

# The Scratching Post



The Newsletter of the Peebles and Biggar Branch of Cats Protection

Catline 0707 4357228

Spring Issue 2012



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

# How to join

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

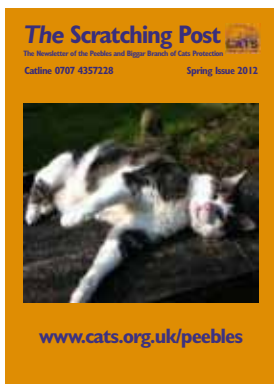
# How to donate

We are always grateful for donations of:

- Cat Food (can be left at Vet surgeries, Tesco in Peebles and Co-op in Biggar 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](mailto:cppeeblesandbiggar@gmail.com)

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

## Branch Coordinator

Carol Calder Biggar

## Branch Secretary

Brenda Nombro Blyth Bridge

## Treasurer

Karen Valentine Peebles

## Welfare Officer/Council member

Lloyd Inglis-Ballantyne Stobo

## Fundraising Officer

Sharon Montgomery Eshiels

## All correspondence should be directed to the Branch Coordinator:

Carol Calder  
Blackbyres Cottage  
Kilbucho  
Biggar  
ML12 6JJ

## Fosterers

Jean Hunter	Ninemileburn
Carol Calder	Biggar
Lloyd Inglis-Ballantyne	Stobo
Sharon Montgomery	Eshiels

## Production Editor

Michael Collie

## Cats Protection

Reg. Charity No SC037711



# Coordinator's Column

I am delighted to say that Beau has a home. After almost a year in care, he has moved to live with a couple in Moffat. We have said in the past that there is the right home for every cat, with patience. It is certainly true for Beau.

There is a new contributor in this issue. Stephanie Smith, vet nurse from Two Rivers veterinary surgery, is going to be a regular columnist. This issue sees her giving lots of information about thyroid troubles in cats, and methods of dealing with them. If there is a special vet subject you would like to read more about, let us know and we may be able to have Stephanie give help.

Pauline Martin has very generously offered to sponsor a cat pen. The pen, which is at Eshiels, is to be called 'Kizzy's Spa' in memory of her beloved companion cat. You can read her story in the newsletter.

In celebration of his recovery from surgery, Barney has been promoted from general cats-body to cover cat.

'The Scratching Post' is sent out to all members with an S.A.E. For renewal, but due to the rising postal costs this will not be repeated for reminders.

I have recently given a few talks to Brownie packs in the area. If you would like one of us to visit your pack contact a committee member.

Lastly, with spring flowers coming to the fore, this may be the time to dig out your cameras and start snapping your cat's entry to the annual photo competition. The winning photos will be included in our branch calendar.

*Carol Calder, Co-ordinator*



*Panther*

## Panther makes himself at home

As you may remember from a previous issue Panther was still looking for a loving home after being in care for over a year.

I was going into hospital for a hip replacement, and decided to try him in the house with my two dogs, Charlie and Megan, and my other rescue cat Katie (who had also been in care for over a year before I adopted her) so that he would not have to change fosterer. He came into the house, had a look round, met the dogs and Katie and decided it was fine, and you would honestly think that he had lived with us for years. He took over! He has no wish to go outside, plays with his and everybody else's toys.

He likes watching t.v. on my lap, loves being talked to. Call his name and he is there. At bed time, he is not keen to sleep in a cat-bed, so I have to try and get into bed first and stake my claim.

He certainly loves being a home cat.

*Jean Hunter*



*Barney, doing very well after his radiotherapy treatment for hyperthyroidism and is this issue's cover cat.*

# Hyperthyroidism in Cats

In the previous issue of *Scratching* post, we heard of Barney's story. Barney had been diagnosed with hyperthyroidism, an unfortunately common feline disease where the thyroid glands in the neck produce an abnormally high amount of thyroid hormones. Cats affected by the disease develop a very fast metabolism, causing them to lose weight despite their increased appetite. Cats may appear to be more irritable or restless. Vets can diagnose hyperthyroidism by physical examination and blood testing, to measure the concentration of thyroid hormones in the blood and to identify any underlying concurrent disease (such as kidney disease, high blood pressure or secondary heart disease). Hyperthyroidism is a treatable

disease, and most cats will make a complete recovery. There are three main treatment options: medication, surgery (as in Barney's case) and radiotherapy.

