turned and walked a few yards away, wiggling the toy along the floor. Yes! Finally I get to play with her!

Purring happily, I jumped to the floor and started chasing after the toy as Kim dragged it around the room. I knew she would come around eventually – she loves me really!



THE BOARDING HOUSE DIARY

Settle down and enjoy meeting two more feline characters that have been on vacation in Notting Hill recently - one finds there's more to hunting than meets the paw

BY DOMINIQUE URQUHART

As a kitten Lily was the smallest of the bunch with short, stubby fur. The only one of her siblings that hadn't been 'coo'ed' over and chosen by strangers to be given a home when she came of age. The owner of the kittens was wondering what to do about Lily when there was a knock at the door. A couple had got lost and were asking for directions and the owner invited them in. The couple saw Lily, fell in love and adopted her instantly. Such was Lily's gratitude that her stubby fur imme-

diately grew into a fluffy and lustrous coat and all of her whiskers curled with pleasure.

The new owners couldn't have been more pleased and Lily was adored by the whole family, often travelling to Kensington to spend time with their young granddaughter Mia. When a stray cat decided to move in with the couple, Lily quite naturally upped sticks and moved into Mia's Kensington home and has been residing there ever since.

So when she arrived with her overnight bag

for her stay at my place Lily, a seasoned traveller was completely unfazed. Hopping out of the basket she headed straight for the window and squeezed onto the cat protected balcony, jumping up onto the wicker bench and surveying the street below.

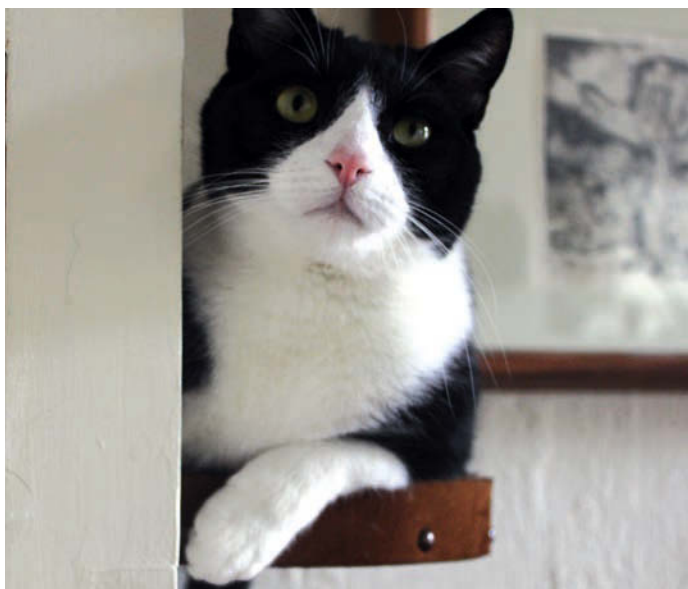
Minutes later she was running through the cat tunnel before disappearing and reappearing on the top tier of the little cat tree. Looking at Lily from behind you could be forgiven for thinking that she is a completely black cat. Her body is a series of rounds in varying sizes with two twitching triangles for ears balanced on top. Her fabulous curled whiskers sprout from the sides of her face and top of her head, and her furry black tail flaps with excitement whenever there is the slightest movement around her.

When Lily finally notices



me, I realise that she is not a black cat at all, her underbelly and paws are completely white. She has a tiny black chin tucked in a white collar, white cheeks, half a white nose and nestled in her black fur are two of the prettiest green eyes I've ever seen.

She is an extremely happy cat, bounding towards me with the sole purpose of having a cuddle. She will stop directly under my hand and spin



"Claude ignores us as he takes a good look around sniffing the air as he goes."



around giving herself a circular massage. Lily is also extremely polite; sitting in front of her breakfast bowl in the morning, she looks up at me eagerly and waits to be served.

When a friend of mine came to visit, Lily, upon hearing the doorbell, took refuge behind the sofa. But before my friend has even sat down Lily has popped out with her tail held high and her head cocked upwards to say hello. Hopping on the sofa between the two of us as we chat, she purrs away contentedly and rolls over onto her back, her little paws in the air as we take it in turn to stroke her.

Claude

Claude is a Parisian kitty with an attitude. He is a little bit clumsy and as a kitten managed to smash a glass as he jumped off a counter. The glass shattered around him and he was stuck in a corner for hours, unable to move until his owner got home and rescued him. They bonded there and then, his owner Mark tells me proudly over



a cup of tea.

Claude ignores us as he takes a good look around sniffing the air as he goes. He tests out every surface before settling in the cat cave with a catnip sardine. High on the fake fish he rolls out of the cave and while pressing it to his face with his paws he inhales the heady scent and rocks backwards and forwards.

After spending some time on the balcony he hops onto a heated cush-

ion and when I absent-mindedly attempt to stroke him, he slaps my hand away with his paw. "How rude", his eyes seem to say, so I apologise. I am soon forgiven though as Claude sidles up to me when he decides it's time for a cuddle. I take care not to annoy him and by the time Mark comes to collect him the next day, Claude and I are firm friends.

Before they leave I turn

on my latest cat toy and as the butterfly spins and flutters around its base, Claude tries in vain to catch it. Mark demonstrates for Claude again and again how to trap the butterfly, cupping his hand into the shape of a paw and trapping it gently underneath. Ten minutes later, when Claude finally captures the butterfly in both paws, Mark and I cheer so loudly he loses his grip and the plastic butterfly flutters to freedom. Mark sighs and bemoans the fact that Claude is not a hunter as he gives him a reassuring cuddle and drops him in his basket before heading home.



THE CAT FACTS:

The Notting Hill Cat Company
Pampering Your Pets While You Are Away
email: nottinghillcatcompany@gmail.com
web: www.nottinghillcatcompany.com
call: 0781 354 7461



CONFESSIONS of a CAT LOVER

CAT NAPS MAKE GOOD CAT SNAPS ACCORDING TO TIM REIF AS HE TRIES TO GET TO GRIPS WITH A NEW DIGITAL CAMERA

My cats aren't enamoured with my new camera. Since its acquisition, they've been co-opted and dragooned into becoming my principal subjects so many times that they now leave the room at the mere sound of the camera bag being opened. In short, they're heartily sick of having lenses pointed in their faces.

They don't, of course, 'pose' as such, because that would imply a level of

cooperation that they're clearly unprepared to give but they have featured in hundreds of pictures and been encouraged and manhandled into dozens of potentially photogenic spots around the house and garden.

It's my first digital SLR so there was a phase after I first bought it when, trying to get my head round the many unfamiliar buttons and settings, barely a day passed without Nutmeg and Parsley being coerced

into a shooting session. They've put up with different lenses, different shutter speeds, different depths of field and different ISOs. They've been snapped indoors and out. In every room of the house with every background imaginable. With and without a tripod. Awake, asleep. I've tried to capture them in as many varying moods as possible – playful, fighting, affectionate, inquisitive, sleeping. You name it and I've attempted to snap a

feline demonstration of it.

The only problem is – and this is more a reflection of my photography abilities than my cats' photogenic nature – that most of my pictures have turned out either too dark or blurred. People tell me it's hard to take a bad picture with a good camera but Nutmeg and Parsley are helping disprove that particular theory.

It's been a great learning curve, though. Pet photography is, I've discovered, a whole specialism in itself. I reckon if you can take good cat pictures, then you can probably take good pictures of just about anything.

You have to be quick, for a start - well, it's impossible to do it any other way with cats. 'Look at the camera' doesn't really generate the desired response. And 'just hold that pose for a few seconds longer' would be sure to send them scamping from the room.

It strikes me that, as with good people portraits, so much is about spontaneity – but, like most spontaneous things, they can be improved if some thought goes into them first. I've learnt you've got to get down to their level. Crouching, kneeling, even laying



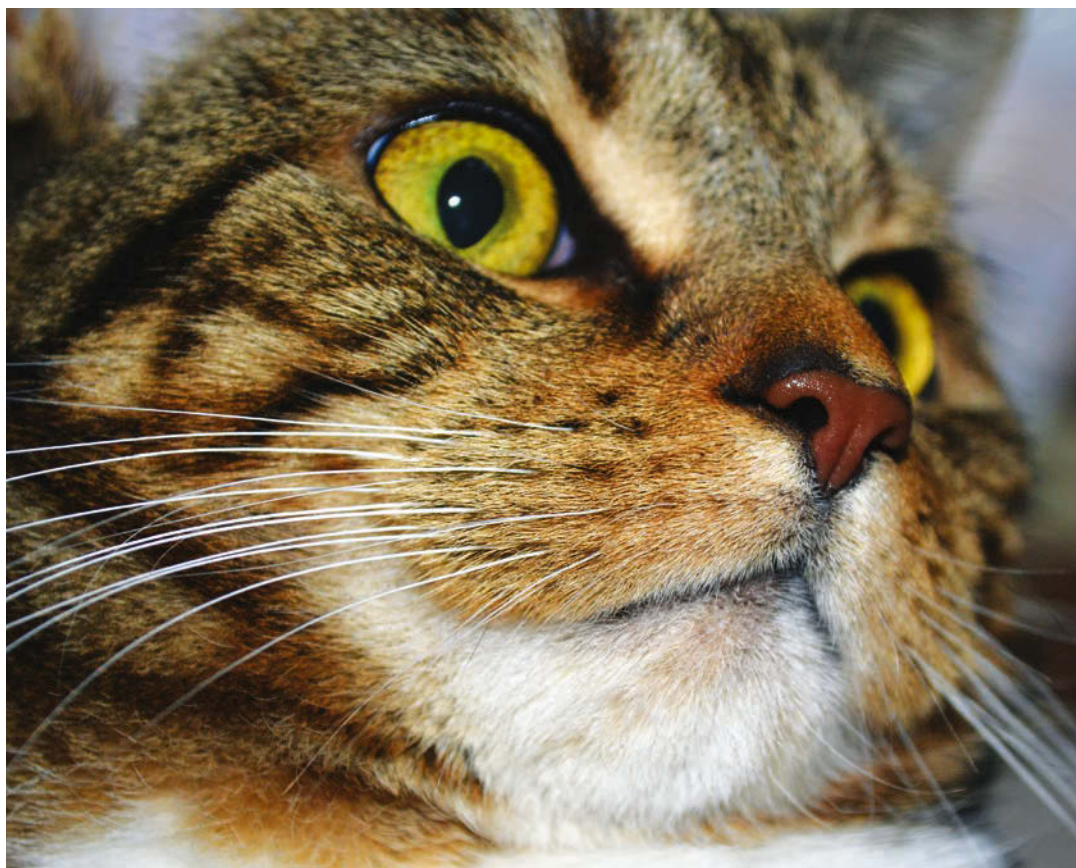
around on the floor makes for better shots. I'm sure neighbours and passers-by would have been perplexed on many occasions, having seen me flat out on the grass.

Close-ups are vital, too. A cat on a shed doesn't make a good picture from 20 yards away. And another useful tip I was given was to 'always remember the eyes'. These are what you should be focusing on, so if you keep them sharp that's a good start.

Catching them unawares is also worth trying. You certainly get the best 'relaxed' shots when they're tired and sleepy – which, in the case of Nutmeg and Parsley, potentially means most of the time! Naturally, they're often grumpy at being woken so will often give the camera a swipe. The tell-tale bite marks in the strap are yet more evidence of their lack of enthusiasm for this particular project.

As a rule, they have consistently done their best to make the process as complicated as possible. For Parsley, like most things in life, it's an unnecessary and largely unwelcome intrusion into her preferred occupations of sleeping and looking grumpy. Ironic, really, because she (and don't tell Nutmeg this or I'll have a mutiny on my hands) is the more photogenic of the two – she's got huge eyes and her markings are incredibly pronounced. I've always said she'd make a nice image for a card or a calendar.

Not, of course, that Parsley would cope very



“She’s a cat that’s always preferred to be left alone rather than being the centre of attention.”

well with the fame. She's a cat that's always preferred to be left alone rather than being the centre of attention. When it comes to pictures, she'd rather none were taken at all. She certainly doesn't appreciate having a flash thrust in her face. Perhaps she sees it as an intrusion of privacy. If Parsley was a celebrity, she'd vehemently object to any sort of media interest. She'd probably have Max Clifford representing her, specifically to keep her out of the headlines.

Nutmeg, conversely, is an easier subject to work with. There again, she's always loved being in the limelight and laps up any attention. And she certainly has the celebrity pout.

She's like some wannabe celebrity: fame hungry. If there was a 'Big Brother' for cats, Nutmeg would volunteer like a shot. She'd be the really irritating noisy one (actually, they all are, so she'd be the most irritating noisy one) who's always showing off.

In fact, Nutmeg would probably even like being pursued by the paparazzi: it would reinforce her impression of herself as the most important creature on the planet.

The problem is, like a lot of wannabe celebrities, Nutmeg has the attention span of a gnat so won't 'play camera' for more than 60 seconds before wandering off to something more interesting. It's

usually some food or the prospect of starting a fight with her sister or a neighbour's cats.

I enjoy taking photos of cats but also love looking at photos of other cats. I can stare at these for hours; they have a strangely addictive quality.

The internet is a vast and unlimited source. You can find cats from just about every country of the world doing just about everything imaginable. With every imaginable expression. Then there are the myriad of cat-related videos that the internet is awash with. The world, it seems, is full of people like me: people with cameras and videos, enjoying pointing them at their pets.

The perils of summertime exploration

A cat's curiosity is famous for landing him in tricky situations and summertime adventures can lead to a cat going missing for several weeks - what treatment might he need?

BY ALISON LOGAN

The recent request from an extremely relieved cat owner was: "Please could you check Fred over for me? He has been missing for three weeks. Believe it or not, though, I came home last night and automatically called him for his food, and he appeared in the kitchen as if he had never been away!

"I am just so relieved that he is back. He has been ravenous. He has also been drinking water as if there were no tomorrow and he has diarrhoea."

It looked as if Fred had been very lucky indeed, because his white patches were stained grey as though he had been somewhere very oily. The fact he was very hungry and thirsty suggested that he had been trapped for much of the time he had been missing, in a building of some kind without access to water or food.

Searching for your cat

Cats, by nature, are inclined to explore. I have come across cats which have turned up after being away for weeks, if not months. I have also encountered an ownership dispute whereby a cat moved in with another household a few miles away from his original home.

His original owner just happened to call at this house some months later, having long ago given up all hope

of finding her cat, and there he was! One cat can look very like another to the casual observer but not so for the owner.

Additionally, in this particular case, the cat had been chipped so he was brought to the veterinary practice where I scanned him and rang the central database which confirmed ownership.

In Fred's case, his owner had followed all the usual lines of enquiry suggested below but to no avail.

