

June 1991

Cat Affairs

Journal of The Cat Protection Society of N.S.W.

(Registered Charity CC17122) Registered by Australia Post Publication No NBH 1972.



Inside this Issue:

- * Your cat's first year**
- * Winners in our story contest**
- * A Questionnaire to fill in**
- * Missing Cats - What is happening to them?**
- * And lots, lots more!**

President's Page

There are quite a few things to share with you this journal!

Firstly, it's goodbye to Sybil and Gordon Cozens who have worked tirelessly for the Society for years and years. Sybil has been primarily involved with our Opportunity Shop and was the driving force behind its inception way back in 1979. I'm sure you'll join with me in wishing them both a happy, relaxed retirement away from the rigours of pickups, sorting, and pricing! We thank them for the wonderful legacy of a successful Opportunity Shop - we'll do our best to build on it to ensure that we maximise its potential in the future. Elsewhere you'll find another tribute but somehow just saying thank you is not enough.

Coming up soon is the AGM of the Auxiliary and I hope volunteers can make it to our offices at Enmore on Monday, July 8. I'm certainly hoping to pop by to meet everyone again, and pass on Council's appreciation for the work done by so many behind the scenes. Council is keen to work more closely with the Auxiliary as its success is so vital to the welfare side of our activities. As I keep on saying, we couldn't do without our wonderful band of volunteers.

We also have lots of new members to welcome. Excellent results have been achieved through leaflet drops, and many thanks to those who've been walking the streets distributing them. If you'd like some for your own area just call our office on 514 818 and we'll send you some. We'd love some help and it's something you can do at your leisure, when it suits you.

Compulsory desexing is still a major campaign which we are lobbying towards. Dozens of petitions have

been sent to Parliament and we keep our politicians and local Councillors updated continually. By the time you read this we will have had a meeting with the RSPCA on the practical aspects of implementing legislation. We have also been asked to talk to Councils about how we can help. At long last there seems to be a light at the end of the tunnel, and we are being taken seriously and treated as professionals on all matters concerning cats.

Anyone coming past our Welfare Office lately would have wondered if we've diversified into a book store! Although we don't single out people donating things as a general rule, special thanks to Mr and Mrs Tolliday of Grahame's Books for their van load of new books covering all manner of subjects. We have been overwhelmed by their generosity and the response from everyone keen to make purchases. In these current economic times we need to maximise our income and this has been an excellent vehicle to bring in some extra cash.

We have been wondering if anyone has a spare chest of drawers or filing cabinet to spare. We desperately need extra storage for our records which we have to keep for seven years. If you can help please call Nance Iredale on 514 818 and we'll arrange collection.

ON A LIGHTER NOTE, DO YOU REMEMBER GRUMBLEBUM IN OUR LAST ISSUE? She's finally found a wonderful home and her new owners are thinking of calling her Blossom!!

- Lyn Thomas

THE CAT PROTECTION SOCIETY OF N.S.W.

Registered office and postal address: 103 Enmore Road, Enmore, N.S.W. 2042

Opportunity Shop: 87 Enmore Road, Enmore, N.S.W. 2042

Welfare Office: 51 1011, 519 7201, Opportunity Shop: 516 2072

Membership/Volunteer enquiries: 713 8576

PATRONS: The Hon. N.P. Greiner, M.P., Premier of N.S.W. Miss Ita Buttrose, O.B.E., Professor Charles Birch, F.A.A.,
The Hon. James McClelland.

OFFICE BEARERS: President: Miss Lyn Thomas

Vice President: Miss Jo Tomkin

Honorary Treasurer: Mrs Nance Iredale

Membership Secretary: Mrs Beverley Walsh

COUNCILLORS: Mrs Flo Best, Mrs June Chapman, Mrs Stephanie Forsyth, Miss Lesley Hood,
Mrs Lena Larsen, Professor Daria Love, Mrs Shirley Pikler, Mrs Beverley Walsh.

