

FOR PETS

The magazine for Blue Cross supporters

AUTUMN 2021

JOY AFTER HEARTBREAK

**AUTHOR JAMES BOWEN
REHOMES PUPPY IN NEED**

Abused cat's miracle survival

Tiny horse is on the mend

Lonely degu finds love



Pets change lives
We change theirs



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We change theirs

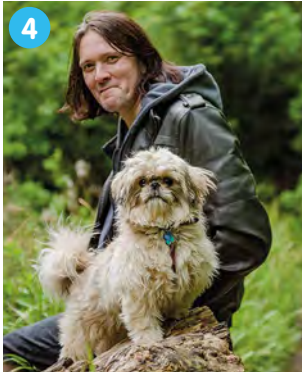


Thinking about getting a puppy?

Our Puppy Knowhow advice will help

Sign up for free emails at: bluecross.org.uk/puppyknowhow

Advice also available for people thinking about getting a kitten. Visit: bluecross.org.uk/kittenknowhow



COVER STORY

04 Scam warning

James Bowen, author of *A Street Cat Named Bob*, rehomes a puppy after scam heartbreak

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WELCOME

There's never been more demand for the company of pets than there has been in the past 18 months, with so much more time spent at home. Sadly, in many cases, it has been unscrupulous breeders or crooks that have reaped the rewards. Our friend and cover star, James Bowen, knows that all too well after falling victim to a scam. But, as you'll soon see, he's now happy with a puppy rehomed from Blue Cross. As normality returns and the ongoing financial impact of the pandemic continues, more and more pets will need our help. And facilities like our new Hertfordshire rehoming centre, which we bring you a sneak peek of in this issue, mean we can be there for them – all thanks to our wonderful supporters

Aimee Brannen, Editor

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JOY AFTER PUPPY SCAM HEARTBREAK

With lockdowns fuelling a surge in demand for puppies, scammers are cashing in – as author and musician James Bowen, and his fiancée Monika, sadly discovered...

Devastated by the tragic loss of his world-famous companion Street Cat Bob, James Bowen had some much-needed joy on the horizon in the form of a new puppy.

He had put down a deposit on the new four-legged family member with his fiancée Monika and they hoped that a lively new arrival would give them both a focus through what continued to be a difficult time.

But their hearts were broken all over again by a cruel scammer, who had posed as a dog breeder to steal £250 off the couple and cash in on the rising demand for dogs during the pandemic.

James says: “We paid the deposit and then the person disappeared. And it was on what was supposed to be a trustworthy website.

“It’s like expecting a new family member and then it doesn’t happen.

“All that energy and emotion that you put into it. You want to have that feeling and that attachment and then before you’ve even got him, it has been torn away.

“I just felt like a fool, I should have been aware and reined it back when things didn’t seem right.”

Sadly, James and Monika are not alone. Puppy scams – many very believable – have soared in the past 18 months.

In March and April alone last year, stats show 669 people lost a total of nearly £300,000 in ‘deposits’ for fictitious pets advertised online.

And Blue Cross has also seen an



increasing number of poorly puppies brought into the world with the sole purpose of lining the so-called breeders' pockets.

James' long history with Blue Cross first started 24 years ago with a litter of puppies he found on the streets.

Later, he formed an unbreakable bond with ginger tabby Bob, whose extraordinary tale about helping former drug addict James turn his life around has been the subject of nine books and two hit films.

The pair were regular visitors at our former mobile vet clinic in Islington, London, and Bob has now been immortalised with a bronze statue close to where our van used

to sit each week – a fitting tribute to the remarkable cat, who died unexpectedly in June last year, aged at least 14.

SHOCKING

So, before welcoming a puppy home, James had already been in touch with Blue Cross in the hope of raising awareness about how to safely introduce dogs and cats, as he and Monika have four moggies – Bandit, one, Gizmo, one, Jynxie, four and Pom Pom, nine.

And when the couple realised they had fallen victim to a shocking scam, they looked to us in the hope of rehoming a dog instead.

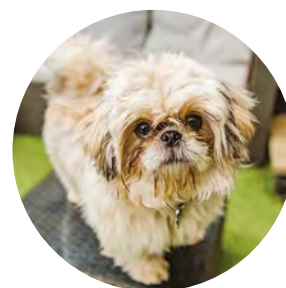
At about the same time, little Chewbie came into our care.

The shih tzu puppy was given up by his first owner after a week because circumstances sadly meant they could no longer care for him.

We ensured he got the vet treatment he needed for his irritated ears and quickly found him a foster carer, but it wasn't long before James and Monika offered him a home with them in south London.

FIRST INTRODUCTIONS

The couple immediately fell in love with Chewbie – short for Chewbacca – but ensuring their four cats felt the same was a process that needed



“

He's definitely brought some laughter and a little bit of joy back into the house.

”

lots of care, management and help from our expert Behaviour Team.

Introductions had to be slow and measured, giving the cats plenty of dog-free space to retreat to when they wanted it. But, thankfully, it didn't take long for Chewbie to be welcomed into the feline fold.

"We kept them separate at first," says Monika. "We would then slowly introduce them through a stairgate. It went quite smoothly."

James says: "Bandit and him [Chewbie] have become best mates,

like little brothers. Bandit sleeps on top of his little kennel that he has and they play together."

The playful puppy's arrival has also had a huge impact on James and Monika's life and wellbeing.

Monika says: "He's so happy to see us in the morning."

James continues: "We come downstairs and he's always, like: 'Where have you been?' It's like these videos you see of soldiers coming home to their dogs, and he's like that every morning.

"He's definitely brought some laughter and a little bit of joy back into the house.

