



CATS' AID NEWS

AUTUMN 2008

Cats' Aid Twenty Years On

I can still recall that first meeting of Cats' Aid when we gathered, determined to make life better for any cats who came into our care. That night we chose a name, discussed matters which would form the basis of our Constitution, the most important being our total 'No Kill' policy. This aroused some argument and at least two people felt that they could not agree to this and left. Another very important decision was that every cat who came into our care would receive the same level of medical treatment as any of our own cats, regardless of the cost. We also donated some cash with which I opened the Cats' Aid bank account. Cats' Aid was born!!!

Twenty years on and there are still a few people who have been there from the beginning, or very near to it. Others have come and gone due to other pressures, relocation or death but all made valuable contributions to the early years. Angela and John were crucial to the infant organisation; we could not have survived and grown without them.

Reflecting on the idealism and enthusiasm of that first meeting I ask myself whether we have been true to those ideals? Recently Lily was diagnosed with a rare and totally life threatening condition. Her only hope was complicated surgery which, if successful, would give her a chance of a normal, happy life; she had the surgery and is recovering well. All illnesses are not that dramatic but veterinary care is expensive and most cats whom we take in need a certain amount of treatment. No cat is ever denied the best of care although sometimes that leaves the coffers very depleted. But somehow, thanks to your generosity and the tireless fundraising efforts of members of our Core Group, we carry on! Provided a cat is not suffering and has a good quality of life, be it blind, three legged, without a tail or whatever kind of disablement we don't give up. It may take a good while but a home always comes. And we

are always there to give help and support to anyone who gives a home to the more difficult cases. Thinking of the many cats who might have been given up as hopeless and the many who have found loving homes I hope we can say 'yes, we have been true to those ideals'.

If had a 'Wish List' for the next twenty years I would wish for an influx of young, dedicated people, male and female, who would be prepared to share and carry on our work. As you can imagine some of us are getting on in years and, with the best will in the world, can't carry on forever!

When we started we really hoped that one day we would have a sanctuary where the old and weary would have a comfortable home in which to spend their last years. This has remained in the realm of dreams. I would wish for a Legacy that would make this dream a reality.

My next wish is much more realisable. Would people who have stables or small holdings with secure sheds be willing to take some of our feral cats and give them a reasonable future? Often we have to return feral cats to very unsuitable situations after they are neutered simply because we have no other place to put them. Maybe some of our readers could think about that. Personally I have a tremendous respect and love for the ferals; they are so brave, ask for so little and raise their young against all odds. And yes, all my cats started life as ferals and now enjoy all the comforts of home – and they give so much in love and loyalty.

I have many more wishes but that's enough for now. I hope you think we have made a difference, be it ever so small and will continue to support our work in the future. MBO'C

Reflections on Cats' Aid

I joined Cats' Aid in 1990 when the organisation had been in existence for two years. I saw one of their advertisements in *The Irish Times* and I phoned to say that I wasn't offering a home to the cat in question (I had a much loved cat called Scamp) but I was interested in getting involved. I was invited to the AGM, was elected to the Core Group at that meeting and that, as they say, was that! I was a bit dazed as my offer hadn't envisaged meetings, committees and reports (of which I had a surfeit in my 'day' job) but I set to and over the years I have done many jobs – trapping, delivering traps to those in need, dealing with phone calls for help (in those days we didn't have a dedicated helpline), homing, packing envelopes, to name but a few. I have also been involved in researching, planning and ordering new merchandise for selling at our fund-raising events.

Fostering was extremely rewarding: cats came to me to be socialised, some moved on to new homes and some (more than I intended!) stayed put. Some were not suitable for new homes — little 'wildies' not tamed sufficiently to be rehomed, and some, well, they just stayed! Every cat or kitten who came into my care carved out their own special place in my heart. And Scamp, the 'boss cat', accepted each one and became a 'daddy' to them all. Each had to be washed regularly by him, whether they liked it or not, and each recognised his senior position in the household. He was a gentle giant, a very large tabby and white, who went to the Rainbow Bridge six years ago at the age of fifteen.

