



CATS' AID NEWS

Summer 2008

Adults, Babies, Cats and a Dog – ONE BIG HAPPY FAMILY

When Gen and Simon heard that they were expecting not one baby but twins, I wondered how they would cope with two babies, three indoor cats and a large Labrador in a fairly small space. Also, how the cats and Sam the Labrador would cope with two tiny, noisy and very demanding babies. A couple of months before the babies were due, the bedroom was declared a cat free zone (more or less!). The cats were persuaded that their comfortable beds in the utility room was the best place to be. Cats are such creatures of habit that they soon spent much of the day in there as well – the boiler was a definite attraction. Sam remained in his basket under the radiator in the living room.

The babies arrived five weeks prematurely, spending a number of days in intensive care before weighing enough to be allowed home... they were so tiny and fragile looking. While in hospital Simon brought one of the baby blankets home so that the animals could become familiar with the new scent. Zackery came home before Sophie and while Simon made a fuss of the animals, I carried Zackery in. He was formally introduced to Sam and then each of the cats – their reactions were interesting. Albertine, a very old lady, soon lost interest, Phoenix was fascinated, Jack was interested but more interested in appropriating Sam's basket while no-one was looking, and Sam, from that moment, considered himself guardian in chief of the twins.

Twins are hard work and between feeds, nappies, sleep deprivation, sterilising bottles and all the rest that goes with tiny babies, the animals didn't get much one-to-one attention but their routine didn't change, they were still part of the family and whenever there was a space on the couch, one of the cats was there getting a bit of TLC. Wherever the twins were, there you could find Sam lying guard, he became really upset when they cried.

The twins grew and as they took notice of the world around them, their eyes lit up whenever a cat came near them. Sam's soft ears

were a delight to their little hands as they became more tactile and he was very patient. As soon as Sophie could crawl she made Sam's basket her special den, Zackery found Phoenix a comfortable pillow.

Obviously there are health and safety issues – never leave babies or children with animals unsupervised. Once the crawling stage is reached, make sure the litter tray is off limits. A covered litter tray is a good option. Cats really aren't walking bacteria bombs, a survey showed that the kitchen chopping board hosted more bacteria than the cat's paws! Make sure your cat or dog is flea, tick and worm free, hopefully you would do that baby or no baby! If you have carpets you will have to do a bit more hoovering to get rid of hair, especially during the moulting season. It really isn't necessary to make drastic changes to the cat's lifestyle, a few minor adjustments are all that is necessary.

The twins will be two in September and the feline, canine and human family are all doing well. Cats' Aid has been blessed with a number of infant prospective members, Zackery and Sophie, then Freya and Lauren O'Connell, now twelve weeks old, went home to a five cat household, and more recently Baby Joshua Hartung was welcomed by two cats and a dog. New babies and animals are not mutually exclusive; all the above parents agree that companion animals enrich the lives of their families and more so as the babies get older and explore their horizons. We wish all these babies long and satisfying lives. **MBO'C (proud grandmother of the twins!)**

(Editor's comment: I look forward to welcoming all the infant prospective members and wish the babies and parents well. If you would like a copy of our leaflet 'You're expecting a baby – congratulations: but you don't have to part with your faithful feline companion' contact us at 01-6683529 or email your details to us at catsaid@gmail.com **MB)**

A 'First' for Cats' Aid



A few weeks ago Cats' Aid was approached by Viktoria Soos of Cicmic TV, a Hungarian on-line TV channel for cat lovers. It is intended that this channel will represent feline welfare

throughout Europe. Viktoria had discovered Cats' Aid's website and felt that we would be a good Rescue Group to represent Irish feline issues. She wanted to get a picture of the cat in Irish mythology and literature and how the cat fares in Ireland today.

Viktoria suggested that a few of our Core Group would meet her to be interviewed on camera and she sent me a list of questions which would form the basis of this interview. She also said that she would like to film some of our cats and I suggested that we might ask one of the vets who work with us to do an interview as well. Eileen agreed to provide the location for the filming and Ann agreed to be interviewed with me.

Viktoria and her partner, Balazs Benkovics, arrived in Belfast where they interviewed 7th Heaven Animal Trust, then they came to Dublin to meet us. (After speaking to us Viktoria said that the problems faced by 7th Heaven are very similar to ours.) During our drive to our filming location we discussed feline welfare and the differences between Irish and Hungarian society and the differing

SUPREME CAT SHOW

On Sunday 27 April the crème de la crème of the Irish feline world descended on the RDS in Dublin to compete in the Supreme Cat Show. Cats' Aid was there too, representing the waifs and strays that don't share the pampered and privileged lifestyles of the pedigree aristocats.

Many visitors stopped at our table to pick up our leaflets and to ask us about our work. There was much good-will for what we do and we hope that this will translate into practical help for us and for the cats. Our merchandise sold well and people were also generous with their donations so we made a worthwhile profit on the day. Our new picture board (with thanks to Neal) attracted a lot of attention and provided an opportunity to tell people about our work.