"Things were a bit, you know, sad. I mean, they still are, kind of – they're very different post-Bob."

James adds: "But you know, he's a little bundle of energy. So, he definitely keeps us on our toes. And he keeps us fit and healthy."

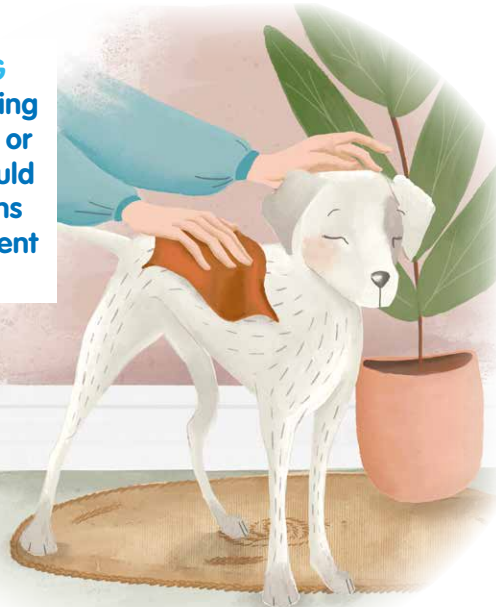


FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES
 Ensure that your home has plenty of high places that a cat can easily access, away from your dog. Cats naturally like to rest and hide in high places, so this is really important.

HOW TO INTRODUCE CATS AND DOGS

Although dogs and cats are often portrayed as enemies, if introduced carefully and slowly, they have potential to be firm friends...

SCENT SWAPPING
 Ideally, before bringing either your new cat or dog home, you should exchange soft cloths with each other's scent on them.



All pets are very different, and you'll have to work at the pace that they are comfortable with.

While some introductions progress quickly, others take several months. It's important not to rush things if you want your cat and dog living in harmony.

Remember to do first introductions after exercising your dog, keep initial interactions short and sweet, never let your dog stare at your cat for too long and always reward your dog's calm and relaxed behaviour. Keep your cat's food and litter well out of reach of canine paws and never leave both pets alone together until you are happy that it's safe to do so.

Watch for signs of stress and seek professional help if things aren't progressing positively.

PROVIDE A 'SAFE SPACE' FOR YOUR CAT

Whether you are introducing a new cat to your resident dog or vice versa, you need to provide a safe dog-free area for the cat. If you are taking on a new cat, a spare room is ideal as they will need time to adjust to their new surroundings. If you are bringing in a new dog, choose an area where you know your existing cat will feel safe. Move all essentials there – a bed, food and water and a litter tray (even if your cat normally toilets outside).



STAIRGATES ARE KEY

Stairgates are invaluable when introducing cats and dogs, as they allow the pets to see and smell each other safely. This isn't practical if you have a kitten, as they will slip through the bars. Instead, use a large dog crate for your kitten with enough room for a litter tray, scratching post, bed and hiding places. Keep your dog on lead and let your cat approach in their own time. If your dog is crate trained, keep them in there whenever you can't directly supervise.



HOUSELINES

If your cat starts becoming more confident and interactions through the stairgate or crate are positive, allow them a bit more freedom – but keep your dog on a houseline to maintain control. Never allow chasing, even if it's playful. If all goes well and both pets are comfortable with each other, you can progress to removing the houseline, but make sure you are there to manage the situation carefully and ensure your cat has safe retreats.







LITTLE FIGHTER

Rocky's tiny body was broken and battered – but emergency care saved his life...

Nothing could have prepared our team for the horrific injuries they uncovered in poor little Rocky.

The sweet kitten arrived at the doors of our Victoria animal hospital in central London in December aged four months, with a head wound and a suspected broken leg.

More worryingly, he appeared to be struggling to breathe. And X-rays soon revealed a devastating raft of injuries, indicative of a past filled with sadness, abuse and neglect.

Poorly Rocky needed emergency care on arrival at Blue Cross



She explains: "Rocky needed time, both physically and mentally, to recover from the ordeal he had endured for the first months of his life."

Amanda continues: "But we took everything at his pace, and he grew a little more in confidence each day."

"Despite all he had been through in his short little life, Rocky was still such a sweet boy and so gentle."

"We had to teach him that humans can be kind and reassure him that life was on the up."

LOVE

And on the up it most certainly was. Rocky couldn't have hoped for any more love than that showered on him by Amanda and her other pets, who immediately took him under their wings.

Sadly, the head trauma Rocky suffered has left him with lifelong brain damage and sinus problems, but it doesn't dampen his zest for life.

was 13 fractured ribs, all at different stages of healing.

"Rocky also had an infection and was sneezing discharge and blood from his nose."

"He was struggling to breathe; most likely due to the pain he was in with his ribs and chest."

Rocky was put straight on a strong ketamine drip to control the pain as well as antibiotics to treat his respiratory condition.

And once he was stable, we got to work repairing his shattered bones.

HEALING

A tough two months on strict crate rest then lay ahead for the kitten.

He needed a foster home for both his heart and body to heal, and Amanda didn't hesitate to step in.



Rocky with his favourite toy

Our team was shocked and saddened, but immediately got to work saving Rocky's life.

London Welfare Officer, Amanda Rumball, says: "X-rays confirmed two broken bones in his right front leg. But what we were not expecting



“
Despite all he had been through in his short little life, Rocky was still such a sweet boy and so gentle.

”

And, once he was out of the crate, there was no stopping him.

Unsurprisingly, this brave and loving boy soon stole Amanda's heart, and it wasn't long before she decided that he'd be staying with her.

“He settled in so well and he will most likely need daily nursing care for life,” says Amanda.

“I just want to make sure he has everything he needs to have a happy and healthy future.

