



CATS' AID NEWS

AUTUM 2009

VERY SPECIAL APPEAL FOR FREDDIE

Freddie came into our care when a lady who had been feeding him noticed blood on his tail. He had a serious wound, probably a bite, which had become infected and which necessitated part of his tail being amputated. As if that were not enough the poor fellow had a huge ulcer on his tongue, one could only wonder how this poor cat came to be in such a pitiable condition. Initially he did not respond to antibiotics, probably because he turned out to be FIV and along with hunger and neglect his immune system would have been very low. There were times when his future seemed very problematic but Cats' Aid does not give up easily. With excellent vet care, lots of good food (fortunately he never stopped eating) and TLC plus his own courage and will to live, he has made a remarkable recovery and is now in a temporary foster home, playing with his toys, chatting and following his carers around. After being confined during his long road to recovery he obviously wants to make the most of every minute.

He is now ready to find a wonderful home with a caring and dedicated cat lover... Because he is FIV he would need to be an indoor, only cat. It is possible that his mouth condition could flare up again and this would need an early visit to the vet. Cats' Aid would pay for any vet care associated with his condition. Ideally, if Freddie needed veterinary treatment, we would like him to be treated in the practice that knows him well but this is not essential. Because he has been abused in the past, probably by being kicked or swung around by the tail, one leg is shorter than the other and he cannot jump any great height.

Despite all the horrible things that have happened to him, Freddie remains a friendly, sweet-natured cat. He has most unusual colouring and beautiful, trusting sea green eyes, that seem to plead, 'please, please choose me'. Can anyone out there give this most deserving cat the love he so richly deserves. If you would like to know more about Freddie please call Maureen 086-1282114 or phone the Cats' Aid help line 01-6683529. MBO'C



Freddie's fosterer writes:

Freddie managed to catch our hearts the minute he arrived in our home. He is now full of life and happiness despite all he has suffered and the slight problems he has to live with. He loves to be with people. He follows us everywhere just to be as near as possible to us, he talks to us a lot and purrs whenever he gets a chance. He loves his food and could stay fascinated at the windows watching the neighbours... but not for too long as there is nothing he likes more than entertaining himself with his many toys. We have never seen a cat enjoying playing all day long with numerous (toy!) mice. It is amazing to see how he has recovered. He is just an adorable sweet and very bright young lad, who is just now at my side on the sofa while I am writing these lines about him, staring at me with his big green eyes and purring as much as he can, dreaming of finding his new forever loving and understanding family. SC

Published quarterly by Cats' Aid, P.O. Box 2874, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4.
Web address: www.catsaid.org Cats' Aid is a registered charity: no. 9769
Editor: Maeve Bradley

FOSTERING FOR CATS' AID

Cats' Aid has never had a sanctuary, so many of the cats who come into our care are looked after in the homes of our foster carers. The role of the fosterers is vital and we couldn't find homes for many of the cats without their help. Young kittens need to be socialised, cats recovering from surgery or trauma need TLC and timid cats need a home environment in which they can gain confidence before going to new homes.

I started fostering three years ago, by accident really. One of our fosterers was going on a two-week holiday and I was asked if I would take the two kittens whom she was looking after at the time. Before I knew where I was my kitchen/conservatory had been taken over by a pen occupied by two kittens. (It hasn't been the same since!) Next came Tabby, a feral female, trapped with her son, Jet, in Herbert Park. Tabby was totally feral and she remained very timid for some time. After weeks of patient quiet interaction she allowed me to pick her up and cuddle her. That was a moving moment.

Last summer there was Harvey, whose middle name was 'Houdini'. He escaped from my house and caused much anxiety before being safely recovered. Then, in spite of my vigilance, he escaped again. At that point I seriously questioned whether I was cut out for fostering. People wonder why we stress the importance of vigilance with open windows and doors but my experience proved that it is so easy to forget and one moment of inattention is all a cat needs to escape.

All the cats and kittens have different personalities and one has to tailor one's approach to each cat. Generally my fosters start off in a puppy pen in my conservatory. I can open the door to stroke them and to get them used to my voice and being confined gives them a feeling of security. At first I am often greeted by hisses, quite comical when it's a tiny kitten hissing. Any initial aggression from the kittens is almost always because they are terrified. I wish I could explain to them that I am on their side and trying to help them. Morsels of chicken offered from my fingers can help the bonding process, as can play when they are more confident. I am sometimes asked 'Don't you become attached

to the cats? How can you let them go?' Yes, I do become attached to them to varying degrees but I tell myself that they are not 'my' cats and that I have a job to do; to get them to the point where they can go to permanent homes. When I pack their bags and deliver them to their new homes I have the satisfaction of knowing that I have helped these cats to happy futures. Occasionally a foster carer becomes so fond of a protégée that he or she decides to offer a permanent home to the cat. That's great for the cat, of course, but it does mean that we lose a foster home!