Lines of enquiry

Advertising a missing cat – or any other species, for that matter

a) posters (including a recent photograph) in shop windows

b) fliers (including a recent photograph):

(i) through the letterboxes of all houses in the immediate neighbourhood for information and to ask for gardens, sheds and garages to be checked;

(ii) handed to local delivery people (postman, milkman, refuse collectors etc.);

c) local veterinary practices:

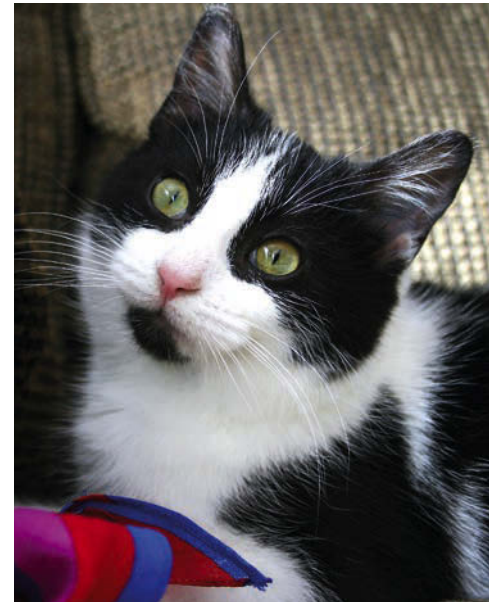
(i) to check has not been found;

(ii) to be recorded as missing;

(iii) poster on notice board;

d) if micro-chipped, inform the central data-base.

e) on social media sites such as Face-



book, if you use them

Searching the local neighbourhood is a thankless task. One is dreading finding a body in a ditch, yet at the same time finding one's cat in any condition will at least put the doubts and worries to rest. As a child, we seemed to lose cats on a regular basis and fruitless searches of the hedgerows are a vivid memory for me.

Clinical examination

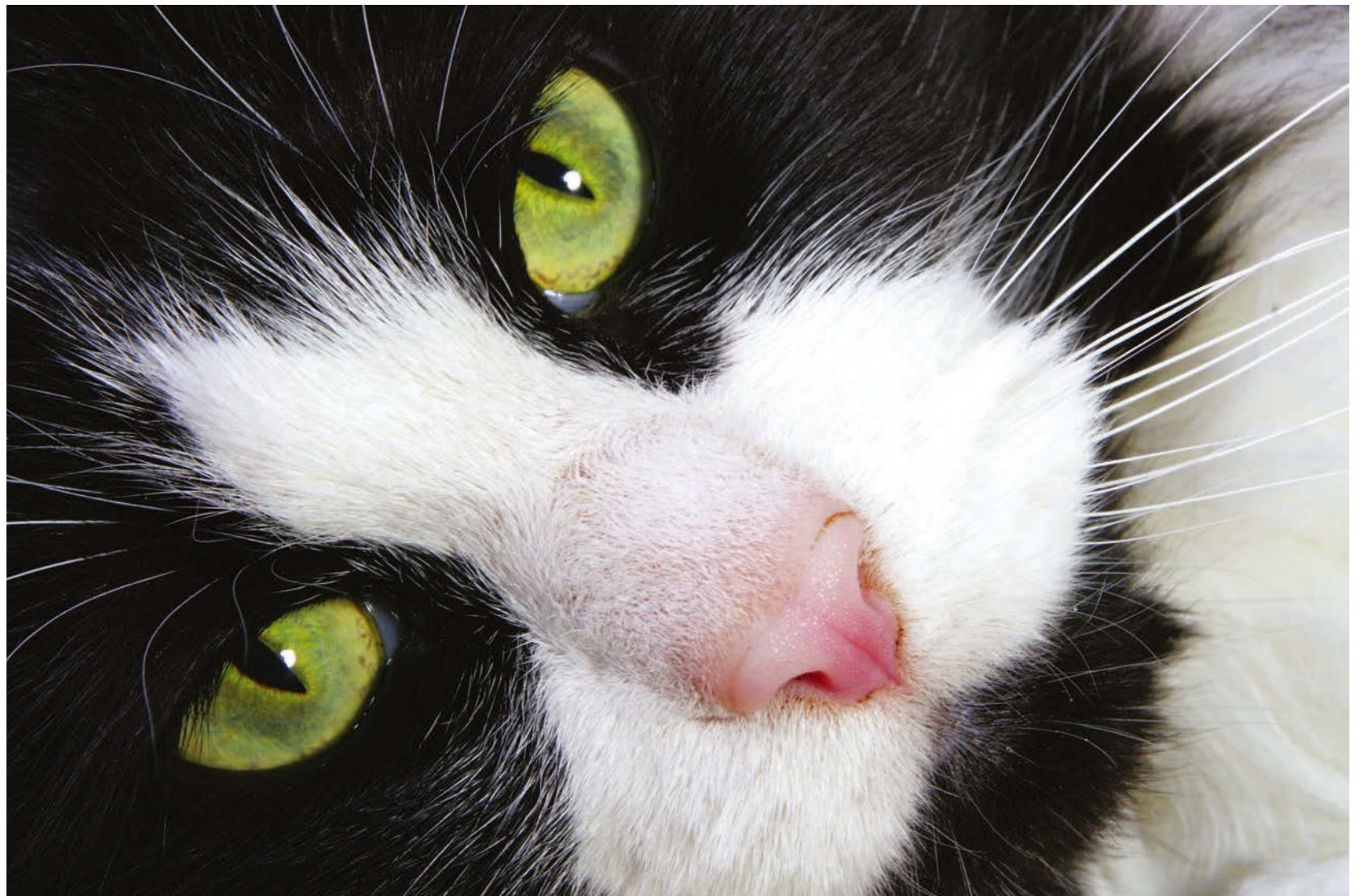
With a dishevelled and thin cat before me, I commenced my clinical examination. It was self-evident that Fred had lost weight; I was able to put a figure to this because he had been weighed at his last visit for a Program injection six months previously.

Yes, he was therefore due another Program injection but, even though I did ultimately give him the 'all clear', I postponed it for two weeks to allow him to recover from his ordeal, especially as there was no sign of fleas.

Fred's coat was dirty. The grey patches where he should have been white remained stubbornly grey, suggestive of oil. On questioning his owner, it transpired that a likely place where he could have found himself trapped was a local factory warehouse which would have been oily.

I was a little concerned that Fred might have been dehydrated. His skin did not bounce back immediately af-

"The fact he was very hungry and thirsty suggested that he had been trapped for



ter being gently raised between thumb and forefinger but one had to allow for his weight-loss. The diarrhoea was not severe but was probably affecting how he restored his body's hydration status to normal after some time without water to drink.

Why diarrhoea?

I would suspect that the diarrhoea developed after Fred returned home. His owner had said that he absolutely stuffed himself with food as if he had not eaten for at least a week. The intestinal tract would have suddenly faced a huge load after some time of rest and its response would be to propel everything through much quicker than normal, preventing efficient removal of water and thus resulting in liquid faeces.

Management

The major concern was to reassure Fred. I advised his owner to keep him in over the next few days:

- a) to reinforce his bond with the home;
- b) to monitor his health for any problems that were not yet apparent;
- c) to enable regular access to balanced meals and fresh water.

Since Fred had diarrhoea, I suggested a readily digested diet, offered as frequent small meals, together with fresh water. A priority was to restore the intestinal system to health so that Fred could regain the weight he had lost during the time he had been missing.

If he had returned with no change in body condition or, indeed, having gained weight, then one could have assumed that he had either been taken

in by someone or at least had had access to regular balanced meals during his absence from his usual home.

Prevention

It is pretty well nigh impossible to prevent a cat from going missing if he or she has full access to the great outdoors.

There is traffic on the roads and sheds and garages offer somewhere a cat can be inadvertently shut in, for example.

There are forms of identification which carry advantages and disadvantages but at the end of the day curiosity may win out!

Identification

Advantages and disadvantages of some forms of identification

...r much of the time he had been missing without access to water or food.”

a) collars

(i) easy to read owner's name and address (hand-written or engraved on metal disc, for example) unless blurred with age, ink has run after contact with water, etc;

(ii) reflective material to increase visibility of wearer in poor ambient light;

(iii) may catch on branch or such like unless collar has inbuilt weakness - a quick-release collar is the safest option;

(iv) cat may catch mouth or forelimb in collar unless collar breaks at inbuilt weakness;

b) micro-chip

(i) permanent identification with unique combination of letters/numbers;

(ii) can only be read with scanner so cat must be caught and taken to someone with appropriate scanner;

(iii) may migrate or become non-functional;

c) tattoo

(i) have to be up close to cat to read tattoo

(ii) need to know who to contact for access to owner's details.

It is hard to say exactly what proportion of cats that go missing do make it back home. We keep a 'Lost and found' book at the main practice, where we record all reports of lost animals in the front and all reports of found animals in the back. When a missing cat, or other pet, has been found, it is vital to let everyone know he has been found, not least to put worried minds at rest.

There is a certain feeling of satisfaction to put a line through a missing report in the book when a pet turns up safe and well.

Sadly, there are also occasions when an entry is deleted because the pet has been found deceased but fortunately this was not the case with Fred who went on to make a full and uneventful recovery from his unknown ordeal.

Those three weeks had also been an ordeal for his owner but she was one of the lucky owners to have her cat return to her safe and well.

Kittens found dumped in a shopping basket

Yet another case of unplanned and unwanted kittens being dumped has been highlighted after five tiny kittens were dumped by a Leeds supermarket. The kittens were just seven weeks old and their mum was also dumped with them.

A resident living nearby reported them to the RSPCA who sent an Animal Collection Officer to recover them. Unfortunately the mother and two of the kittens escaped through a gap in the fence before the officer arrived.

The three remaining kittens were gathered up by ACO Tina Hallas and taken to their Wakefield branch to be cared for before being found new loving homes once vaccinated and microchipped. As they were all in good health, there were no other major concerns.

RSPCA cat welfare expert Alice Potter said: "Around this time of year, we often see a lot of abandoned kittens as a result of unwanted litters from cats who have not been neutered.

"Some cat owners may believe that cats should be allowed to have a litter of kittens before they are

neutered - this isn't true, in fact it's just an old wives tale. There is no need for a cat to have a litter of kittens before she's spayed. The sooner she is spayed, the sooner she can enjoy doing all the things cats like to do - such as going out and climbing trees."

Of course both male and female cats should be neutered. Alice continued: "Male cats that haven't been neutered are more likely to roam and fight, putting them at risk of injury, infected wounds and contracting diseases, including FIV - the feline equivalent of HIV."

In 2016 the RSPCA alone neutered nearly 41,500 cats across England and Wales, males and females. Add to that the number of cats neutered by other rescue organisations and you can see just how many cats they are dealing with.

"The romance and the reality of having a litter of kittens are two very different things - with around 68% of litters of kittens being unplanned - that's a lot of people in for a much bigger surprise than they bargained for.

"The RSPCA advises having cats spayed at four months - before they are free to venture outdoors unsupervised and start to attract the attention of Tom cats."

Please, please have your cats neutered. These kittens were lucky but we all-too-often report incidences of kittens being dumped suffering from very poor health or injuries and preventing this happening is simple and effective.



Drink more water - try telling the cat

Drinking water is good for skin, general health and preventing dehydration which can lead to serious illness but sometimes our cats don't seem too keen to drink it from their bowl

BY JILL MUNDY

We all know that fresh water is good for us and our cats to drink but while we happily put out bowls of the stuff daily for our feline friends, they seem to prefer dirty water from a puddle. What's going on?

First of all, don't be offended by the fact that your cat appears to be fussy and snubs your fresh tap water. Our tap water is often treated with chemicals and our cats can probably smell the chlorine, even though we can't, sufficiently to put them off. Cats have far more sensitive noses than we humans do and many of them don't like the strong smell or taste of our tap water, no matter how fresh it is.

The bowl you offer it in could also still have traces of the detergent used

to clean it and this can make it unpalatable for your cat too. Cat food has quite a strong smell which will help to mask the smell of the washing up liquid and your cat won't find the bowl so offensive.

If your cat is really thirsty and tap water in his bowl is the only source of water available, he will drink it, which is why it is still very important to leave fresh water for your cat to drink every day, regardless of whether he usually drinks it or not. However, if there are other sources of water in your garden or elsewhere in his territory, he will prefer to drink from a bird bath, pond or puddle. Puddles can be full of rotten vegetation and microbes but cats actually find this strange 'soup' quite tasty. It is always a worry though that



such puddles may also contain harmful substances such as oil or antifreeze which can often be fatal as it is highly toxic to cats.

So how can we encourage our felines to stay away from harm but stay hydrated at the same time?

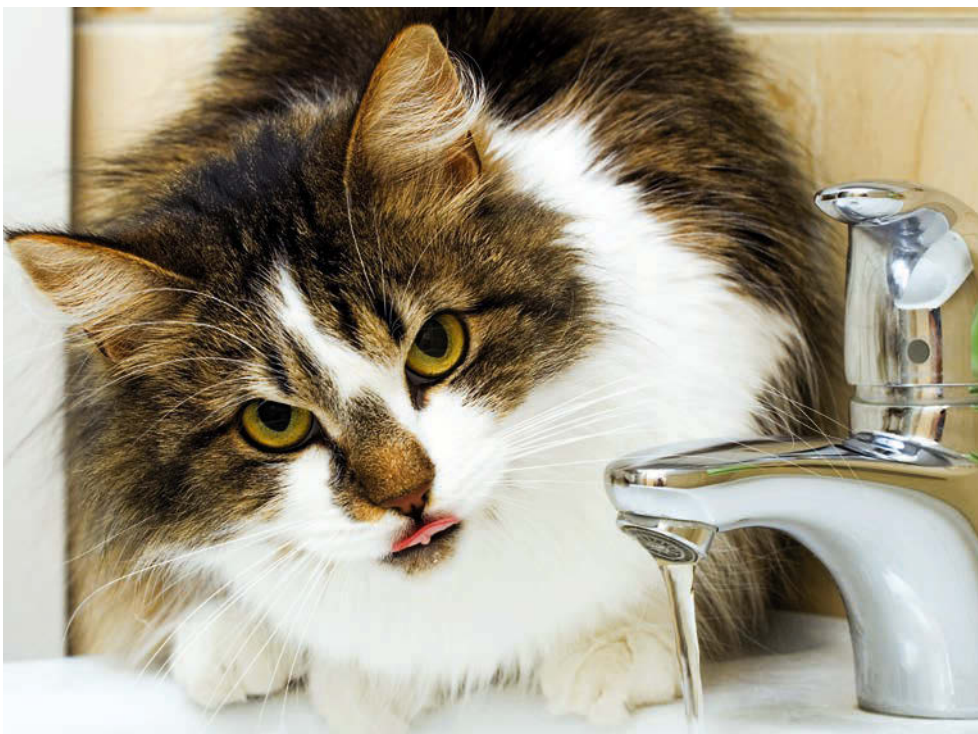
Rinse your cat's water bowl more thoroughly than you would normally for your own food and drink.