“His eye has to be bathed due to a blocked tear duct and his nose cleaned multiple times as he has a constant stream of discharge, which at times I find up my wall and on my sofa – it's just as well I love him.

“He is a real sweet cat, getting more and more playful by the day. And he loves his almost-daily visits

from the Amazon man, bringing him new presents. He deserves nothing but the very best in life.”

EXPLORING

Rocky now spends his days exploring Amanda's garden and loves to chirp at the birds, before settling down for snuggles with her and his four-legged family.

Despite all the pain in his past, Rocky couldn't have a brighter future ahead of him, thanks to Amanda and the Blue Cross team who saved his life.

Amanda adds: “I can't imagine life without him now. He makes me smile every day.

“The vet team may have saved his life, but this sweet bundle of energy has changed mine for the better.”





STARS ALIGN FOR LONELY DEGU

Grieving Greg's three-month quest for love ends in a 'perfect match' with new soulmate...

Degu Greg snuggled up with his new 'soulmate' Sophie



After his best friend and cage mate died, degu Greg was lost and downhearted.

The three-year-old arrived in our care last year with his elderly pal Charlie, who had to be put to sleep to end pain and suffering caused by advanced dental disease that could not be treated.

As degus are sociable creatures who need the company of their own kind, the team at our Burford rehoming centre in Oxfordshire quickly tried to match Greg with a friend to enjoy sand baths with.

But, sadly, he was rejected by every male degu he was introduced to, leaving the rodent increasingly depressed and lonely.

We neutered Greg in the hope he could find a lady friend instead. And, after a Valentine's Day appeal, the stars aligned when Jordan Hubbard and Natalie Curry came across the lonely degu's story online.

"We were looking for a new partner for our degu Sophie as she lost her partner last year to old age and had become depressed," says Natalie, from Cheltenham.

"They're social animals who need

to be kept with their own kind and my partner and I wanted to find her a new companion, but it's not something we wanted to rush as we wanted to be sure to find the perfect match for her."

PERFECT MATCH

Jordan's mum, who had spotted the appeal on Facebook, shared a link to Greg's story on the Blue Cross website – and the rest is history.

Natalie continues: "As we were reading through the article, we couldn't believe it; it sounded like a perfect match!

"Their stories are almost identical, they both lost their cage mates due to old age, they were both lonely, they were both the same age, and they were both very submissive.

"We decided within 24 hours of



reading Greg's article that we would like to take him on."

And so, after three months in Blue Cross care, Greg went to start his new life with Sophie.

IN LOVE

"Since having Greg with us, he and Sophie are very much in love! It couldn't have worked out any more perfectly than it did," adds Natalie.

Hannah Wiltshire, Rehoming Manager at Blue Cross Burford, says: "We're so happy to have helped Greg to find his perfect match.

"Degus, like many small animals such as rabbits and guinea pigs, really don't cope well on their own, and we had noticed Greg was very subdued after losing his companion.

"So, we're delighted to have found him a new love and to see him and Sophie getting on so well together."



“

Since having Greg with us, he and Sophie are very much in love! It couldn't have worked out any more perfectly than it did.

”

TOP FIVE FACTS ABOUT DEGUS

- 1** Degus are diurnal which means they are active during the day.
- 2** They love human interaction, busy and active homes, sand baths, digging, tunnels and tree branches.
- 3** Cages need to be made of wire and at least 93cm long, by 63cm deep, by 159cm tall for two to four degus. They should contain plenty of toys and enrichment, be dry and below 20 degrees Celsius.
- 4** They eat hay and pellets without sugar, as they're prone to diabetes. They love sweet potato (in small amounts and without skins), leafy greens and dandelions.
- 5** The life span of a degu is around five to nine years.



Is a degu the right pet for me? Find out at bluecross.org.uk/degus-care

Hundreds
of pets are
just waiting
to meet
you

COULD YOU TAKE ME HOME?

Can you give any of these Blue Cross pets a place in your heart and your home?

▼ NELSON

Hiya! I became homeless after my previous owner got a dog and I was too scared to return. I'm now looking for a peaceful canine-free paradise to call my own. Please?

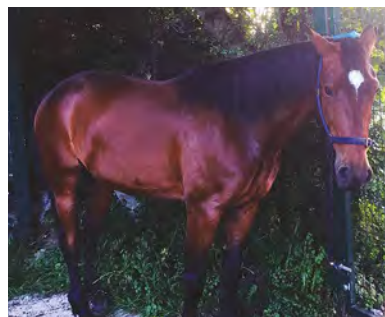
Bromsgrove, 0300 777 1460



▼ LENNY

Hey! I'm described as a sweet and gentle boy who is a joy to handle. Well, isn't that a glowing endorsement? And all totally true. Looking forward to hearing from you!

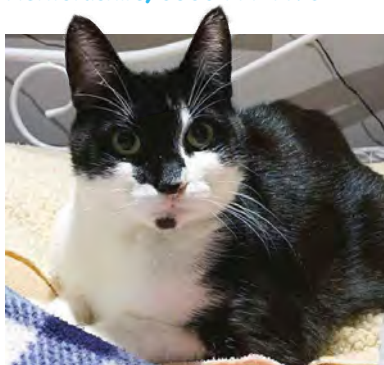
Rolleston, 0300 777 1520



▲ BUBBLES AND BAILEY

The best things come in twos, and we're living, hopping proof of that! We thrive when we have plenty of space and are looking for an owner with experience of folk like us.

Hertfordshire, 0300 777 1490



▼ LADY

Hello there, I'm Lady and I promise to make a wonderful non-ridden companion. I love nothing more than to be groomed and pampered by my special person. Any space for me?

