

The Scratching Post



The Newsletter of the Peebles and Biggar Branch of Cats Protection

Catline 0707 4357228

Autumn Issue 2012



www.cats.org.uk/peebles

How to join

Contact any of the committee members who will be happy to send you an application form. Alternatively, you can download the application form from our website.

How to donate

We are always grateful for donations of:

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

It's called 'recycling the Cat way'. A huge thank you as always for the tremendous support you give us.

How to contribute



If you would like to contribute to The Scratching Post, please contact the committee by email as listed opposite, or write to the Branch Coordinator,

details also opposite. Photographs and tales of cats we have homed with you are especially welcome.

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

Committee Members

If you would like to speak to a member of the Committee, please call the Catline number - 0707 4357228, send an email to: cppeeblesandbiggar@gmail.com

Or visit our website, www.cats.org.uk/peebles

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Coordinator's Column

The major event of the summer was the wedding of our treasurer, Karen. She and her fiance Curly tied the knot on 20th July, and celebrated at the Park Hotel in Peebles. All the committee wish them both the very best for the future.

Our fosterer Jean Hunter is now back on fostering duty after her hip operation, and she is fostering a young cat named Rosie. Rosie is very friendly tortie girl, neutered and microchipped and vaccinated, as are all our cats before homing.

If you have a rodent problem, then do consider the eco-friendly way of control. One of our huntin, shootin, fishin you cats may be your solution. There are three very pretty ginger cats looking for a new home and they would make ideal outdoor cats. They do not particularly want to be affectionate, but would be happy with regular meals and somewhere cosy to sleep.

If you think that you could offer a home to a cat looking for a new start, then contact our catline on 0707 4 357 228.

*Carol Calder
Coordinator*





Bramble remembered

My last story about my cats was eventually a happy one after Bramble had a cancerous tumour and his affected spleen removed. He made a remarkable recovery and enjoyed life to the full for the last fifteen months. However, we were plunged into the depths of despair again in May this year, when Bramble started vomiting every day. I was away in London when my husband told me that he had to take Bramble in to Two

Rivers where an exploratory operation showed he had another cancerous tumour. Trevor removed Bramble's kidney with the tumour; tests showed that the whole tumour was dissected. He was very anaemic because of the illness though and had lost a lot of weight. He was a very sick boy.

Nothing daunted, he began his fight to recovery and was doing quite well until he suddenly started vomiting again, and

couldn't walk straight. His head was down and he was going in circles crying. He had all the symptoms of a stroke. We rushed him back to Two Rivers where they agreed it was definitely neurological. We really did think that this was it this time. He couldn't possibly survive a major operation for cancer and a stroke at the same time, plus a small heart murmur had been discovered. The odds really were stacked against him. After several visits to the vet of physical examinations, blood tests, painkillers and steroid injections, and constant 24 hour nursing from us, he started to recover, put on weight and looked really well. We had our old Bramble back. The resilience of cats never ceased to amaze me.

After a month since his stroke, we thought everything was going to be fine, but he suddenly started to go downhill. His circulation had not picked up properly. In fact it had gone dangerously low, and it was straining his already weakened heart. Our lovely boy Bramble lost his fight for life on Friday 29th June. Kirsty came from Two Rivers and helped our boy pass away peacefully in our arms with his brother Tommy nearby, in the garden he loved so much. He is buried beside all our other boys and girls in the garden. We are heartbroken that he is gone, and his brother is missing him. We have had almost 12 years of joy from Bramble, and he will always stay in our hearts. He was a happy, cheerful big chap; tail always up in the air dashing to meet you. The end of life is always the most distressing part of having a dearly-loved pet, but we wouldn't change having them for a minute. We are so grateful to the Two Rivers Vet team for valiantly trying to save our boy's life. We cannot thank them enough for everything they have done.

Cath and Stuart Mitchell and Family

Dustmite Allergies



Dustmites are not only responsible for asthma and eczema in people, they also cause skin problems in cats. Cats Protection surveys suggest that around 15% of the cat population suffer at any one point in time in spite of the improvements in flea control.

Dustmites occur in all soft furnishings, bedding and carpets so these are the places to treat. Bio-Life HomeCleanse is an essential oil and quaternium salts based solution that gets rid of dustmites and most importantly, their residues. Allergy UK and National Pharmacy Association approved, it is safe and non-toxic. Better still, you only need to spray the areas once per month to maintain a dustmite free environment. It also removes, pet allergens, moulds and pollen grains which can be as damaging to the family as it is to your pet.

The spray is available from all veterinary surgeries and pharmacies in the UK at a cost of £11.95 per bottle. Your local Cats Protection can advise you on any aspect of its use.

FabriCleanse is a laundry and carpet cleaning additive that deals with washable surfaces. Again, bedding should be washed once per month; carpets every 3 to 6 months depending on the sensitivity of the sufferer.

Cats and babies – it can work!

‘Ee-oo’ – Gabriella has only just turned one and clearly adores our cat Leo, shouting at him very loudly as he passes. And Leo is pretty taken with her too – often coming for cuddles and company. It isn’t always harmonious – Gabriella has started to crawl so Leo has to be on his guard, and there can be a bit of playful negotiation as they both try to fit on my knee.