Let the tap water stand in the bowl for a while before putting it down for your cat. This helps the chemicals in the water to dissipate so that they hopefully won't be as noticeable to feline noses.

Try leaving a tap running slightly as many cats love to lap the stream of water as it falls from the tap.

Invest in a water fountain that has been specially designed for pets. If your cat enjoys drinking water from them then they are a worthwhile investment, and can be fairly inexpensive. You can expect to pay around £20-30 for a plastic fountain and £70-80 for a ceramic model. On average the fountains hold three litres of water. Water fountains filter out chemicals and debris - filters should be changed monthly so do take into account that you will need to buy replacement filters.

The most important thing, especially during hot weather, is that your cat has the opportunity to drink clean water at any time to prevent him becoming dehydrated. Do the best you can and he will thank you for it.





ASK^{the} EXPERTS

LET THE CATWORLD TEAM OF EXPERTS HELP WITH YOUR PROBLEMS

Who can microchip my cat?

Q: I know I should really get my cat microchipped but I'm a bit worried about it. Who should I ask?

A: It is very wise to have your cat microchipped, especially if you allow him outside. Microchipping is a very simple procedure whereby a tiny chip, about the size of a grain of rice, is inserted under the cat's skin near the scruff of his neck. It is pretty painless but could be worth its weight in gold to you if your cat ever goes missing... as long as the database details are kept up to date.

There are regulations governing microchipping but current legislation only really covers dogs. With cats, it is recommended by Defra (The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) that anyone who microchips a cat should have completed a Defra-approved training course. This generally will include veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses and many people who run feline rehoming and rescue centres.

I would suggest you speak to your veterinary nurse who can give you specific information about how the procedure takes place at your local surgery.

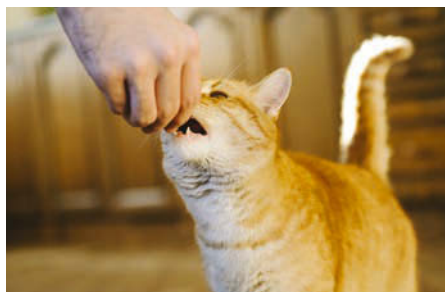
I can't stop him feeling hungry

Q: My two year-old cat Prince is constantly hungry. He will eat everything I put down for him, is

always looking for scraps of my food (although I rarely give him any) and I'm sure he probably has a 'live' snack when he's out at night as I sometimes find the remains on the driveway. What should I do?

A: If you are feeding the appropriate amount of food according to your cat's weight and the recommendations on the packaging, then I doubt that Prince is really as hungry as he is making out. Hunting for prey is what all cats are born to do naturally although some seem to feel the need to hunt more than others. You don't say where you got prince from and, if he was a rescue cat, it is possible that he could have had to fight for food as a youngster, either in the wild or amongst siblings.

A quick chat to your vet would be a good idea. He may ask you to make an appointment to determine if there could be a medical reason for Prince's excessive hunger. If not then ask him about a referral to a behaviour specialist. Although hunting is natural, they may be able to help curb the scavenging behaviour.



Dental concern

Q: My cat has just lost one of her teeth - should I be worried or is this normal?

A: The most common reason for tooth loss is periodontal disease. The gums become inflamed (gingivitis) and if left untreated, the disease can spread to the periodontal ligament. Once the tooth has become loose from its anchor point it can become dislodged quite easily, just by your cat eating normally.

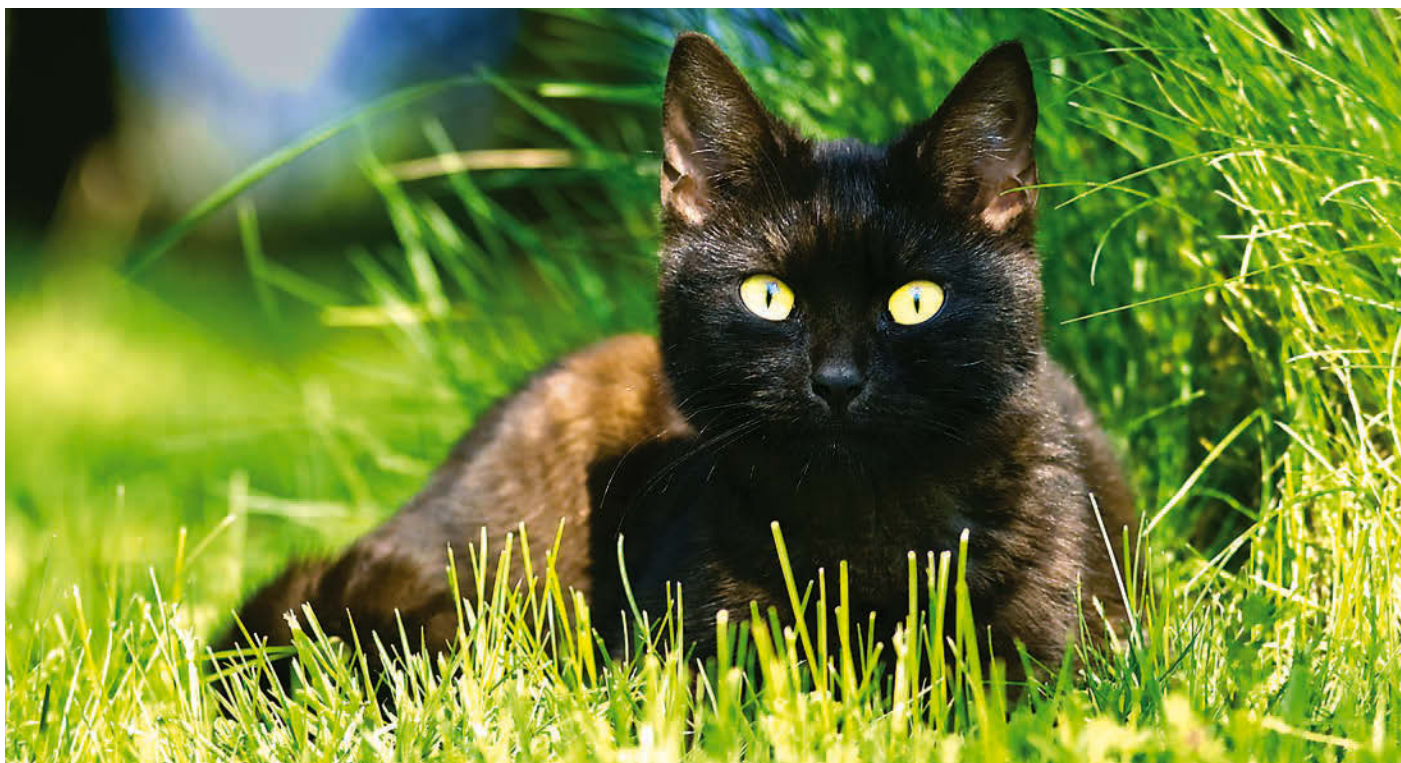
A visit to your vet is recommended to check the affected area and her other teeth. An x-ray may be required to see if any part of the root of the tooth remains in the cat's gum as it could cause a more serious dental problem.

She won't 'go' outside

Q: I have tried really hard to encourage my cat Polly to use a litter tray outside but she is having none of it. Actually, she seems quite scared to 'do her business' outside. We are about to have an extension built at the back of our house so the place we usually keep her litter tray will be a 'no go' zone for several weeks. What can I do?

A: If your cat isn't keen to toilet outside, no matter how hard you try to persuade her, then I'm afraid you will have to accept that fact. There could be another cat in the neighbourhood that is bullying Polly and leaving their own scent messages around your garden. If Polly is elderly then having to use an outside toilet area if it is wet or cold is not a good idea either.

If you don't provide Polly with a litter tray at all, she may resort to using your carpet or another area of your home. It sounds likely that Polly may be rather stressed by the upheaval the imminent extension will bring to her normal surroundings. It would



be a good idea to clear a spare bedroom in advance of the building work and make it a 'safe' place for Polly.

Provide food and water bowls in there as well as a litter tray. Encourage her to spend time in the room before the builders move in so that she becomes accustomed to it and won't be tempted to toilet where you don't want her to. You can keep her safely shut in this room while the builders are at the house and let her out each day when they have gone home.

Neighbour pains

Q: We have a beautiful black cat called Mitch who is very good natured and friendly. Mitch is allowed outside and doesn't seem to get into any scraps but our new neighbours don't seem to like him being in their

garden. We don't want this to become a serious or unpleasant issue - do you have any suggestions?

A: This is always difficult and without putting containment fencing around your garden, a little compromise and understanding is required.

You could try explaining to your neighbours that cats are naturally roaming animals and that the law does not prevent them from doing so. However, understand that if your neighbours are trying to make a nice garden at their new home, finding evidence of cat poo on the lawn or flower beds can be very frustrating. They may not dislike Mitch but don't want him, or any other cats for that matter, spoiling in their garden.

Advise your neighbours that Mitch is just marking 'his' territory as

there is no resident cat to lay claim to it. They should remove all traces of cat poo thoroughly then use warm water and washing up liquid to wash away the scent, followed by a strong smelling cat repellent.

Offer to block up any holes in fencing or walls that might allow Mitch access to their garden. Your neighbour may also want to invest in 'prickle strips' to put on top of walls and fences to deter any cats from jumping up.

Overhanging tree branches could be another issue, as your cat could climb on your side and jump down in his. If branches are overhanging, suggest that the tree is trimmed regularly to keep this to a minimum.

Hopefully if they can see that you are keen to help resolve the situation, they won't mind if Mitch pays them the occasional visit.



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CATS ON THE COUCH

WITH LEADING BEHAVIOURIST INGA MACKELLAR



We are all now well acquainted with the term 'animal behaviourist' but when exactly is one required and what do they do? Inga Mackellar explains

Although many cat owners are aware of what happens when they have an appointment with their vet, few have experience of what occurs in a cat behaviour consultation and can be apprehensive about what may be involved.

Different behaviourists work in different ways but all professional behaviourists are striving to solve the cat's behaviour problem in a kind and patient manner, to ensure the best welfare of the cat and to obtain a satisfactory resolution to the problem from the owner's perspective.

All APBC (Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors), work to a strict Code of Conduct, which includes seeing clients only on veterinary referral. This is to ensure that there is no physical problem causing the problem behaviour. For instance, an indoor urination behaviour problem may not be behavioural in origin at all but due to the cat having a urinary tract infection. Working on vet referral will also reassure the cat owner that they are seeing someone competent, experienced and qualified.

Some behaviourists may hold their consultation in a clinic either at their own premises or at a veterinary surgery. Others, including myself, prefer

to do a visit to the client's home. I feel that the cat will be more relaxed in its own surroundings, the owners will feel more at ease and also, very importantly, it gives me an insight into the cat's normal, every day environment. I can see and assess the situation for myself rather than relying on a description from the owner, which is what would happen in a clinic consultation.

Visits to the home can yield vital information that might not have otherwise been revealed. For example, in one case of inter-cat aggression within a third floor flat it transpired that there was a very narrow passageway that led to the only access to the outdoors, via a cat flap. One cat would sit on a shelf, waiting, and attack the other cat as soon as it attempted to come along the passageway to use the cat flap. This fact might not have emerged unless I had seen it for myself.

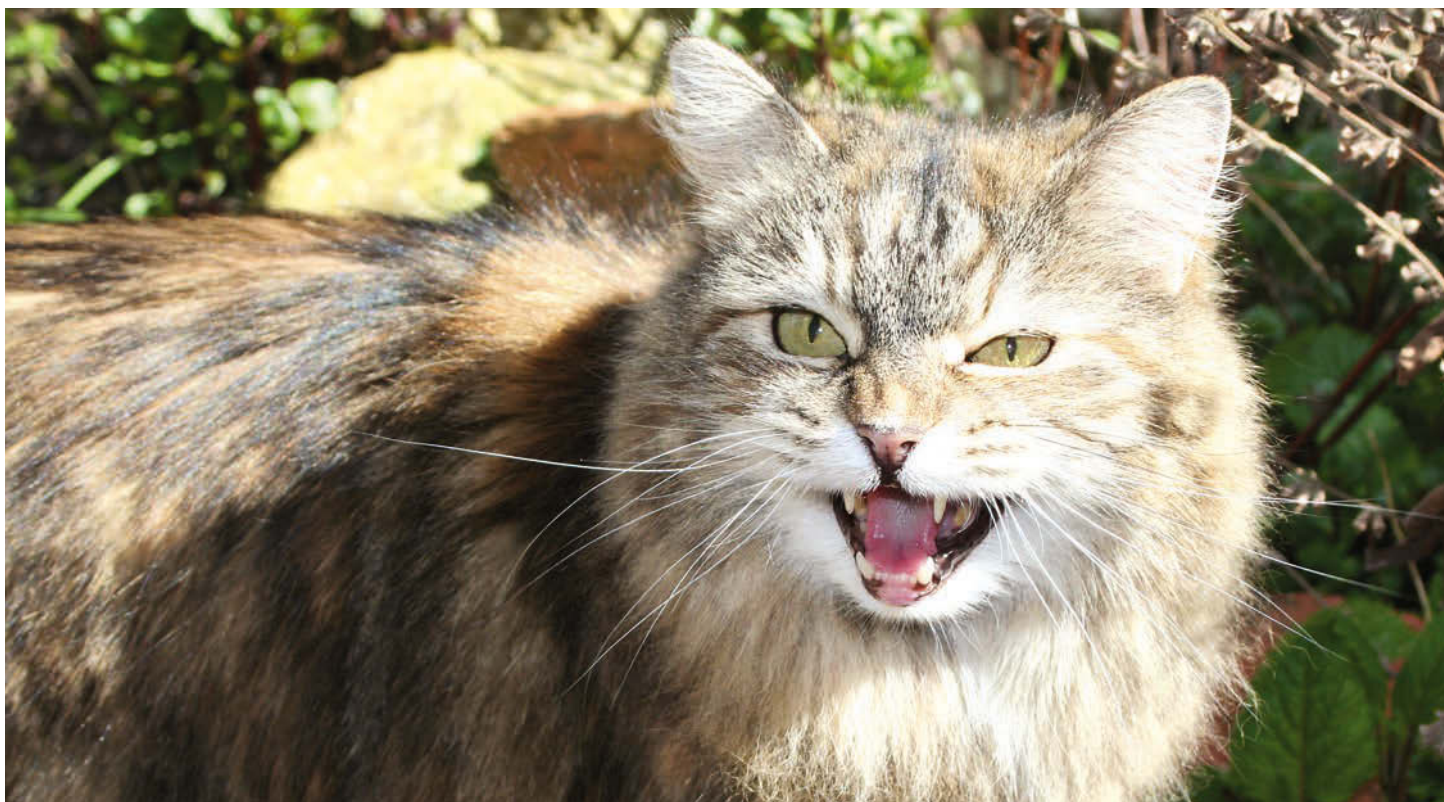
Another example was that of a cat not using its litter tray. I saw that the owners, literally, only put a handful of litter in the tray for the cat to use, rather than fill the tray up to a good depth - something that may have not been revealed in a clinic consultation.

