

Summer 2007

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

Hopefully the lovely weather which prevails as I prepare this newsletter will continue until our Summer Fair which will be held on **Saturday, 9 June** from **12.00 noon to 3.00 p.m.** at the **Iris Charles Centre for Older People, Newbridge Avenue, Sandymount, Dublin 4.**

Can you help by donating goods to sell at our stalls: **Gifts, Jewellery, Books, CDs, Tapes, Videos, Plants, Cakes.** If you transfer/copy music to an iPod or MP3 Player maybe you would like to create some space in your house by donating your unwanted CDs to Cats' Aid. The CDs stall always does particularly well and we would be happy to take them off your hands. Unwanted gifts are particularly welcome for our **New/Good-as-new stall** and for the ever-popular **Wheel-of-Fortune.** Can you bake or do you know someone who would do some baking for the **Cake Stall?** Perhaps you might be able to donate some home-made jam? There will also be super prizes in our **Raffle** and lots more.

You will be able to buy **Notelets, Mugs, Cotton Bags, Tea Towels, T-shirts, Pens, Car Stickers and Keyrings** at the Cats'

Aid stall and you can become a member if you would like to support us on a regular basis. If you need reviving refreshments of tea/coffee and biscuits or soft drinks will be available.

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 8 June between 6.30 and 8.30p.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 1 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 9 June. **MB**

Jess's Story –

Part One

Jess and her companion Rupert came into our care in April 2006. They were in a very neglected state, not because of any deliberate lack of care but because of the age and ill health of their owner. As soon as the situation was realised by a relative, we were asked to help. We were very fortunate that a wonderful fosterer, Margaret, was delighted to take them into her home and give them all the TLC they needed. Rupert, a white cat, was found to have the beginnings of cancer of his ear and needed surgery to remove the part of his ear that was affected. This caused him minimal discomfort and certainly prolonged his life! When Jess was removed from the carrier, there was shock and consternation at the sight of a tumour on her back the size of her head. At this stage the skin had split and it was oozing serous fluid, the risk of infection necessitated an urgent visit to the vet where surgery was thought to be the only option. She was 16 years of age but survived the surgery without any bother; once home she was soon eating and purring and showed herself to be a wonderfully happy little cat with a great zest for life. Unfortunately the tumour was a fibrosarcoma, a type of cancer particularly difficult to eradicate, especially at this advanced stage. It was decided that, while Jess had quality of life, we would be advised by the vet and just keep removing the regrowth as it appeared.

When Jess and Rupert were taken into care they had completely forgotten all their toilet training and a litter tray meant nothing to them; obviously this was not a desirable state of affairs! Margaret, with amazing patience and ingenuity, finally got them back on track and we breathed a sigh of relief – it is a great deal easier to rehome cats that are litter tray trained! At this stage Margaret's return to America was drawing near (why do so many of our valued fosterers leave the country???) and it was imperative that another suitable foster home be found. We need not have worried, the angels were definitely watching over this pair. Clare contacted Cats' Aid with a view to fostering – after a home visit when we explained what fostering entailed, Jess and Rupert were delivered into her care. Rupert very soon went off to a new home and with Clare's consent it was decided that Jess would stay with her in permanent foster care. We knew that it would be months, rather than years. A very strong bond soon developed between them and thanks to the skill of the vets and the love and dedication of Clare, those last months were full of happiness for Jess. Cats' Aid can only express their heartfelt thanks to Clare and all our fosterers who enable needy cats to live in a home environment surrounded by the love and care they so deserve. MBO'C



Part Two

My friend suggested the idea of fostering to me. I live in a very small rented flat with no easy access to the outdoors and wasn't sure if I would be a suitable candidate but I liked the idea of having a feline companion and contacted Cats' Aid who responded immediately. I was soon matched up with two older cats. It turns out that an indoor home is ideal for fostering and often better than the confined space of a cattery.

Jess arrived at my flat in June last year with her littermate, Rupert, a large white cat, who soon afterwards went to live with my friend. Jess made herself immediately at home, curling up on my bed whilst all that was visible of Rupert, as he hid under the wardrobe, was a white paw!

Jess was an easy cat to love. From day one she was hugely affectionate, with a preference for climbing onto me on the bed so she could curl up against my neck or lying up in my arms with her paws around my neck purring loudly all the time. She liked her food but would happily let Rupert dine first although woe betide him if he tried to claim any affection from me whilst she was in the vicinity – he would be met with a swift bat from Jess's paw as a warning accompanied by a single loud yelling meow.

She also had another strange quirk of trying to wake me up by first sitting staring hard at me (as if willing me to wake) and failing that ever so gently nipping my eyebrows. An odd target but it certainly worked! Aside from this she was a model cat, inquisitive, tactile and content. I felt that her happy temperament must be due in part to being well loved by her previous owners and this was a source of comfort to me throughout the number of operations she had to remove the tumours which stubbornly grew back. Although caring for Jess involved several trips to the vets, I never felt burdened by this, particularly as *she* took it so

much in her stride. I felt well supported at all times by Cats' Aid and they even covered the expense of taking Jess to the vet by taxi as I don't drive.

