

blueprint

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THREAT OF PET
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welcome



Welcome to the Autumn 2012 edition of *Blueprint*. It's been kittens and puppies galore at Blue Cross and you'll get the opportunity to see heart-melting photos of some of them throughout these pages. While they're absolutely adorable and I simply can't resist giving them a cuddle, sadly it highlights a growing problem in the UK of pets being treated as disposable items. Increasingly they're being over-bred, traded as commodities on the internet or simply dumped in the street.

At Blue Cross our vision is that every pet will enjoy a healthy life in a happy home,

and we're working hard to put a stop to this worrying trend. From encouraging neutering to promoting responsible pet ownership to thousands of people, we won't rest until all pets get the place in society that they deserve. You can read about this problem and what we're doing to tackle it on page 14.

Thanks to your amazing support we've found loving homes for more than 4,000 cats, dogs, horses, rabbits and other small pets so

far this year. One of them was Dolly, a puppy who was found in a terrible state by the side of the road after being caught in a snare trap. You can see just how amazing she looks now she's happy, healthy and enjoying life in a wonderful home – read her story on page 13.

Happy reading,

Natasha

Natasha Kleanthous **Editor**

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Editor Natasha Kleanthous
Production Andrea Fraser and Karen Hedges
Photo library Tracey Hawkins
Communications development manager Debbie Curtis
Design Think
Designer Nikki Ackerman

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Our vision: every pet will enjoy a healthy life in a happy home.
Our mission: we find happy homes for abandoned or unwanted pets, and we keep pets healthy by promoting welfare and providing treatment.

Blue Cross is a charity registered in England and Wales (224392) and in Scotland (SC040154).

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Blue Cross feeds Hill's™ Science Plan™, generously donated by Hill's Pet Nutrition, to ensure optimum nutrition for the dogs and cats in our care.

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your news update

Rehoming successes and fantastic fundraising activity from our centres, teams and supporters across the UK and abroad

Hatty goes global

Unwanted kitten Hatty has been around the world and back thanks to our imaginative and intrepid supporters.

We've been sent photographs of Hatty (well, a paper cut-out version of her) from across the UK and even as far afield as New Zealand, Hawaii, Bratislava, Croatia, Turkey and Norway.

It was all part of a campaign to alert people to the plight of unwanted pets such as Hatty and her siblings, who were born by emergency caesarean. Their mum was too ill to care for them and, as there was no one to hand-rear the kittens, they were facing being put to sleep until we saved them. We're delighted to report that Hatty grew into a healthy, happy kitten and has now been rehomed.

We received so many amazing photographs and it was very difficult to choose the best, but here are some of our favourites. You can see more photos from Hatty's adventures on our website at www.bluecross.org.uk/hatty. Thanks to everyone who took part and who generously donated to the appeal.



Luckily, the paper version of Hatty is exempt from quarantine laws



Blue Cross Tea Party raises £25k

The 2012 Blue Cross Tea Party has raised more than £25,000 for sick, injured and homeless pets, with money still coming in.

Thanks to everyone who took part this year – if you didn't get the chance, it's not too late! You can hold a tea party for Blue Cross any time or, if you'd prefer, you can join us for the 2013 event on Friday 10 May.

Find out more by visiting www.bluecrossteaparty.org.uk, calling 0300 790 9903 or emailing teaparty@bluecross.org.uk



Selma's fresh start

Rat Selma and her pal Patty are enjoying their new life after we found them a loving home.

The pair came to our Burford rehoming centre because their owner had moved and wasn't allowed to keep them in his new flat. Both of these whiskery rodents are really friendly and inquisitive, so they're enjoying exploring their new turf.



An absolutely fabulous new home for rats Patty and Selma

FREE WILLS MONTH

Blue Cross is one of the charities supporting Free Wills Month, which gives people aged 55 and over the chance to have their Will written for no charge.

Throughout October you can contact any participating solicitor and they will write you a simple Will at no cost. More complex ones, involving business interests or trusts, for example, will be written at a discounted price.

Writing a Will is the most important way of making sure your wishes will be honoured, and there's no obligation to leave a gift to any of the charities involved. To find out more and see which solicitors are taking part, visit www.freewillsmoonth.org.uk or call 0845 020 4309. Please note, the website and phone number don't go live until 1 October 2012.

Jubilee celebrations at Blue Cross

It wasn't just the Queen who had a jubilee celebration this year. Our Blue Cross rehoming centre in Thirsk marked 25 years of helping pets in need.

The centre moved to its current site in North Yorkshire in May 1987 and admitted its first pets soon after. Since then, it's cared for more than 13,500 homeless and unwanted cats and dogs.

We celebrated the silver jubilee with a fundraising extravaganza, attended by former Blue Cross staff, people who've rehomed a pet from us, supporters and special guests. Deputy centre manager Caroline Thompson says: "This is such a milestone in our history and we are so very grateful to the local community, who continue to support the work we do for so many pets needing our help."



Special Emmett

When pony Emmett arrived at the Blue Cross Burford rehoming centre he was very ill and malnourished. Emmett had strangles and a lice problem, so he was given urgent veterinary care and put on a detailed diet programme.

Because he was so ill, he was fed little and often with Hi-Fi Senior and Alfa-Beet, which are readily digestible and so easier for his body to cope with. Once his appetite improved, the ration was increased to three feeds a day and the Hi-Fi Senior was replaced with Alfa-A Oil, alongside Alfa-Beet, to provide him with more calories. A specialist youngstock mix was fed to provide all the essential nutrients he needed for growth and development.

Jenna Martyn, yard and vet supervisor, says: "I was shocked by Emmett's very low body condition score of one when he arrived. He had a very thick, matted coat, which made his appearance deceiving to the eye. But just look at his progress – he's got a great shine to his coat and looks really well considering his awful start. Abi Leach, his care groom, has done a fantastic job in looking after him, gaining his trust and working on his training."

Emmett is now ready to be rehomed and, while he waits for that special person to continue his rehabilitation, he's enjoying time out in the field with his friends.

For further information or friendly feeding advice for your horse or pony, please contact the Dengie Feedline on 0845 345 5115 or visit www.dengie.com

Fresh start for Munch and Frie

Two ponies found in a tiny back garden full of rubbish and scrap metal have happy futures to look forward to after finding a new home.

Gorgeous Shetland ponies Monster Munch and French Frie were belly-high in mud, underweight and infested with lice when they were rescued.

But since coming to our Burford rehoming centre and getting the care they so desperately needed they have thrived and have now left Blue Cross to live in their loving new home.



ABOVE: Monster Munch and French Frie back at their well-coiffed best

Blueprint winners

Congratulations to the winners of our Spring 2012 *Blueprint* competition to win one of three limited edition Rascal bears. The winners are:

- 1) Shelagh Jackson, Cannock
- 2) Mike Atkins, Sussex
- 3) HJ Llewellyn, Worcestershire



A MARATHON EFFORT

A team of 28 brave animal lovers battled the exhausting 26.2 miles of the Virgin London Marathon to help sick and unwanted pets at Blue Cross.

Not only did our dedicated runners have an incredible experience that they'll never forget, they also raised more than £40,000 for the pets in our care.

If you're looking for a challenge, we've got guaranteed places left for the 2013 London Marathon, taking place on 21 April. Or, if you've already got a place, you can choose to run for Blue Cross and we'll support you every step of the way. For more information and to apply, visit www.bluecross.org.uk/londonmarathon



HORSE SURVEY SUCCESS

Important information about more than 5,000 horses was gathered in the latest round of our groundbreaking National Equine Health Survey (NEHS).

The survey, carried out in May, looks at the general health of horses, ponies, donkeys and mules in the UK, and around 1,000 people took part. It aims to spot trends so we can see – and try to prevent – the main problems that affect the nation's horses.

Congratulations to the winners of our past two survey competitions,

Laura Flynn from Hertfordshire and Anne-Marie Richards from Surrey. Both will be cover stars of NEHS and will appear on posters and leaflets to promote the survey.

NEHS is supported by Pfizer Animal Health, and Ariat kindly donated five pairs of boots to the lucky runners-up of our competition.

Find out more about NEHS and its results at www.bluecross.org.uk/nehs

ABOVE LEFT:

Laura Flynn with her horse, Uzi

ABOVE: Anne-Marie Richards with Kalif

"Around 1,000 people took part in the survey"

COULD YOU HELP OUR CHARITY SHOPS?

Blue Cross charity shops raise vital money for sick and unwanted pets, and they desperately need your help.

We now have 28 charity shops across the UK and they all need good quality stock to sell. So if you have any clothes, household goods, toys or books you no longer want, please consider donating them to a Blue Cross shop. You can either drop them in at your nearest shop or contact your local veterinary practice to see if they're involved in the National Veterinary Services (NVS) clothing collection scheme. If so, you can drop your clothes off at the practice and they'll be picked up by an NVS driver and brought to Blue Cross.

We also need volunteers to help out on the shop floor, doing things such as sorting and displaying stock, dressing the window and operating the till.