SECRETARY/ADMINISTRATOR: Mrs. Julie Gorrick.

WELFARE DIRECTOR: Mrs. Nance Iredale.

ASSISTANT WELFARE DIRECTOR: Mrs. Lena Larsen.

Journal Editor: Mrs. Julie Gorrick

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Mrs. D. Haines, Mrs. B. Harvey, Mrs. N. Iredale, Mr. G. Luton, Mrs. T. Nelson, Mrs. S. Pikler, Mrs. J. Taylor, Mr. G. J. Thatcher.

Life Governors: Mrs. L. Braby, Mrs. B. Morrison, Mrs. N. Iredale, Mrs. S. Springfield, Miss. D. Sillins,
Mrs. F. Best, Miss. V. Murdoch, Mrs. I. Cheffings, Mr. W. Turner, Mrs. J. Nelson, Mr. J. Tiley, Dr. M. Cridland, Mrs. J. Holdup,
Mrs. L. Loveday, Mrs. S. Pikler, Mrs. S. Watson, Mrs. D. Breust.

● All about the story contest ●

There was a strong thread running through all the entries received in our contest . . . the extraordinary bond that exists between cat and owner.

Cats are more than "pets." They are our friends, who stick with us through thick and thin, and offer never failing love and comfort. Some scientists say we shouldn't give cats "human" attributes like dignity, sensitivity, loyalty, and devotion. But we who share our lives with cats see these traits demonstrated every day. And yes, some cats can be fickle, scatterbrained, snappy and wilful, too . . . more "human" characteristics that are as plain as the whiskers on their faces!