My consultations will normally

take between one and a half and two hours. If possible, I like everyone in the household to attend so that I can get a 'feel' of what normal home life might be like. I will start by taking down a full history of the cat, including the environment the cat was obtained from, its age and its general temperament. I will ask about family routines and how much involvement everyone has with the cat. How often is the cat played with, does it have free access to the outdoors and is there a cat flap? What is the cat fed on, where does it like to sleep and what other pets are in the home? Only by asking a full range of questions and taking a holistic approach to the situation can one obtain a clear picture of exactly what is happening.

I will then ask to be shown around the house so that I can take details of the exact spots where, for example, the cat may be urinating. Location of urination will provide me with important information. In some cases, where there is a problem with aggression with neighbours' cats, I may also ask to see the garden. Only by seeing the cat's environment can I fully diagnose what is occurring and tailor a plan to specifically suit the cat's and client's needs and circumstances.

I prefer to visit the client's home



The size and location of an owner's home can have a tremendous bearing on tackling a behaviour problem. If the house is terraced and adjacent to many other cat owning households this will affect a cat's outdoor territory and inter-cat relationships.

At the other end of the scale, last summer, I visited a client who had a marking problem in the house. Her home was massive with a number of balconies and French windows, which were constantly left open during the summer months, resulting in numerous neighbourhood and feral cats wandering into the house and having the occasional fight with the resident cat. The client's cat was extremely anxious as a result of this 'open house' and spent all its time going around this enormous dwelling spraying over curtains, doors and windows in an effort to make itself feel secure and warn off potential intruders.

After I have fully assessed the situation and diagnosed the problem I will explain to the owners why their cat is behaving as it is and what they need to do to rectify the situation. It is important that owners have an un-

derstanding of the motivation for the behaviour and to have realistic expectations of what can be achieved. Although, sometimes, problems can be resolved quickly, others can take many months of patience and hardwork. In some cases, behaviour problems have been present for many years or there may be external factors that cannot be quickly resolved.

I provide the client with a full written report specifically for their cat and I also send the referring vet a consultation report so that he/she is updated on the situation.

A telephone consultation is arranged for five weeks after they have seen me to update me on progress. Fees for behaviour consultations vary but cat owners who have their cat insured should find that most of the leading insurance companies will cover the cost of a behavioural consultation with an APBC member or with a Certified Clinical Animal Behaviourist (CCAB).

It is important to remember that many behaviours which, from a human point of view are perceived to be problem, are as a result of the cat

behaving quite naturally. As owners learn more about what a cat is and how it communicates they will get a deeper understanding of what potential problems might occur and how to prevent them occurring.

Tip of the month

Whilst the Internet is useful for finding information about numerous subjects, care needs to be taken before following any advice. Within the UK, the behaviour profession is unregulated which means that anyone can say they are a behaviourist. To be sure of getting the very best and most appropriate advice for your cat, always talk to your vet first and ask them to refer you to a member of the APBC or other properly qualified cat behaviourist.

If you are experiencing some behaviour problems with your cat, to find your nearest APBC Member (Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors), visit www.apbc.org.uk



GORDY & ME

ELAINE MEAD SHARES HER EXPERIENCES OF LIVING WITH A CHALLENGING SPECIAL NEEDS CAT

This story starts and ends with Simmy Cat and I have to warn you that tissues will probably be required before you reach the end.

I woke my husband up after a night shift one early afternoon. The sun was streaming through the window and illuminating the dust particles that hang in the air, Teeko's silky hairs, that dangle from the blinds like a morbid sun catcher, sparkled. I perched on the end of the bed drinking my tea and chatting to my husband who was trying to stay asleep. I was regaling him with the tales of the day - the dogs down at the river, Gordy eating so much chicken I thought he might explode - when Simmy Cat jumped on the bed.

My husband 'oooffed' under the weight of Simmy Cat as he padded his way across the duvet, purring like a train, after a big fuss, which I was happy to give. He twisted and he turned, enjoying the scratching behind the ears and along his spine. It was at this point he 'presented' his bottom to me, tail up, his nose twitching in cat ecstasy, when, mid sentence, I screeched in laughter at the white dangling worm hanging out of his bottom. My husband shot out of bed faster than a tom cat on a promise with me howling with laughter and Simmy Cat not looking terribly amused.

‘He twisted and he turned, enjoying the scratching behind the ears and along his spine.’

After I stopped laughing at my big burly husband freaking out over this incident, I asked him to ring the vet and pick up a prescription as he was going out as soon as he woke up properly. All the animals were due to have their flea and worm treatment, it was on my to do list, Simmy just brought it forward by a week or so.

An hour or so later, I was in my studio and my husband was on his way out when he rang the vet and then came to see me. "They won't give us the treatment until they see Gordy" he said. My heart sank, this was my worst nightmare, Gordy at the vets. Our vets have been brilliant over the last few years. Gordy is registered there and they are aware of him and his issues and have in the past been happy to give us the prescription for prescription on request. All our animals are registered there, Teeko was before he lived with us and the vet knows that he came here when his previous owners went abroad. Simmy Cat and Smudge have both been to the vets recently for neutering and both dogs are regular yearly visitors for boosters and weight checks; the only one not seen is Gordy and this time the surgery was asking to see him before they gave the prescription for all the animals. The good news was I didn't have to fret for more than 40 minutes as they would see him straight away.

I took a deep breath and got the cat box.

At the vets, which is just five minutes in the car, I sat on the bench with Gordy whilst my husband

booked us in. Gordy was having a panic attack. He was quivering and shaking all over so I took him out of the cat box and although he still shook like a leaf in the wind, he was happier to be able to see what was going on and be held. In the consultation room with the nurse I immediately launched into who he was and that he had problems and this was a HUGE deal for him to be here, whilst my husband interjected that he was a famous cat with a huge following on Facebook and every month he features in Cat World Magazine.. we are the very proud parents of our boy!

The nurse was wonderful and didn't touch Gordy, although she was wanting to, but she accepted he needed the space and I was most grateful that she just talked about his problems, his IBS, his dribbling and any concerns we might have, which we don't and as I told her, he is broken but he works just the way he is. Then she weighed him on the big table. We were amazed when the scales came in at 3kg. The average weight for a British Shorthair male is 6 – 8kg so Gordy is half what he should be but no one expected him to get this big and to us he is huge.

Back in the waiting room I sat at one end with Gordy in my arms whilst my husband was at the desk getting the prescription so we could order online – a saving of quite a bit! This took a while as the vet was busy. A young couple came in with a beautiful puppy Bulldog and just stared at me and Gordy, now stood



in the middle of the waiting room, me rocking him like a baby whilst wide eyed, he stared around the room, his tongue glistening under the strip lights.

We were still in this position when an older lady came in, took one look at me and Gordy and said 'Oh no a cat.' I heard myself saying 'don't worry he isn't a 'real' cat' as if that was perfectly normal. The lady gave me an odd look and called in her husband who was on the end of the lead of an ENORMOUS long haired shepherd. The dog took one look at me with Gordy and did a double take, his instincts obviously screamed CAT but his brain was so confused he just sat down near us and stared, much to the amusement of us and the complete bewilderment of his owners.

Our stay at the vets was more delayed, as a family came in and were informed their beloved pet had died. My heart broke for them, the children were in tears and the dad was pretty close to sobbing as the nurse explained the big bill! I felt so blessed that all my lot were young,

healthy and happy but nothing lasts forever.

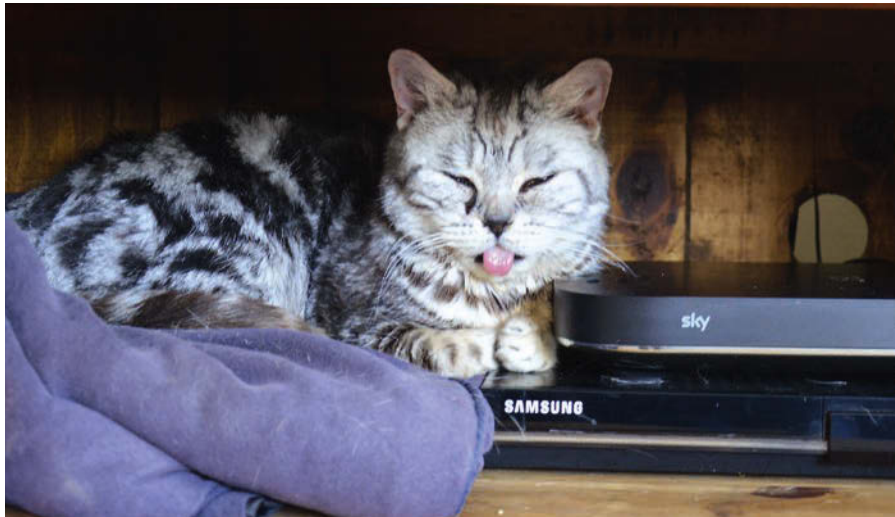
One day in May

Our bins go out each Wednesday, one week general rubbish, the next recycling. Last week was recycling, the big green bin. The sun shone through the window that day as I played with Simmy Cat on the bed; I was stripping it ready to change the covers and this was his favourite game. He jumped and twisted and charged under the sheets, he leapt from the bed ran down stairs and out of the cat flap whilst I giggled and watched him run into the field in the sunshine from the upstairs bedroom window. It was to be the last time I saw him alive.

Tea time came as normal around 5.30pm and Simmy hadn't been seen all afternoon. I was a little concerned but the weather was fabulous and there are plenty of shrews and mice to chase for a young cat beginning his journey through life. I kept his bowl on the side in the kitchen, ready to give him when he came in.

Evening came and with it the dark. Still no sign of Simmy Cat. We were all restless, Smudge was in and out of the cat flap unable to settle. Looking back I think she already knew what we feared. My son drove round the lanes slowly, looking in all the hedges but he came home with no news. At 10pm I locked the cat flap so that Simmy could get in but no one could get out and went to bed. At 3 am I was up and in the kitchen drinking tea. As soon as breakfast was over I was out with the dogs. Smudge was still being chaotic and even Gordy was subdued. Teeko was the only one that didn't notice.

I searched all the hedgerows and asked the neighbour I saw (we don't have many!) to check any outbuildings for him. They knew who he was and they have only been here for a month! I was beginning to feel better walking back from the river. I hadn't seen him, maybe he was off chasing girls and would be home later for a good telling off and some food. I had convinced myself he was off doing 'young man' stuff and even had the



ground rules in my head ready to tell him about how he should be home by 9pm and this really wasn't on.

I opened the gate and let the dogs off their leads. My usual routine is to then walk around the garden and pick up the poop but this morning I decided to just walk around and check under all the hedges. Our garden is surrounded by hedges that are now greening up as the warmer months approach. There, in the corner at the front of the garden, under the old Red Robin bush and behind the picnic table now adorned with thistles that have grown out from the hedge, was an enormous orange bum. 'Simmy' I called, delighted. He looked for all the world like he was stalking a mouse under there...but he didn't turn around like I expected and my heart sank like a stone.

Pushing thorny branches aside I almost crawled into the hedge to touch his bum. It was stone cold. I pulled out his body and sat on the bench removing the dead leaves and debris from his face. His eyes no longer shone like amber lights, his nose no longer twitched. His body was contorted, his claws were outstretched and on his muzzle was a small but fatal wound that told me he had been hit by a vehicle. We suspect it was the bin men that hit him as in the hedge on

the other side was a pair of workman's gloves. My world fell into a thousand pieces and my tears fell on his head.

I laid him out on the bench and went to find Gordy. Smudge had found me already and was sniffing the quiet form of her brother. Both Izabel and Defi went and said their goodbyes and as I carried Gordy from the house to the front of the garden, he too realised what had happened. Watching Gordy and Smudge sat next to Simmy Cat, sniffing him, broke my heart and I sobbed down the phone to my husband who said he would come home to say goodbye. He had a particular fondness for Simmy Cat.

My son rang me to see if I had found him yet and when I said yes, he said he was coming home straight away. My son is a courier driver so he came and dug me a grave under the bamboo next to our Claude and Megan, and Dave the chicken.

For days I sobbed; my daughter sobbed and everyone in the house was so subdued, especially poor little Smudge who had lost her best friend since birth. I posted on Facebook that Simmy had returned home but not alive and the outpouring of grief from other people touched my soul. Someone did message me and say that they have never seen so many messages sending love for the loss of a pet

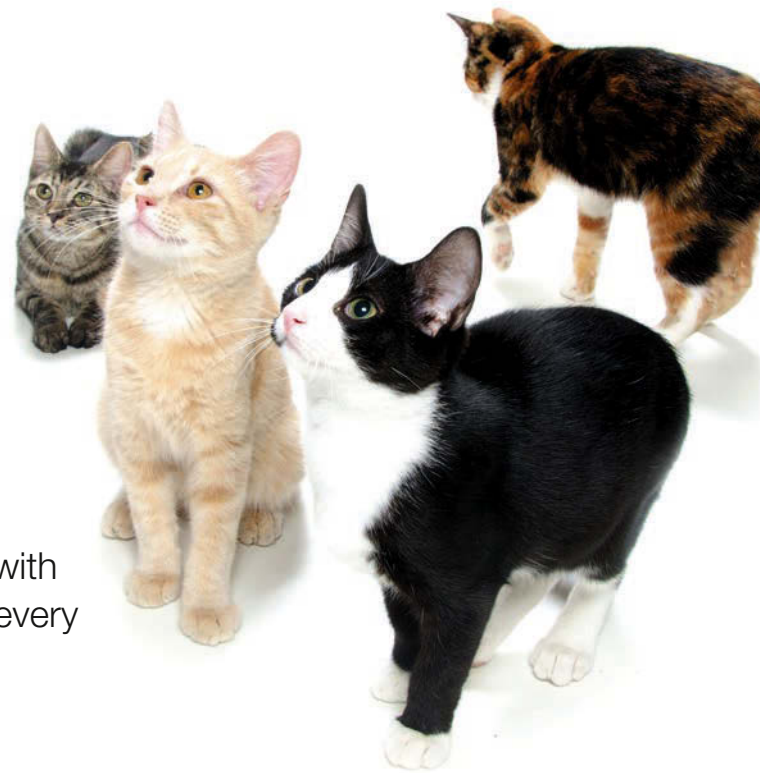
and they didn't see the personal messages and texts I received. I never knew so many people followed me and my bonkers life and their support was overwhelming.