If you'd like to donate stock or volunteer, you can find the details of your nearest shop at www.bluecross.org.uk/shops or by calling 0300 777 1897.

Foster scheme for horses

We're delighted that our foster scheme has now extended to horses and ponies for the first time.

Connor and Harry are the first horses to be looked after by one of our respite foster carers, Chrissy Bacon, after the scheme was a great success with other types of pets. They are both non-ridden companions, and as it can often take longer to find homes for these types of horses, while they were at our centre we had less space to take in other animals that desperately needed our help, for example abandoned or mistreated horses.

Now the pair are being looked after by Chrissy, who'll care for them until we can find them longer-term homes. Chrissy says: "They're lovely horses and they've settled in really well. By looking after Connor and Harry it gives the centre a chance to take more horses that are waiting to come in, so I think it's a great scheme. I'm happy to have them for as long as it takes."

If you'd like to be a foster carer for Blue Cross, please visit www.bluecross.org.uk/volunteering for more information or call us on 0300 777 1897.

Raffle and Spot the Ball winners

Congratulations to all the winners of our Paw Draw raffles and Spot the Ball competition so far this year. The top winners were:

New Year raffle:

- 1) C Wilkins, Gwent - £7,500 cash or a Nissan Pixo car
- 2) L Scales, Hertfordshire - £1,000
- 3) JG Ferguson, Kent - £500
- 4) M Wright, Hampshire - £500 super seller prize

Spring raffle:

- 1) Mr and Mrs D Cameron of Yorkshire - £10,000 or a Nissan Micra car
- 2) J Ward, Hampshire - £1,000
- 3) M White, Middlesex - £500
- 4) N Bugg, Suffolk - £500 super seller prize

Spot the Ball competition winner:

- L Beard, Worcestershire - £5,000

For the full results of our raffles, prize draws and Spot the Ball competition, visit www.bluecross.org.uk/raffle or send a stamped, addressed envelope to Paw Draw raffle, Blue Cross, 7 Hugh Street, London SW1V 1QG.

DEGUS FOUND IN THE BATH

Two degus abandoned in a bathtub have been rescued and brought to Blue Cross.

Poor Chilli and Nacho were found in a pet carrier in the tub after a house eviction. Luckily they were discovered in time and brought to the Blue Cross rehoming centre in Burford.

A veterinary check revealed that the pair were in good health, but sadly Nacho was blind – not that he lets it stand in his way. Despite their traumatic experience, both degus are friendly and sociable, and have now been rehomed.



PANTO POWER

Thanks to the staff at Thames Water, who put on a pantomime of *Beauty and the Beast* in Swindon in aid of Blue Cross. They raised an amazing £2,500.

LEFT: Bath time is finally over for this degu

A new reason to leave a gift to Blue Cross

Changes to inheritance tax laws mean there's now another great reason to leave a gift to Blue Cross in your Will.

From April 2012, anyone leaving 10 per cent or more of their taxable estate to charity will qualify for a reduced inheritance tax rate: down from 40 per cent to 36 per cent.

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, half our annual income comes from Wills, so it's important

for us that people continue to feel inspired to leave legacies that will help us be there for sick, injured and homeless pets.

We hope that news of the tax relief will encourage people to write Wills that plan for the future of those they care about, including charitable causes close to their hearts. If you'd like to know how any tax reliefs may apply to your estate, and make sure your Will

reflects your wishes, we recommend that you speak to your solicitor.

For information about leaving a legacy to Blue Cross, visit www.bluecross.org.uk/legacy or call us on 0300 777 1757. For information about the Legacy10 Campaign, visit www.legacy10.com or call 020 7251 3801.





Victoria and Albert's journey of love

When puppies Victoria and Albert were born by emergency caesarean their future looked bleak. Could Blue Cross help them to survive against the odds?

Weighing just a few ounces, rejected by their mum and left fighting for their lives, Victoria and Albert had one of the worst starts to life possible. Their siblings had been too weak to survive and the prognosis for the two remaining puppies wasn't good.

Victoria and Albert started life at our Victoria animal hospital after their poorly mum arrived needing an emergency caesarean. From a litter of seven, only two puppies made it past the first few days.

The pups were deteriorating and they needed round-the-clock care, so their owner decided to give them to Blue Cross

so they could have the best chance of a future. For the first, critical weeks of their lives we nursed them day and night, and gradually they grew stronger. The worst was over for the puppies, but their Blue Cross journey was just beginning.

Once they were well enough to leave hospital the pups, now known as Victoria and Albert, needed somewhere to stay where they could get love, care and attention until they were old enough to be rehomed.

They were collected by one of our regional fostering managers, Kellie Brooks, who kept the puppies for ten days

"They were lovely little pups. It was delightful to watch them grow"

until we could find them a longer-term foster home with one of our volunteers. Kellie fed them every two hours and started to wean them on to special food. Soon it was time for our volunteer foster carer Maggie Burton to step in.

Victoria and Albert are the first Blue Cross pets Maggie, from Carterton, Oxfordshire, has taken in. She started fostering because she loves dogs and wanted them in her life but, after losing her own elderly dog in 2010, she didn't want another pet permanently.

At four weeks old Victoria and Albert came to Maggie and her husband's



home. And, despite a few sleepless nights, they were excellent guests. Maggie says: "They were lovely little pups and, although looking after such young animals was hard work, it was delightful to watch them grow. Every day there was something new to remark upon and they seemed to develop so quickly.

"They both had their own little personalities. Victoria was the explorer and Albert was more reserved. But then they seemed to switch and Albert began to grow in confidence."

Our behaviour team was on hand to advise as the puppies grew, and by the time Victoria and Albert were two months old their traumatic past had become a memory and they had blossomed into healthy, inquisitive, cheeky pups. It was time to find them loving new homes.

To avoid the upheaval of bringing the puppies into a kennel, staff at our Burford centre set about finding them new families through our Home Direct scheme. This meant the puppies would have the same assessment as any other Blue Cross pet, but would be rehomed directly from their foster home, freeing space for pets with no other choice, such as stray or abandoned animals.

For Maggie, it meant saying goodbye, but she knew the puppies were going

THEY HAD THEIR OWN LITTLE PERSONALITIES. VICTORIA WAS THE EXPLORER AND ALBERT WAS MORE RESERVED

"Victoria and Albert blossomed into healthy, cheeky pups"

to happy homes. She says: "I spent a lot of time with them and it was sad to see them go, but we know there'll be another pet along soon who needs our help too. That's the thing about fostering."

Victoria, now called Stellar, has already become a celebrity in her new neighbourhood after being rehomed by Julie Collett and her family. Julie can't take Stellar out for a walk without being stopped by people wanting to say hello. But her new big brother, Labrador Timmy, is on hand to step in if she gets too big for her boots.

Julie says: "Stellar loves to cuddle up to Timmy, but she's very playful and if she starts getting too persistent he'll soon put her in her place. She adores him and when we go out for walks she scampers after him trying to keep up. He definitely gives her confidence when we're out."

Julie adds: "Stellar's a real people dog and you can tell she was hand-reared. She's absolutely delightful and she loves sitting in the garden and listening to the birds. Having a puppy is very hard work but she's more than worth it."

Albert's new home is with Jessica Dillon, her partner Peter and their two

children. Now known as Alfie, he's having a great time. Jessica says: "I'd seen Alfie's picture on the Blue Cross website and when we went to Maggie's house to meet him we thought he was absolutely lovely. We were so excited when we took him home and he's settled in brilliantly."

Jessica adds: "We've had a dog before but never a puppy; it's like having a baby! But he's getting on really well and he's a very cute and confident puppy who loves other dogs and really enjoys meeting new people."

COULD YOU FOSTER A BLUE CROSS PET?

Blue Cross needs volunteers to look after needy pets in their own home until they're ready to find permanent families. You could be doing anything from helping to hand-rear puppies to caring for a cat recuperating from an operation or offering a break to a pet who's not coping well in kennels.

For more information please visit www.bluecross.org.uk/volunteering or call us on 0300 777 1897.

Is your rabbit a happy bunny?

Rabbits love to keep busy and can get depressed and frustrated if they don't live in a fun and stimulating environment. Our enrichment tips are here to help

Rabbits are playful and inquisitive pets, but sadly they're often misunderstood. If they're going to enjoy happy, healthy lives they need to be able to display their natural behaviour, and the good news is that there are fun and easy ways you can help them do this.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Rabbits absolutely love to eat and spend 70 per cent of their waking hours feeding. Their diet should consist mostly of good-quality hay, and you can make this more fun by encouraging them to forage for it. Rabbits should be able to stretch, just like they would in the wild, so try putting their hay in hanging baskets that they can reach up to and feed from.

Hang some root vegetables on a string for them to nibble and scatter their food so they have to search for it. You can also buy treat balls from pet shops or hide food in plant pots for them to find. You can give them safe things to chew, such as apple wood or willow, or buy treats to nibble on from a good pet shop. Avoid foods that are high in sugar, as this is bad for their teeth.