This winning story by Dawn Atkinson sums up the way we feel about the dear companions who share our lives. There are other delightful stories on pages 12 and 25, and more will be published in the September issue.

~~~~~ **Staying On Guard**

In this issue, there is a distressing story about missing cats, and what may be happening to them.

Some members may think our fears are melodramatic. However, according to the June 1990 issue of "Cat Fancy," pet theft is certainly a serious problem throughout the United States and in other parts of the world.

While it is difficult to compile exact statistics, Action 81 Inc (a global network that monitors the theft of privately owned cats and dogs) estimates that approximately 10% of the cat population disappears each year in the United States. Of that number, at least 5% are stolen.

The report says that cats are stolen for numerous reasons. They may be held for ransom, sold to research laboratories, or, if they are undsexed pure breeds, sold for backyard breeding.

Cats are frequently stolen for use as prey for training dogs, and increasingly, for sacrifice in cult rituals. In certain parts of the country, cats are stolen to be eaten. Cats may also be taken out of spite, or by someone with a grudge against the owners.

Mary Warner, who is president of Action 81, adds this warning: "People should be aware that many markets exist for stolen cats, including the cat fur market."

I repeat our plea for members to be aware of their cats' whereabouts at all times, and not to leave them unattended outdoors. We are still receiving reports of many cats missing within a concentrated area, and we cannot be too cautious.

- Julie Gorrick.

The Winning Story In Our Cat Story Contest

A Noble Cat

by Dawn Atkinson of Manly Vale

Ginger Minnie Moo was my very first cat. We knew he was a male, but somehow he became "Minnie Moo."

In the mid fifties, reasonably priced accommodation was very hard to get, particularly with a child and a cat. So in five years we had 10 moves.

When we arrived at the new place, I would leave Minnie Moo on my bed all day. I would cuddle him and explain this was our home for a while. He never once attempted to stray.

Another 7 years passed, with two more moves. Another child came. Soon after, I noticed Minnie Moo hadn't eaten much for a couple of days. I promised I would take him to the vet the next morning.

I was hanging out the washing before we left. Minnie Moo came over and rubbed against me. The feeling was so strong - I knew he was saying goodbye. There was such communication flowing between us, 12 years of loving each other, a love I still have today.

That was the last time I ever saw him alive.

When I went to take him to the vet, no cat anywhere - no Minnie Moo, who never went further than the back door.

I called and called. I was heartbroken. I knew, beyond doubt, he was dead.

In my grief I lay on top of my bed. I never slept in the day, but finally I went into a half wake, half asleep state. Almost another dimension.

Then I saw Minnie Moo walking across the room, so proud and pleased with himself, his chest puffed out and his tail standing upright and happy. Suddenly, my aching heart was at peace.

A few days later, my son found Minnie Moo's body deep in the bush down in the gully. This beautiful, loyal, loving cat had courageously gone off to die alone. This cat who was never more than a few feet from the back door, wherever we lived, was totally in touch with his noble instincts when he chose to go to the gully and spare us pain. I stand in awe of him today, as I did then.

We left Minnie Moo deep in the bush, covered in a blanket of leaves.

Give a cat a name

Here are some more ideas for naming cats from the book "Cat Calls," published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London. If your cat has an unusual or especially appropriate name, please let's know about it!

Literary Cats

Bustopher Jones The cat about town of T.S. Eliot's set of poems, "Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats." The musical Cats was based on the book.

Felix The most famous of cartoon cats, who first delighted children at Saturday matinees in the 1920's.

Gallop The hero of poet Stevie Smith's "Galloping Cat"

Gib From the story "How Gib Disturbed The Wedding Feast," written in the early 17th century. It tells of the wedding of a frog and mouse, with all going beautifully until Gib came in and ate the mouse bride.

Lady Jane A ferocious beast in "Bleak House," by Charles Dickens

Mehitabel The wild, independent cat heroine of "Archy and Mehitabel," "Don Marquis' famous poem about a cat and a cockroach.

Pyewacket The Siamese cat in "Bell Book and Candle," a play about wacky modern witches by John Van Druten.