Smudge started sleeping under the duvet tucked into me. She fidgets all night but I don't mind, watching her nose twitch as she dreams makes me smile. After a few nights she started waking up periodically to play like she did with Simmy Cat, although she never came out of the duvet. We still sleep like this now, 12 days later. Gordy misses his big little brother, Simmy Cat being a big bruiser could play with Gordy who doesn't do gentle play; he isn't nasty, he doesn't understand how to play 'nicely'. It is all or nothing with him but Simmy played with him, they scratched on the cat castle posts together and charged behind the sofa. Simmy was a huge personality in our house and is so sorely missed.

That saying that cats leave paw prints on your heart is right - we know they will leave us, we don't know when and we hope that it is many, many years in the future but even the smallest amount of time spent sharing their life is worth the pain and loss they leave behind.



*RIP Simmy Cat
May 2016 – April 2017.*



Be responsible and neuter your pets

Rescue charities around the UK are struggling to cope with the numbers of abandoned cats and kittens that arrive every week because so many are not neutered or spayed

BY CORINNE MANSFIELD

Charities all over the UK and around the world are forced to cope with the result of kittens being born by cats that have not been neutered. In the UK, all rescue charities produce literature urging you to get your cat neutered or spayed in a bid to reduce the number of unwanted kittens that are frequently dumped at their doors - sometimes literally.

It is a common belief that the main reason for an owner not neutering their cat is the cost. It is not overly expensive however and may well save unnecessary expense on vets bills in the future.

Here are the main reasons why we should pay attention to the charities and believe that this process is the right thing to do for both owners and cats.

Rescue centres are full

There are simply too many unwanted litters of kittens brought to rescue centres and shelters each year. The number of kittens exceeds the number of families looking to adopt a cat or kitten from them. Last year over 1000 kittens were dumped, given up or born at just one national animal charity alone.

Problems with ferals

Unwanted cats that are not adopted may end up

being euthanised because they are often abandoned and grow up to be feral. It is estimated that there are as many cats living as ferals as there are in loving homes. Feral cats can carry diseases. Having your own cat spayed or neutered will ensure your cat will not contribute to the growing problem.

Coping with heat

Female cats that are not spayed go into heat several times a year. By spaying your female cat you can prevent several unwanted behaviours, including spraying, hours of yowling and you will not have to confine your cat for several weeks of the year.

Cats wander off

Male cats that have not been neutered are also more difficult to care for. Sexually mature male cats often feel the need to mark their territory. Mating instincts in un-neutered cats cannot be curbed or controlled so these cats often wander off for days at a time, in search of a female cat in heat. This can lead to them getting lost or even hit by a car.

A healthier pet

Your cat's health can benefit if it is spayed or neutered. For example,

a female cat that is spayed before their first heat will have a reduced chance of mammary cancer and will be unable to develop pyometra, a serious uterine condition that can cause death. An unwanted pregnancy in an already ill or ageing cat can be fatal.

Male cats that have been neutered have less chance of being injured in fights over females or of developing prostate problems. The risk of catching Feline Immunodeficiency Virus, usually spread through saliva while fighting, is also minimised.

Cats are better behaved

A spayed or neutered cat is likely to have a better temperament and so be more friendly towards its owners. It's much easier to have a good relationship with your cat when you don't have to worry about all of the unfortunate situations that come up after your pet has reached sexual maturity.

Save money on bills

It can save you money in the long run. Female cats that haven't been spayed are likely to damage furniture or carpets when in heat and un-neutered males will spray furnishings and furniture to mark their territory, meaning hefty bills to get these things replaced.

As previously mentioned, spaying and neutering can prevent health problems in your cat, saving money on vets bills



The Million Cat Challenge

Sharing knowledge and ideas for the future safety and rehabilitation of rescued cats is at the heart of this innovative scheme taking place throughout America for the past three years

BY CARLA GREENWOOD

Saving the lives of one million cats in North America's animal shelters over five years seems like an enormous task to undertake, yet this is exactly the goal of the Million Cat Challenge. Nearly 1100 shelters have already joined the campaign since its launch in 2014, as a joint project between the UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program and the University of Florida Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program. Shelters across America are sharing ideas to find new and innovative ways to improve the lives of shelter cats.

Mutual goals

The euthanasia of shelter animals has been a huge issue in America over recent decades. Approximately 860,000 cats are euthanised every year as shelters struggle to cope with the sheer number of animals they take in. Through consultations with shelters across America, Million Cat Challenge co-founders Dr. Kate Hurley, of the UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program and Dr. Julie Levy, of the Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program at the University of Florida, noticed that many shelters expressed frustration at being unable to do more for cats in their local area.

"Both of us spend a lot of time traveling, visiting animal shelters and attending sheltering and veterinary conferences. We noticed something the people we spoke to had in common: a desperate hunger to save more cats' lives."



In 2014 the Million Cat Challenge was launched with generous funding from Maddie's fund; a National Foundation created by Dave and Cheryl Duffield to revolutionise the well-being of companion animals. Sharon Fletcher, Director of Marketing and Communications at Maddie's fund, said: "The proposal we received from Drs. Kate Hurley and Julie Levy in addressing the community cat situation was an innovative and ambitious approach to lifesaving. The mind-shift they are creating is extraordinary"

In just three years, shelters that have joined the challenge have saved nearly 800,000 cats' lives and are expected to reach their one million target by early next year!

Key initiatives

The five core initiatives of the Million Cat Challenge, pioneered by animal shelters across the country, are based on the understanding that each cat is unique. Through these initiatives, shelters are encouraged to match each shelter cat with the most appropriate outcome based on their individual needs:

Alternatives to intake - Admission to a shelter is not always the best

choice for every cat. Through the campaign, shelters can offer an expanding selection of alternatives from providing resources and support towards veterinary care, to assisting a community member in trapping and sterilising a community cat.

Managed admission - Scheduling the intake of cats to match the shelter's capabilities ensures that every animal is well cared for. Even shelters obliged to take all animals that come their way can manage how and when these animals are admitted. Some shelters have gone further by creating detailed interview processes designed to assess the best needs of the animal before accepting them.

Capacity for care - In simple terms, this means making sure that the welfare needs of every cat accepted to a shelter is being met. Accepting too many animals will make it harder for staff to look after every animal to the best of their ability.

Removing barriers to adoption - Although commonly performed with the best of intentions, many traditional barriers to adoption, such as home visits and endless checks, tend to be based on tradition more than evidence of their value in protecting pets. Shelters can increase the number of potential adopters by removing some of these barriers through a variety of ways including additional funding, open adoptions or by simplifying the adoption process.

Return to field - Trap-neuter-return (TNR) programs can be used as

allenge



an alternative to euthanasia for those cats who are capable of looking after themselves. Through this method, feral or stray cats are trapped and transported directly to a clinic where they are sterilised, vaccinated and ear-tipped for identification before being released back into the wild.

Candy Hearts

By implementing at least one of the core initiatives set out by the Million Cat Challenge, shelters have seen a dramatic improvement in both their adoption success rates and their ability to care for their resident cats. Cats like Candy Hearts, who was found immobile on a snowbank by a passer-by back in February. When she was admitted to the Tree House Animal Shelter in Chicago, Candy Hearts was dehydrated, underweight, hypothermic and struggling to use her back legs. It was soon discovered that both of her hips had been broken and she spent most of her first week in an oxygen tank to assist her laboured breathing. Late one night,

the shelter vet was called out when Candy Hearts began gasping for air. In the early hours of the morning, lifesaving surgery was performed on her to correct the diaphragmatic hernia that was preventing her lungs from expanding. Soon after recovery, Candy Hearts was adopted in to her new forever home.

Before the Tree House Animal Shelter started implementing the Capacity for Care initiative, they cared for around 350 cats, most of them long-term residents with little chance of adoption. Since joining the Million Cat Challenge in 2014, the shelter has lowered their capacity to just 150 cats, freeing up their resources to help vulnerable felines like Candy

Hearts. By focusing on providing the best care for their resident cats, the shelter has been able to increase its adoption rate from 300 animals per year to 1400!

Empowering shelters

Since its launch back in 2014, the Million Cat Challenge has evolved into an established program, endorsed by nearly every major animal welfare organisation across the US and Canada, including Best Friend's Animal Society, the Petco Foundation and most recently, the ASPCA (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) who joined earlier this year. To find out more, visit www.millioncatchallenge.org

NATURAL HEALTH



When conventional and alternative attitudes towards medicine seem to coincide, it can only be a good thing for all concerned, says Richard Allport

When you are 50-something, like me, your brain tends not to work quite as quickly as it used to. So I was quite proud of myself for finding the energy, and getting my remaining brain cells primed, to attend a two-day course on feline infectious diseases.

This course was given by two excellent veterinary lecturers, who know more or less everything there is to know about Feline Leukaemia Virus, Feline Coronavirus, Feline Immunodeficiency Virus and most other viruses and bacteria that your cat may be unlucky enough to come into contact with.

What I found a little surprising, and most pleasing, was that – although the lectures were at the cutting edge of modern scientific knowledge of cat diseases, some of their suggestions were in fact of a ‘natural’ nature.

So let’s start with chronic stomatitis, or ‘really sore mouth’ to give it a more normal title.

Cats are very prone to persistent sore mouths. The gums, particularly the inside corners at the back of the mouth, and sometimes the throat, become sore. And not just ‘a bit red’. We are talking painful, inflamed, swollen, bleeding gums in many



cases, leaving the cat unwilling or unable to eat.

The conventional approach in the past was commonly lots of antibiotics, lots of steroids and if all else fails, take all the teeth out. One strong point made by the ‘experts’ was – don’t take all the teeth out if at all possible. There is a serious risk of producing infection in the eye while extracting the upper back teeth, as the roots of these teeth are very, very near the eye socket, and several cats have lost their sight because infection has travelled into the eye after an extraction.

Similarly, steroids are best avoided, as they suppress the immune system and encourage infection to recur after the use of antibiotics. If anti-inflammatory medication is necessary to help relieve soreness, then nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories – known as NSAIDs, such as Metacam – should be given.

But just why does the mouth get so sore in the first place? For a long time viruses have been implicated in causing stomatitis. Some cats with FIV (Feline Immunodeficiency Virus) have stomatitis, and this is often blamed as being a cause of the disease. However, FIV is found in the same percentage of cats with stomatitis as in the rest of the cat

population. But, all cats with chronic stomatitis have FCV (Feline Calicivirus – one of the cat ‘flu viruses’).

Apparently, as I learned on this course, FCV is a clever virus, and keeps producing new strains. The FCV part of the cat ‘flu vaccination does not, and never can, cover all the strains, and especially not the new strains which are constantly evolving. It may give some protection, it may reduce the signs and symptoms of cat ‘flu, but it won’t guarantee to stop a cat picking up and carrying FCV.

Just to make things even more confusing – not all cats that get FCV infection get chronic bad mouths. The ones that do, seem to have some defect in their immune systems which ‘allows’ the FCV infection to trigger a major inflammatory reaction.

And food is a factor. One of the experts said she had found cases of cats’ mouths becoming much improved simply by changing to an additive-free diet. Now, this ties in with my own findings: that cats eating foods that are highly processed and with lots of additives have more health problems in general, and mouth problems in particular. I would personally go one better than any commercially produced food,



and feed a diet of 'real' meat, preferably raw – as long as you can trust the source of the raw meat.

Our expert also suggested that boosting the immune system with antioxidants such as vitamins C and E was useful. This is something any holistic vet would go along with. In fact, I would expand this support system to include not just vitamins C and E, but also vitamin A, and the mineral Selenium – all of which help boost the immune system.

I also usually recommend the use of royal jelly which is a useful immune system booster.

Finally, do give Coenzyme Q10. This is an enzyme naturally occurring in the body, needed in high concentration in the gums and other tissues - especially the heart - to keep tissues healthy. A daily dose of 10-30 mg of Coenzyme Q10 seems

to help keep cats' mouths healthy or to help clear up mouths when they are sore.

Of course you might also like to suggest to your vet that a referral to a homoeopathic vet is an option. Homoeopathy – in conjunction with diet and immune system boosters, can be remarkably helpful in cases of feline stomatitis. You would need to see someone with a great deal of experience in homoeopathy, so ask to be referred to someone with the VetMFHom qualification.

What your homoeopathic vet would do is not just choose a remedy for a sore mouth but one which fitted any other physical symptoms your cat was experiencing, and that fitted with your cat's character, personality and temperament. In other words, treat the whole cat. And by this I don't mean 'the cat, the whole

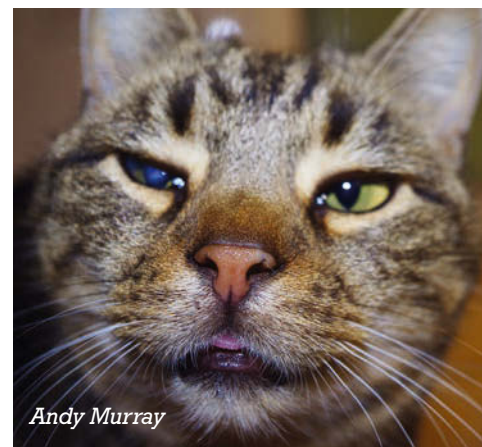
cat, and nothing but the cat' – rather, treat the cat at 'mind, spirit, body' levels – the whole of the cat and not just the bit that seems to be going wrong.

So, whether from a strictly scientific, conventional background, or an 'unconventional' holistic - and still 'scientific' in its own way - background, it seems to me that thoughts about chronic disease are beginning to converge.

One final 'nugget' of information that came up during the course. Apparently very similar sore mouths to those of cats with severe stomatitis have been seen in humans – especially in humans who drink lots of Irn Bru – a drink which I believe is part of the diet of many Scots. I would go with the more mature Scottish drinker, and reach for a good malt whisky rather than an Irn Bru. Cheers!

Elderly felines need loving homes too

Volunteering at the local rescue means meeting many cats of varying ages but all too often it is the felines in their senior years that become a more permanent fixture



BY TINA READ

When cats get to the age of 11 they are classed as senior pets, quite understandably, as it is the equivalent to 60 in human years. At Feline Care Cat Rescue there are many senior cats, as no cat is ever turned away as a result of their age or due to any existing health issues they have. That is probably why there are around 40 elderly cats in residence, which is around a quarter of the cats in FCCR's care. Some of the cats have approximate ages due to the large feral colony of around 50 cats that reside in the grounds of the rescue. They have an array of cat houses to snooze in or on, depend-

ing on the weather and how the mood takes them!