PLAYTIME

Rabbits love to investigate and their favourite activities are exploring,



"Rabbits can spend 70 per cent of their waking hours feeding"

tunnelling and digging. Creating hiding places for them is also really important for helping them to feel safe, because they're prey animals so their instinct is to run and hide if they sense danger.

It doesn't need to be expensive at all – everyday items can lead to hours of fun. Give them tubes to run through and cardboard boxes filled with shredded paper or hay that they can hop in and out of or climb on. They also enjoy burrowing, so a digging pit will go down very well, too.

Like children, rabbits can get bored of their toys after a while, so rotate them regularly to keep them interested – but be careful not to change everything all at once, as the sudden shift in their environment could be stressful.

ABOVE: Rabbits love company, and a male-female pair is perfect – as long as they're neutered
LEFT: Prey animals such as rabbits have acute instincts for danger

TWO'S COMPANY

Rabbits are very sociable creatures and in the wild they live together, not alone. Company of their own kind is extremely important, so keep them in pairs or a compatible group. They'll need to be neutered, even if they're in a same-sex group, to avoid fighting. The best combination is a neutered male and a neutered female.

RABBIT AWARENESS WEEK

Blue Cross wants every pet to enjoy a healthy life in a happy home, so we're delighted to support Rabbit Awareness Week, which runs from 15-22 September 2012. Visit www.rabbitawarenessweek.co.uk for more information about this annual event and to pick up some more great tips on rabbit care, from vaccination advice to clicker training your pet.

A street cat named Bob

James Bowen was a recovering heroin addict trying to put his life back together when he met a stray cat who needed a friend as much as he did

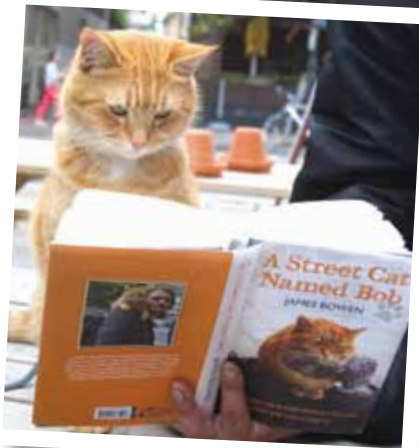
Five years ago James Bowen's world was a mess. He had no direction or purpose in life other than survival – and keeping off heroin.

But all that changed the day a stray, injured ginger tomcat walked into his life and refused to leave. James was living hand-to-mouth in sheltered accommodation and the last thing he needed was a pet, but he couldn't resist helping him. He nursed the cat, whom he called Bob, back to health and sent him on his way, imagining that he'd never see him again.

But Bob had other plans. After several attempts to follow James up the street, on to the bus and, during one hairy moment, across the street, James realised that Bob was here to stay and it was his job to keep him safe. Equally, Bob had decided it was his job to keep James safe too.

The pair became inseparable, and, with each other's help, James and Bob have healed the scars of their past and transformed their lives. The incredible story of their friendship and adventures on the streets of London has been turned into a number-one bestselling book: *A Street Cat Named Bob*.

Their success is extra special for Blue Cross because we've been there for James and Bob over the years. We have a weekly mobile clinic in Islington Green that helps pets whose owners can't afford private fees, and James has enlisted our help in the past to microchip Bob and give him general checkups so he could make sure his beloved cat was in excellent health.



So when they came back to say hello this summer, a published author and his world-famous cat, we were overjoyed to hear how well they were doing. James says: "Our life is completely different to how it was when Bob and I first met. We're stopped up to 40 times a week and asked for our autographs. We've even had to get a pawprint stamp so Bob can sign too.

"We've done several book signings and each one has had 200 people queuing up to meet Bob. He's got 5,000 followers on the social network Twitter

ABOVE: Bob the feline fashionista, with his distinctive neckwear

LEFT: Probably the only editorial consultant to be paid in cat food

and he's also got his own Facebook page. He even gets fan mail."

Most importantly, James has got his life back on track. He's busy working on a sequel, which he can't reveal much about yet, but he has told us it'll be made up of "stories and morals about the things Bob has taught me".

He no longer has to sell copies of the *Big Issue* magazine on the streets to survive, but he still pops down to Covent Garden with Bob a couple of times a week to do some busking and smile for photos, because that's where it all began. But, like all pet-lovers know, animals have their own agenda.

He says: "Bob comes out with me most days, but it's never been about using him to attract customers. He's there because he likes hanging out with me, and if he's not in the mood he stays at home."

"We've had to get a pawprint stamp so Bob can sign books"

A Street Cat Named Bob, by James Bowen, is published by Hodder and Stoughton and is available to buy in bookshops and online.

take me home

Can you offer any of these Blue Cross animals the companionship and attention they deserve?



TIGGER

Thirsk rehoming centre
0300 777 1540

Lovely Tigger is looking for a home and some love and attention. Because she's eight years old, she's being passed by in favour of younger cats, but she's got a lot to give a family.



RUSSELL

Tiverton rehoming centre
0300 777 1560

Russell is a lovely one-year-old crossbreed who had a rough start to life. Despite this, he's an affectionate dog who loves to play and is a quick learner. He's lively, active and eager.



HEATH

Burford rehoming centre
0300 777 1570

Heath is a gorgeous, fun-loving four-year-old looking for an experienced horsey family to help him grow into a riding pony. He was born at Blue Cross after his pregnant mum was rescued.



DILLON

Southampton rehoming centre
0300 777 1530

Dillon is a beautiful Weimaraner cross German shepherd dog who will make a loyal and loving companion. He's a sensitive, clever dog who loves to learn and please.



TOTTIE

Northiam rehoming centre
0300 777 1510

Tottie is an affectionate older cat who just wants to be loved. She likes to curl up on your lap and dribble with pleasure, and would be over the moon with a nice warm home to call her own.



DANNY

Torbay rehoming centre
0300 777 1550

Danny is a fun and friendly five-year-old moggy who loves nothing more than a warm lap and some attention. He enjoys hanging out with older children and misses his home comforts.

OUR ANIMALS ONLINE

To learn about all our pets available for rehoming, visit www.bluecross.org.uk

Love at first sight

Dolly was discovered by the roadside, injured and frightened. Could we give this affectionate puppy a happy ending?

When stray puppy Dolly was discovered whimpering by the side of the road she was in a terrible state. Scared and alone, we think the tiny puppy had been caught in a snare trap, and one of her back legs was damaged beyond repair.

We don't know how long she'd been stranded or how much longer she would have survived on her own, but thankfully she was spotted and rescued by some passing horse-riders. At only a few months old, Dolly had to have an operation to have her shattered leg amputated. While she was recovering from the surgery at our Lewknor rehoming centre the staff were charmed by this little Patterdale terrier crossbreed puppy who had been through so much but who had such a loving, gentle and happy-go-lucky nature. She quickly adapted to life with three legs and soon had no trouble with movement at all – in fact most of the time she was running rings around the dog friends she made at the centre.

Her enthusiasm for life was infectious.

THREE'S A CHARM

Knowing what a fun-loving and affectionate pup she was, we could only hope that her injury wouldn't put off potential new owners and that she'd get the happy home she deserved. We put her profile on our website and kept our fingers firmly crossed that she'd catch someone's eye.

It was around the same time that Sue Spafford was looking on the Blue Cross website. She had lost her beloved old dog three months before and had decided not to get a new pet for a while. But the house was so quiet without him that she couldn't help looking online for rescue pets needing homes.

She says: "I was really looking at the older dogs, but then I saw Dolly's profile and absolutely fell in love with her, so I rang the centre hoping she'd still be available."

Luckily for Sue, from Bicester, Dolly was still looking for a home, and just a couple

of days later she went to the rehoming centre to meet her. Sue was smitten from the start. She says: "She was so tiny, much smaller than I had expected, but she had bags of energy and she was extremely affectionate. The fact that she only had three legs didn't put me off at all – in fact it endeared her to me even more."

DOLLY'S HOUSE

After spending some time getting to know each other, Sue took Dolly home, and it didn't take long for her to settle in. Sue says: "She rules the roost now and the house never feels empty. We've started going to puppy classes and she's the smallest one there. Everyone absolutely loves her."

THAT SHE ONLY HAD THREE LEGS DIDN'T PUT ME OFF AT ALL – IT ENDEARED HER TO ME EVEN MORE

Sue adds: "Whenever people see me they say I seem so much happier. That's because I have Dolly in my life now."

We couldn't give pets like Dolly a happy ending if it wasn't for generous supporters like you helping to fund our work. If you've given a Blue Cross pet a happy home, we'd love to hear from you. Email us at editor@bluecross.co.uk



ABOVE: Safely and cheerfully ensconced in her new home, even a missing leg hasn't put Dolly off her infectious love of life

Are pets the latest disposable commodity?

If you think Britain loves pets, think again. This year Blue Cross has taken in more stray and abandoned animals than ever before, and that's only part of this growing crisis, where there are simply too many pets and not enough homes

Britain is known as a nation of pet lovers, but, sadly, that may no longer be the case. We're hearing more reports of pets being needlessly killed, badly kept and abandoned, and we want to do something about it.

