



# North Walsham and District Cats Protection

## Branch Newsletter – March 2013



**A month later than planned, the first newsletter of 2013 is finally here. Because of the weather, everything has got off to a rather slow start – the fundraising was delayed, the kitten season has not yet begun... Nevertheless, I hope you will find some of the information in this issue useful.**

### Fundraising 2013

As mentioned above, we haven't had a very good start to the fundraising year: the January collection at Tesco's in Aylsham had to be cancelled because of the snow. However, on a more positive note, in February we were nominated as one of the three 'Community Matters' charities at the North Walsham Waitrose store and we will be receiving a donation of £318 based on the number of tokens the customers put in our collection box. If you were one of these customers, we would like to say 'thank you' on behalf of the cats.

Except for the donation from Waitrose, we've also raised money for the cats at a number of events between November 2012 and the present:

Talk at the North Walsham Brownies – November 2012 - £20

Holt Christmas lights - £83.80

Dereham CP sale - £142

Litcham sale - £44.25

North Walsham Christmas sale – 17<sup>th</sup> November 2012 - £1623.32

Dilham Christmas sale – 8<sup>th</sup> December 2012 - £314.28

St Mary's Pet Service - £50

Bluebell Thrift Club – 9<sup>th</sup> December 2012 - £327.25

Dereham Adoption Centre fundraising event in Longham

Village Hall (Val and Barbara) - 9th March 2013 - £60.60

Once again, we would like to thank anyone whose generosity and hard work made the above fundraising successful.

Our fundraising profile this year is changing – we shall no longer continue with the Thursday Craft Sales in St Benet's Hall, but we are hoping to hold more supermarket and street collection. Your favourite events, however, including the Hog Roast and the Branch Open Morning are going to take place, as they do every year. So far we have the following dates:

Plant Sale at St. Benet's Hall – Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2013

Hog Roast in Dilham – Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> or 30<sup>th</sup> June (look out for the posters or check our website, [www.northwalsham.cats.org.uk](http://www.northwalsham.cats.org.uk), for the final date).



### Neutering Vouchers Reminder

As it was last year, eligible owners (people on benefits or low income) can receive help to have their cats neutered. It is especially important at present, as the kitten season is about to start, and neutering will reduce the number of unwanted kittens coming into care. If you know anyone who would require neutering vouchers, please advise them to ring **our neutering line: 07880 256948.**

### Re-homing 2012

In 2012, we re-homed 202 cats and kittens, compared with 225 in 2011 and 219 in 2012. This shows that last year's figures are down slightly, but it was to be expected in the current economic climate and with more cats than ever waiting to come into our care.

However, this year so far we have re-homed 48 cats, as opposed to only 30 this time last year, so we're hoping 2013 is going to be more successful than 2012.

## Kitten Season 2012 Final Update

When I was writing about the kitten season drawing to a close in the previous newsletter, little did I know that we were going to have more new arrivals, including some really dramatic ones. Shortly after the November newsletter was distributed, one of our fosterers found a cardboard box on her doorstep. As her son was moving house at the time and many people were bringing her boxes, she thought it was yet another one someone had kindly given her. However, when she had a closer look, she realised it wasn't the case, as inside the box were two kittens. Fortunately, she found them before they managed to get out of the box. The kittens were moved to one of the pens at Stephanie's and have now left for new homes. If you know anyone who has cats or kittens they want to come into care, please advise them to ring Stephanie on **01692 535858**. We do have a waiting list and we'll not be able to take them in immediately, but if people discuss their situation with us, together we can make sure that no more cats will have to go through the trauma those two little kittens experienced.

At present, we don't have any kittens, we do however still have a few young cats that came into care as kittens during 2012. They have now all been neutered and are more than ready to be re-homed. Tiger Moth and Comet, two beautiful black girls, are still very kitten-like and playful. Because they came into care underweight and in poor condition, they are likely to be quite small cats, even when they grow to their full size. They are now, however, in perfect health, in spite of their difficult start in life. They would prefer to go to the same home together, as Comet is a little shy and would feel lost without Tiger Moth around.

The other two cats, Piggy Malone and Golly, came into care with their mother Jenny (now Tosca, featured in the previous newsletter), their sister and two brothers. When they came in, in spite of mum being very friendly, all the kittens were extremely shy and almost scared of humans. With time, however, they gained confidence. Jenny and three of the kittens have left for new homes and I know that Jenny/Tosca, little Luna and her brother Charlie have settled in really well, as I have had updates from their new owners. Unfortunately, Piggy Malone and Golly are still waiting to be chosen. They are big, handsome looking boys, if still a little timid. They are very different: Piggy has got a most unusual, long, curly coat, so much so that people who don't know him would probably mistaken him for a female. Golly is black, with sleek fur and beautiful big eyes. They both have been with us for over 7 months now and we would like them to go to new loving homes very soon.