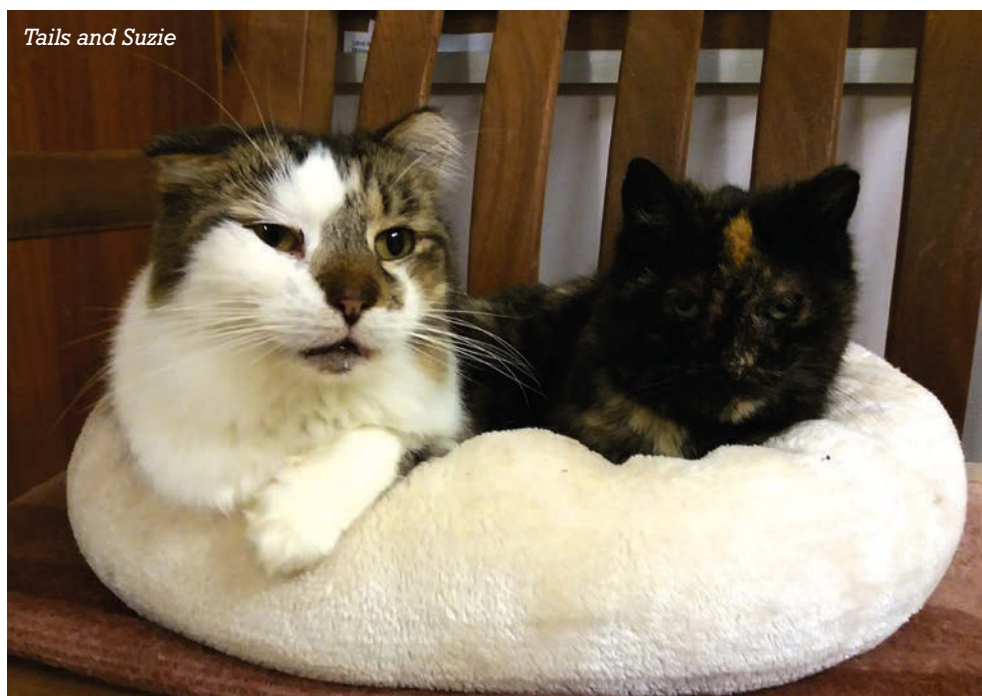
All the cats are monitored on an ongoing basis and Molly has extensive experience of the health conditions that can affect older felines, working alongside her vet to ensure the cats receive any medical care required. The team keep an eye on appetite, any changes in behaviour, the cats' general appearance including the care of their coat and also their mobility. This ensures that any health conditions more likely to be associated with cats of this age can be identified and treated as soon as possible. These common issues include; chronic renal

(kidney) disease, heart disease, diabetes mellitus, arthritis, hyperthyroidism, dental problems and cancer.

The main reception area at the rescue is a warm and comfortable space, which is also somewhere the team and volunteers congregate on occasion. This ensures the special care cats who reside in this homely and welcoming space enjoy plenty of love and affection if they want it! It would be fair to say that not all of them do, as some of these cats are semi feral and simply prefer to be left alone in a warm bed to enjoy a peaceful and cosy kip.

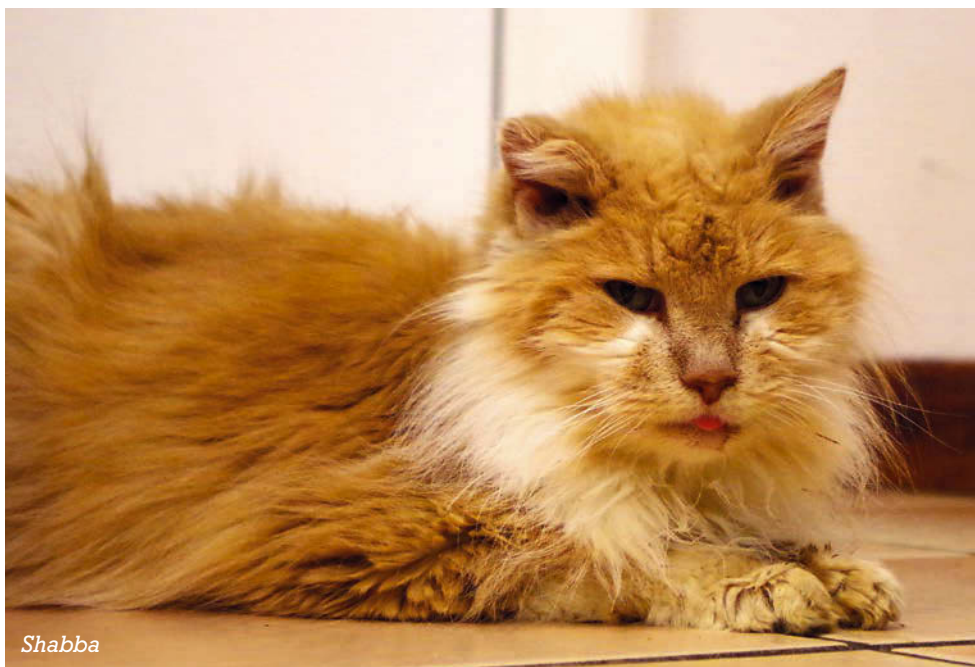
Tails is one of the cats who spends much of his time in the reception area, although he does venture out on occasion. He is a gentle boy with the most soulful eyes and laid back character and if he could talk I am sure he would have many a tale to tell. At the recent Easter open day, he found the perfect vantage point to survey the comings and goings of visitors, while relaxing on a chair and taking a keen interest in the tea and cake being served. On my visits I do admit to sneaking him a few cat treats, knowing he is allowed them in moderation. He waits outside in the sunshine on warmer days for me and the rest of his fan club to have an opportunity to worship him. He isn't officially a senior as he is a spritely nine years young!

Senior cats make the most wonderful loving companions and can enjoy a





Wendy



Shabba



Scampling



Bowie, Chloe and Tails

long and happy retirement in the right home. They are often more likely to enjoy a comfortable lap to sit on and an ear rub and if they have another cat for company, they can often be left during the day, which means they can suit families who are out at work for part or most of the day.

Andy Murray and Scampling

Andy Murray, who I have mentioned before, has become a great friend over time, along with his best pal Scampling. These special cats originally came from a colony of poorly feral cats, who lived at a rural cottage with their elderly owner. It turned out that almost the entire group were FIV positive and Andy Murray and Scampling are now the only remaining cats left from their group.

They are much adored residents

of FCCR and enjoy both indoor and outdoor living (a spacious cat run) with a plethora of favourite snoozing spots. I have to admit I try and fit in a visit to these two surprisingly spritely cats whenever I visit the rescue. They are quite clearly devoted to one another and are so delighted to have as much attention as possible in between cat naps. They are always keen as mustard when the dreamies come out, their treat of choice, and sometimes even a game or two, just before I leave them to have a cat nap.

I admit that I was lulled into a false sense of security on the first couple of occasions I spent time with them and ended up on the receiving end of a game of pounce that started without any prior warning, which is of course a cat's prerogative! What huge characters these two are and how adored

they are by so many human...servants.

Although Scampling has a growth in her ear that cannot be operated on, Andy Murray has a cloudy eye, and they both have feline viral rhinopneumonitis, they could still go to a very special home together. Though their manners in the feeding and litter tray department may need a little refining!

Perhaps one day their special someone will come along but until that day they will continue to have an army of wonderful and well trained cat worshippers who pander to their every whim.

- If you are interested in adopting one of the older cats at Feline Care Cat Rescue, please contact Molly on 01953 718529 or email her info@felinecare.org.uk. Website: www.felinecare.org.uk/

Making the most of your internet photos

Social media is awash with cat photos so capture your cat's great looks and personality in style and he'll stand out from the rest

BY JAMES SCHOFIELD

Photographing my feline friends has become something of a little hobby of mine. As my mother's photography skills are rather limited, every month she requests that I supply her with some new photographs to go with her articles. Cats fascinate and intrigue me with their innate beauty and varied behaviour and in recent years, every time I came home from university I would be met by the scurrying of little tabby paws as they welcomed their slightly bigger, more talkative and less furry big brother.

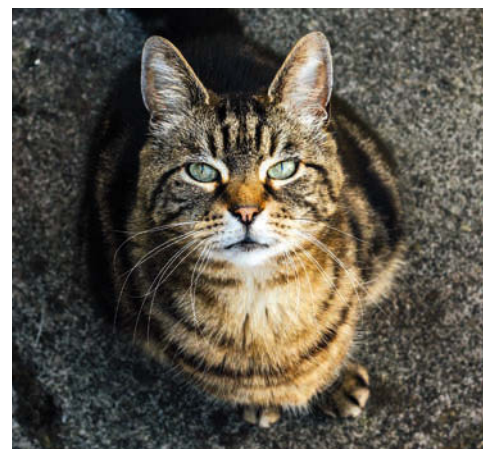
Endless strokes would ensue, whether it was Tibbles rubbing himself against the legs of my jeans with a delightful purr or Toby who would stand upright on his back legs to give me a little nose-nudge in greeting. It is these touching moments with our feline friends that we remember most fondly and naturally, they are the kind of moments that we wish to capture and remember forever in the form of a picture.

Whether it is sharing pictures on social media or capturing a picture that can be framed, we all want the best quality image that represents how we feel about our pets. Here are a few tips to help capture both the beauty and the quirky personalities of our feline friends.



1. Whenever possible shoot in natural light Natural light is the best light, as glorious rays of sunshine enthrall you with their golden glow and vibrant colours, so why not capture your cat in the best possible lighting? During the summertime, the best chance to take advantage of the natural light is at 12pm midday here in the UK when the sun hovers in the centre of the sky without any unappealing shadows appearing to ruin your perfect shot. More to the point, if it is sunny it is more than likely your cats are playing or, as in Toby's case, snoozing outside - which leads me to my next point.

2. Capturing your cat in its natural environment So it is a fine summer's day and you happen to notice your cat wants to go outside, so what is the best thing to do? Follow it! Following your cat and getting the chance to see what it gets up to when it is not sat upon your lap contentedly purring is an eye opening experience for any owner and a perfect chance to discover how your cat behaves in its natural environment. Does your cat hunt in the nearby fields? Toby certainly does and watching your cat skulk and stalk in the garden or in the countryside, should you live near to fields,



allows you to explore its wild side. Capturing a shot of your cat hunting or stalking requires patience and persistence but should you succeed it will provide you with a lasting reminder of the wild and untameable aspect of their personality. Alternatively, most cats love an outdoor snooze, especially on a warm, sunny day and will find a cosy little place in which to doze or to happily roll around in the garden.

3. Simplicity This is a useful creative tip applicable to photographing any subject but in relation to cats, the key to effective photography is having one point of interest and when photographing cats and avoiding clutter to create a most simple yet effective image. For instance, should I be photographing one of my cats in the garden, I will take a picture that captures the cat sitting on the grass while looking content. Thus, there are only two elements here - that of the cat and the grass and simplicity is the key. However, should I capture another image which shows the garage and washing line in the background, suddenly the focus upon the feline is lost, so it makes good sense to aim for simplicity and to keep the cat as the main focus of the picture.

4. Be careful with totally white or black cats The majority of time you should have no problems photographing your cat, regardless of the colour of its coat but occasionally the camera



may become confused. When your camera focuses on the subject at which you are pointing it will automatically try to gain an understanding of the optimal brightness for the photograph. Sometimes when photographing a cat that has jet black or pure white fur, the camera has the potential to become confused and so may brighten or darken the exposure in accordance with your cat's fur. In this instance the use of flash may be required.

5. Treats...and a whole lot of them Crunchy treats tend to be the treat of choice in the Schofield household to garner the attention of our felines and assuming that all cats love little treats, it is safe to say that waving a bag of treats is a great way to get your cat's attention as it looks towards you and also the



camera. Just remember to act quickly however as soon enough, they may very well return to their normal aloof selves.

6. The realities of living in the UK So it is raining as per usual and similar to you and your cat decides to say firmly indoors and enjoy the comforts of the house and in winter the benefits of the central heating. How can you address this in terms of capturing a good photograph? The answer is...wait for them to sit on the windowsill. Given that it is the most direct source of natural light into your house, this is your best opportunity to capture a special moment with your kitty when the weather just is not up to it. In this case, tapping the plywood of

the windowsill should suffice in getting your cat's attention for that next social media update.

7. Flash as a last resort (not a euphemism!) Flash, on the whole, in photography only really looks close to natural when used in a professional studio. With regard to compact cameras and smart phones it tends to make the subject of your picture look unnatural. Therefore, my advice would be to consider this point as a last alternative should points 1-6 not be possible.

Hopefully these tips will help you to capture a perfect, natural image that typifies the unique qualities that make your cat precious and special to you. By following these tips, it will maximise your chances of success as well as affording you the chance to spend some quality time bonding with your pet as you begin to understand to a greater extent your cat's unique personality as seen both through the lens and also your own eyes.

SHOW DATES

CLUB EVENTS FOR YOU DIARY

GCCF **JUNE**

June 03

Bristol & District Cat Club

Oasis Leisure Centre Swindon,
North Star Avenue,
Swindon SN2 1EP

Cambria Cat Club

Oasis Leisure Centre Swindon,
North Star Avenue,
Swindon SN2 1EP

Merseyside Cat Club

Sutton Leisure Centre,
Elton Head Road,
Saint Helens WA9 5AU

June 10

Abyssinian Cat Club

Tiddington Community Centre,
Main Street, Tiddington,
Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 7AN

June 17

Lakeland & District Cat Club

Kendal Leisure Centre, Burton Road,
Kendal, Cumbria LA9 7HX

Oriental Cat Association

Pitsford Sports Hall, Gate 4 Moulton
College, Pitsford Road, Moulton,
Northampton NN3 7QL

Siamese Cat Association

Pitsford Sports Hall, Gate 4 Moulton
College, Pitsford Road,
Moulton, Northampton NN3
7QL

Wessex Cat Club

Fleming Park Leisure Centre,
Passfield Avenue, Eastleigh,
Hampshire SO50 9NL

June 24

East Sussex Cat Club

Lockmeadow Market, Barker Road,
Maidstone, Kent ME16 8LW

Maine Coon Cat Club

Wilnecote Community Leisure
Centre, Tinkers Green Road,
Wilnecote, Tamworth B77 5LF

JULY

July 01

Wiltshire & District Cat Club

Oasis Leisure Centre Swindon,
North Star Avenue,
Swindon SN2 1EP

July 08

Bombay and Asian Cats Breed Club

Wood Green Animal Shelter,
King's Bush Farm, London Road,
Godmanchester, Huntingdon,
Cambridgeshire PE29 2NH

Eastern Counties Cat Society

Wood Green Animal Shelter,
King's Bush Farm, London Road,
Godmanchester, Huntingdon,
Cambridgeshire PE29 2NH

Kensington Cat Club

Wood Green Animal Shelter,
King's Bush Farm, London Road,
Godmanchester, Huntingdon,
Cambridgeshire PE29 2NH

July 15

Balinese & Siamese Cat Club

Samuel Cody Specialist Sports
College, Ballantyne Road,
Farnborough, Hampshire GU14 8SN

Scotia Cat Fanciers

Lanark Agricultural Centre,
Lanark ML1 1 9AX

July 22

Airedale Agricultural Society (Bingley)

Myrtle Park, Bingley,
West Yorkshire BD16 1HB

July 29

Humberside Cat Club

George Stephenson Ex Hall,
Newark Showground,
Lincoln Road, Newark-On-Trent,
Nottinghamshire NG24 2NY

Lincolnshire Cat Club

George Stephenson Ex Hall,
Newark Showground,
Lincoln Road, Newark-On-Trent,
Nottinghamshire NG24 2NY

TICA

JUNE 03/04

VanTICA, Ware

JULY 16/17

ThamesTICA, Swanley

AUGUST 5/6

OneforAll, Brigg

AUGUST 26/27

CatTICA (Regional Show),
Bracknell



A NURSE'S NOTES

JANET PENNINGTON REPORTS FROM THE FRONTLINE OF A BUSY VETERINARY PRACTICE

Janet Pennington hopes that TJ will be able to overcome his wee problem

I never worked out what the initials 'TJ' stood for. There were plenty of ideas and suggestions in the prep room at the veterinary surgery. Unfortunately most of them included the word 'tinkle'. You see, the boy had a rather personal problem.