Treating pets as disposable items is becoming a huge problem in the UK and it's something Blue Cross plans to reverse. Last year nearly

127,000 dogs were picked up as strays by local authorities (according to figures from the Dogs Trust) – an 11-year high – and thousands were killed because no home could be found for them. There are more than two million stray cats in the UK, and around 35,000 rabbits end up in rescue and rehoming centres every year.

There's also been a rise in the number of horses being cared for by charities such as Blue Cross in the past 12 months, as well as shocking reports of foals being killed and dumped.

With your support, we'll put a stop to the growing crisis facing our nation's pets and make sure all animals have the happy, healthy lives they deserve.



OVER-BREEDING

The biggest problem is that there are simply too many pets and not enough good homes for them. The number of irresponsible breeders is growing and supply is far outweighing demand, which means that unwanted pets are being thrown away or left to fend for themselves.

We firmly believe that neutering is the key to this problem. If we can only prevent unwanted litters being born, we can save them from a life that's pitifully short, dangerous and miserable.

ON THE STREETS

Our centres took in 40 per cent more stray and abandoned pets in the first half of this year compared to the same period in 2010.

Some of the more disturbing examples included kittens dumped in a tree in a plastic bag, a badly injured guinea pig abandoned in a box and a dog discovered zipped up in a suitcase on the streets of London.

We gave them a warm place to sleep and a proper meal, made sure they had the veterinary treatment they needed and cared for them until we could find them loving homes. But we know that thousands of Britain's stray pets weren't so lucky and haven't survived.

ONLINE TRADE

Our research has shown there can be up to 50,000 pets for sale on just one popular website at any one time, and the overwhelming majority of these adverts are for puppies and kittens because of over-breeding.

At the same time, our hospitals and rehoming centres are seeing a growing problem with pets being bought from unregulated websites that need urgent veterinary treatment or even have to be put to sleep because of health or behavioural issues. Others are abandoned when they don't live up to the buyer's expectations because they didn't know what they were taking on or the information in the advert wasn't accurate.

Blue Cross director of external affairs Steve Goody says: "We've found some serious welfare problems with pets being sold online, including the sale of underage puppies and kittens, puppy farms masquerading as private sellers and illegal 'status dogs' being sold under the guise of legal breeds.



There are two million stray cats in the UK; thanks to your support, this is no longer one of them

THE NUMBER OF IRRESPONSIBLE BREEDERS IS GROWING, AND UNWANTED PETS ARE BEING THROWN AWAY

"There seems to be more protection for people buying a car online than a living creature, and irresponsible breeders are using the unregulated forum of the internet to make a quick buck at the expense of animals' lives."

FASHION ACCESSORIES

Last year our rehoming centres were forced to turn away nine out of ten Staffordshire bull terriers due to the rising number of "status dogs" being over-bred and abandoned.

Our London hospitals treat more staffies than any other breed of dog and last year we treated more than 4,000.

We also saw a 270 per cent increase in the number of Chihuahuas at our centres. Like other breeds of dogs in the past, they had their five minutes of fame as young celebrities turned them into a fashion accessory for a while, but, after a panic to buy one, some owners soon realised they were harder work than they thought and lost interest.

TIME TO ACT

Blue Cross pledges to change the lives of Britain's pets for the better and give them the future they deserve.

With your support, we'll tackle these issues by encouraging people to neuter their pets, educating owners on responsible ownership and promoting good pet welfare.

We will urge people to rehome a rescue pet rather than buying one online or privately, which can encourage irresponsible breeders to increase their supply. We'll promote the benefits of taking on an animal from a charity such as Blue Cross, where the pet will have received a full health MOT and will be individually matched to suit their new owner's lifestyle.

We're working with websites where pets are commonly advertised to help them improve the regulation of online ads, for example by insisting that people include detailed information and photographs of pets and by displaying warnings that ads for banned breeds will be reported to the police.

"There's more protection for people buying a car than a living creature"

"We have no idea how a pet so young could end up all alone as a stray"



This is Bobby. Somebody, somehow, left him on the street

BLUE CROSS PLEDGES TO CHANGE THE LIVES OF BRITAIN'S PETS FOR THE BETTER

We don't receive any government funding, so our work is only possible thanks to you, and we hugely appreciate your support. If you'd like to do more to help us tackle the problem of disposable pets, you can make a donation at the back of your copy of *Blueprint* magazine.

GIVING PETS A BETTER LIFE

These pets all deserve happy, healthy lives, but instead they were left alone in the world, forced to survive on their own.

BEATRIX AND HER KITTENS

Cat Beatrix was discovered abandoned in a skip with her five young kittens at a bus yard in Maidstone. Despite the terrible conditions she was living in, she had worked hard to nurse the kittens and keep them as healthy as she could.

Carolyn Pierce, an animal behaviour adviser at our Northiam rehoming centre, says: "We have no idea how they ended up where they did or how long they'd been there, but thank goodness they were found by the skip removal men and brought to Blue Cross.

"The kittens were very nervous and they clearly hadn't had much handling in their short lives, but Beatrix had looked after them very well."

We took the family in, gave them a warm place to sleep, provided a tasty meal for Beatrix and made sure the kittens got all the care and attention that they needed to help them grow into strong and healthy cats.

Thanks to their mum, and the care they got at Blue Cross, all five kittens survived and went on to find loving homes.



ABOVE: Beatrix's brood – no longer living in a skip

RIGHT: Hugo is still haunted by past trauma, but he's now enjoying life as a companion horse

BOBBY

Puppy Bobby was only a few weeks old when he was found on the streets of Ireland. We have no idea how a sweet, friendly pet so young could end up all alone as a stray, with no one to look after him.

Luckily he was rescued by a local organisation and later transferred to our Lewknor rehoming centre in Oxfordshire, where we gave him the vaccinations, worming and flea treatments every young pup needs. Bobby was very cheeky and affectionate and, unsurprisingly, he had a happy home waiting for him as soon as he was ready to leave the centre.

HUGO

Pony Hugo was found tied to a gatepost with no food or water. We don't know how long he'd been there, but, after his horrific ordeal, he was wary of people and nervous about being handled.

When Hugo arrived at our Burford rehoming centre we put him on a tailor-made training programme and gradually he got used to being around people.

We had hoped he'd develop into a riding pony but, perhaps due to something that happened in his past, he became very unsettled when we assessed him.

We do everything we can to give the animals in our care the best chance of having a happy future and we look at each of their needs individually so we can find them the right home.

We decided that the best life for Hugo would be as a non-ridden companion for another horse. Hugo has now been rehomed and is enjoying life as a field-mate for two other horses.



Staffie stigma

Flinty's affection for everyone and everything made him a potentially great family pet, but no one wanted him. Why? He's a Staffordshire bull terrier type...

When we see a young dog who's friendly, adores cuddles and gets on well with other dogs, it's not usually long before they're leaving kennels for a new home.

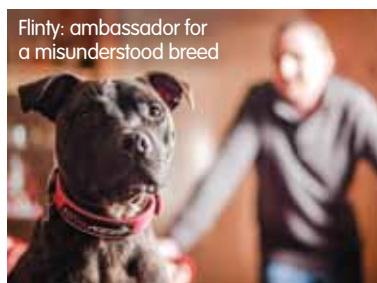
But when the dog's a Staffordshire bull terrier, or "staffie", as they're commonly known, the story's very different. Their personalities are irrelevant – it's looks that matter, and staffies and their crossbreeds have a reputation as "status dogs" that it's proving hard to get rid of, as poor Flinty discovered.

This means that staffies often take us much longer to rehome, and over-breeding makes the problem even worse, and there are rising numbers of unwanted staffies and simply not enough homes for them.

BULL MARKET

One-year-old Flinty was a stray who was found in a field and brought to the Blue Cross centre in Lewknor to find a new home. He made friends with everyone, both people and dogs, which should have made him very easy to rehome. But, as his dog friends left the centre one by one to start their new lives, Flinty was left behind.

Animal welfare assistant Jess Hollis says: "As soon as he arrived we could tell that Flinty was an ambassador for his breed, but the stereotype attached to staffie types was holding him back from finding his dream home. Staffies



Flinty: ambassador for a misunderstood breed



"He made friends with everyone, both people and dogs"

Only dog chews have anything to fear from a well-behaved staffie type

have had some bad press over the years and dogs like Flinty are paying the price."

Six weeks after Flinty arrived, Nigel Jones and Sharon Crossley popped in. They were looking for a pet who would get on well with their other dog, Labrador Elton, and their children Melissa (13) and Kieran (16).

UNFAIR REPUTATION

Nigel, from Warwickshire, says: "We didn't really have a particular breed of dog in mind and when the staff brought Flinty out to meet us he was so friendly and full of life that we fell in love with him. I was surprised that such a lovely dog had been struggling to find a home, but not only is Flinty a staffie type, he's also brindle colour, which we were told is even more unpopular."