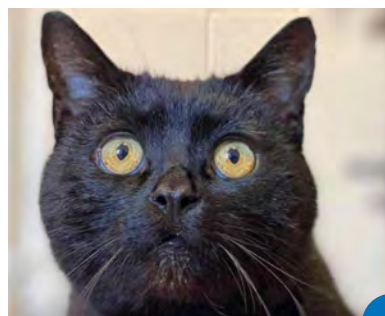
Rolleston, 0300 777 1520



▼ PANZER

I'm 13 years young and a sensitive chap with plenty of love to give – laying on a cosy lap is my favourite thing to do, by the way! Could you find space on the sofa for me?

Burford, 0300 777 1570



▲ WINNIE

Howdy! I'm an older chap in need of a home for my twilight years. I'm a sensitive soul so I'm looking for a quiet place, ideally with my own room while I settle in.

Southampton, 0300 777 1530

Find your new best friend at bluecross.org.uk/rehome

BLUE
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OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Pets in need are now enjoying the brand-new facilities at our redeveloped Hertfordshire site, thanks to your generous support...

Hamster Dave had no idea the spotlight was on him as he became the very first pet to depart our new Hertfordshire rehoming centre for a fresh start.

He is one of thousands of animals set to benefit from our modernised facilities, which replace cramped kennel blocks with no outdoor space, outdated catteries and a claustrophobic reception area which didn't give

people the privacy they needed at difficult times.

SPACIOUS

The new site, which has been two years in the making, includes two blocks of 20 spacious dog kennels complete with individual outdoor runs, vet rooms and quiet areas for nervous residents. There are also grassy pens for playtime and building up confidence with other dogs.



Dave the hamster was the first pet to be rehomed by the centre



Read more about our plans at bluecross.org.uk/three-year-strategy



LEFT Animal Welfare Assistant, Katrina Goodair, with one of our social ambassador dogs

BELOW The spacious and light new cattery blocks



Similarly, the cattery also features outdoor space from which feline guests can watch the world go by, as well as ample indoor space for relaxing and enjoying a fuss from our team. A new cat isolation area also means we can stop the spread of infections.

There's a new kitten unit for mums to nurse their young and a refurbished puppy area where litters can get all the care and early socialisation they need.

Meanwhile, a new small pet room enables us to take in hamsters, gerbils, rats, chinchillas and degus at the site for the first time, and a dedicated space for indoor rabbits next to the team room.

Our new reception area has private rooms for people facing the heartbreaking decision to give up their pet, as well as office space for our Home Direct scheme, which places pets straight into new homes, sparing

them the upheaval of centre life.

The Herfordshire team, which has been helping people and pets remotely from a temporary office while the rebuild took place, couldn't wait to get back to the centre and hands-on work.

Gracie Beaty, Animal Welfare Assistant, says: "It's really exciting and motivating to see how good the facilities are and how many more pets we'll be able to help because of it."

ENDLESS LIST

"The list is endless as to how it's going to improve the job we're able to do and the welfare of the animals we care for."

Centre Manager, Kellie Brooks, adds: "Coming back to the centre, we're coming back to being part of the community and being able to support people and pets, in a bigger way."

"I'd really like to thank everyone who donated – we wouldn't be back here without them."

THE FUTURE

As we head into our 125th year in 2022, we want to help more pets and people across the UK than ever before.

By evolving and adapting our services, we can reduce our costs by £1 million a year while improving our approach to local pet care and strengthening our ability to help more animals.

This has brought with it some difficult decisions, including the closure of our Lewknor rehoming centre in Oxfordshire, with services moved to our flagship site in nearby Burford.

ADAPTING

We're also replacing our Tiverton and Torbay rehoming centres with a new rehoming, advice and behaviour unit (RABU) in Exeter, Devon, and another in place of our Cambridge site.

Our existing RABUs in Newport, Sheffield and Manchester strive to keep pets and people together through expert support and, where needed, rehome pets directly from one home to another to spare them unnecessary upheaval.

But the RABUs are always there for pets in urgent need, thanks to a network of foster carers and partnerships with overnight kennel facilities for dogs receiving specialist care from the team during the day. It is this model that we will take to all four corners of the UK.

Remote vet consultations have been one of the successes of our pandemic response and, as a result, we're closing our London mobile clinic, with appointments moved online, over the phone or to one of our hospitals.

Meanwhile, we're focusing on expanding our digital reach to improve the lives of even more pets and people.

STRUGGLING FOAL NOW WALKS WITH EASE





Miniature Shetland pony Doolittle arrived in need of surgery to correct problems with his leg joints, likely caused by bad breeding...

Tiny foal Doolittle loved to frolic in the field, but defects with his leg joints were holding him back.

The miniature Shetland arrived in our care in November last year with his mum Princess, who was rescued by the RSPCA from bad conditions shortly before he was born.

It soon became clear to our Burford horse team in Oxfordshire that the playful youngster's stifle joints in both back legs kept locking.

The stifles are the equivalent of a human's knee joint, connecting three bones at the top of a horse or pony's hind limbs.

And because Doolittle had been bred to be so tiny, these joints hadn't properly developed.

Jess Hall, Horse Welfare Assistant, explains: "When Doolittle first arrived, we noticed that he was struggling with movement and thought it was likely to be his stifles.

"The ligament which usually releases as the horse moves its leg



“It wasn’t painful for him, but it wasn’t very comfortable either.”



LEFT Horse Welfare Assistant Jess with cob Brook (left) and Doolittle

was getting stuck on the patella, so his legs would get stuck in place.

"It wasn't painful for him, but it wasn't very comfortable either.

