

# Summer 2006

# CATS' AID NEWS

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## 'GIVE A CAT A DINNER'

**Cats' Aid continues to care for many cats in permanent and temporary foster care and living in colonies around Dublin city and we also provide veterinary care for many of them. As you can imagine our food bills are considerable. So, once again, as part of our Summer Fair, we will have a large box at the Cats' Aid stall where we invite people to donate tinned or dried cat food to help with our feeding costs. All the food collected in this way will be distributed to our foster homes and to those kind, caring individuals who, in all weather, travel to our various colony sites to feed the feral cats who live there. PLEASE HELP TO GIVE A CAT A DINNER.**

## SUMMER FAIR

I know that summer is on the way when my feline family start venturing out again, to their cat run attached to our house, to catch any passing sun. They have spent the long cold winter in their comfortable beds next to the radiators (or, indeed, in my bed). Who says cats don't hibernate?!

So it is time to think of our Summer Fair which takes place this year on **Saturday, 10 June** from 12.00 noon to 3.00 p.m. at the **Iris Charles Centre for Older People, Newbridge Avenue, Sandymount, Dublin 4**. As most of you will know our Sales form a large part of our fundraising. You can help by donating goods to sell at our stalls: **Gifts, Jewellery, Books, CDs, Tapes, Videos, Plants, Cakes**. Unwanted gifts are always welcome for our **New/Good-as-new stall** and for the ever-popular **Wheel-of-Fortune**. Would you bake something for our **Cake Stall**? There will also be super prizes in our **Raffle** and lots more. We should be glad to hear from you if you would like to help at the Sale. Please leave a message on our helpline 01-6683529 and we'll get back to you.

At the Cats' Aid stall we will have our own merchandise: **Notelets, Mugs, Cotton Bags, Tea Towels, T-shirts, Pens, Car Stickers and Keyrings**; and you can become a member if you would like to support us on a regular basis. Refreshments of tea/coffee and biscuits will be available if you need reviving.

**UNFORTUNATELY WE CANNOT ACCEPT BRIC-A-BRAC, ELECTRICAL GOODS, CLOTHES, SHOES, MAGAZINES OR FURNITURE.**

Goods for donation can be delivered to the **Iris Charles Centre for Older People, Newbridge Avenue, Sandymount** on the evening before the Fair, **Friday 9 June** between 6.30 and 8.00 p.m. If you have goods to donate but are unable to transport them we will do our best to collect them from you. Please leave a message at 01-6683529 **NO LATER THAN Friday 2 June** (the weekend before the Sale) and someone from the Sale's organising committee will contact you.

A leaflet about the Fair is enclosed with your newsletter and we should appreciate any help you can give in publicising it. We look forward to seeing you all on 10 June. MB

# Peregrine Bootle goes to tea

Peregrine Bootle, staff reporter on the Daily Mews, stretched and stood up. 'Going somewhere?' asked Ed the Editor of the paper. 'I thought I'd drop in on the St Michaels and see what's happening in the feline scene.' (Since his first meeting with Christopher St Michael, he had become friendly with him and his sisters Marina and Jessie, see photograph). 'He loves a bit of male company, he gets tired of all those females fawning over him – even the housekeeper dotes on him.' 'Wasn't there something wrong with him?' asked Ed. 'There certainly was, he started behaving very strangely, shouting all night and stamping around, unable to settle. Fortunately the housekeeper had read that this behaviour could indicate an overactive thyroid gland, especially in older cats. Off he went for a blood test and now one little tablet twice daily and the housekeeper sleeps peacefully once more. He has gained weight and looks wonderful.' Peregrine tucked his ears into his cute tartan cap, swung his warm cape around his shoulders and prepared to face the cold east wind. 'I'll be back before the paper goes to press.'