Nigel adds: "His breed didn't bother us at all – I know how soft staffies can be because a colleague of mine has got one."

The family took Elton to meet Flinty to make sure they would get on well

RIGHT: Flinty has been a big hit with the Crossley family



and, after a few visits, it was time to take him home.

Nigel says: "Flinty settled in really well and he's very loving. He gets on well with people and dogs, so we can take him everywhere with us.

"It's so sad that staffies have such a bad reputation. I've noticed some people take one look at Flinty and cross the road to get away from him. They'll never know what a lovely, friendly dog he is."

Blue Cross has launched a project called RespectaBULL to encourage young staffie owners to make sure their dogs are happy, healthy and well trained. We hope this will help to improve the reputation of staffies and tackle the issue of "status dogs". You can see our new online resource at: www.bluecross.org.uk/respectabull

ask the panel

Our Blue Cross experts answer your questions on cat diet, dog bereavement, and horse relaxation



FUSSY EATER

Q My cat Percy doesn't like to eat anything other than a certain brand of dry food, with the odd mouse, bird or rabbit. He doesn't like any cooked or tinned food. I just fill his bowl up and give him fresh water. Am I feeding him right?

Marjorie Pearson, Suffolk

A **Caroline says:** Cats are fastidious eaters and their tastes are heavily influenced by the foods they eat as kittens. They learn hunting techniques from their mothers and tend to catch the same prey as adults. They are notoriously finicky about eating a different food.

Modern pet-food standards are high and any brand of "complete" cat food provides adequate nutrition even if it's fed every day, but it's critical that the food is complete, not "complementary". Some cats never tire of eating the same foods daily.

Be careful not to overfeed, as big cats often carry excess weight. A cat with a saggy tummy or lacking a visible "waist" could be overweight and that's a health risk, so you should consult your vet.

If you have to change foods, for example to a low-calorie or special diet for a health condition, persistence and gradual change is the key. It usually takes at least one to two weeks of mixing the two foods together, starting with a tiny amount of the new and gradually increasing it while reducing the old. Don't give up too soon but do be careful; cats have to eat something every day as not eating at all can be damaging.

SAYING GOODBYE

Q My friend has two dogs, a shih tzu and a westie. Unfortunately the westie has been diagnosed with westie lung, for which there is no



cure. The pair are very close and we fear she will pine and eventually die. People have suggested that when the dreadful day comes and my friend has to have the westie put to sleep, she should show the body to the shih tzu so she will understand she is not coming back. What is your advice on this – would it help the remaining pet come to terms with her loss?

Christine Foster, via email

A **Claire says:** I am so sorry to hear of your friend's situation; it must be a very worrying time for her. Losing a pet is a difficult and sad time for all the family and this can include pets that are left behind, especially if they were closely bonded. We cannot know for sure how animals feel in this situation, but when one pet dies, we feel it best to give their companions an opportunity to see and smell the body, as this may aid the grieving process.

To help prepare the shih tzu for life without the westie, I would

ABOVE: "You think I'm going to eat *that*? Is it even organic?"

suggest that your friend puts a few things in place as soon as possible. A good place to start is to take her on a few walks without the westie, so she gets accustomed to doing activities on her own. Individual play and training sessions will also help, which will be good fun for both your friend and the shih tzu.

It's best not to change too many things when one pet dies – maintaining the normal routine is best. It is understandable that we try to console dogs that are left behind (much as we do with our friends and family), but this is not understood by them in the same way, and the change in our behaviour can worry them. If your friend would like to talk to someone, then please encourage her to contact our Pet Bereavement Support Service on 0800 096 6606

HORSE MASSAGE

Q Is massaging good for horses and how should I do it?
Via email

A **Kath says:** Massaging your horse can be a very worthwhile way of spending time interacting and relaxing with them and may help them to recover from injury. For the performance horse, as with any athlete, massage can play a part in a

HAVE A QUESTION?

Do you have a pet or horse question that you would like answered by our experts?

Please write to: **Ask the panel, Blueprint, Blue Cross, 7 Hugh Street, London SW1V 1QG** or email editor@bluecross.org.uk. Due to the volume of mail we receive, we regret we cannot answer every letter. For urgent enquiries, please contact your vet.



horse's fitness and training programme, improving circulation and flexibility and helping to eliminate waste products post-exercise.

It is, however, important that the root cause of any stiffness, soreness or lameness is investigated fully to establish the underlying cause and rule out medical conditions. Make sure that tack is correctly fitted and remember your horse will change shape depending on their fitness levels, age and body condition, and your saddle may need to be adjusted accordingly. Ask your vet to assess any concerns you may have first. Massage practitioners may ask for a letter from your vet, giving permission to treat your horse.

There are several massage techniques to choose from and, if you plan to massage your horse, it would be worth completing one of the accredited courses. If you decide to employ someone to massage your horse, make sure they are qualified and insured, and get references if you can.

ABOVE: Massage can be good for horses, but it's worth training first or consulting a professional

MEET THE PANEL

Claire Stallard

is an animal behaviourist at Blue Cross. She can answer your animal behaviour, training or welfare queries



Caroline Reay is chief veterinary surgeon at the Blue Cross hospital in Merton, London. Ask her advice on any aspect of pet health.



Kath Urwin is manager of our Rolleston rehoming centre. She can help with your horse concerns.



CARING FOR NEUTERED CATS

Hopefully, your cat is one of the nine in every ten in this country that are neutered or sterilised. There are lots of health benefits to neutering, such as protection against unwanted pregnancies and reduced risk of cats wandering, or being involved in road accidents or fights with other cats.

The next step is to ensure that you feed your neutered cat correctly. Controlling calories is critical because some cats tend to gain weight after neutering. This is because of changes in appetite and a tendency to convert excess energy from food into body fat.

Choosing a food formulated specifically for neutered cats takes the guesswork out of feeding. Science Plan™ Sterilised Cat contains L-carnitine at levels clinically proven to reduce fat build-up and keep muscles lean.

Weight gain often predisposes cats to bladder stones, too, so choose pet foods with controlled levels of phosphorous and magnesium to reduce the risk of bladder stone formation and promote a healthy urinary system.

As your cat gets older, it helps to look after the kidneys. These important organs contain filters that ensure useful nutrients stay in the body and potentially harmful waste products are ejected in the urine. With age, feline kidney function can decline, and adjusted levels of minerals help support continued health. Look for special "mature" cat variants of foods for sterilised cats, to address those concerns. You can find out more about feeding your cat at www.hillspet.co.uk.

 **RECOMMENDED BY VETERINARIANS WORLDWIDE**



Two sides to every story

Horse riding and dog walking are both great ways to unwind. But be careful when the two meet, especially if one animal isn't used to the other. Blue Cross has teamed up with the British Horse Society and the Association of Chief Police Officers to look at the situation from both sides

DOGS

Dogs are predatory species and, even though they're mainly kept as pets these days, their instincts are still there. If they've never seen a horse before they could feel fear, curiosity or nervousness and react by chasing.

TEN WAYS TO AVOID A CHASE SITUATION

- Train your dog around horses from an early age so they're not a scary or exciting thing to come across
- Make sure you have your dog under close control and a reliable recall
- If you don't have a sound recall, keep your dog on a lead
- If you see a horse approaching, call your dog back and keep them as still as possible in a visible but safe place
- If you see a rider approaching quickly, make yourself visible so they can slow to a walk before they pass you
- Wear high-visibility equipment so riders can see you and react sooner
- Encourage your dog not to bark and give them food treats when you see a horse so that they mean "a good thing happens"
- Even once the horse has passed, keep your dog under close control
- Don't allow your dog to go into a field of grazing horses
- Stop and speak to the horse-rider – you have more in common than you think!

HORSES

Horses are prey animals so their natural instinct, if they see a dog hurtling towards them, is to get as far away as possible. This has the potential to cause injury.

TEN WAYS TO AVOID A CHASE SITUATION

- Train your horse around dogs so they don't react to their presence
- Keep your horse as calm as possible when passing dogs
- Always slow to a walk to pass dogs and communicate with the dog owner as soon as possible. They may not have seen you – particularly if you're approaching from behind
- Give dogs that appear nervous a wide berth so they don't feel threatened
- Wear high-visibility equipment so dog owners can see you sooner
- If riding in a group, slow to a walk and pass in single file
- Always thank owners who keep their dog under control and allow you to pass safely
- Don't shout or wave your arms around
- If necessary, stop to allow an excited dog to be caught
- Stop and speak to the dog-walker. You have more in common than you think!

Unbreakable bond



We've never seen a bond so strong as the one between cats Tabby and Madame, who even trusted each other to nurse their own kittens

Looking at the pile of fur snoozing happily away it's hard to tell where one kitten begins and another ends.

Among the cat mountain are mum Tabby, her three kittens, her best friend Madame and Madame's litter of four. They snuggle up so closely that it's clear these cats and kittens are one big, happy family. While it's quite well known that some cats will nurse others' litters, this close bond is something that the staff at our Thirsk rehoming centre have never seen before.