At the moment I am fostering three kittens who are making sure that my kitchen and living room have that 'lived in' look! I am still waiting for the first purrs and head butts from them which will be so satisfying. I have found fostering very rewarding. Watching kittens exploring their world and seeing a timid cat learn to trust is such a pleasure. It's also lovely to hear reports about how my fosters are getting on in their new homes and to see photos of them looking relaxed and happy.

Cats' Aid urgently needs more foster homes. If you feel that you could foster for us please contact us. The main requirements are that the cat remains strictly indoors at all times and that you have a reasonable amount of time to spend with the cat. Having your own transport is helpful, in case the cat needs to see a vet. We would try to find a cat who would fit in with your home situation and your lifestyle. We can't give a timescale for fostering; you might have a cute kitten for only a few weeks; an adult cat for longer. Cats' Aid will pay any veterinary expenses while a cat is being fostered and we are always on hand with help, support and advice.

If you have internet access you can read more about fostering on our website www.catsaid.org; alternatively you can phone our helpline 01-6683529. Just leave a message and we will return your call to talk further.

Please give it some thought; you could make a difference. CP

HOLLY THE SUPERCAT

Dear Missus, Holly the Supercat here again with my latest news. I had a really bad day a little while ago. I was just coming home from a run around after breakfast when I saw something that really upset me. There were a whole lot of terrible fellows in our house and they were knocking out the windows! They were making a dreadful noise and I was very frightened. I was making off for a bit of peace and quiet when I saw something that really made my fur stand on end. One of the terrible fellows had got the back door off with my special private entrance in it! I did not know what to think but I came back later to see what had happened. There was a new door and my entrance was back in place after all. I could see the terrible fellows were still in the house and I was afraid of them, but I decided that I would have to find out if everything was all right. I rushed up to my entrance, I shot though and out again in a flash. I was very relieved I can tell you.

One of the people here went to the great sale you held a while ago. He seemed very pleased with the splendid bargains he got. As everything was such good value he did not spend a lot so I have asked him to send some money to help all those good cats who don't have anyone to look after them. Best wishes from Holly the Supercat.



TESS'S STORY

All of our pets are important to us. If you are lucky you find one who becomes a true friend and family member. Tess is that cat!

We found Tess on the Cats' Aid website in March 2005. The fact that she only had one eye just made her all the more appealing. I could not wait to ring to find out more about her. After talking with Maureen from Cats' Aid and when the home visit was completed we were over the moon to find out we could bring her home. She was living with a foster family in Bray and they were sad to see her go. Tess took to life in our apartment quite well. She was very shy at first and would hide behind the couch. Over the next few weeks we all settled in together and it was like Tess had always been part of our family.

Three years passed and we decided to relocate to Waterford, from where I came originally. We got a spacious house with a big walled garden which would suit all three of us! The move was planned for mid-January 2009. Over Christmas we noticed that Tess was very quiet and sleeping a lot. She was also eating less and not moving around.

So moving day came. The apartment was empty and the car was full of the last few bits and pieces. We were very worried about Tess and decided to bring her to our local vet who had administered her boosters in the past before we left for Waterford. He told us that Tess was a very sick cat, she had liver failure and was extremely jaundiced. My heart sank and the tears started to flow. They also said they would have to take her in straight away and put her on a drip. When we informed the vet of our move we were told that the sooner she got the drip into her the better. So we had to make the decision to leave her in the care of the vet and to move without her. After we left the vet's surgery we just sat in the car and cried. I could not believe what was happening. This was our first time without her around.

The next few days were awful. Nothing seemed important and we could not focus on anything as all we could think of was Tess. I was ringing the vet twice a day to find out how she was doing. The news was not good. Tess had completely stopped eating and was on the drip 24/7. This was such a lonely time for us. I especially missed Tess as Keith was at work and I found myself at home on my own. I was so used to having Tess there for company; I truly missed my little pal.

Nearly a week later we got a call from the vet to go back to Dublin. He felt they had done all they could for Tess and that we needed to make a decision. Tess looked so small when she was brought to us. Her skin was hanging and you could see nearly every bone in her body. She had two bald front legs from the drip and her fur was in terrible shape as she wasn't cleaning herself. Despite how awful she was feeling Tess just kept rubbing against us and trying to climb into our arms. We just could not let her go. We said that we were bringing Tess home with us and even if she only had days to live we wanted her to spend them at home with her family. There was no way she was spending her last days on earth in a cage away from us. So I wrapped Tess up in my cardigan and we set off for Waterford.

The next day we brought Tess to the vet who had looked after my family's animals for years. He took Tess in and immediately did blood tests, x-rays and scans to try and eliminate different illness which could be making Tess so sick. None of this was done by the previous vet.