Peregrine, now settled comfortably by the fire, looked at his friends with affection. 'How are you, Christopher old boy, and what's new on

the cat scene?' 'Nothing much, Perry,' replied Christopher, 'the same problems year after year – quite depressing.' Gentle Marina handed Peregrine a cup of steaming catnip tea and a large slice of his favourite salmon roulade. 'Humans are either stupid, thoughtless or downright cruel!' said Jessie. 'Now Jess, that's not true of all of them, there are some really wonderful people.' 'I know that,' snapped Jessie, 'but walking out and leaving cats and dogs that have been loyal companions to fend for themselves, not caring what happens to them, that's cruel in my book. And it's almost an epidemic now and we know it gives our housekeeper sleepless nights.' 'Many of the new homeless are golden years cats like ourselves,' Marina sighed, 'imagine finding ourselves facing a locked door, no food and a perilous future... nothing very golden about that. Perhaps it's even harder for the young unspayed ferals, litter after litter of kittens and being hounded out of gardens while trying desperately to protect and rear their young. If you remember, that's what happened to our Mom. We could easily have suffered a dreadful fate.' Jessie shuddered. 'Vermin control was mentioned if I remember...'. They sat a while in silence. 'I wonder if people realise that an unspayed female cat can have three litters in one summer,' said Marina thoughtfully, 'they say one queen can be responsible for 30,000 kittens in three years. And the remedy is so simple. Neuter your male cat at six months and your female cat at five months and put an end to so much suffering.' 'And what about the unneutered Toms fighting, passing on F.I.V., getting bitten and dying of septicaemia, not a happy thought.' added Christopher. 'Another thing, why don't people make provision for their companion animals in case of death or serious illness? Death is an inevitable part of life and knowing that your beloved companion is secure must surely give peace of mind.' 'How



would that be managed?' asked Peregrine, who had been listening closely to his friends. 'Simple.' answered Christopher. 'If possible, leave some money towards their keep and rehoming but even more important make sure that neighbours and relatives know the name of your chosen organisation so that immediate help is at hand. People can be devious, so the human needs to be very clear, writing everything down and having the paper witnessed and signed. It should also be copper fastened in the will. I know our housekeeper feels much happier knowing we are secure.'

Peregrine twitched the last crumbs of roulade off his whiskers and glanced at the time. 'I must be going. Thank you, Marina, for my favourite refreshments, and thank you for a most enlightening afternoon, as usual. Would you like me to write an article reflecting your views? If only one person has a change of heart, it will be a plus.' 'Wonderful!! Please do!' they mewed as Peregrine, snug in cap and cape, said his farewells and made his way back to the office. 'I do like that cat – he's such a good listener.' said Jessie, arthritic pains quite forgotten. Counting their blessings they closed their eyes. MBO'C

## Ladies' Mini-Marathon

At time of writing six wonderful ladies have registered to run for Cats' Aid. If you would like to support them you can send a donation, marked **Mini-Marathon**, to Cats' Aid, P.O. Box 2874, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4. If there is anyone else out there who would like to join them contact us at 01-6683529 or email us at [catsaid@gmail.com](mailto:catsaid@gmail.com)

MB

## In memory of Grizelda – a beloved companion 1992-2005

From the moment I saw her name in the paper I knew she was mine. From the moment she laid eyes on me she knew I was hers. The latter was well and truly the case. I immediately became enraptured by the beautiful, grey, intelligent and strong-willed cat Grizelda was. She was four years old when I adopted her from Cats' Aid (my having been stringently vetted by Morag).

There was a strict 'No pets' policy at the all-boys boarding school where I work but Grizelda and I both understood that rules are made to be broken and so, with some aplomb, we installed

ourselves after mid-term in October 1992. I was reminded by the headmaster at the time that the 'no pets' rule applied to both boys and staff. He was enlightened by me that Grizelda was no ordinary pet but a feline companion who would only be an asset to my doing my job well... (I hoped). In truth my having the temerity to bring her on my rounds in the mornings and again at night proved to be a huge point of interest to the students. We had a number of escapades in those years: the time she clawed her way up the chimney to get at a bird's nest perched on top; and when she pounced on the stuffed pheasant which was a prize artifact belonging to the headmaster. I was the one almost let go at that stage.