Medication can provide short- or long-term control. The tablets are very small and the levels of thyroid hormones are usually reduced to within normal range in 3 to 4 weeks. Occasional blood tests will be required to ensure the cat is receiving the safest and most effective dose. Side effects of the tablets are uncommon. The tablets need to be given once or twice a day for the rest of the cat's life. Barney, being semi-feral, would not have been easy to give tablets to, so Carol opted for the surgical route instead.

Surgery is generally very successful and can provide a long-term or permanent

cure. Cats are first stabilised with a course of anti-thyroid tablets before having the procedure, which involves removing one or both thyroid glands. If both glands require removal, this is often carried out by two separate operations to minimise complications with the parathyroid glands (hypocalcaemia). Cats require a full general anaesthetic for the procedure. Cats who are high-risk patients for anaesthesia may be better suited to radiotherapy, as no anaesthesia is required.

Radiotherapy (radioactive iodine therapy) is the most advanced method of treatment. A single injection of iodine is given under the skin, where it is absorbed only by the thyroid tissue, destroying it. There is no risk of complications with the parathyroid glands. Radioactive iodine therapy is curative in 95% of hyperthyroid cases. It is commonly misunderstood as a dangerous and harmful procedure for pets; however there are no serious side effects to the cat being treated: the risk is more for the staff who are handling the injection. Therefore this treatment option is limited to hospitals and referral centres, and cats who are being treated need to remain hospitalised for 3 to 6 weeks following treatment until radiation levels fall to a safe level for contact. Radiotherapy is available at Edinburgh and Glasgow Vet Schools.

In late spring/summer, a prescription diet cat food is being released into the market, designed to be an alternative to daily tablets. Research on the food's success is very limited, and long-term trials are required to validate its effectiveness. Wouldn't it be great if vets could prescribe food as a form of treatment for a very common disease..? I hope the research reveals some promising evidence. Watch this space!

*Stephanie Smith, Practice Nurse Two Rivers Vets*



*Kizzy*

## Sponsored pen in Kizzy's name

After being diagnosed with ME and spending time on my own, my days started to get longer, I decided I needed a distraction in my life, this is when Kizzy Martin came along. I visited the cat and dog home in Edinburgh and there she was sitting waiting on me to take her home and care for her. She was covered in oil and was in need of a good wash and loads of loving. We got her home and she settled in fine, and it was me that ended up getting all the loving. After 14 years of loving and caring for Kizzy we lost her suddenly on the 12 Aug 2008. I so wanted to do something for the Peebles & Biggar Cats Protection as it's close to my heart so therefore I have sponsored a pen at Eshiels and would like to name the pen Kizzy's Spa.

*Pauline Martin*





## A tale of three kittens

*Katsuma and Tinga*

We had been considering getting another couple of cats for a while but we weren't sure if our other two cats Molly and Ralph would welcome any other animals. Molly and Ralph had been adopted from the Cats Protection when they were 3 and 2 years old respectively over 11 years ago. One of the reasons they had been given up by their previous owner was because they could not get on with another cat. However, I concluded that Molly and Ralph were more likely to accept a kitten rather than another cat. When I spotted the advert for the kittens at the vets, I couldn't resist enquiring about them. I spoke to Sharon at the Cats Protection who was very helpful and explained she had already re-homed one of the kittens but there were still three kittens needing homes. Sharon explained that she would need to do a home check,

just to make sure that we didn't live near a busy road etc and if all was well we would be able to adopt a kitten.

After a big discussion with my husband we decided to go ahead with the home check and offer a home to all three remaining kittens. All went well with the home check. We also had a big chat with our daughters about the importance of quiet and calm around these kittens to help them feel safe. We prepared our spare room for them where they would be able to settle and feel safe away from Molly and Ralph for the first week or two.