"Sadly, this is quite common in the tiny Shetlands, due to the bad breeding that often happens."

Doolittle needed an operation to correct the problem and allow him to move with ease.

And, after a delay caused by a nasty respiratory infection, the surgery was a great success.

PRANCING

Two weeks of box rest and a further fortnight on soft woodchip followed, but he was soon back to prancing about his paddock.

As Doolittle's mum wasn't keen on

playing much with the cheeky little foal, the team decided it was best to match him with a group of young likeminded ponies to give him the interaction he craved.

"It wasn't working for him just being with his mum after he was weaned, which isn't really unusual," explains Jess.

"He's always been a confident little guy, but we were quite worried about introducing him to other ponies as he is so small.

"We took it slowly and introduced him to some slightly bigger horses with his mum and he took it all in his stride, so we knew he was ready to find a new gang of his own."

The team buddied Doolittle up with two cobs of a similar age – Ghost,

who had also come from an RSPCA rescue and Brook, who had come from another home. The trio were soon inseparable.

"Doolittle really came into his own when he was paired with Brook and Ghost and relaxed so much more," adds Jess.

Our handlers continued to work on the ponies' socialisation, which includes introducing novel objects to their field for them to explore and practising farrier handling.

Once he was ready, Doolittle was put up for rehoming and it wasn't long before the fluffy foal caught the eye of a new family.

After 173 days in our care, he went off to his new home where he joined another Shetland pony.

RUN for Blue Cross

Do you want to get fit, challenge yourself and help pets in need?

There are loads of great reasons to start running, maybe you want to improve your fitness or take on a personal challenge? After a few weeks you'll feel like a new person... and it's not just your life you'll be changing.



Run for pets in need

Whether it's a local 5k park run or a full marathon, everyone has their own personal goals. Imagine how amazing it will feel when you cross that finish line – and you'll feel even better knowing you're helping transform the lives of sick, injured and homeless pets by fundraising too.



Our running pack contains

- Training tips to help you get in shape
- Nutrition advice and healthy recipes
- Details of upcoming Blue Cross running events
- Running event support materials



Request your free Blue Cross running pack!
Fill in the coupon at the back of the magazine or visit
bluecross.org.uk/running-pack



Blue Cross is a charity that has been helping sick, injured and homeless pets since 1897.



1450335400


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WE LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

Please send us your news
and pictures of your pets!



CROISSANT AND WAFFLE

We rehomed Croissant and Waffle from Blue Cross Newport when they were five months old. We had just taken in an older guinea pig, Beatrice, who had been living alone after unsuccessful bonding with the other guinea pigs in the home. I think having Beatrice around may have helped to settle Croissant and Waffle in. And Beatrice, who had been on her own for two years, had a new lease of life. Not only did Blue Cross help Croissant and Waffle find a new home, it helped find Beatrice some companionship.

All of them bring so

much joy to our lives. Their little personalities have really shone through and they are well and truly spoiled and loved by all of us. The children like to involve them in a lot of things and they were the focus of tasks set for home learning when schools were shut in January and February.

Croissant and Waffle recently celebrated their first birthday, and we hope that, even after Beatrice, they will have many more happy years with us, maybe even joined by other guinea pigs in need of homes in the future too, which we know is possible – thanks to the Blue Cross.

Lydia David

We love to hear how Blue Cross pets are changing lives...

Please email your letters and photos to editor@bluecross.org.uk or write to For Pets Editor, Blue Cross, Shilton Road, Burford, Oxon OX18 4PF

Find us on Facebook & Twitter

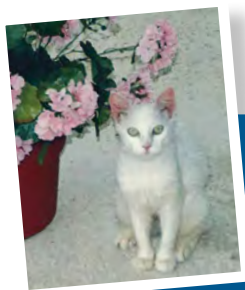
 /thebluecrossUK  @The_Blue_Cross



PAINTING OF KITTENS

I was very interested in your story of Mac and Cheese in the spring 2021 issue of *For Pets* and thought you might like to see my painting of one of the kittens (when she still had both eyes).

Chris Strong



IN MEMORY OF OUR JASMINE

This is our darling rescued cat, Jasmine, photographed a couple

of weeks after we had taken her under our wings (above). She was very nervous, terribly undernourished, had a nasty infection plus a variety of parasites. Thanks to a kind vet and heaps of love and care she became the adorable pet (below) who gave us almost 16 years of delight. Thanks for all the wonderful work you do.

Angela Auger





DOG 'RIPS UP THE RULE BOOK'

Elsa spent nearly 200 days in our care, overcoming any obstacle thrown at her with an incredible zest for life...

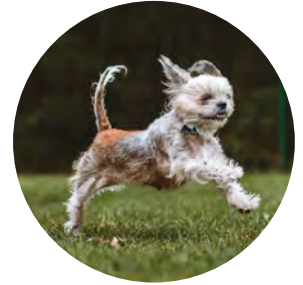
Itchy, sore and almost completely bald, five-year-old Elsa was in a desperate state by the time she arrived at Blue Cross.

The shih tzu, who had just had her second litter of puppies, was quickly assessed by a vet and found to be suffering from a painful condition called sarcoptic mange.

If left untreated, it can cause dogs to lose all their fur. It's an incredibly uncomfortable condition, meaning poor Elsa, who arrived at our Suffolk rehoming centre in August last year, must have really been suffering.

Claire Williamson, Centre Manager, says: "We were shocked when Elsa arrived in our care.

"Her condition was so severe



“

She's such a happy little creature and definitely lives life to the full, totally oblivious to any limitations.

”

that she had almost no fur left on her body. Not only was her skin very sore, cracked and bleeding in places, but it was clear she was very irritated by the condition.”