Missing Mail

It has come to our attention that mail, in the Dublin 4 area, is going astray. As you know our postal address is in Dublin. 4. If you have sent us any correspondence over the last two months and have not, as yet, received an acknowledgement we would appreciate it if you could let us know. Please telephone the help line (01-6683529) and leave a message or email us at catsaid@gmail.com

We are particularly concerned if money has been sent through the post and would like to ask that you lodge donations directly to our

attitudes towards cats.

Eileen's cats were co-operative and seemed to understand that this was a chance for fame – no doubt we will hear from their agents shortly about repeat fees, etc! In fact one pregnant cat obligingly gave birth a few days beforehand and she and her tiny kittens were filmed (both mother and babies are doing well).

Then Ann and I faced the camera and took part in a very wide-ranging interview. This covered how Cats' Aid came into being, the problems of our daily rescue work, the lack of Government support for feline welfare in Ireland, the attitude of the public towards cats and towards our work, and our hopes for the future. Yeti, Eileen's beautiful long-haired cat, took part in the interview too, walking across the table at one point!

The following morning we visited our vet, Richard, for an interview in his Pet Hospital. He spoke about feline health issues, treating feline diseases and about neutering and spaying. We are very grateful to Richard for giving us his time.

Viktoria and Balazs returned to Hungary with both written and recorded material which they plan to collate with similar material from other countries for Cicmic TV. Eventually we hope to have a link to this on our own website. Cats' Aid is delighted to be part of this initiative; we hope it will raise awareness of feline welfare and help stray cats throughout Europe.

Sincere thanks to Eileen for providing the appropriate venue for our filming, to Ann for going before the camera and to the cats that made their own contribution to the afternoon. CP



We had some time to admire the cats being shown – plush Persians, muscular Maine Coons, leopard-like Bengals and the non-pedigrees. All absolutely stunning cats, and don't some of them know it! All too soon the final judging took place and it was time for the exhibitors to pack their

cats and for us to pack our suitcase.

Thanks to Eileen, Muriel and Margaret who helped on the day and to Lesly and Lorraine for the photocopying. CP

bank account should you wish to do so. Our account is at The Bank of Ireland, Montrose Branch, sort code: 90 13 51, A/c No: 42802722 – in the name of Cats' Aid. *And always make sure to let us know so that we can acknowledge.*

As always we are extremely grateful to you for your continued support for the work we do in caring for the cats who come into our care. EP

The Lady Alice!

Alice is a very dainty, very feminine little cat and she came into my life from Cats' Aid in a rather unexpected way! I'd lived with another Cats' Aid cat called Jason for nearly sixteen years and when I finally had to part with him I was devastated. At first I thought I would never have a cat again, because no cat could ever replace my beloved Jason! Then I thought – maybe in about three months or so I'll think about it..... perhaps a seven year old male cat?

A few days later I went into the Cats' Aid website – just to see what might be available – and there she was: Alice, female, one and a half years old – exactly what I didn't want but it

was love at first sight! The following morning I was on the phone to my friend in Cats' Aid and, as they say, the rest is history.....

Three weeks later Alice arrived and, to my amazement and delight, settled in straight away. She is gentle and good-natured and is unbelievably friendly towards all my visitors. Alice is also a bundle of energy. I had forgotten what it was like to have a young cat around the house. She's into everything!! I have one of those coal-effect electric fires in the living room and Alice is convinced that there is another cat in there behind the glass....

Jason will always have a special place in my heart; but Alice is a joy to live with and I hope we will have many happy years together. **BG**

(Editor's comment: I knew Jason from the time he was adopted by Barbara through Cats' Aid and I was deeply saddened when I heard he had gone to join our other beloved pets at Rainbow Bridge. But it is wonderful to see another cat settled in a loving home – this is the sort of story which makes our work worthwhile. **MB)**



Lost Cat

Tux, a stray cat found in our local park, has been with us for over four years. During that time, she still restricted her climbing to the height of a bed, she was now an only cat, and her elderly canine companion had been succeeded by two rambunctious pups (Gordon Setters) whose main joy in life was to ambush her. She never hissed or scratched, so a rescue operation had to be done frequently. By early evening, however, the pups were fast asleep, and Tux settled comfortably on my lap to watch some show on TV. When the weather was fine she loved to sit out with us in the seclusion of the front garden while we had afternoon tea. She watched in amazement as a heron flew over, twig in mouth, to its nest high in the trees. She sniffed the rhododendrons and was fascinated by the hum of the bees.

On that Monday we followed our usual routine. She explored outside, appearing frequently to check we were still there. When it was time to go in, we called her but there was no response. I walked around the garden, checking her usual hiding places, but she was not there. Immediately, I visited my neighbours to check if she had wandered over (she is really an indoor cat so they had never seen her) but no luck. At this stage the immediate reaction was disbelief – she could not possibly have disappeared! Touring the neighbourhood by car produced no results. One complication was that new neighbours at the end of the road had a cat identical to Tux (wearing an obvious red collar) who explored the neighbourhood. So I notified them immediately about the missing Tux. By bedtime, despite searching and calling, she had not come home. The next reaction was worry – knowing her limitations, was she lost? Had she been attacked? Was she hurt somewhere? Had she got shut in?