When the kittens arrived they were very timid, particularly the smallest one. At one point we thought she would never come out of her hiding place. The girls were delighted with the kittens and named them Shelby, Katsuma and Tinga. I knew that

the girls were careful but their care for the kittens and awareness of the need to be gentle and calm even surprised me. After a week or so we let the kittens into the rest of the house and introduced them to Molly and Ralph. This was another surprise, there was absolutely no problems at all. The kittens thought Molly and Ralph were brilliant and followed them everywhere. They got the occasional growl and thump on the head but nothing that put them off following the older cats.

They have been with us for 6 months now and grown in confidence and are now almost unrecognisable as the shy kittens they were. Shelby is very pretty, super friendly and always first at the food dish and last to leave. Katsuma is quieter than Shelby but he is a beautiful gentle boy who is growing very fast into a big cat. Tinga is still the smallest and shyest but has found a great friend in Ralph, my older cat, they look quite funny together since she is so small and he is so big. She is also the best climber and can easily climb to the top of the curtains, all the other cats just stare in admiration at this.

When we got the kittens we knew our oldest cat Molly was ill but when she started get worse the kittens would sit with her and sometimes clean her and when Molly died peacefully in her sleep on the 17 February this year the kittens youth and energy was a great comfort to the girls and has given company to Ralph.

One piece of advice is that if you have small children there are a lot of small items about, clasps, beads, small figures and at night the kittens steal these and play with them if they are not put away properly. Because these could be dangerous for the kittens we do our best to keep these things out of harms way but its really tricky.



*Shelby*

Overall although we were unsure about getting three kittens whilst still having our other cats we know now we made the right decision and couldn't have wished for an easier settling in period. I think the fact that they were kittens and could play with each other instead of bothering the bigger cats really helped. We were also unsure about adopting such nervous kittens with two young children in the house but with the girls careful and the constant handling of the kittens was a real benefit. We now have very friendly little cats as a result.

Many many thanks to the Cats Protection and in particular Sharon for all their support.

*Susan Handyside*

# New website goes live



**Peebles & Biggar**

Our vision is a world where every cat is treated with kindness and an understanding of its needs.

Call us on 0707 435 7228

*£15 would feed a CP cat or kitten for a whole month*

**Donate**

**Adopt a cat** **What we do** **Feature pages** **Support us** **News** **Events** **Volunteering** **Lost & found** **Contact us**

**News**

- Cat Carriers**  
We have a number of cat carriers for sale for...
- Tesco Food Bin**  
Cats Protection food bin is still in Tesco...
- Recycling**  
Do you have any unwanted or not so useful...
- Can you Help with Wool?**

**View all** >

**Welcome to our website!**

**Find out more** >

Have a good look around! We are still working on our new website. Please bear with us while we fine tune it!

Hello, and welcome to the new website for the Peebles and Biggar branch of Cats Protection. We are based in the Scottish Borders and cover the area bound by South Edinburgh, Carstairs, Moffat and Galashiels, taking in post code areas ML12, EH26, 43, 44, 45, 46, DG10 and TD1.

Cats' Protection created a new corporate website that enabled them to roll it out to all the branches last year. We moved on to the official Cats' Protection website on 16th March 2012. It has taken a wee bit time to get it personalised for our branch, but we are almost there. So, please bear with us while we are still working our socks off to make all the nuts and bolts function smoothly. Although we are now part of the bigger CP picture, our website is still all about Peebles and Biggar – it's all about our local cats, local events and local news.

Our new contact details for the website is:

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

Our new contact details for the email is:

[cppeeblesandbiggar@gmail.com](mailto:cppeeblesandbiggar@gmail.com)

Our Cat line telephone number stays the same: 0707 4357228

Please, come in, have a look round and tell us what you think of the new look.

We love it!

Cath Mitchell - Website Manager



# Henry, a story of blind trust

Henry, blind and FIV positive was found in a remote rural setting, presumably deliberately abandoned, for reasons that most people couldn't even begin to understand. Luckily he was discovered and given into the care of Cats Protection. Due to his diagnosis of FIV he had to be kept in



isolation and spent some six months in a pen at the home of carer Jenny Hodgen, before being re-homed with Barbara, who had seen him on the website and decided that here was a cat that really needed a home. Normally, Cats Protection do not re-home cats unless they have access to a garden, but in Henry's case being an indoor cat was not going to be a problem.