SPECIAL CARE

She was immediately put on daily antibiotics and her condition managed with steroids and medicated baths. With such special care needed to get her skin under control, the team decided that Elsa really needed a foster home where she could continue her treatment.

Susie Winship, Animal Welfare Assistant, stepped up to the mark.

Thanks to her, it wasn't long before Elsa began to improve, and her personality started shining through.

But an issue with her back legs was now proving to be a further setback for the sweet girl.

Explaining the results of subsequent X-rays, Susie says: “She had cruciate injuries to both legs, issues with both knees and one of her hips seemed to be permanently out of the socket.”

Suddenly, Elsa's whole future was hanging in the balance.

UNFAZED

Remarkably, further tests found that the issues weren't fazing Elsa or causing any pain. So, vets decided to spare her invasive surgery, which had no guaranteed outcome and a long, painful recovery period.

Susie continues: “It was in Elsa's

best interests to rehome her just as she was, with support given to her new owners on how to manage and continue to treat her condition.”

And Carrie and Alan Marchbank couldn't be happier to have little Elsa in their lives.

“We already find it hard to imagine life without her,” says Carrie.

“She makes us smile every day with her antics, whether it's enthusiastically playing with her many toys or just woofing and wagging her tail in her sleep!

“She is such a happy little creature, and definitely lives life to the full, totally oblivious to any limitations.”

Carrie adds: “We feel very lucky to have been chosen to give this special little dog the home she deserves.”



PEACE OF MIND

Nobody wants to imagine life without their pet, but preparing for the worst ensures they will always be loved and cared for...

After his owner died, poor Muffin's life was turned upside down.

But, thanks to the careful planning of his loving owner, upheaval for the elderly cat was kept to a minimum during this sad and confusing time.

Muffin had earlier been enrolled onto the Blue Cross's free Pet Peace of Mind service, which gives owners the reassurance that, if their pet outlives them, they will be cared for.

So, soon after losing his owner, the Birman arrived at our Southampton rehoming centre and was given all the love he needed from the team.

He had a few medical issues to overcome, including a kidney condition, but it wasn't long before the then 14-year-old boy found a wonderful new home.

Kim Simpson, Animal Welfare Assistant at Southampton, said: "It must have been a sad and confusing

time for Muffin, but thankfully things were made a little easier for him to cope with due to his owner planning for the worst by signing him up to our Pet Peace of Mind service.

"He was an incredibly affectionate cat, so clearly must have been very close to his owner. We're so glad that we were able to find him another home to live out the rest of his days being showered with the kind of love he has been so used to."

Find out more about Pet Peace of Mind on the back page or at bluecross.org.uk/pet-peace-of-mind and on 0300 777 1910





'IT'S AN ENORMOUS WEIGHT OFF MY MIND'

Without any friends or family interested in horses, Fiona Devon worried about what might happen to her animals should she no longer be here.

As her horse Beau was rehomed from Blue Cross, she knew he would always be cared for by us – but she wanted to ensure that his friend Jack had the same security.

Spurred on by the pandemic, the 61-year-old got in touch with our Pet Peace of Mind team.

She explains: "I was concerned that if I died or became incapable of looking after Jack for whatever reason, he might end up sold."

She added: "I now have a certificate confirming Jack's acceptance into the service and have been able to inform friends and family that in the event of my demise both horses will be taken care of by Blue Cross.

"It has been an enormous weight off my mind. Many thanks Blue Cross!"

CAT LEFT TO ROAM THE STREETS AFTER OWNER'S DEATH

Charlie suddenly found himself on the streets with nobody to love him after his owner died.

The 18-month-old ginger tabby soon injured his paw and was found unable to walk on a London doorstep near to the home where he had spent happier days.

Thankfully, he was brought to our animal hospital in Hammersmith, London. And after having treatment for fleas and his paw, he went off to a foster home.

Amanda Rumball, London

Welfare Officer at Blue Cross, said: "He seemed so very sad when he arrived in our care but once in a foster home his personality really started to shine through. We were soon able to find him a wonderful new family."

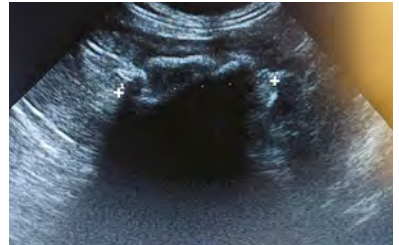
Sadly, Charlie's case isn't rare – many pets find themselves homeless after their owners die or move into care.



"For those with no family or friends who can take on their pet it can be extremely worrying to think about what will happen to their beloved pet in the future," added Amanda.

We're so grateful Charlie came to us in time. But, had his owner known about our Pet Peace of Mind service, he could have been spared so much sadness.

**BITESIZE
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TOP An initial X-ray revealing the blockage in Toffee's tummy

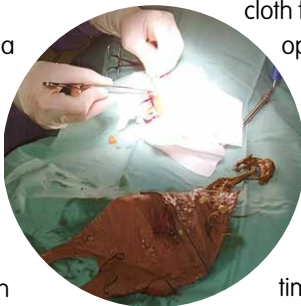
ABOVE An ultrasound showing a large object stuck in the spaniel's gut

PUPPY SAVED AFTER EATING FACE MASK

Blue Cross is warning dog owners to be vigilant on walks after a puppy who swallowed a face mask narrowly avoided death.

Eleven-month-old cavalier king charles spaniel Toffee needed emergency surgery at our animal hospital in Victoria, central London after an ultrasound showed a mysterious

blockage in his stomach. Senior Vet Roisin Bolger was shocked to find a cloth face mask when she operated.