He was brought in on a drizzly Monday morning by his companion Lucy and her mummy, Mrs Wilkins. The vet asked what the matter with the cat was and the little girl unashamedly summed it up.

"TJ has wee-wee problems."

Mrs Wilkins completed the picture by explaining that their cat spent more time in his litter tray than out of it and produced very little urine. He also tried the crumbly soil in their garden but still no result.

Even as they spoke, TJ began to scratch at the newspaper in his carrier and squat unceremoniously in the corner.

I held the sturdy cat's thick head while the vet examined his abdomen and prodded about. The vet explained that he was feeling for any signs of blockage such as a foreign body, crystals or tumours.

We all waited silently

while the inspection took place and even TJ remained patient. Nothing was palpated so the vet advised that we admitted him for further observation. Lucy became tearful but tried to wipe away the evidence before anyone noticed.

On the way out I whispered: "We'll find out what's wrong with TJ and make him better," even though the practice policy was not to make claims like that before a diagnosis had been made. But Lucy was seven years old and I believed that she needed some reassurance.

I put our new in-patient in a comfy kennel and left him some water. The vet asked me to start the cat on a course of antibiotics, which would clear up any infection such as cystitis. If there was no improvement in a couple of days then more intrusive investigation would have to be carried out. I knew that meant looking for tumours.

There were plenty more appointments that needed nursing assistance as usual and, being Monday, people arriving without appointments. There were bandages to change, stitches to remove and

tons of dog toileting duties. It all just kept reminding me of TJ. I desperately wanted to see an overflowing litter tray in his kennel.

It was simply too busy that morning for me to slip back to the kennel block to check on him. It was such a hectic morning that only 15 minutes remained for my lunch hour. The appointments just went on and on. I grabbed my sandwiches and rushed to the kennels to see TJ and his litter tray.

I know that sounds a little odd but the kennels is a strangely relaxing place to me, away from the ever-ringing telephone and the vets who have a bark sharper than any dog. In any case, I saw the vet begin to scrub up for an operation – so no lunch for him then. And grumbles and barks for the rest of us.

As I walked through the kennels' door, I could see the back of TJ, all hunched in the corner of his litter tray. There was only a tiny dribble of dampness in the sawdust. Maybe tomorrow, I wished, knowing that the more time we waited, the more the chance of the problem being a tumour.

Next morning the duty

rota placed me on the kennels and as usual I relished the role. I collected the keys and trotted across the car park to the kennel block, cursing the weather for being wet again.

But it was much wetter inside. I opened the door and was almost washed away by the huge waterfall that suddenly gushed in front of me. My first concern was for the animals and I ran through the ankle-deep flood to check them.

Thankfully they were all unconcerned, safe and dry. The kennel floor sloped down to the edges like a road and had a gutter that ran in front of the block of kennels with a grid at the end. However, it was struggling to cope with the river that ran along the centre of the room so just ran out of the door.

Once I knew everyone was ok, I looked around for the cause of the leak and noticed the cold tap had been left on slightly. I glanced into TJ's cage while I mopped up and, lo and behold, his tray was full. Perhaps the tap had deliberately been left on. At least some good had come from the flood then...

"I desperately wanted to see an overflowing litter tray in his kennel."

THE CAT LADY investigates

WITH ELEANOR FORRESTER



The felines of 10 Downing Street have a long and colourful history

This month I am investigating the moggies of 10 Downing Street and Westminster. Feisty felines have a rich history and long association with politics and the Prime Minister's residence. Many a cat has borne witness to some of the most influential leaders this country has produced, living alongside them in the corridors of power from the past to the present.

The National Archives have records dating from the 1920s about cats that were Chief Mousers patrolling both the Cabinet Office and Cabinet War Room. One of these was named Jumbo. There are records of several cats and what the food allowance was for these chief mousers.

Prior to this there are records from 1909 of a cat called Frilly who resided in the War Offices and was even on the payroll with the rest of the staff that worked there. After he passed away all the employees took up a collection together so that Frilly could become preserved, by being stuffed for posterity. In 2007, Frilly appeared at the Imperial War Museum's exhibition of the Animals' War.

In 1924 an infamous cat by the name of Smokey, who was a marmalade colour Tom, served under Prime Minister Ramsay Macdonald.

He was one feline that developed a big reputation as being a brilliant mouser and ratter. It is said that he used to take his trophies to his boss but when he learned that they were being put in the bin by the cleaners, Smokey started putting these finds by the bin in the hallway ready for disposal.

In Smokey's later years, when he began to look thin, the Secretary to the Treasury decided to submit a claim to the Lords of the Treasury because he felt that the cat's food allowance was insufficient and should be raised by fifty percent. The financial climate at the time was not great as a result of rising living costs and the lordships responded by stating that they were, 'unable to approve a rise'. However, one day the money-tight Chancellor, Philip Snowden's, door was left ajar and Smokey crept inside. Immediately he observed the cat and was suddenly softened and wrote a note saying, 'Treasury vote: approve increase in cat's pay'. After this Smokey then became known as Treasury Bill.

During the period of Neville Chamberlain being in office, there was a cat who became known by the name the Munich Mouser. This name was given to the cat by Winston Churchill when he took up residency in 1940, as a disrespect-

ful nickname. It is thought Munich Mouser passed away in 1943 and there is no record of his real name. Churchill was very fond of felines and had one of his owned called Nelson who was often seen at number 10.

In more recent times, when Tony Blair moved into Number 10, the cat in residence was Humphrey who had served under Margaret Thatcher and John Major and had become quite a celebrity. Apparently, he had to make a swift exit possibly because Cherie Blair did not like cats, feeling they were unhygienic, but more likely he just retired. It would not be till 2007 and Gordon Brown that there would be another puss in Number 10 - a black and white cat by the name of Sybil.

In 2011, a cat was seen in a pet carrier entering Downing Street, causing a media frenzy about who this new arrival was. It was Larry, a rescue cat who had been selected from a list of several candidates from the Battersea Dogs and Cat home. In his time as a mouser he gained quite a reputation and was seen bringing in his prey through a window in Downing Street.

You will find loads more on the internet about the cats who live around Whitehall, Westminster and Downing Street.

“He was one feline that developed a big reputation as being a brilliant mouser and ratter.”

Where do you go to I wonder?

The boys are up to more mischief and mayhem and I would love to know what they get up to away from home sometimes...but perhaps ignorance is bliss

BY INGRID HOOPER

Pasha and Tanni continue to grow into two very handsome Siamese boys but they are still full of kittenish fun. Though sometimes it might be much later before I see the funny side!

I was in a deep sleep at around 2am when I was awoken by an almighty series of crashes...That must be something to do with the Siamese duo, I thought to myself as I stumbled bleary-eyed out of bed.

As I headed into the kitchen I was met by Pasha wearing his innocent it's nothing-to-do-with-me look. Which of course meant whatever it was it had everything to do with him! Meanwhile Tanni circled around, sizing up the situation. Which meant he was innocent.

Then I noticed the clothes airer had collapsed with damp clothes strewn higgledy piggledy across the kitchen floor. As I struggled to get the contraption upright without much success, I heard a crack and then another one. The contraption had snapped into three pieces. Unable to deal with this in the early hours I hurriedly moved the broken airer outside, scooped up the damp washing and draped it over whatever I could find. Only to be met with a Siamese haughty look.

The gang of six youngster cats in the immediate neighbourhood have staked out their territory and each pair keeps to their own garden. But at breakfast time they all, apart from

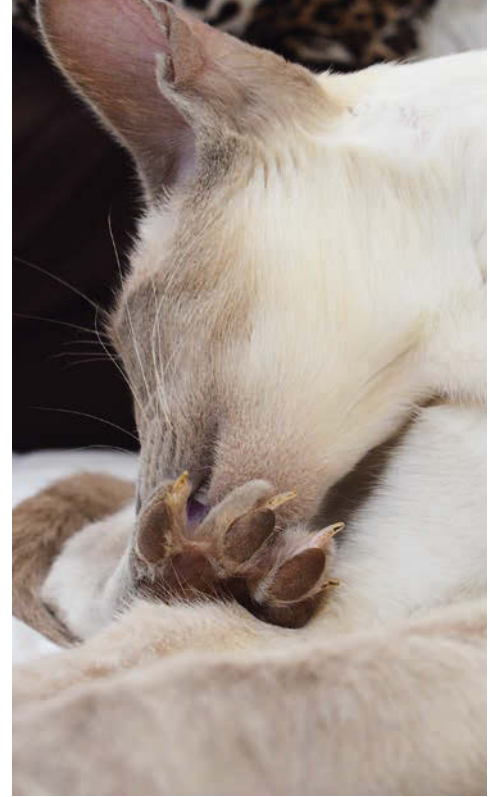
Tanni, mysteriously disappear only to return a couple of hours later.

I would love to put a tracker on Pasha. But even as an it'sy bitsy kitten with his three litter siblings he was the one who, like Houdini, managed to break free. He obviously takes after his grandfather who was named Houdini. While Tanni must take more after the other side of the family.

Once Pasha returns from his adventures he and Tanni do everything together. Climbing trees, running along fences, teasing the neighbour's chickens or bird watching. When they tire of this they move their attention to the office where Pasha does a flamenco dance over the laptop and across my paperwork. Luckily my IT guy is a cat person and understands when yet again the curser gets stuck or goes missing.

Tanni recently had a misdemeanour involving a tiny fledgling robin. Which of course he tried to bring indoors. He couldn't understand why I was less than pleased at his gift. I did my best to save the little robin but unfortunately it wasn't to be. I now keep an even closer eye on him to protect the feathered inhabitants sharing the garden.

The Siamese duo recently had a photo shoot for a very nice painting which a very kind friend and neighbour did of them. Pasha found it on the whole rather a bore but Tanni turned out to be a poser, able to put any super model to shame! He flirted



coquettishly with the camera and I swear he knows which is his most photogenic side!

He has a good deal of patience and is teaching me to speak 'cat'. If you think about the number of words and phrases our cats learn from us it seems only fair to return the compliment!

Pasha continues to get shut inside places he shouldn't be in and clearly hasn't learnt from his shut-in-the-neighbour's-garage experience earlier this year. Only this time it happened in the Wendy house where the garden furniture is stored. I always check carefully knowing how quick the Siamese boys can slip into places unseen. It wasn't till I noticed the shattered perspex in the side window that I recalled a gash above Pasha's elbow and put two and two together.

Knowing how curious the Siamese boys can be I think it a good idea to write a short note to the neighbours asking them to check their garages and sheds before leaving to go away on holiday. It's either that or putting a tracker on the boys to see where they are. Now there's an idea...

● Follow Pasha & Tanni's kitten adventures on their blog at www.CatsHaveStaff.co.uk

● Cats Have Staff – The Saffi & Misa Diaries by Ingrid Hooper is available from the above website or from Amazon. Out now in paperback and Kindle.

We're all going on a summer holiday

If you really want to get away but can't bear to leave kitty behind then with a little planning and organisation you really can take her with you



BY JILL MUNDY

Travelling with animals is never easy and with cats it can be very stressful so if you haven't taken your cat on a long journey before, now is not the time to suddenly get in the car and drive off into the sunset. However, with enough time to plan and prepare there are things that can be done to make the journey as stress-free as possible for your cat and for you.

UK holidays

If you are certain that your cat will be happy enough to contend with a long car journey then the first thing you will need to consider is accommodation. Many hotels and holiday homes do not accept pets at all, perhaps with the exception of assist animals. Some will welcome dogs but may not be keen to have a cat in the rooms. There are several online holiday sites that provide details of places where pets are welcome. A quick search of your desired destination should indicate if you will be able to find suitable accommodation where your cat will be allowed to stay too.

Gradually get your cat used to driving around in the car in plenty of time before your holiday. Cat carriers are the safest way of transporting a cat. The carrier should be large enough that the cat can stand and turn around comfortably but not so large that she doesn't feel safe and secure. Ideally there will be enough room for a small

litter tray but if not, place an old towel, newspaper or even a nappy on the floor of the carrier to soak up any spills or accidents.

With that in mind, a plastic pet carrier will resist spillages better than a cardboard one. Some carriers have slatted sides that afford your cat some privacy while still allowing her to look out. A carrier with both a side and top opening will make it easier to get kitty in to and out of the carrier. Make sure you can secure the carrier with the seat belt so that it is close to plenty of ventilation and where kitty can see out. One of her favourite blankets on the bottom of the carrier will make it a comfy place for her to sit and it will be something familiar which should help



to ease any stress she may be feeling.

Never leave your cat alone in your car for any period of time as the interior temperature can rise very quickly, especially if it is very warm outside.

It is a good idea to plan your route very carefully so that it includes plenty of opportunities to stop the car if you need to and let kitty stretch her legs. Some cats are happy to walk on a harness which makes this fairly easy. If your cat won't then allow her to roam around the car for a few minutes but ensure all the doors are firmly closed and a window is open a little for ventilation but not far enough that your cat could escape.

Cats are usually too nervous when travelling by car to want to eat but if you are taking a long trip, offer some dried cat food when you stop for a break and always offer water. Cats' tummies are often easily upset by car travel so her usual food is the best thing to offer. If her stomach does become upset then a light diet would be best.

If your cat carrier doesn't have room for a litter tray then you will need to carry a small sandbox in the car and encourage kitty to use it when you make a stop.

Before you leave for your holiday, try to find the details of a vet at your destination just in case you have cause to worry when you arrive or an emergency during your stay. Better to know in advance than to add to a stressful



situation and waste time searching for one.