Grizelda went everywhere with me: to and from my parents' house and also to what was to be my new home with my husband, Liam. She completely adapted to all three locations (at school she was an indoor cat) but I am well aware of how unusual was the arrangement. I had three of everything for her (identical) and, of course, I was the common denominator. Liam also became very attached to Grizelda and it always amused me how better behaved she was with him. She would do whatever he wanted whereas she expected me to do whatever *she* wanted.

Grizelda adopted a strict zero-tolerance attitude towards visitors and could be very persistent in getting her message across. She would want to sit wherever the visitor was sitting until the visitor became exhausted playing musical-chairs and would go home. She was extremely intolerant with my chatting on the phone. She would start to 'meow' and keep it up for the duration of the call until my friend would say 'I think I should let you go and see to the baby'!

She was a very spirited cat and would throw her heart and soul into whatever was going on. At Halloween our house was always first port of call with all neighbourhood kiddies because of Grizelda. I would put on my witch's hat and one year was allowed to put a little witch's hat on her. She loved to sit on the window sill to have her photo taken and even went on home-video taken by a neighbour. At Christmas she would hang out of the tree and on my wedding video

and in many of the photos Grizelda features almost as much as the bride and groom. My picking her up wearing my wedding dress nearly sent my mother into orbit and had my grandmother reaching for her rosary beads.

This magnificent cat enjoyed good health until the last year of her life. She then needed treatment for an underlying condition. She received the very best of care at the veterinary clinic from Pat Keating and Doreen to whom I will always be grateful. At the beginning of March last year it became increasingly difficult for her to keep going. She had fought the good fight. We had fought it together and she let me know it was time for me to let her go but I was going to have to help her on her way. I will never forget her last night with us. She lay down under the radiator in our hall and I lay down beside her and cuddled her and talked to her all through the night. We brought her into Pat and Doreen the next morning for the last time. It was one of the saddest days of our lives. We said goodbye and my heart was broken to the point that I could actually feel physical pain. However, I would not have missed a single moment of the time we spent together... we were companions, feline and human together.

Grizelda's legacy remains on at school. Recently a young student, who had never actually met her, wrote me a note which read: 'Do you still miss your cat?' to which I replied: 'Yes, I still miss her, but I feel she is in cat heaven and I still feel her love.' Grizelda may be gone from our lives physically but not from our hearts or minds. Love never dies.

AW



## A mouse's tale

For a few nights in November last I had heard noises in my bedroom which I took to be the normal settling-down sounds in any house, for example, when the central heating goes off. People who think a house is silent at night are very much mistaken. We just don't hear the noises because we are usually asleep.

Then, as I was lying in bed reading, I suddenly saw the cause of the trouble: a mouse. Now this is a household with six cats (four female and two male, all rescued and spayed/neutered) who have the complete run of the house except at night when they sleep in the kitchen, so you can imagine my surprise at seeing a mouse. In the three nights since I had first heard the mouse none of the cats showed the slightest interest in him. I live in a bungalow so later that night (at 3.00 a.m.) when I heard Mr Mouse, as he came to be known, in the hall I closed my bedroom door. All doors off the hall are extremely close-fitting and I didn't think a mouse would find anywhere to hide. My plan was to open the front door in the morning and escort Mr Mouse back out to the garden. For the next two hours a cheeky mouse scratched at my bedroom door. Obviously a carpeted bedroom was much more conducive to sleep than a cold, tiled hall. Come morning he was nowhere to be seen or heard. Meanwhile the resident cats still showed no interest even though the

mouse's scent must have been very strong.