Justin came to me when he was five months having broken his jaw in a road traffic accident. A long-haired tabby, he was most affectionate and eminently homeable so, in due course, off he went to a new home. A week later he was back as the resident cat in the household was threatening to leave home. He then went to another new home with a little brindle female, Cupcake, who was in my foster care and of whom Justin was very fond. She settled in really well but Justin returned — he was pining for me, and, truth to tell, I for him. That was that. I adopted him officially and he joined the Bradley family permanently.

The little 'wildies' who stayed were wonderful. They were cats who had known we knew not what before being rescued by Cats' Aid and it was so rewarding to see them beginning to trust again. One

such, Kilda, has been with me for about thirteen years. A little grey and white tabby (a 'roundy' girl), she settled in very well with the feline family and gradually learned to accept me. While she sits on my lap and I can pet her I can't pick her up so, on the (thankfully) rare occasions when she has needed to go to the vet, her Auntie Doreen comes and rugby-tackles her (thank you, Doreen). The vet is instructed to do a complete MOT as he won't see her again for a while. This happened just recently when she wouldn't eat her dinner one Friday evening (the August bank holiday weekend) so Doreen provided her services and Kilda spent the weekend at Fairview Vets returning home on the Tuesday fit and well. To show that she bore no ill-will against Doreen Kilda purred at her over the phone that night.

I fostered three six-week old kittens, two boys and a girl, and before they were old enough to be vaccinated Jessica died overnight of FIE (Feline Infectious Enteritis). Her brothers, Goldie and Jasper, also caught the virus and very nearly died. A lot of nursing was required to pull them through. My friend, Rita, commented one day about six weeks later: 'Goldie is ready to be rehomed' to which I replied 'but Jasper would be lonely without him'. Rita sighed and muttered 'in a house with nine other cats?!' and no more was said: Goldie and Jasper stayed.

Cats' Aid News, which I have edited for some years, is one of the ways of getting our message to people and keeping our supporters informed of what is happening in Cats' Aid. Suitable articles and photos are always welcome and can be sent to me as follows: The Editor, *Cats' Aid News*, P.O. Box 2874, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4. We are always pleased to hear reports of cats whom we have homed and to know that they are doing well in their new homes.

If you are interested in cats and have some spare time why not help us? Apart from the wonderful cats who have, and continue to, touch my heart I have made friends with like-minded people. Remember, the cats and kittens need us. **MB**

Grand Prize Draw

Once again we are holding our 'Grand Prize Draw' and are enclosing, with this newsletter, some tickets (for obvious reasons we don't send tickets to supporters who live outside Ireland). We would appreciate your support by buying the tickets or selling them to your family/friends.

If you need further tickets please leave a message on the helpline, 01-6683529, clearly stating your name and telephone number. You will then be contacted and arrangements will be made to send the

required books of tickets to you. There is a prize for the person who sells the highest number of books of tickets so start selling if you would like to be in with a chance.

Cheques/Postal Orders and counterfoils should be returned to CATS' AID, P.O. Box 2874, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4, to arrive no later than **Friday 14 November 2008**. PLEASE DO NOT SEND CASH BY POST.

September Sale in Loughlinstown

Please come and join us for our 'Mini-Sale' on **Saturday 20 September 2008** in **Archbishop McQuaid National School** from 12.00 noon to 3.00 p.m. We will have Cakes, Books, a Bottle Stall, Cats' Aid merchandise and a Raffle. Admission €3.00 to include a raffle ticket and tea/coffee and biscuits. We look forward to seeing you. MB

Recital

Karishmeh Felfeli Crawford and friends will present a recital of classical music and song on **Thursday 25 September 2008** at 6.00 p.m. in the **Goethe Institute, 37 Merrion Square, Dublin 2**. For tickets phone 01-6683529 (please leave your name and number with a short message and your call will be returned); email <catsaid@gmail.com> or contact any committee member. Ticket price €15 includes refreshments. All proceeds to Cats' Aid. Please join us for a very pleasant evening. MB

Annual General Meeting

The 2008 AGM will take place on Saturday 18 October at 12.00 noon in the Iris Charles Centre for Older People, Newbridge Avenue, Sandymount, Dublin 4.