When we found out I was pregnant, we were obviously very excited but also nervous – at the time we had two cats, Leo and Henry, and we wondered how they would take to the changes. We started straight away with implementing some new rules and boundaries (no cats in the room we were to use as a nursery, shutting them in the kitchen overnight) and with a few months of practice, they soon got the hang of it. Leo loved to wrap himself around the bump for a snooze – a great excuse for me to sit with my feet up!

We were careful to make sure all vaccinations, worming and flea treatments were up to date, I wore two pairs of gloves for gardening, my husband dealt with the litter trays and I was always careful to wash my hands after playing with the boys.

Unfortunately, a week before Gabriella was due, Henry was killed by a car on the road – it was incredibly sad and upsetting

for all of us – not least of all Leo. So poor Leo had to deal with losing his best friend and the imminent new arrival all at once – and I am so proud that he has done so brilliantly. We were only out of the house for a day when Gabriella was born, so perhaps this helped Leo keep to a routine. When we brought her home, he was interested in her – but more interested in mum being home

and filling his bowl with biscuits. For Leo, he just wanted his usual cuddles – he was rather oblivious to the baby at times, and, at three times her weight, he did try to oust her from my knee!

Leo has never tried to sleep in with or nearby the baby, nor has he lashed out or retaliated to her poking and prodding, but we have never left them together unsupervised.

When we found out we were having a baby, we were very honest with ourselves and knew that we may need to find our boys a new home if things didn’t work out. We have been incredibly lucky with both a happy and healthy baby and a tolerant and affectionate cat. I look forward to when Gabriella is old enough for us to bring a kitten home as I want her to experience the love, fun and responsibility of a cat crazy family, just as I did.

Brenda Nombro

The Scratching Post



Just two of the many cats we have re-homed over the years with your generous help and support.

All our funds are spent on cats

We receive an annual grant from Cats Protection Head Office. However, this grant goes only a small way to covering our annual costs and we are, in the main, self funding.

We very much rely on our members and supporters who are extremely loyal and hard working.

Being part of a larger Charity affords us much more than our annual grant. It allows us access to a large support system, and gives security to our committee, fosterers, members and supporters. As a registered charity, we are obligated to care for animals in terms of the Animal Welfare Act and in terms of the Cat Standards set by Cats Protection. We are also regulated by OSCR (Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator) which means that we must account for all funds received and expended which gives peace of mind to those who donate

funds to the branch and help in a variety of ways that, as a registered Charity, these funds are used appropriately and cats cared for properly. There is also the security that our fosterers are fully insured; our 'cat' van is fully insured; all members and supporters who assist at our fundraising events are also fully insured.

I understand that, as part of the larger Charity, the view may be that we have access to unlimited funds and therefore there is no reason to donate specifically to the Branch. There may also be a misconception that there are paid members of staff within the Branch. However, this is not the case and I can assure all of you that funds raised by the Branch are used only by the Branch to give cats a new start and loving new homes and all those involved with the Branch are volunteers.

Karen Valentine, Branch Treasurer

Chronic Kidney Disease in Cats

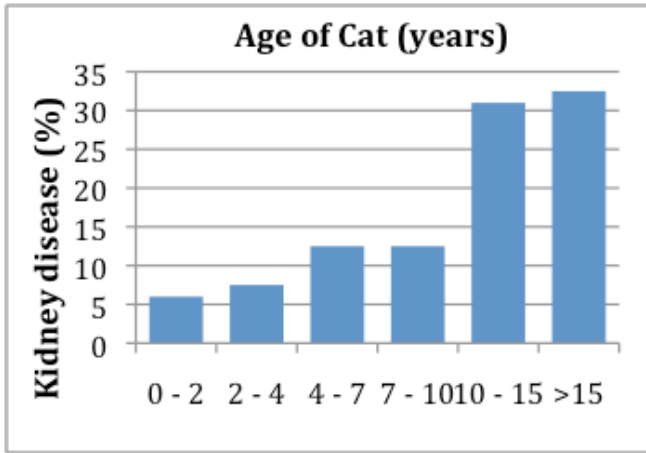
Early diagnosis is the key to the successful treatment of CKD says Two Rivers Practice Nurse Stephanie Smith

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) is very common in cats over 10 years old. Normal, healthy kidneys are able to filter out waste products

from the blood stream; but when the kidneys begin to lose their function, these waste products cannot be eliminated efficiently. This process is a very gradual one, and it can take a number of years before levels in the body build up excessively. As all of you whose cat has had an illness know, cats are experts at hiding symptoms, and those with kidney disease will often not show any outward signs until almost 75% of the cat's kidney function has been lost. Although there is no cure, supportive therapy can improve the quality of life for affected cats.

How do I know if my cat has kidney disease?

Early diagnosis is the absolute key. For those of you with cats 10 years of age and older, I highly recommend urine testing twice yearly. I do also recommend blood pressure monitoring and blood testing at



least once yearly. Kidney disease can push the blood pressure up, and if it becomes very high (i.e. over 180 mmHg), it can cause

permanent loss of sight. A blood test can confirm a diagnosis of kidney disease (high levels of urea, creatinine and phosphorus), but testing the urine is a good, easy start.