So it was off to Boardwalk Pet Store on Wellington Quay to purchase a humane mousetrap. I set it with some rasher that night but it obviously wasn't to Mr Mouse's taste. I was subsequently advised by a friend that I should have cooked the rasher! Next day I consulted Margaret, veterinary nurse at Fairview Veterinary Hospital and oracle on all things to do with animals, and she said chocolate would work, Cadbury's Milk Chocolate, no less.

For the second night I set the trap, this time with chocolate as per Margaret's instructions, and within the hour Mr Mouse was caught. Next day he was released some miles away in a country area near a factory and with lots of fields. I was advised not to release him in the garden because, if there was an entry, he would probably just come back into the house and I'd be back to square one. At first Mr Mouse was reluctant to exit the trap but, with a little bit of encouragement, he departed and, when last seen, was scampering down a field where I hope he will be very happy.

**(Editor's comment:** I can vouch for the truth of this story. You see it happened in my house. MB)

# Remembering Sweep and welcoming Oscar and Felix

On 19 November last, we lost a dear friend and much loved pet, Sweep. We had adopted him as a tiny, beautiful kitten from Cats' Aid six and a half happy years earlier. He was diagnosed with cancer in the bone in his nose in May of last year and, after a good summer, a slow deterioration in his condition meant that we had to make the heartbreaking but necessary decision to say goodbye. I sent an email to Cats' Aid to let you all know the sad news and received a lovely call from Maeve Bradley, assuring us that we had given Sweep the best possible care and should take comfort in the knowledge that he had a great life with us. That really meant a lot.



About a month later I was still really missing Sweep, and I received a call from Maeve asking if I would be interested in adopting two 14 week old ginger brothers. Despite feeling very disloyal to Sweep my Mum and I went to meet the kittens the following week and I fell in love AGAIN.

Once I'd met them, there was no going back! Their little faces just begged me to take them home, so I did, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Oscar is the larger of the two and *loves* his grub. As I write he is staring in the glass oven door at the chicken inside, *my* dinner I might add. He is mostly ginger with a white bib (ready for dinner at any time) and white paws. Felix is petite and all ginger. What he lacks in size he makes up for in courage. If there's an interloper in the garden, he's the one to make chase. Oscar follows up the rear once the intruder is well out of harm's way. Oscar has a slight turn in his eye which gives him an endearing and slightly comical look. Felix is generally the boss except where food is concerned. He is my lap cat and loves nothing more than to curl up on top of either me or David, my partner, or if there are no laps available, he'll curl up with his big softie of a brother who just lies there and gets the full valet from his little brother. Felix is a bit of a computer buff: whenever I'm on the laptop he'll get in under my right arm, face resting on the mousepad. Every so often the urge to chase that cursor just becomes too much to bear and a lazy paw will stretch out towards the screen.

I'd like to thank all the dedicated Cats' Aid team and especially Rita, Maeve and the kittens' foster carer, Helen, for making our little family complete again. Rest assured they have fallen on their paws. MW

**(Editor's comment:** I knew Sweep as a small kitten, fostered by Rita, before he went to live with Maria and David where he had such a wonderful home. Oscar and Felix have certainly 'fallen on their paws' and I look forward to hearing further news of them. MB)

## Cats' Aid Core Group

Maeve Bradley  
Zarah Davidson  
Margaret Hopkins  
Penny O'Donovan  
Cyrileen Power  
Woulfe, Anne

Maureen Bristow O'Connor  
Lesly Field  
Deirdre McCormick  
Valerie Owens  
Rita Walsh

Muriel Davidson  
Doreen Grant  
Lorraine O'Conaill  
Eileen Penston  
Eileen Warren

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? Send us your feline tale along with a photograph and we'll be delighted 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. MB

## CATS' AID HELPLINE:

01-6683529: messages for Cats' Aid may be left on this number.

The helpline is checked daily.

CATS' AID ON THE WEB:

[www.catsaid.org](http://www.catsaid.org)