Tabby, Madame and their seven kittens were found on a farm after the tenants moved away and left them behind. The landowner didn't want to look after them and was threatening to have them all put to sleep, so we stepped in and took the mums and their litters into our care.

HAPPY FAMILIES

Animal welfare assistant Amy Younger says: "When they arrived we put Tabby and Madame into two different pens with their litters, but Madame became very upset and wouldn't eat anything.

"We didn't know what was wrong but we decided to let her in with Tabby

to see if it would cheer her up, and they just started feeding each other's kittens and all piling into one bed together. We'd never seen anything like it."

We don't know for sure but we think Tabby and Madame may be mum and daughter because they are so close; the friendship between them was so strong that as soon as they were apart they started calling out so they knew where the other was. We made sure they could always get to each other if they wanted and the kittens could spend their time together.

Amy says: "The kittens saw themselves as one big litter of brothers and sisters. They played together, fed together and cuddled up together."

When the kittens were old enough they were weaned and rehomed. But that wasn't the end of babysitting duty for the cats. When the centre took in some orphaned kittens who desperately needed a mum, we introduced them to Tabby, whose litter

"As soon as they were apart they started calling out"

THEY SNUGGLE UP SO CLOSELY THAT IT'S CLEAR THESE CATS AND KITTENS ARE ONE BIG FAMILY

was almost weaned and would soon be leaving their mum to start their new lives. It didn't take long before she had taken them under her wing.

Amy says: "She accepted the orphaned ones straight away. The other kittens took to them as well. They were soon sharing one big bed together."

ALWAYS TOGETHER

Once the kittens were old enough, we found them loving families to go to and, now that Tabby and Madame's work is done, they'll be neutered before we find them a home, too. Amy adds: "These cats have such a wonderful and close bond that we'll definitely be finding them a new home where they can be together. They'll be very much missed at the centre but it's great to know they'll always have each other."

Would you like to hear more heart-warming stories about the wonderful pets that we meet every day? You can catch up on the latest news via our Facebook and Twitter pages – just search for Blue Cross – or sign up to receive free email news and updates at www.bluecross.org.uk/pawprint

A debt of gratitude

After a terrible loss followed by months of living in kennels, Tia was struggling to cope with what life had thrown at her

Making the move from the glamorous world of marketing to becoming an animal behaviourist for Blue Cross was both scary and exciting for Jenny Woolliams. And it might never have happened if it hadn't been for one woman and her dog, Tia, who inspired her to follow her dreams.

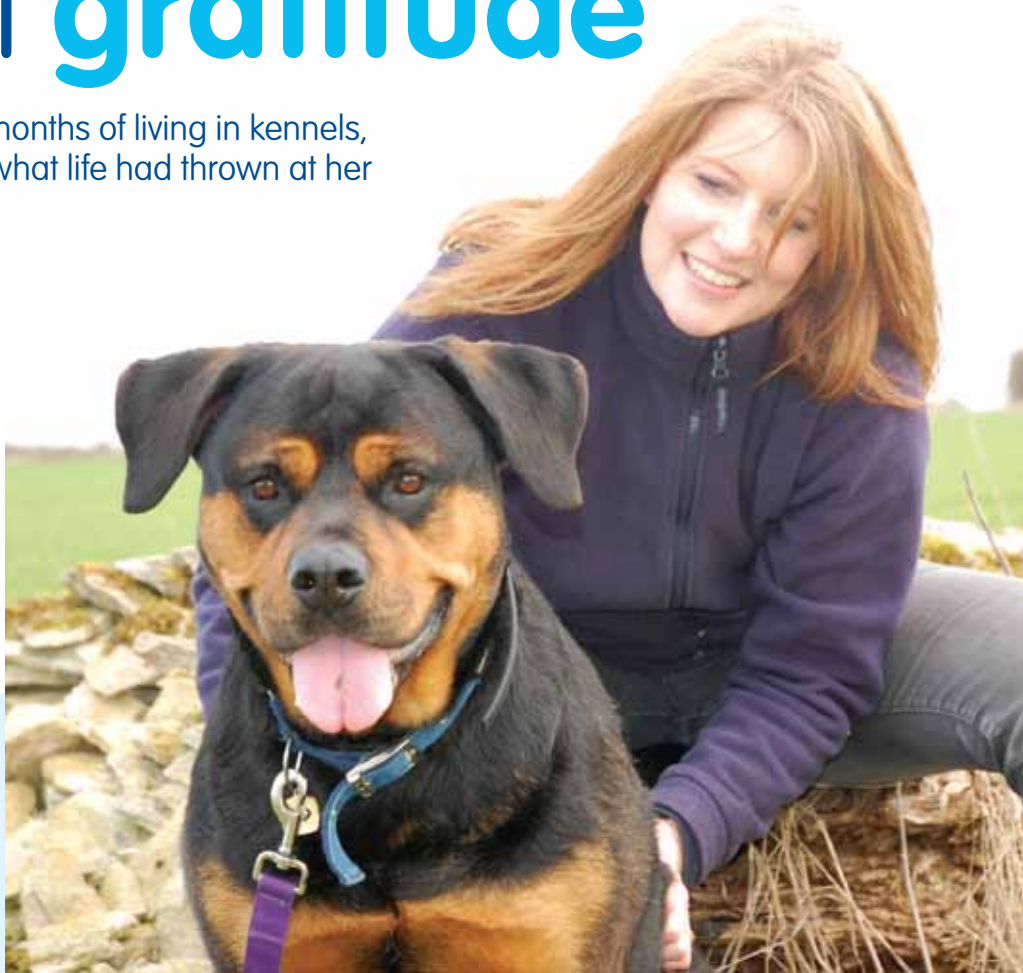
So when, many years later, Tia arrived at one of our rehoming centres after a traumatic ordeal, it was time for Jenny to repay her debt of gratitude.

Jenny explains: "I met Tia and her owner Sarah five years ago at college. I knew I wanted a career change and I'd dreamed of working with animals but I still wasn't sure exactly what I wanted to do. Sarah was already established as a dog trainer and she helped me to find my new path in life. Tia was a rescue puppy and, after a tough start, Sarah had worked wonders with her – she had such a full life."

A SUDDEN SADNESS

The pair became good friends and, when Sarah and her family moved to Australia, they kept in touch. Jenny says: "Sarah spent a long time preparing Tia for quarantine and she arrived safely. She had a wonderful time, walking on the beach and making friends – she was a real dog about town."

But a year ago a routine operation went wrong and Sarah died suddenly, leaving behind her husband and two small children. Jenny says: "I was devastated. My heart went out to her poor family and to Tia, her beloved dog, who I knew would be lost without her."



JENNY MADE A PROMISE TO HERSELF – AND TO SARAH – THAT SHE'D FIND TIA A HOME

The family decided to move back to the UK and, after Tia endured another long stint in quarantine, Sarah's husband made the difficult decision to give her up. Jenny says: "He really wanted to keep her but, with two children under school age and a full-time job, it just wasn't possible, and he knew Sarah would have wanted more for Tia. It was absolutely the right thing to do."

TIA'S CHALLENGE

"But sadly Tia was in for a long stay at Blue Cross. She was six years old and she's a big dog, which can be intimidating. Plus, because of her breed, she needed an experienced home, so she wasn't getting a lot of attention. She was struggling to cope with life in kennels, especially after months in quarantine, and I knew that the longer she waited for a home, the more she'd deteriorate."

Jenny had two dogs of her own so she couldn't take Tia long-term, but she fostered her to give her a break and made a promise to herself – and to Sarah – that she'd find her a home. After doing lots of research she contacted a Rottweiler breed organisation to see if they could help, and she couldn't believe it when they said they had the right home waiting for her.

Jenny says: "It felt like fate. The family were experienced Rottweiler owners, lived nearby and couldn't wait to meet Tia. It was love at first sight and Tia hasn't looked back since."