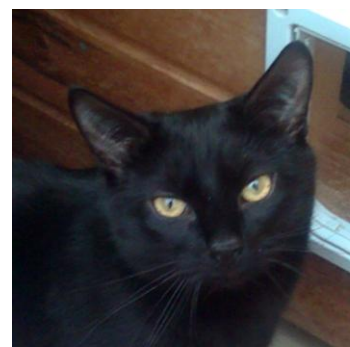
The two kittens abandoned in a box



Tiger Moth and Comet



Piggy Malone



Golly

## Cats we will always remember

Most of our volunteers, except for looking after cats in care, have several cats of their own. No matter how many cats you have had, however, it is never easy when you lose one of them. It becomes even more difficult when you lost a cat that you have had for a long time and who had become very special over the years (even though you're not supposed to have favourites!). Two of us have lost such cats recently.

### Casper

Casper belonged to our web editor. This is how he remembers him:

"Casper came into care with sister Littly and despite an inauspicious start (biting your fosterer's husband when he tries to catch you after accidentally letting you out of your pen) could have resulted in a very strained relationship but fortunately the opposite happened. Some cats have a way of getting under your skin and this was the case with Casper, leading to a request to offer him and his sister "a permanent home, please". Casper was a very large cat, but not fat, with paws as big as those of a small dog's and like a dog he would follow his new family around. People coming to see the cats in care would not be allowed to ignore him as he would gently paw their arms for attention. He was also happy to sit on the seat of his "mum" moped on sunny days or should his "dad" chance to sit on the seat under the carport, he would consider this an ideal way to while away a few hours, getting on his lap for a cuddle. Although Littly, who sadly died last year, had health problems, Casper had always been remarkably healthy until a short time ago. Some cats leave a big impression on people and have a very special place in their hearts and this was certainly the case with Casper and his "dad". He will be greatly missed."

### Janet

Janet was the first cat I adopted from the North Walsham Branch of Cats Protection. Initially, when I moved to North Walsham from Poland, I had planned to bring my cat, Basil, over to the UK in 2005. However, I soon realised that he settled really well at my mother's house, where he had been temporarily staying, and I decided it would have been unfair to move him. Because I couldn't really be without a cat, I contacted Cats Protection about Janet, having seen her picture on the website. By then I had decided I was going to have an older cat, as they are always the most difficult to re-home and Janet was supposed to be twelve at the time.

Janet and her sister Susie were staying with one of our fosterers in North Walsham. They had not had a very good life prior to that; they initially came into care with their brother, but he was diagnosed with a tumour and had to be put to sleep. I visited Janet a couple of times and I thought she had got used to me. However, when I went to collect her on Easter Monday of 2006 and she saw the cat carrier, she panicked and it took her fosterer several minutes and a lot of effort to catch her.

When we finally got her to our flat, Janet was hiding for a couple of days, but then she gradually started to trust us. This was when we learned what a vocal cat she was – throughout her six and a half years with us we must have heard her produce at least a hundred different noises. We also discovered how traumatic her past life must have been – she was scared of plastic bags, of most household noises and hated being picked up. We also discovered she liked beer, when we caught her on the table one day, licking my husband's beer bottle. We thought this was perhaps because there wasn't always drinking water available where she used to live.

In spite of her asthma, being overweight and having to attend weight clinic, Janet had over six happy years with us. Having been an indoor cat all her life, she was overjoyed when we moved into a house and she discovered the garden for the first time. She was perhaps slightly less happy when other cats came to live with us. Overall, though, she had a good life until she was diagnosed with liver tumour in November last year. The operation she had to have proved to be unsuccessful and so we lost Janet in early December. I really miss her and the house is so quiet without her. On the positive note, though, she was the reason why I became a Cats Protection volunteer, so in a way her legacy lives on, in the help I give to other cats.