Travelling by rail

With so many rail companies now operating within the UK you should contact each of them that you will be using during your journey before booking your ticket to find out their regulations and requirements regarding transporting your cat.

Travel overseas

Since the introduction of the Pet Travel Scheme (PETS), travelling to Europe and certain other countries has been made much easier than it was. You will need to have all vaccinations plus flea and worm treatments up to date and should take copies of your documentation with you to prove this if required. This is your pet passport, which gives the scheme its more common name. These regulations mean that your cat probably will not need to

stay in quarantine on arrival. See the DEFRA website for full details.

As with the UK, it is a good idea to have details of a vet in the vicinity of your holiday accommodation before you go, preferably an English speaking one if you don't speak the language fairly fluently.

It should go without saying that you will need to contact the airline in advance of your journey to establish their requirements. Most airlines will insist that your cat stays in his carrier and travel in the cargo hold. She may need to be loaded several hours before take off but this will vary from airline to airline and depending on your destination. The carrier should be clearly labelled 'live animal inside' and the label should also show your contact details.

If your cat is taking any medication then speak to your vet to make sure you have enough supply for the duration of your holiday. Your vet will also be happy to listen to any concerns you

may have about taking your cat on a long journey. As with humans, all cats are individuals with different needs and tolerances.

Careful research in plenty of time will ensure that you can make the journey as trouble-free and comfortable as possible for your cat, wherever you are going and whatever the method of transport. This will ultimately make the journey less stressful for you too. So get organised, pack your case and have a lovely summer holiday - all of you.

It is important to put your cat's welfare and well being before anything else and if she really is unhappy about travelling, then perhaps the best option would be to make arrangements for her to be cared for at home or at a boarding cattery while you are away.

● Useful websites:

DEFRA: www.defra.gov.uk
iCatCare: icatcare.org

Exam time - don't get stressed, get a cat

Stroking a cat is a very calming experience and what better way to relieve the stresses of exam worries than with your own perfect feline

Are you living with children or students who are busily revising for exams? It would be unusual for them not to be feeling a little stressed and for some students, stress at exam time can be a serious worry.

According to the results of a recent survey carried out by Cats Protection, more than four in five teenagers (81%) agree that spending quality time with their cat can calm their nerves and boost their mood, helping to reduce stress at exam time.

The study of cat-owning 14-19 year olds found that more than two thirds (67%) agreed that having a cat to go home to helped them deal with difficult situations and 86% agreed that stroking their cat and listening to it purr was soothing.

Much has been said in recent years about how much owning a pet can help to reduce stress and lower blood pressure. When asked the main cause for their current stress levels, 72% of teenagers cited the reason as exam pressure so the UK's leading feline welfare charity decided to survey teenagers to see if having a cat could help with exam revision.

The majority of students (55%) said that having a cat around them while studying calmed them down. "The companionship that a pet offers is a great way to reduce anxiety and stress because the affection they give back is so simple," says Consultant Clinical Psychologist Elie Godsie.

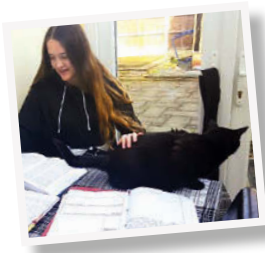
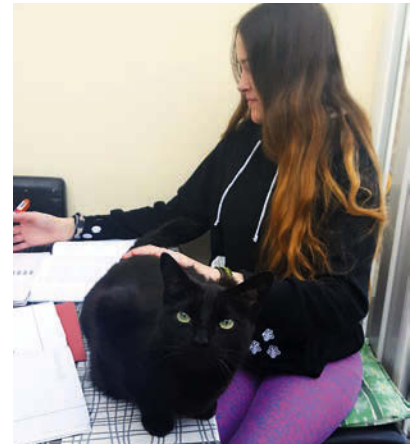
"Unlike many other pets, cats make it absolutely clear when they want to be played with or stroked - or not! It can be really reassuring for teenagers who may be experiencing for example, relationship issues or exam pressures, to spend time playing with or stroking a cat: this can help to enhance their mood as the friendship and acceptance of a loving pet makes the world a much better place."

Damon to the rescue

Nia is 15 and attends secondary school in Birmingham where she is hard at work studying for her GCSEs. She's had her cat Damon for seven years after he was abandoned on the street as a kitten. Nia suffers from anxiety and credits Damon for helping her through difficult times.

"It's like he can sense when I'm stressed," Nia said. "I'll be feeling anxious and then he jumps up on my lap and chirps a purry meow and rubs his head on my chin to let me know it's ok."

The survey also found that 72% of students felt their cat was more likely to always be there for them than their friends and 86% said their cat was more likely to love them unconditionally. At such an emotional time, knowing that someone will be there for you without asking questions or adding to the pressure can really help you to relax. "It doesn't answer back and is there for me, no matter what mood I'm in", was a typi-



cal quote. from those taking part in the survey.

Nia says that Damon's calm, quiet presence at her side or purring weight on her lap really helps to reassure her when she gets worked up. "I just have to think to myself that if he could survive on the street as a kitten, I can get through exams," she said.

Cats Protection is the UK's largest cat charity, with over 250 volunteer-run branches and 34 centres helping around 500 cats a day, or 200,000 a year.

Those interested in finding out more about adopting a cat from Cats Protection can visit www.cats.org.uk/find-a-cat

Some other results from the survey:

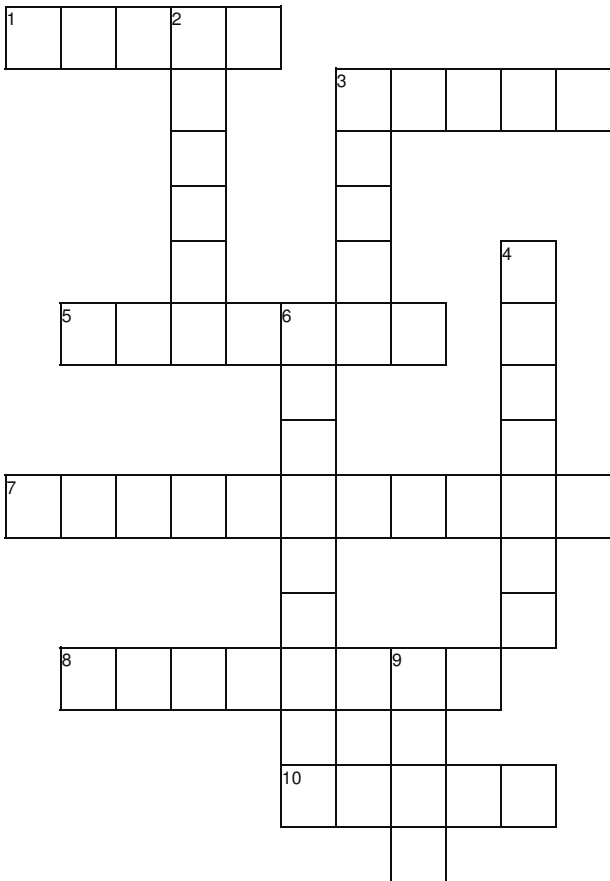
- 36% felt that owning a cat helped them cope with loneliness.
- 41% said they were likely to spend between one and two hours a day with their cat.
- The most common age-group to find comfort in having a cat were 16 year-olds, with 80% saying they were feeling stressed by exams (14 year-olds, 67%) and 46% believing having a cat helped with exam stress (18 year-olds, 33%).
- The split between boys and girls was fairly even but the girls edged it, with 45% agreeing that stroking their cat and listening to it purr was soothing, against 45% of boys.

FELINE FUN



Criss Cross

On average, cats spend 2/3 of every day sleeping. That means a nine-year-old cat has been awake for only three years of its life



Across

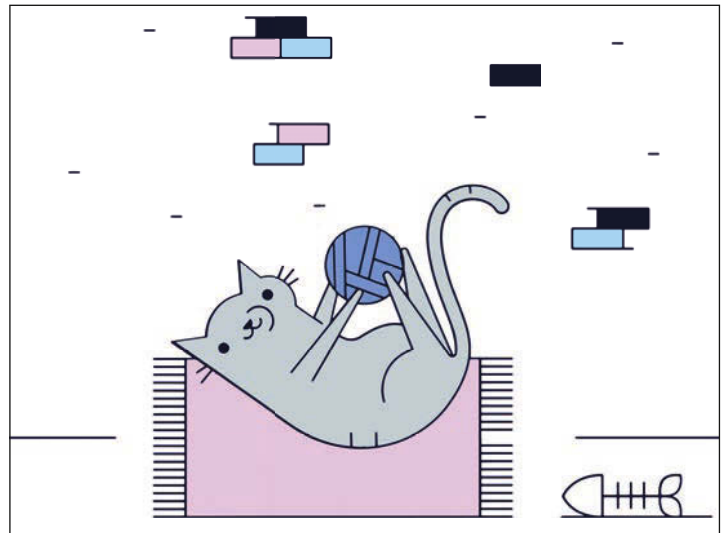
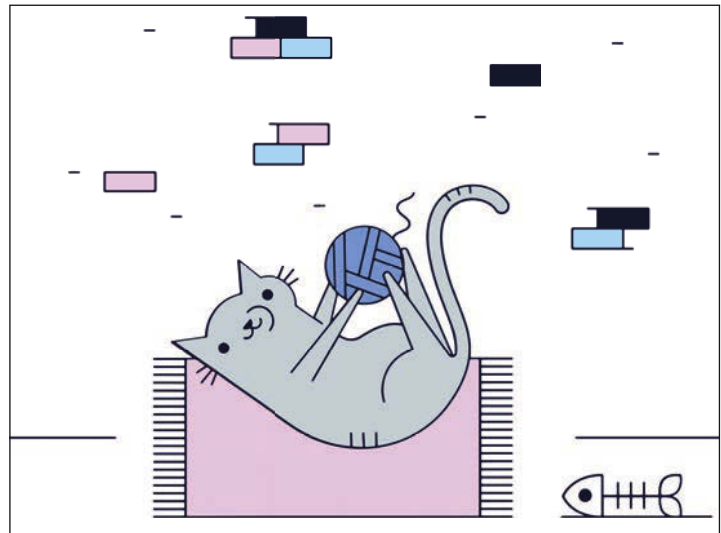
1. A good _____ will remove loose hairs
3. Make sure you leave plenty of fresh _____ outside during hot weather
5. Most cats will enjoy a final polish with a chamois _____
7. Plants that attract _____ and other insects are fun for your cat
8. A _____ recommended for use on cats can be applied to prevent sunburn
10. Plants can give your cat a _____ area to sit

Down

2. Evaporation of _____ from the coat helps to keep a cat cool in hot weather
3. _____ cats suffer most in the sun
4. Tree _____ are just one of the causes of allergic reactions in cats
6. Loose hairs on a cat's coat may be ingested and form _____
9. Feeding good nutritious food will enhance your cat's _____

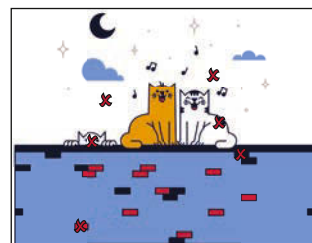
Spot the difference

Can you find 8 things in the picture that are missing?



Answers from last month

Word Search: Missing word - AGILITY. Spot the difference, right.



CAT FACTS:

ON AVERAGE, CATS SPEND 2/3 OF EVERY DAY SLEEPING. THAT MEANS A NINE-YEAR-OLD CAT HAS BEEN AWAKE FOR ONLY THREE YEARS OF ITS LIFE

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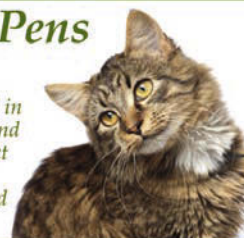
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TAIL END

A feisty kitten was soon calmed when his rescue companion joined him at Lynne Osborn's home

When we moved house, we decided we would give a home to a rescue cat. I had always loved what I called marmalade cats and could just imagine a big, sappy red tabby sprawled in front of the fire.

The RSPCA regularly advertised in our local evening paper and I was happy to learn that a foster carer had three ginger kittens available. The snarling apparitions that greeted me from the back of the pen, however, were not my idea of an ideal pet.

"They're feral," the foster carer told me, patiently explaining that they would soon settle down in a domestic environment. I nodded dubiously and, choosing a gorgeous red boy, went home to what would become an extremely trying two days and nights.

I decided to put Linus - he just reminded me of Charlie Brown's little shy friend - in the kitchen, suspecting that being a smaller room, it would be less intimidating than

the lounge. I opened the cat carrier and he shot out like a cannon ball, disappearing beneath the cooker. There appeared to be only about an inch of space under there.

Flattening myself to the floor, I peered into the darkness and saw a pair of malevolent yellow eyes glaring back. He clearly needed time to settle in, so setting up his litter tray, food and water, I crept quietly away. At 11pm I found myself trying to haul half a ton of cooker away from the wall and retrieve Linus, aka Freddy Kruger, as my shredded hands gave testimony to.

My next problem was where to put him for the night. I hit on the bathtub - it was secure and would hold his bed, tray and water bowl, the perfect solution.

Things looked far from perfect at 3am, however, when not having had a minute's sleep, he was still howling.

The following morning I took Linus into the lounge after a further taming session in the bath. Me stroking, him

mauling, respectively. He promptly vanished behind the sofa and no amount of coaxing was going to get him to come back out. He hated me.

I was beginning to feel desperate when I remembered a serene tabby kitten in the pen above Linus' on my previous visit. Perhaps a companion might be the answer? Hastily I rang back and thankfully, the kitten was still there. Luckily this did the trick. Within moments of releasing Dylan they were curled up together just as though Linus had never been a deranged psychopath at all.

Linus developed an adorable nature with a penchant for talking non-stop. I couldn't do anything without him accompanying me, chattering away. At night as I watched the television, he would lay with his head on the crook of my arm and body across my lap like a human baby.

Hunting was one of his favourite pastimes. Mice and birds, usually preceded by frantic scrabbling noises, would

appear unharmed in the kitchen. They were his friends, he'd explain; he'd just brought them in to play. The most bizarre incident was when he caught an ornamental goldfish. It was unusual, one cloudless summer evening, to see a dripping-wet cat shambling through the cat flap. 'What on earth?', I thought. Minutes later, my irate neighbour pounded on the door, threatening to commit murder if that ginger cat of mine didn't stay away from his pond. Unfortunately, by this time the goldfish was beyond help.

To anyone contemplating homing a feral cat, I would heartily advise it. They make loving companions but always be prepared for the unexpected. I remember well that when I was a child my uncle brought a kitten home from the local steelworks and I can still hear my little cousin's bloodcurdling screams as she discovered yet another rat. Feral cats are definitely unique - and lots of fun.

"I saw a pair of malevolent yellow eyes."

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