All members welcome.

Figaro and a new Baby

Figaro is a very elegant sixteen year old cat who came to live with Sophie and Oisín last summer just for a few weeks while his elderly owner was in hospital. When his owner came out of hospital, she declared that she wanted a permanent break from Figaro. Sophie and Oisín flew to his rescue, determined to provide a wonderful home for him. Although he had already had to adapt to being an indoor cat, he now had to adapt to a smaller living space in a second-floor flat (though with more of a sense that he could roam where he liked — rumour has it that he had spent much of his time under the bed hiding from his initial owner).

All was well, Figaro having fallen on his four paws with two people who adored him. However there has since been one further adaptation to make. Baby Gabriel was born in May this year and when Gabriel came home, his entry into the flat required Figaro to take on the learning curve of a newborn's crying. One night early on in wee Gabriel's life, Figaro was found sheltering in the litter tray from that piercing sound which wakens everyone until a baby gets used to his surroundings. Happily, a few months on, Figaro is now well settled as is Gabriel into an expanded and serene household. What a resilient and of course very beautiful pussy cat he is, as is his new family! JM-L



(Editor's comment: Jo was inspired to write to us about Figaro and Gabriel following the article 'Adults, Babies, Cats and a Dog – ONE BIG HAPPY FAMILY' in our summer edition. Thank you, Jo, for sharing this with us. We send our good wishes, congratulations and purrs to Oisín, Sophie, Gabriel and Figaro. MB)

Some welcome donations:

Birthday Girl

Caitriona de Burca asked for donations to Cats' Aid, rather than presents, on her recent 12th Birthday. Caitriona, who has done this for several years, sent us €340. Sincere thanks, Caitriona. The pussies really appreciate your kindness. MB

A Company Donation

Pauline Power wrote to us as follows: 'I have been fostering cats over the past year through Maureen and I have loved the experience. I enclose a cheque for €327 from the employees of the

company I work for, Martello Media. Each year the company picks a charity to support and this year I got to choose Cats' Aid. I hope this will help with your great work.'

(Editor's comment: A big 'thank you' to Pauline and her co-workers. We are delighted to be chosen as this year's charity. MB)

Gemma's Sale

Gemma Spelman sent us €300 being the proceeds of a sale which she held in support of Cats' Aid. Many, many thanks, Gemma. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. MB

Ladies' Mini-Marathon 2008

Once again we thank the wonderful ladies who took part in the Ladies' Mini-Marathon on 2 June on behalf of Cats' Aid and raised a grand total of €1,815: Anna Dulag, Aislinn Holland, Caroline Mc Call, Susan Ronayne, Anna Maria Prew, Sara Terry, Lila Simmons and Kara Wright. Thank you, one and all. MB

Cats' Aid Core Group

Maeve Bradley
Maureen Bristow O'Connor
Muriel Davidson
Lesly Field
Doreen Grant
Margaret Hopkins

Deirdre McCormick
Lorraine O'Conaill
Eileen Penston
Cyrileen Power
Eileen Warren
Ann Woulfe

CATS' AID HELPLINE:

01-668 3529: messages for Cats' Aid may be left on this number. The helpline is checked daily.

CATS' AID ON THE WEB:

www.catsaid.org

Would you like to see your rescued cat's story featured in the *Cats' Aid News*? If you enjoy reading the stories of rescued cats in the newsletter, then why not let everyone else know about yours? Have you an opinion about something feline which you would like to share with us? Write to us along with a photograph and we'll do our best to publish it. Please write to: The Editor, Cats' Aid News, P.O. Box 2874, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4. It would be a big help to us if you could enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for the return of your photograph. Alternatively you can email your story and photographs (marked for attention of the Editor, Cats' Aid News) to: catsaid@gmail.com MB