Sylvester Another famous cartoon cat, partner to the canary Tweetie-Pie

Famous People's Cats

Beppo Lord Byron's cat, probably named after the pirate hero of one of his poems

Slippers US President Theodore Roosevelt's cat, who enjoyed protected status and immunity from the FBI

William Charles Dickens' cat, re-christened Williamina when her sex was properly established.

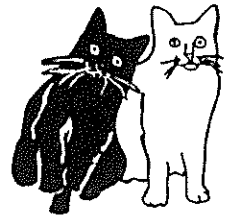
Zizi A silver grey angora belonging to French novelist Theophile Gautier

Zuleika Another of Gautier's cats, with a snow white breast. Gautier was often painted wearing Turkish costume and surrounded by a "harem" of beautiful felines.

Pepper Pot Three tabby kittens belonging to poet **Scratchaway** Thomas Hood

Sootikins

Windy The Flying Cat, owned by Wing Commander Gibson of the Royal Air Force



Legendary Cats

Bastet The Egyptian Goddess of fertility and good health, represented by a sitting cat. She was also known as Pasht. (Some authorities believe this is the source of the word "puss.")

Freya The Norse Goddess of love. Her symbol was a cat, and two black cats pulled her chariot.

Grimalkin The traditional name of a witch's cat.

Ra A spotted cat pictured in the Egyptian Book of the Dead.

Names for Black Cats

Blackjack A card game, and also the name of a black-coated 16th century beer mug.

Bowler Traditional black hat worn by businessmen in Britain

Domino The enveloping black cloak worn at masquerades, and by Dominican friars.

Inkspot A blot of ink, also a famous quartet of black jazz singers

Odile The black swan in "Swan Lake"

Pitch A black tar-like substance

Names for White Cats

Alabaster Slightly transparent white quartz

Bianca The Italian word for white, also Katherine's sister in "The Taming of the Shrew"

Cueball The white ball in snooker

Frosty After the white frost on a winter's morning

Odette The white swan in "Swan Lake"

Names for Ginger Cats

Apricot After the delicious fruit

Marmalade After the breakfast favourite

Saffron Dried orange stamens of the crocus flower, used as flavouring

Sunshine Perfect for a golden-ginger cat

Names for Grey Cats

Bluey Favourite name for our blue-grey Australian cattle dog, and just as appropriate for a cat

Charles After the second Earl Grey, who abolished slavery throughout the British Empire in 1933.

Jane After Lady Jane Grey, Queen of England for just 10 days before she was imprisoned and executed.

Names for Calico (Multi-coloured) Cats

Checkers A board game played with differently coloured marbles

Motley Multi coloured attire worn by medieval jesters

Spangle A small sparkling object!

Maneki Neko The Japanese good luck cat of three colours.

Names for Tabby Cats

Bengal After the Bengal Tiger

Gossip Tabby used to mean a chattering woman... just the name for a talkative tabby cat!

Taffeta A lustrous fabric with a watermarked pattern was known as "tabby" in France.

Tiger The natural name for a small striped cat.

Names for "Just Cats"

Catmandu a serene cat from the mountains of happiness.

Chesterfield The fourth Earl of Chesterfield left pensions for life to his cats and their offspring.

Felicity From Felic, the language of cats. Unlike dogs, who communicate only with vowel sounds, cats also use at least six consonants.

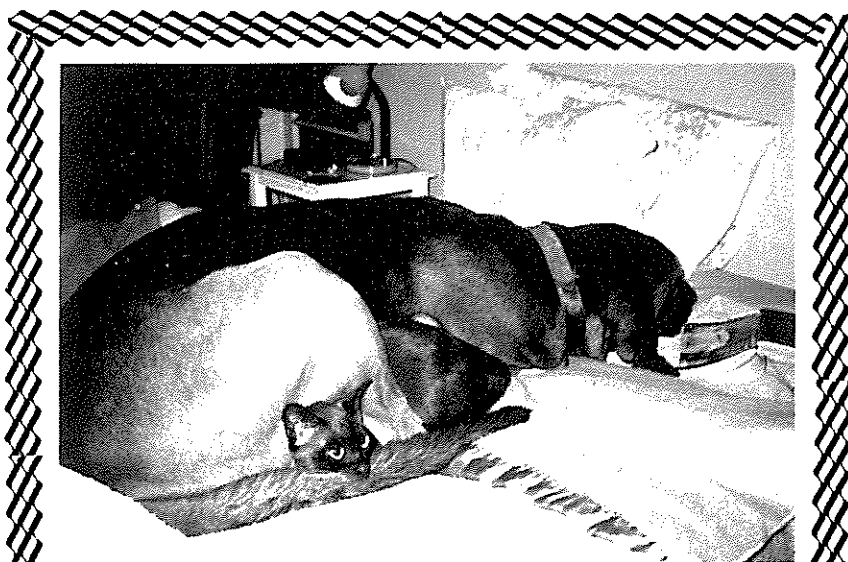
Mackintosh From the Mackintosh of Mackintosh, chief of the Highland clan whose motto is "Touch not the cat except with a glove."

Peterkin From Cecily Hamilton's poem, "The Lord likes cheerful noises," says Peterkin the Cat!

Postie After all the cats who have been on the payroll of the British Post Office since 1868, when they were employed to keep down the number of rats and mice destroying mail. Their original salary of one shilling a week has increased over the years to one pound.

Tanker The insignia of the US Tank Corps in World War 1 was a huge black cat with flashing green eyes.

Willow From pussy willow, with its silvery catkins.



ANY PORT IN A STORM: Jane Swanton of Chippendale was reading in bed recently, during a violent thunderstorm. Suddenly she was joined by her enormous hound, and her Burmese kitten, who cuddled up together until the storm was over. Thank you to CPS member Val Gordon for asking Jane to send us this delightful picture.

MISSING CATS

There is a grave possibility that pet cats are being stolen for their fur. Editor Julie Gorrick explains why the Society takes this view, and what members can do to help.

Please read this. We need your help

As you would expect, The Cat Protection Society maintains a Lost and Found Directory, and we get reports of missing cats from all over Sydney . . . from the general public as well as our own members.