He told us that Tess was approximately 10 years old and not 7 as we had thought – he could tell this by examining her eye. So she is an old lady! Tess stayed with the vet for a few days. She was put back on a drip and given injections to stimulate her appetite. All tests came back clear so I was able to bring her home. The vet told me that animals always do better in their own environment and around familiar faces. He also told me that the only way to get the liver back functioning normally was to get her to eat - not an easy task!

The next four weeks were spent trying to figure out foods that Tess would eat. The house had a very interesting smell of microwaved cat food and at one stage she was eating fish fingers for me although the breadcrumbs would have to be taken off first! The difficult thing was that she would only eat things once or twice and then she wouldn't touch them again. Tess did relapse a couple of times during this period and it was back to the vet for more injections, drips and sleep overs!



She was becoming a pro! All the staff in the surgery were very upset each time she came back in, they all felt so sorry for her and kept telling us what a wonderful cat she was and what beautiful markings she had. It was apparent that everybody was willing Tess to get better.

After the last time she came home from the vet she steadily started eating again. She gradually became more active and social. One evening when she was sitting at the fire Tess started to clean herself. I had not seen her do this in weeks. I had a little cry and then rang Keith, my Mam and Dad and my friends to share the joyous news.

It has now been nearly three months since our last visit to the vet. All of Tess's hair has grown back and the weight is being put back on. Tess is reaping all the benefits of her new home and garden and I think the sea air is doing her good.

I do believe that after losing an eye and recovering from liver failure there is just nothing Tess cannot overcome! The lesson we learned is that it never hurts to get a second opinion even if you have been going to the same vet for years. We owe our little friends that much at least, because you never know what a different vet may try or the unusual cases they have come across. It is hard to believe that we came so close to losing Tess. Thank God we didn't give up on her and that we found a vet who thought there was a chance to save her, otherwise there would be a very different ending to this story. **RF**

A FOOTNOTE TO ANDY THE HERO

You will recall the story of Andy the Hero in the last issue. He escaped whilst awaiting a new home and found his way back to Glenageary from Blackrock; this despite the handicap of a congenitally deformed back paw. Andy, following a restful day indoors, would still indulge his nocturnal habit of disappearing once his considerable appetite was satisfied. More recently, however, a thorough trial and assessment of the merits of more permanent indoor living finally persuaded Andy to call it a day and a night! In fact, he took to the indoors like the proverbial duck to water and currently divides his time between the sitting room and the adjoining sunroom, his location at any given time being dependent on temperatures outside. His other preoccupation has him scuttling to the front door in response to the doorbell, all in the name of inquisitiveness.

Still his ambitions were not entirely so confined, for Andy had been observing the already resident male favouring the upstairs area for taking long rests, and he, too, sought to investigate this possibility for himself. However, in the interests of controlling hostilities, Andy was firmly discouraged from entering this area and seemed to accept these strictures as a further step towards détente. One day it was discovered with some puzzlement that Andy was inexplicably missing. Speculation suggested a sentimental return to the old secret haunt of his homeless days. Old haunt? No! Secret? Yes! Andy was discovered in the guest bedroom reclining on a vintage hand-embroidered white linen bedcover.

The guilty look said it all as he made an instant dash to his downstairs quarters! The ubiquitous black hairs suggested that while the household slept Andy had enjoyed many happy nights of elegant repose on the prized inheritance. Well, it WAS the guest bedroom!

In the early hours of Thursday 3 July last when we all woke to the apocalyptic thunder, lightning and deluge, a check to locate the senior feline found instead an elongated Andy idly and nonchalantly extending and retracting his claws on the sofa. As thunder boomed about him rivalling the deafening drumming of torrential rain on the windows and roof of the sunroom no scale could measure the smug look that said 'look at me. I have a home of my very own now and frankly the sky can fall in for all I care'. MM



REPORT ON THE SUMMER SALE

In view of the bad weather we have experienced this summer we were extremely lucky to have a fine and warm day on 27 June for our Sale. Our members and friends supported us once again and I am delighted to report that the takings, including memberships and donations on the day, amounted to just over €4,000 with approximately €420 worth of food donated to our 'Give a Cat a Dinner' appeal. The attached photos feature Moya, who had her face painted and Doreen, a founder member who celebrated her 80th birthday a few days before the Sale, cutting her birthday cake. Many thanks to all who set up and ran the stalls and cleared up afterwards (not a popular job but it has to be done!). A special 'thank you' to Margaret whose Trojan efforts made it all happen. MB

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting will take place on Saturday 10 October 2009 at 12.00 noon in the Irish Charles Centre, Newbridge Avenue, Sandymount, Dublin 4 (the location for our Sales). All members welcome.

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-editor