Tuesday morning saw no Tux, so it was time for an action plan. By computer I was able to quickly mass-produce 'LOST CAT' notices of various sizes. I put a large one in my front garden – the heading

could easily be seen by passing cars, and walkers could read the full details as they strolled by. We have communal mail delivery boxes (one compartment per household) and these are used as notice boards so I stuck notices on all such boxes in the area. A large poster went up in the park where she was originally found, and all neighbours and people I met, while walking my dogs, were told about the missing cat. I heard every story about the amazing return of other cats and I inwardly ground my teeth while smiling when I would be told: 'Oh, I'm sure she'll turn up!' Fluffy, my beautiful elegant white cat, disappeared over 20 years ago and never came home. A comment such as 'I'll keep my eyes peeled and get the children to tell their friends at school' was much more appreciated. Every time the phone rang, I rushed to answer it – to find it was some salesperson or a kind neighbour enquiring if I had any news about the cat. The chimney sweep came and was most excited when he saw my 'LOST CAT' notice: he had just passed such a cat down the road – with a red collar. Another neighbour had seen 'my cat', again wearing a red collar.

By Wednesday morning I had resigned myself to an unsuccessful search result. Blame set in at that stage: why did I let her out? Why did I not supervise her more carefully? Why did we sit out that particular afternoon – it was not even very sunny. If we had stayed indoors, she would not be lost. Meanwhile, a dog walker from a nearby townhouse complex reported seeing a strange cat there (the strata rules allow only indoor cats in the complex), so I put a large poster at their entrance. An advertisement was phoned in to the bi-weekly local paper to appear on Friday, and the plan was to arrange an ad in the daily paper starting that weekend. The pound was notified and visited. Checking out my mailbox notices, I was pleased to find that only one had been vandalised. Meanwhile, cat food and water dishes were put away, and it was strange to be without my little house companion. Even the dogs sniffed around the house, looking for her.

Early morning on Thursday, I was opening some windows and idly glanced outside. My shriek to my husband must have awoken the whole neighbourhood: 'Come quickly and help me – Tux is at the front door!' She was safe and healthy and could not come inside fast enough. We have no idea where she was, and as she ate only a small amount immediately, she was not starving.. She now wears a lightweight elastic snap collar with her name and phone number, and she will be outside only on the deck (with us) where there is a suitable gate and her inability to climb will keep her safe.

The morning was spent removing notices and phoning neighbours with my good news. Everyone was so glad and later, when I was

walking the dogs, I was amused when a stranger spoke to me, telling me how glad she was to hear that my cat had returned! NF

(Editor's comment: Tux, who lives with the editor's sister and brother-in-law on Vancouver Island, Canada, was first written up in the Spring 2004 issue of the Cats' Aid Newsletter. Her Irish family was most relieved at the happy ending. If you would like a copy of our leaflet on 'What To Do If Your Cat Goes Missing' contact us at 01-6683529 or email your details to us at catsaid@gmail.com MB)

Clifford and Smudge

I adopted 'Clifford', a little ginger/cream long-haired cat, just under a year ago and thought Cats' Aid would like to know how he is getting on and how he settled in. Months after our much-loved cat 'Pip' had to be put to sleep, we decided Smudge, our other cat, needed a friend. We looked at various pet-adoption sites over the next few weeks and even went to visit some cat shelters. When looking through the Cats' Aid website one evening, we saw 'Fluffy' and contacted Cats' Aid within seconds, but sadly he was no longer available. Cats' Aid promised to call the minute another long-haired cat came into their loving care and needed a good home. A week passed, and on a sunny Saturday morning, we received a call that a male, long-haired ginger cat was available for adoption. Little under an hour later, we visited Rathcoole, where many of the cats were kept and we fell in love with Clifford. He was partly shaved on one side as he had the occasional matt in his long hair and he was known for the occasional nip, but knowing this did little to turn us off. Smudge and Clifford were not the best of friends at first, as expected, and we began to worry whether they would ever accept each other. After the odd pounce and nip, Clifford stopped fearing us and started purring. Months on, Clifford and Smudge get on great, nestling beside each other for a rest and even meowing when



the other is outside and wants to come in. I hope this encourages more people to adopt from Cats' Aid or even help fundraising by running the

women's mini-marathon for them. AH

(Editor's comment: Aislinn kindly raised funds for Cats' Aid at the beginning of June by participating in the Women's Mini-Marathon. Thank you, Aislinn, and we are so glad to know that Clifford and Smudge are 'good buddies'. MB)

Cats' Aid Core Group

Maeve Bradley
Maureen Bristow O'Connor
Muriel Davidson
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Eileen Penston
Cyrileen Power
Eileen Warren
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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