Owner, Jess Busby, thinks he must have quickly gobbled up the mask without her noticing when he was enjoying some off-lead time on a walk.

He later developed an upset tummy before becoming

lethargic and vomiting. Jess says: "When the vet called us to tell us they had removed a full facemask from Toffee I just couldn't believe it, I was really shocked and also shocked because Toffee is so tiny!

"It's terrifying to think that could have been inside him for two weeks."

Thankfully, Toffee soon bounced back after surgery and hasn't looked back since.

Jess adds: "We're keeping extra eyes on him but he's running around as if nothing happened and is back to his old self.

"It's really great to see and my children are so glad to have him back home, we really can't thank Blue Cross enough for their care and for saving Toffee's life."

Vet Roisin adds: "Toffee was really lucky to be brought into us when he was because blockages of the stomach and intestines like this are life-threatening. If you think your pet has eaten something they shouldn't, or are concerned about repeated vomiting, always contact your vet."



Mercedes survived but her brother Marco (below) didn't

ONLINE SALES HEARTBREAK

Two kittens sold by an unscrupulous breeder online fell critically ill a fortnight later.

Marco and Mercedes's owner had already spent huge sums of money treating sickness and diarrhoea at a private vets' and, unable to afford any more, had to give them up.

The siblings, who were taken from their mum far too young, arrived at our hospital in Victoria, central London, seriously dehydrated and riddled with fleas and worms.

FRAIL

Frail Marco was put on a drip and treated for suspected flea anaemia, but could not be saved. After a week of intensive care, his sister pulled through and gained strength in a foster home before finding a new family.

Amanda Rumball, London Welfare Officer, says: "Unfortunately, pet scammers are continuing to look for every opportunity to cash in on the demand for pets wherever they can with no thought for the animal's welfare."



ABANDONED PONIES REHABILITATED

A group of emaciated, sick and terrified ponies abandoned on flooded land are now happy, healthy and in loving homes.

Our Rolleston centre took in 11 of the 43 ponies rescued last year from the site in Northamptonshire, where several horses had sadly been found dead.

Five of the ponies that came to Blue Cross were in foal.

The team spent months teaching all of them how to trust humans and adapt to being handled.

Verity Anderton-Johnson, Rehoming Coordinator at Rolleston, says: "All of the ponies were in such a sorry state when they came into our care.

"We are used to helping abandoned, nervous ponies but to have so many all at once, it was another level. It makes us so happy to see them come out of their shell and be able to go to their first real loving homes."



ACCIDENTAL LITTER

Five baby guinea pigs born in our care have been found loving homes.

Muffin, Marmaduke, Mo, Minty and Mable's dad was wrongly sold as a female and an accidental litter was soon on the way.

Louise Thomson, Animal Welfare Assistant, said: "It's very easy to mis-sex small pets and they can breed so quickly that owners fast find themselves with a large group of animals to care for."



RABBITS RESCUED

Two rabbits were saved after being abandoned outside a school on one of the coldest nights of the year.

Pimms and Paddington were brought to our nearby Victoria animal hospital, London, in January after being found with overgrown nails and matts in their fur.

The team got the pair warmed up and all the treatment they needed before they were rehomed.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO?

Every year Blue Cross finds families for thousands of homeless pets. We've caught up with a familiar face to see how they're doing...



BOBBY

Bought as a lockdown companion for a child, Bobby's family soon realised they had underestimated the time and care he needed.

He had also been sold by a pet store which failed to give the right advice on minimum cage requirements, leaving the Syrian hamster in cramped accommodation.

But our Hertfordshire team took him in, and it wasn't long before

he found a wonderful new home with Felicity Hall.

She says: "Since bringing him home, he's made us smile every day. He was very nervous at first, but we continued the great work Blue Cross started by handling him every day – always on his terms – to build his confidence.

"Watching him scuttle around his enclosure or playpen brings us a lot of happiness, and we're so grateful to have him."

MAGICAL ENDING FOR WIZARD

Thin, starving and nearly bald on some parts of his body, two-year-old stray Wizard was in a sorry state.

The saluki arrived at our rehoming centre in Burford, Oxfordshire, in February, and was quickly given all the treatment he needed.

Once recovered, it wasn't long before he found a home with Claire and Keith Meadows, who had recently lost their beloved cocker spaniel and Blue Cross rescue, Susie. Claire says: "We get the feeling he wasn't shown much love before he came to the Blue Cross, so we always want to make sure he feels secure and loved.

"We love him to bits and can't imagine life without him. Thank you to Blue Cross for bringing us together."





Marie (left) in her new home with best friend Percy

MEET 'MIRACLE MARIE'

A kitten rescued when she was days away from death has made an extraordinary recovery.

At just six weeks old, Marie was the only survivor of her litter.

The kitten arrived at our Manchester rehoming, behaviour and rehabilitation unit clinging to life.

She was quickly placed in foster care but was still extremely poorly with a swollen tummy, worms, ear mites, fleas and suspected cat flu.

And after taking a further turn for the worse, she spent five days at the vets in intensive care before showing signs of improvement.

Charlotte Ayres, Animal Welfare Assistant, says: "She began to pick up and put on weight, even making it over the 1kg mark! Her foster carer

said she had become a different cat and was now eating for England, growing in confidence and starting to act how a kitten should – playing and running around the house."

Nicknamed Miracle Marie by the team, she soon found a home with Charlotte Raynes, her partner Connor and their older cat, Percy.

Charlotte says: "When we saw Marie and how tiny and beautiful she was, we couldn't say no!

"And when we learned about her previous health conditions, we knew that we could give her the loving home she needed.