So Henry moved north, first to Edinburgh for a few months and then on to his current home in Dunfermline, where he has been now for some three years. No one is quite sure how old he is, but somewhere round about thirteen is the guess of one vet.

Considering he's blind Henry manages to get around quite well, navigating his

way between his favourite spot for a sleep, when he's not in Barbara's bed, and his food in the kitchen. Occasionally he takes himself off for a wander, which usually results in much bumping into objects, but so far no serious damage.

Like so many cats, Henry has discerning

tastes. Jenny had assured Barbara that he didn't like treats such as tuna. This turned out not to be the case. And more generally, only the finest cat food will suffice. Food apart, the way to Henry's heart is to comb him. He just can't get enough of it.

Along the way Henry has had a fair bit of attention from the vet, including the removal of one of his eyes, after it became apparent that its condition was causing him distress.

Henry has been very grateful to Cats Protection for paying the not inconsiderable cost of his treatment and giving him the best chance of enjoying a good life despite his medical issues.

*Michael Collie*



*Zoe*

## At home with Zoe and Kleo

I'm in to my sixth year as Treasurer for Peebles & Biggar Branch of CP, and I'm still going strong. It's sometimes a bit of a juggling act working full time and finding time to help with the Branch but it's very rewarding and amazing the number of people who get to know you, initially as one of the 'cat people', and eventually as Karen!

My love of cats comes from my family. My parents and grandparents were cat owners and, as with most of us, that love continued through the generations. At the moment, I have two cats – Zoe and Kleo. Zoe is 14 years old and Kleo is in her

'terrible twos!'

Zoe is probably the most amazing cat I've ever had which really is saying something. Her nickname is 'Dora Bubble' because she is adorable. I know?! People and their cats – what weird nicknames we find.

Zoe's favourite pastime is being 'chased' and then falling over so you can rub her tummy. Aw!

Kleo is without a doubt the most bonkers cat I've ever had which again is really saying something. She's also highly entertaining and affectionate.

Kleo's favourite pastime is running up doors and sitting on top to survey her land.

They are both very chatty and, as we all know, you soon get to learn the good words from the bad.

I work as a Scottish Law Accountant for Blackwood & Smith in Peebles. I've worked there for almost 25 years and no two days are the same. It's a rewarding job but also stressful at times. I have three options when I'm getting stressed – 1. exercise; 2. listen to very loud music; 3. cuddle Zoe and Kleo. Exercise sometimes works, and loud music certainly has its place, but without fail I am guaranteed to feel calm as calm can be when I'm with my cats. Zoe is a big cuddle monster and just loves it when you give her attention and you can have the most amazing conversations with Kleo because she likes you to hear about her day (I suspect some exaggerating on occasions!). It's quite remarkable the positive effect that they have on your mood.

I think all animals are amazing and I support a number of other animal welfare charities, but cats are my all time favourite.

*Karen Valentine, Branch Treasurer*



*Kleo*

*Toasting away together in front of a warm fire. It's a cat's life for Zoe and Kleo*





157 High Street  
Biggar  
S Lanarkshire  
ML12 6DL  
01899 220073

15 Old Town  
Peebles  
EH45 8JF  
01721 722879

[www.tworiversvets.co.uk](http://www.tworiversvets.co.uk)  
[tworiversvets@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:tworiversvets@hotmail.co.uk)



## ARMAC VET GROUP

**1 Montgomery Place, Peebles**  
**4 Station Road, Biggar**

We aim to provide a comprehensive, caring service for your pets, horses and farm animals.

**24 EMERGENCY SERVICE** provided from both surgeries

Office hours

Mon-Fri 8.30am-6.00pm

Saturday 9.00am-1.00pm

**All consultations by appointment**

To arrange an appointment or in case of emergencies phone

**PEEBLES 01721 721293**

**BIGGAR 01899 220046**

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