Casper



Janet

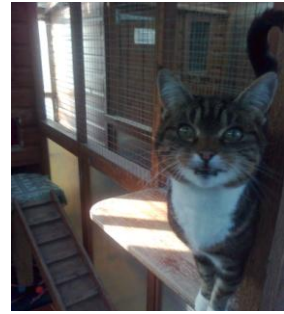


## Happy endings

Just like Janet, many cats that come into our care are traumatised because of how they were treated in their previous home. For many of them, it takes some time and their fosterers' patience before they adjust and start trusting humans again. A cat called Tiger Lily, however, who came into our care in January, became very friendly soon after joining us, in spite of the horrific experiences she'd been through. Tiger Lily's owner was terrified of fleas and, convinced that the cat was covered in them, she groomed her excessively and even used a vacuum cleaner on her. It was only when Tiger Lily lost some of the fur and the veterinary clinic refused to sell her owner any more flea treatment that the lady decided to give the cat up.

This is how Tiger Lily came into our care. At first, she would only let us stroke her head and would scratch and bite if anyone tried to touch her back. However, after a week or so, when she realised no one was going to hurt her, she started enjoying being stroked again, and even demanded it. Because she was about twelve, we were worried that it would take a long time to re-home Tiger Lily. However, someone who had recently lost an elderly cat contacted Stephanie and, after only a month in our care, Tiger Lily left us to start a new, happy life.

Another cat, Bella, who was with us for over two years and has been mentioned in the previous newsletters, has also left for a new home recently. In spite of having been very timid while in care, she has settled in really well and is now enjoying being a lap cat.



Tiger Lily

## Waiting for a happy ending

Yet another cat who had some traumatic experiences before she came into our care is Fidget. Fidget lived as a stray in Norwich for a while after her family had decided they didn't want her anymore, so they shut her out of the house and stopped feeding her. It is not surprising, then, that Fidget doesn't trust humans; even though she enjoys sitting on laps and being stroked, it has to be on her own terms, otherwise she will hiss and scratch when she's unsure what the hand outstretched in her direction is going to do.

Fidget also eats all her food at once and asks for more, which is because, when she was a stray, she didn't know where her next meal was coming from. It may also be comfort eating, as she clearly likes human company and feels lonely in the pen on her own. As a result of this, Fidget is a little overweight, but we are quite sure that, when she finally finds a new home, her eating habits will go back to normal. However, it would be better for Fidget to go to a home with no other cats, where she could enjoy undivided attention and where she would have no opportunities to eat other cats' food.

Finally, one of our long term residents with past experiences very much like those of Fidget's, Clarissa (formerly known as Ginger Biscuit) may be close to her happy ending and we are keeping our fingers crossed for her. Initially we thought Clarissa was unlucky again, as the lady who gave Tiger Lily a home was happy to have any older cat, but at the time Clarissa had been booked by another lady, who later changed her mind and decided not to have her. However, soon afterwards, someone else showed interest in Clarissa. She will have to wait until her future owner moves into her new house (probably in May), but when that happens, she will have a quiet, loving home with no other pets or children, which is what she really needs. We will miss our little cross-eyed friend, as she's been with us for over two years, but there are few cats that deserve a new loving home more than Clarissa.



Fidget



Clarissa

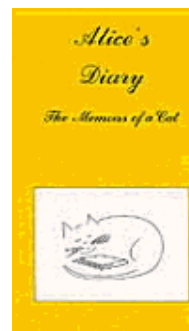


This article has been removed from the online version of the newsletter, as it deals with a controversial issue. If you would like to receive the original version of the newsletter, please e-mail me using the contact details below.

### Cat book corner

If we could read the cats' minds, what would we learn about how their world and how they perceive humans they happen to live with? *'Alice's Diary – The Memoirs of a Cat'* and *'Alice's Adventures – The Further Memoirs of a Cat'* are attempting to answer this question. Witty and entertaining, but also moving and poignant, the two books by Vernon Coleman (who is not featured as the author, leaving all the credit to Alice) are a great insight into what cats may be thinking.

Vernon Coleman, a former GP (with much more empathy than the prospective one mentioned above) is a prolific, self-publishing author. The two *'Alice'* books were inspired by his own two cats, Alice and Thomasina. I had never heard about him prior to receiving the first of the two books for Christmas two years ago, but when I started reading it, I immediately realised it was a must-have for every cat lover. On the other hand, is it always a good thing to know what your cat might be thinking? Read *'Alice's Diary'* to find out...



### Get in touch

If you have got any cat or fundraising news you think should be included in the next newsletter (planned for June 2013), get in touch. You can email me on [justyna90125@wp.pl](mailto:justyna90125@wp.pl) or let Stephanie (01692 535858) or Christine know and I will get in touch with you.