Tia is now enjoying life with Bella Patel and her family in Gloucestershire. Bella says: "Tia already knows where home is and she runs up the drive with excitement. She's taken a particular shine to my 17-year-old daughter and they've formed a strong friendship – it's wonderful to see the pair of them together."



have your say

We love to hear from you – please send us your news and pictures of your pets

FIND US ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER – JUST SEARCH FOR BLUE CROSS



FRIENDS FOR LIFE

I rescued my beagle, Luke, in 1999. Every year we went for at least two doggy holidays, renting a cottage on a farm or by the sea, and he was never away from my side – except when his nose was in the bushes. In 2008, when Luke was 13, we spent a month in Scotland, and he was still full of life. Now, a few years on and with multiple conditions, he is still the bundle of fun he always was, although a lot slower. Not a day goes by when I don't have tears over that awful day to come when he will tell me it's time. But until then we cherish every moment.
Nigel O'Mara, Shuttington

As the writer of the star letter, Nigel O'Mara has won £100 of Love2Shop vouchers, provided by Petplan, the UK's largest provider of animal health insurance. For more information on Purely for Pets pet insurance from Petplan and Blue Cross, call 0800 107 7551 or visit www.petplan.co.uk



SECOND CHANCE

We first met our cat, Smudge, now Boycie, at Blue Cross Burford a month after we had lost our dear Lil, our cat of 25 years. We hadn't intended on calling into Blue Cross, but my wife Belinda said to me, "Let's go in". I stayed in the car, as I was still not sure if I was ready to think about another pet, but after about 20 minutes I decided to join her. When we saw Boycie we both knew immediately that this was the cat for us, and Boycie knew it too. Boycie has been with us for eight months now, and has developed into a most intelligent and beautiful cat. He is such a character and full of beans. We would urge anyone who has lost a beloved pet to seriously consider rehoming another pet and giving them a second chance.
Robert Rogers, via email

MAGPIE MOGGY

I got Chloe from a local rescue centre. She was very timid to begin with but she soon settled in and, after a lot of love and affection, she began to show her true colours! Chloe has undergone a recent operation to remove one of her kidneys but this has not stopped her from being her usual, very cheeky self – she often raids my makeup bag and helps herself to my brushes. Despite her thieving tendencies, Chloe is a wonderful cat and she brings me such happiness every day.
Rachel Bremner, via email



ADVENTUROUS POOCH

Roxy Dog is a fabulous rescue dog who came into our lives four years ago and filled it with absolute joy! She is a huge character, full of life, energy and enthusiasm for anything and everything put in front of her – from walking up the mountains, helming our canoe, manning our stand at the War Weekend and even riding the boogie board on the Cornish sea. She has her very own Facebook page and is also adored by her many followers, who flock to see her in her dad's shop where she goes to work.
Kate and Tom Parker-Brown, via email



WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE YOUR PET ON THIS PAGE?

Email a photo, along with brief details, to editor@bluecross.org.uk or write to Editor, Blue Cross, 7 Hugh Street, London SW1V 1QG. We reserve the right to edit any letters as necessary.



To the top of Britain

Karen Hedges and Clare Archer battled freezing temperatures, slippery slopes and exhaustion as they trekked to the top of Britain to raise money for sick and homeless pets – but they'd both do it again in a second

It started out as an excuse to get a bit fitter and have a fun weekend while raising some money for sick and homeless pets. But for Blue Cross fundraisers Karen Hedges and Clare Archer the feeling of reaching the highest peak in Britain is something they'll never forget.

The friends, from Oxford, journeyed to the Scottish Highlands to conquer Ben Nevis, which stands at 4,409ft (1,344m) above sea level. It was as much a mental challenge as it was a physical one, but the stunning views and moments of inspiration kept them going all the way to the top.

Karen says: "At one point we saw a man making his way up the mountain who was almost blind. His friend was telling him where to step and, when we saw him, we felt incredibly touched and motivated to keep going.

"Then, about halfway up, we had some amazing views and you could see for miles. The climb was hard going and I got out of breath at certain points but

then I just stopped for a minute to catch it and carried on going again.

"The strongest feeling of elation came when, after a tough descent, we got to the bottom and we could stop for a minute and take in what we'd just done."

Together, Karen and Clare raised more than £1,500 to help pets at Blue Cross. It was the culmination of weeks of training at the gym and walks in the countryside to prepare them for the challenge.

Karen said: "I climbed a fell in the Lake District which was only half the size of Ben Nevis and it was very tough, so it motivated me to get back to the gym.

"By the time the weekend came I wasn't too nervous, I was just looking forward to the trip.

And it didn't disappoint – I had such a good time. It was tough, but it was a laugh a minute all the way."

For Clare, the camaraderie of the team really helped. She says:

"It was tough, but it was a laugh a minute all the way"



ABOVE: Karen and Clare approaching the summit after their challenging but exhilarating climb



"There were about eight of us in total and it was such a good atmosphere. There was a mix of different ages and abilities, but we were all there to raise money for charity."

Clare adds: "When we saw the snow, about 20 minutes from the top, we got really excited because we knew we

must be close. The best moment for me was when I saw the summit. It was so exciting and such an adrenaline rush. It was absolutely worth it. I would do it again next weekend if I could."

We're tackling Ben Nevis again and we want you to join us! There are several dates available in 2012 and 2013. For your free information pack, fill in the tear-off form on page 28 and send it back to us or visit www.bluecross.org.uk/activechallenges

dates for your diary

From dog walks to marathons, there's plenty going on at Blue Cross – so get your diary out and schedule some time to join the fun as we raise money for sick, injured and homeless pets

ACTIVE CHALLENGES

With all the excitement of the Queen's diamond jubilee celebrations and the 2012 Olympics, Great Britain really is the place to be at the moment, so take advantage of our "at home" active challenges and enjoy some of the best sights and scenery our nation has to offer.

HADRIAN'S WALL TREK

12-14 April, 12-14 July and 6-8 September 2013. Take in the amazing views and fascinating ruins on this weekend-long 25-mile historic trek. This is a fabulous, challenging trek. Dogs are welcome.

VIRGIN LONDON MARATHON

21 April 2013. If you've ever seen it on TV and dreamed of taking part, now's your chance. Apply today and take advantage of a Blue Cross guaranteed place to win a spot in one of the most famous races in the world.

JURASSIC COAST WEEKEND

10-12 May, 19-21 July and 13-15 September 2013. Walk along England's first Natural World Heritage Site, enjoying the rugged coastline and breathtaking scenery on this 23-mile trek. This is a tough trek with steep climbs and descents, but the views will make it all worthwhile.

SKYDIVING

Various dates. We've teamed up with companies all over the UK to make your skydiving dream come true. Dates are available throughout the year.

To find out about any of these fantastic challenges, fill in the tear-off form on page 28 and send it back to us, or visit www.bluecross.org.uk/activechallenges



LOCAL CENTRE EVENTS

CAMBRIDGE:

Rabbit awareness day, Sunday 16 September, 12-3pm. For more information, call Cambridge rehoming centre on 0300 777 1470.

FELIXSTOWE:

Sponsored seafront dog walk, Sunday 7 October, 10am. Meet by Charlie Manning's Sunday Market. For more information, call Felixstowe rehoming centre on 0300 777 1480.

NORTHIAM:

Christmas fair, Saturday 10 November. For more information, call Northiam rehoming centre on 0300 777 1510.

SOUTHAMPTON:

Rabbit awareness day, Saturday 15 September. Super sleuth mystery dog walk, Sunday 30 September. For more information, call Southampton rehoming centre on 0300 777 1530.

ABOVE: Try an active challenge and raise money for Blue Cross

RIGHT: For a gentler way to get involved, take part in one of our many organised walks



ABOVE: Look out for September's rabbit awareness days

OTHER EVENTS

Come and visit us at any of these events in 2012 to meet a few of the Blue Cross team and find out more about the work we do

Paws in the Park: 22-23 September

Your Horse Live: 10-11 November

Discover Dogs: 10-11 November

London Vet Show: 15-16 November

Would you like to organise your own fundraising event? Could you give up six hours a year to manage one of our collection boxes? If so, our community and events team would love to hear from you. Give us a ring on 0300 790 9903 or email communityandevents@bluecross.org.uk



Tackle moulting mutts and moggies

If your home is in danger of being buried under your pet's ever-shedding fur, this competition is for you! Blue Cross has a fabulous Miele vacuum cleaner worth £149.99 to give away to one lucky winner. Lightweight and easy to carry, your moulting pet should be no match for its cylinder cleaner, which provides excellent performance and hygienic filtration.

We've also got two fabulous Mikki dog grooming hampers worth £35 each for our runners up to help keep your pet looking perky and pampered. They include an anti-tangle moulting comb, a combi brush, an easy-clean slicker brush, anti-tangle spray and a Nylabone DuraChew to keep your dog entertained.



MIELE VACUUM CLEANER



**2ND & 3RD PRIZE
MIKKI DOG GROOMING HAMPER**



HOW TO ENTER

Answer the following question for a chance to win.

In our news update we told you that one of our centres celebrated its silver jubilee this year. But which centre was it?

- A) Southampton
- B) Torbay
- C) Thirsk

Answer _____

You can enter online at www.bluecross.org.uk/blueprintcompetition

Alternatively, write your answer on this coupon, along with your name, address and telephone number, and send it to:

Blueprint competition,
Blue Cross, 7 Hugh Street,
London SW1V 1QG

Strictly one entry per household.

Closing date: 30 November 2012

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

From time to time we may wish to communicate with you by phone or email. If you are happy for us to do this, please fill in your details below.