Supporting a cat with kidney disease

The main areas of support are encouraging your cat to drink (offering several bowls; drinking fountains; flavouring the water e.g. chicken or tuna broth) and feeding a prescription renal diet. Fussy cats may be fed on a diet low in phosphorous and protein with the addition of a phosphate binder (e.g. Renalzin).

The easiest way to check your cat's kidney health is with a urine test. It's non-invasive, and your cat can stay at home! Just ask your practice for a packet of "Katkor" or "Catrine" - non-absorbent cat litter designed for you to collect a sample at home. Don't forget the marigolds!

Stephanie Smith, Practice Nurse Two Rivers Vets



Volunteers always needed

We are all very proud of our Branch – we have rescued, rehomed and raised the profile of hundreds of cats in need in recent years, but it would not be the success that it is without our volunteers – from fosterers and fundraisers, to drivers, cat matchers and distributors – and there is always so much more to do!

Our Fundraising and Volunteer Co-ordinator, Sharon, works hard to organise our coffee mornings, car boot sales and quizzes which are vital to raising much needed funds for the Branch. It really is a large task for one person, which is why Sharon is keen to meet with anyone who can help with our events – and people who are keen run events of their own. Anything from a sponsored walk, a race night, or even a raffle – we can help promote the event across our membership, provide Cats Protection branded merchandise and stationery and support and guide you as

much as you need.

We are looking for a new Branch Secretary

If you have some regular time and would like to get more involved with Branch, then you might be the person to become a member of our committee. Brenda has been Branch Secretary for almost four years, and with a new little person in her life, it is time to hand over to someone new. The role takes approx. 2-4 hours per week and it is an opportunity to have a key role in driving the Branch forward. The Branch Secretary has overall responsibility for our Internet Site, Membership, Newsletter, Stock orders and Committee Meetings and is incredibly well supported by Cath (Internet Editor), Jennifer (Membership Secretary) and Michael (Newsletter Production Editor). You need to be organised and enthusiastic – please get in touch if this is you!



Jaffa

A word from our Membership Secretary

I'm Jennifer and I manage the membership for the Peebles and Biggar Branch of Cats Protection.

As I have done in the past, I will be sending out your annual reminder with a stamped addressed envelope to return to the treasurer. However, as you will all be aware, the cost of postage has increased so if a second reminder has to be sent out, there will not be a further return envelope enclosed. This is also a great opportunity for me to extend a thank you to those of you who have donated stamps they are very welcome.

I became involved with the cats

protection 5 years ago when we adopted our cat, Jaffa, who was 8 at the time. He is a very handsome ginger tom- he's not too bright but we love him. It took us nearly 2 years to get him to play (we had never had a cat who was reluctant to play before), however he now has his favourite toy - a scruffy white mouse.

As I got to know the people in the Cats Protection Branch, I realised the dedication and hard work all the volunteers put into looking after the cats and kittens. When I was asked if I would like be membership secretary and keep the data base up to date, I was very happy to do it.

Dog's diary

8am. Dog food! My favourite thing !!
9.30am. A car ride! My favourite thing
9.40am. A walk in the park! My favourite thing
10.30am. Got rubbed and petted. My favourite thing
12.00pm. Milk bones. My favourite thing
1.00pm. Played in the park. My favourite thing
3.00pm. Wagged my tail. My favourite thing
5.00pm. Dinner. My favourite thing
7.00pm. Got to play ball. My favourite thing.
8.00pm. Wow!! Watched TV with the family. My favourite thing
11.00pm. Sleeping on the bed. My favourite thing!



Cat's diary

Day 963 of my captivity

My captors continue to taunt me with bizarre little dangling objects. They dine lavishly on fresh meat while the other inmates and I are fed hash or some sort of dry nuggets. Although I make my contempt for the rations perfectly clear, I never the less must eat something in order to keep up my strength.

The only thing that keep me going is my dream of escape. In an attempt to disgust them I once again vomit on the carpet. Today I decapitated a mouse and dropped its headless body at their feet. I had hoped this would strike fear into their hearts since this clearly demonstrates my capabilities. However, they merely made condescending comments about what a 'good little hunter' I am. There was some sort of assembly of their accomplices tonight, and I was placed in solitary confinement for the duration of the event. However, I, could hear the noises and smell the food and I overheard that my confinement was due to the power of 'allergies'. I must learn what this means and how to use it to my advantage.

Today I was almost successful in an attempt to assassinate one of my tormentors by weaving around his feet while he was walking. I must try this again tomorrow but at the top of the stairs. I am convinced that the other prisoners here are flunkies and snitches. The dog receives special privileges as he is regularly released and seems to be more than willing to return. He is obviously retarded!!

The bird must be an informant as I observe him communicating with the guards regularly. I am certain that he reports my every move. My captors have arranged protective custody in an elevated cell, so he is safe.....for now!!!!



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ARMAC VET GROUP are happy to support the work of Peebles and Biggar branch of Cats Protection.