Sadly, one of the tumours that Jess developed was inoperable and I brought her home from the vets last December so that she could live out the rest of her life in comfort. In keeping with her character, she proved to be a staunch patient, not seeming to notice the very large and growing lump on her back. She lost her appetite only towards the last couple of weeks and I made the very difficult decision to have her put to sleep to prevent her from suffering. Although I miss her greeting meow and little furry face hugely, I felt relieved that her passing was so peaceful and I feel honoured to have been able to have shared her life for nine months. Fostering has been a hugely rewarding experience for me and I would urge anyone considering it to talk to Cats' Aid. Jess has introduced me to the wonderful world of felines and I have another charge arriving just this week. CS

Myra and Artimus

Myra and Artimus came to us from Doreen. They have come such a long way in the time we have had them. Artimus is the most loving of the pair of them. Myra still has some physical problems and is on and off medication. Artimus is doing really well. She is no longer licking the hair off her legs and her fur has grown back. They both have really shiny coats and they love the new beds which we got for all our pets as a late Christmas present. Each has their own soft comfy bed in a place of their choosing. Artimus sometimes prefers to stay in the kitchen to watch what is going on outside. Myra loves to sit in her bed in the living room with us and the rest of the feline and canine family. In our house if you want a comfortable place to sit you have to move an animal... then it is an open invitation for them to use your lap.

Arty, as I call her, loves to sit on Peter's shoulders and whip him in the face with her tail. When she wants down the claws come out and she waits until he moves to a spot where she can get off onto another piece of furniture. She does not like walking on the ground. She wants to be up high.

Sooty (who was written up in the Autumn 2005 edition of the newsletter) is doing great. She is the Madam of the house and she rules the roost. Sometimes she will curl up with one of the others but then gets tired of them and bats them out of the bed.... When I get

home at night I announce 'Momma's Home' and they all come running to greet me. Myra has to be the first for a 'big love'. The cats and the dogs are getting along great and Arty will often curl up with either of the dogs. The occasional 'grrrrr' from Mr Pep is normal but he realizes that it does no good because Arty will not move - she just yawns and gets closer to him - he then looks at one of us as to ask will we please 'grrrrr' her again. We just move him or give him a treat for being good to his 'sisters'.

Peter is working on the back garden and is going to set up an area where the cats can go out on fine days with access from one of the windows. It might prevent Sooty from trying to be an escape artist and it will be totally safe and secure. RC



Myra



Artimus

Peregrine Bootle of *The Daily Mews* reports on thyroid problems in cats

Peregrine Bootle, sub-editor and chief reporter of *The Daily Mews*, pushed back his chair - he had just had an idea for the Saturday Journal. He would interview Christopher and Marina on the signs, symptoms and dangers of hyperthyroidism and the treatment they had received to return them to health. It was ages since they had published a medical article and it might be of interest to many cats and their carers. It was a good while since he had visited them, life got so busy and priorities like friends seemed to go by the board. Well, he would remedy that right now. Calling out to his secretary, Cappucine, a lovely little tortie cat with beautiful eyes, that he would be gone for the rest of the day, he closed down the computer, donned his light linen jacket and set off up the hill. It was early summer and the trees and flowers looked bright and fresh, new creations! He sang softly to himself as he drank in all the sights and sounds that made being alive so good.

Arriving at the house on the hill, he let himself in with his key and ran softly upstairs. Opening the living room door he gave a loud miaow and nearly frightened the elders out of their skins; seeing who it was, their shock turned to delight and of course Marina dashed out to get her favourite cat a little something to 'stay his stomach'. After they had exchanged news and he had polished off his sardine sandwich, he got down to business. 'Christopher and Marina, can I ask you about your overactive thyroids? I'd like to write an article for the Saturday Journal.' 'Ask away' replied Christopher. Whipping out his tape recorder, Peregrine got into serious mode. 'What made Mo think you had thyroid trouble?' 'I started being very troublesome, especially at night. I shouted really loudly and insisted on going in and out of the room. I'd no sooner

be out than I would shout and bang the door until she let me back in. She actually thought senility was creeping on but then she read an article that suggested this might be a sign of an overactive thyroid so off I went to the vet. Blood tests revealed an excessive amount of the thyroid hormone in my blood. I was put on medication and for months this was very effective but then it started to irritate my stomach and, of course, getting sick meant that I was not getting enough of the medication. My thyroid went out of control again and off I went to the Vet College for surgery. I was home in three days, my physical symptoms normalised immediately and I no longer need medication.'

Turning to Marina, Peregrine asked: 'Was it the same for you Marina?' 'No, Peregrine, I was hungry all the time but no matter how much I ate, I lost weight at an alarming rate. I was very nervy but as I had been a timid cat anyway, that wasn't really noticeable. When Christopher was diagnosed, Mo became suspicious and (with great difficulty) took me to be tested. Because we are siblings, she felt there might be a genetic factor. My thyroid levels were extremely high and my pulse was racing - in order to operate, my T4s (thyroid hormone levels) needed to be brought down to normal which meant tablets twice a day and a return to the college in a week's time... I do not take kindly to medication so we will draw a veil over that fraught time! Suffice to say that when I returned the levels were normal and I had surgery. I recovered well and was home in three days. I have put on weight and feel so much better. My appetite is good but I no longer feel that constant hunger and my nerves have settled amazingly. All in all a great outcome.'

CONTD. OVERLEAF