Email: _____

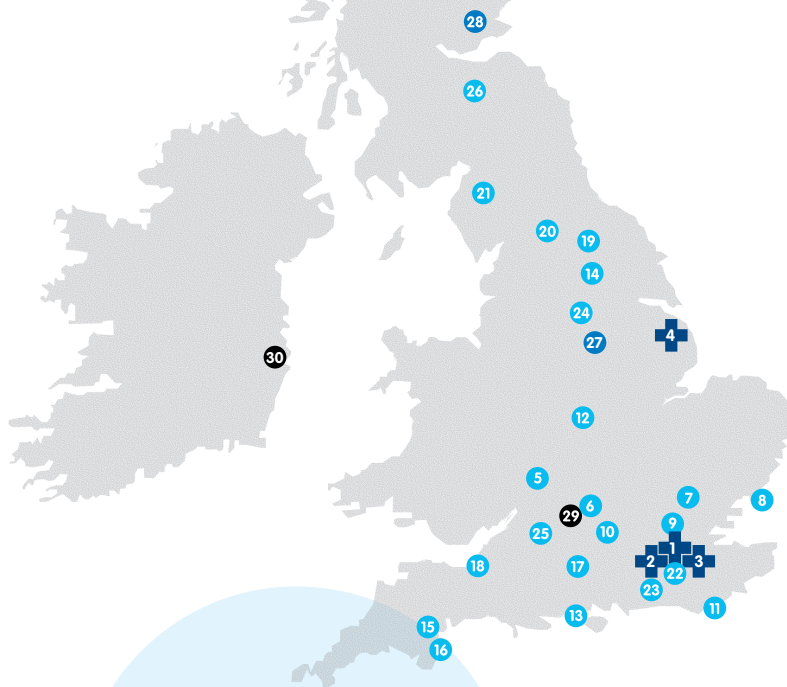
Tick here to receive emails about Blue Cross.

Tick here to receive phone calls about Blue Cross.

find us

Locations of Blue Cross services and charities

FIND US
ON FACEBOOK
AND TWITTER –
JUST SEARCH FOR
BLUE CROSS



Blue Cross Animal Hospitals

- 1 Blue Cross animal hospital, Victoria
- 2 Blue Cross animal hospital, Hammersmith
- 3 Blue Cross animal hospital, Merton
- 4 Blue Cross animal hospital, Grimsby

Blue Cross Shops

Andover, Banbury, Bromsgrove, Cheltenham, Chippenham, Droitwich, Dursley, Fleet, Frome, Henley-on-Thames, Hereford, Hungerford, Kidlington, Leamington Spa, Ledbury, Ludlow, Marlborough, Newbury, Pershore, Royal Wootton Bassett, Stow-on-the-Wold, Stratford-upon-Avon, Summertown, Tewkesbury, Warwick, Wells, Witney, Worcester

Blue Cross Rehoming Centres

- 5 Bromsgrove
- 6 Burford
- 7 Cambridge
- 8 Felixstowe
- 9 Hertfordshire
- 10 Lewknor
- 11 Northiam
- 12 Rolleston
- 13 Southampton
- 14 Thirsk
- 15 Tiverton
- 16 Torbay

Pet Fostering

- 17 Andover
- 18 Burnham-on-Sea
- 19 Cleveland
- 20 County Durham
- 21 Cumbria
- 22 South London
- 23 Surrey and Kent
- 24 West Yorkshire
- 25 Wiltshire
- 26 Pet Fostering Service Scotland

Associates

- 27 Mayflower Sanctuary
- 28 Mountains Animal Sanctuary

Partner Charities

- 29 Society for Companion Animal Studies
- 30 Irish Blue Cross

Please visit
www.bluecross.org.uk
for more details

CUSTOMER CARE 0300 790 9903

MOVING HOUSE?

Please don't forget to let us know if you have moved home recently or are in the process of doing so. Updating us in this way is enormously important because, without your new address, we would be unable to claim Gift Aid on your donations, which is worth 25p for every pound you donate. Giving us your new address also means we avoid the unnecessary cost of contacting you at your old address and ensures you continue to receive your copy of *Blueprint*.

To inform us of a change of address, please call our customer care team on 0300 790 9903, email info@bluecross.org.uk or fill in and return the coupon.

Thank you!



Please write your old address below
(including postcode):

(Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms)

Name

Address

Postcode

Please write your new address below
(including postcode):

(Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms)

Name

Address

Postcode

Please cut out this coupon and return it to the following FREEPOST address:

**Tracey Nadin, Blue Cross,
FREEPOST OF224, BURFORD OX18 4BR**

Please note that since we select our mailings up to two months in advance, it is possible that you may receive one or two further mailings to your old name or address before this amendment takes effect. We sincerely apologise for any inconvenience this may cause you.

SEND US YOUR SHARES... AND HELP ANIMALS IN NEED

Many of us don't often consider the different ways we can support our favourite charities. As well as giving money, volunteering or engaging in fundraising activities, Blue Cross can benefit from donations of shares. So you can help even more animals without it affecting your monthly outgoings!

Donating shares can be an extremely tax-efficient way of giving to Blue Cross and we can turn your contributions into much-needed funds. We also work with ShareGift, the charity share donation organisation, which specialises in aggregating shares, selling them and using the proceeds to make donations to charity. Since 1998, Blue Cross has received almost £75,000 from ShareGift. For more information about how you can donate your shares, please contact Selina Williams at Blue Cross, Shilton Road, Burford, Oxon OX18 4PF, on 01993 822651 or by email at sharegiving@bluecross.org.uk

If animals
have a place
in your heart...



...find a place for them in your Will

We've been dedicated to the health and happiness of pets since 1897. Abandoned or unwanted, ill or injured – we do what's needed to give every pet a healthy life in a happy home. We're a charity, so the more help you give us, the more help we can give pets.

**A gift in your Will can help secure the future for thousands of animals.
If you need us, we can also be there for your special companion.**



www.bluecross.org.uk

 **Return the coupon or write to the address below to receive our free advice and information pack on Will writing.**

Please send me your FREE advice & information pack on making or amending a Will and leaving a gift to Blue Cross.

Name (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms)

Address

Postcode

Telephone No.

Send to: Narelle Khan, Blue Cross, FREEPOST OF224, Room B212, Shilton Road, Burford, Oxon OX18 4BR
Or please call 01993 825594 and quote B212

We need your help

We've been dedicated to the health and happiness of pets since 1897. Abandoned or unwanted, ill or injured – we do what's needed to give every pet a healthy life in a happy home. We're a charity, so the more help you give us, the more help we can give pets.

Please use this form to donate to Blue Cross. Alternatively, you can donate online at www.bluecross.org.uk

From time to time we may wish to communicate with you by phone or email. If you would like us to do this please fill in your phone number and email address below.

Title: _____ First name: _____

Surname: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Please accept my donation of:

£10 **£20** **£35** **£50** or other (please specify) **£** _____

I enclose a cheque / postal order made payable to Blue Cross

Please debit my Maestro / MasterCard / Visa Debit / Visa Credit / Charity Card

Card no.

(if applicable) Valid from / Expiry date / (Maestro only) Issue no.

Signature Date / /

Return to: Blue Cross, Freepost OF224, D12BP2, Burford OX18 4PF

NB We sometimes allow other charities, voluntary groups or commercial organisations, whose aims are in sympathy with our own, to write to our supporters. If you do NOT want to hear from them, please tick this box

For more information please call **Supporter Care** on **0300 790 9903**

Find out more about fundraising for Blue Cross

Please send me further information on the following:

UK challenges Running Overseas challenges Fundraising pack

For more information on these challenges, please complete the form below or email events@bluecross.org.uk

Title: _____ First name: _____

Surname: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

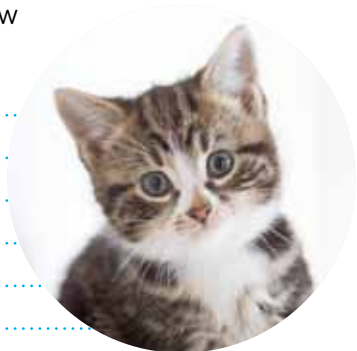
Email: _____

Return to: Events team, Blue Cross, Shilton Road, Burford, Oxon OX18 4PF

NB We sometimes allow other charities, voluntary groups or commercial organisations, whose aims are in sympathy with our own, to write to our supporters. If you do NOT want to hear from them, please tick this box

For more information please call **Supporter Care** on **0300 790 9903**

Thank you
for your
support



Save even more animals by making your gift worth 25% more with Gift Aid

giftaid it

I want Blue Cross to treat all donations I have made for the four years prior to this year, **and** all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations.

Date / /

You must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that Blue Cross will reclaim on your donation in the appropriate tax year (currently 25p for every £1 you give).

To make a donation by phone or for supporter enquiries, please call
0300 790 9903

You can also give online by going to www.bluecross.org.uk



We don't just look after pets – we look after your donations too

Less than **2p** in every £1 we receive is spent on administration, so we make sure your donation goes exactly where you want it to go – on giving pets a healthy, happy future.

Your support means that **each month** we can take in more than 500 abandoned and unwanted pets and operate on around 900 sick and injured animals.

Thanks to you, we can be there for pets long into the future.

January-May 2012

We cared for
756 stray and abandoned pets:
509 cats, 221 dogs, 19 rabbits
and 7 other small pets

We looked after **120 kittens** that were born at Blue Cross and we found loving new homes for more than **3,000 pets**