"She settled in straight away and sooner or later became a right little

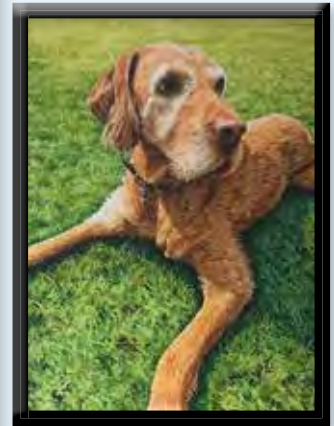
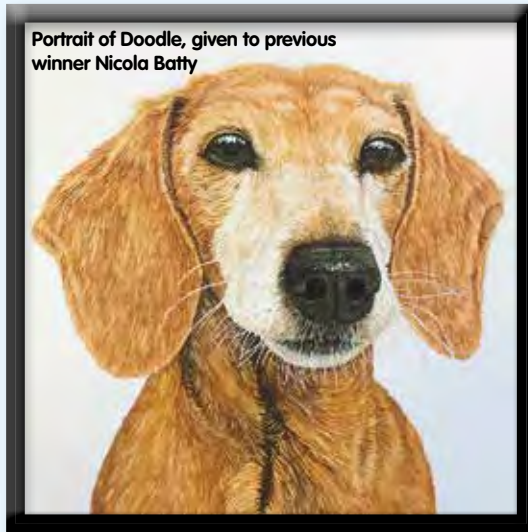
madam ruling the house! We believe she looks up to Percy as they are inseparable."



BEFORE



Portrait of Doodle, given to previous winner Nicola Batty



WIN! A PROFESSIONAL PORTRAIT OF YOUR PET

Blue Cross's official artist is continuing to raise money for pets in need.

Stephen Yorke has been donating 10 per cent of all commission from his animal portraits to our charity for the past 18 months.

He is now offering *For Pets* readers a second chance to win a watercolour or pencil portrait of their pet, drawn from a photo.

The winner of the spring 2020 competition, Nicola Batty, went on to order portraits of her five other dogs.

She said: "We are absolutely blown away by the portrait of Doodle. It is so lifelike, and captures every part of him.

"Stephen Yorke has an amazing talent and we cannot express our joy on receiving this prize."

Stephen produces pet portraits from photos and prices start at £245.

Visit yorkefineart.com for more.

HOW TO ENTER

Answer the following question for your chance to win:

On pages 20 to 21 we brought you the story of struggling foal Doolittle, who needed an operation on his hind legs to walk with ease. What is the name given to the joints affected? *(please tick)*

- Stifle joints
- Pivot joints
- Saddle joints

Fill in your name and contact details and post to:*

Freepost BLUE CROSS FOR PETS

Or, enter online at bluecross.org.uk/forpets

Closing date Friday, 5 November 2021.
*Strictly one entry per household.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Mr K R Senior is the winner of our ProtectaPet® Cat Fence Barrier Kit Spring 2021 For Pets competition. Congratulations!

Blue Cross respects your privacy and will keep your information safe and secure and will only use it in accordance with our Privacy Policy. We will not sell, rent or share your personal data with other organisations for their marketing purposes. We may use your data for profiling purposes to make future communications more relevant to you. To see more about how we will use your information visit bluecross.org.uk/privacy

*You can change your preferences at any time by contacting our Supporter Care Team on 0300 790 9903 or email info@bluecross.org.uk

We have **54** shops and
12 rehoming college
partnership locations

FIND US

Discover your local Blue Cross

Our animal hospitals

- 1 Grimsby
- 2 Hammersmith
- 3 Merton
- 4 Victoria

Our pet care clinics

- 5 Ashford (Kent)
- 6 Derby
- 7 Luton
- 8 Torbay
- 9 York

Our rehoming units and centres

- 10 Bromsgrove
- 11 Burford
- 12 Cambridge (coming soon)
- 13 Exeter
- 14 Hertfordshire (Kimpton)
- 15 Manchester
- 16 Newport
- 17 Rolleston
- 18 Sheffield
- 19 Southampton
- 20 Suffolk (Ipswich)
- 21 Thirsk



Say hello, find your nearest Blue Cross or make a donation

Call: 0300 790 9903 **Email:** info@bluecross.org.uk **Visit:** bluecross.org.uk

Write to us: Freepost BLUE CROSS FOR PETS

Book a free education talk

Animal welfare and responsible pet ownership workshops for children and young people in schools, youth groups and clubs.

Call: 0300 111 8950 **Visit:** bluecross.org.uk/education

Pet Bereavement Support Service

Free and confidential support for anyone coping with the loss of a pet, for any reason.

Call: 0800 096 6606. Lines open every day, 8.30am to 8.30pm.

Email: pbssmail@bluecross.org.uk



Pets change lives
We change theirs

bluecross.org.uk 35



Pets change lives
We change theirs



Loving care for her. Peace of mind for you.

Our **Pet Peace of Mind service** means your pet will be loved and cared for after you've gone.

We understand how much your pets mean to you and how important it is that they are well looked after, no matter what happens. There is no cost to register your pets onto the service, but many people choose to remember Blue Cross with a gift in their Will.

Apply for Peace of Mind today

To request an information pack please call **0300 777 1919** or fill in the coupon below and send it to **Freeport Blue Cross for Pets**.

Thank you for your continued support.
bluecross.org.uk/pet-peace-of-mind

Please send me:

- Pet Peace of Mind information pack
- Gifts in Will information pack

Title: B221

First name:

Surname:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone:

If you are happy for us to contact you by phone, please tick*



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

*From time to time we may wish to communicate with you by phone with news about the pets you are helping and ways you can help in the future. If you are happy for us to do this, please fill in your details above.