For many years now, we have been aware of inexplicable upsurges in the number that are "lost."

Often, these swings are concentrated in certain areas; that is, more cats are reported from the North shore in one month, or the Eastern Suburbs or the Outer West. Within these areas, there is even a concentration in particular suburbs.

Sometimes there is a high percentage of missing cats of the same colour. In 1990, for example, there were heavy numbers of smokey greys, ginger, ginger and whites and tortoiseshells.

In the last three months or so, we have been receiving more and more calls about missing pure breeds, particularly Burmese, Persians and Chinchillas.

And finally, numbers seem to rise as winter approaches, and cat fur is approaching peak condition.

There are several aspects that worry us about missing cats, above and beyond the normal concern we feel for cat and owner.

1. Only a tiny fraction of missing cats is ever found, despite all the efforts of the owners. (We know this because we ask owners to ring us if the cat returns, and we also do spot checks from time to time by ringing owners ourselves.)

2. Most of the cats are mature, desexed, cats and are described as "complete stay at homes." They are wearing identity disks, have never roamed before, and in our experience, desexed cats rarely go beyond their own territory - no more than a few rooftops away.

3. Bodies are rarely found, so attacks by dogs or road accidents can be eliminated as major causes. Local Councils confirm that garbage contractors have not removed bodies from the roads.

4. Many owners offer handsome rewards without success, so ordinary theft is not involved.

5. The concentration on certain breeds and colours is abnormal, given the huge cat population in Sydney. It is also inexplicable why more cats disappear as the weather gets cooler.

"Only a tiny fraction of missing cats are ever found."

Putting these factors together, we find it difficult to accept that a home loving, well fed, happy desexed cat can disappear without a trace. In particular, we find it impossible to accept that - say - five or six Persians or Burmese would disappear within a week or so of each other, in the same area. Or that tortoiseshells would suddenly start to go missing in large numbers.

We have reluctantly come to the view that cats are possibly being stolen for their fur, as there is a steady export trade of cat skins from Australia to overseas fashion houses.

On the other hand, we have absolutely no proof, and neither can we arrive at a logical answer as to HOW the cats are caught.

Consider your own cat, sitting on the front fence in the sun, while you are doing some gardening out the back. You come to call it in an hour later, and it's missing.

Would it allow a stranger to pick it up? Wouldn't you have heard miaowing, or signs of a struggle? Wouldn't someone have seen a cat being put into a bag or container? Or a net being thrown over a cat?

But despite the mystery of HOW cats are being taken, the fact remains that home loving cats are disappearing in great numbers, and not coming back.

We have written to the Collector of Customs about the export of cat skins, and he confirms that there is a trade in skins.

However, this is perfectly legal. Whether or not the skins are from feral or domestic animals is irrelevant.

Domestic cats are not a protected species, and in any case, no export permit is necessary for skins, whatever their source.

The skins are being sent to fashion houses which use the fur to line jackets and gloves, and as trimming on sweaters and coats. Imported garments with cat fur trims have been seen at Sydney markets.

"Domestic cats are not a protected species."

What is Happening to Them?

It is deeply distressing to think about, but the connection is logical: are overseas buyers placing "orders" in Sydney for skins of a certain type and colour? This would certainly explain why ginger cats vanished last year in great numbers, or Burmese and Persians are disappearing now.

The Customs Department is sympathetic towards the owners of missing cats, but can do nothing to help us. WE therefore appeal to members to take the following measures:

* Be aware of the whereabouts of your cats at all times. Do not leave them out at night, even if you feel confident they will stay in the yard.

*"We find it difficult to accept that
a home loving, well fed, happy
desexed cat can disappear
without a trace."*

* Be alert for anything suspicious in your street - miaowing inside a van, a person carrying a bag with something moving inside. Take down details of registration numbers and appearance.

* If you belong to Neighbourhood Watch, bring up the subject of missing cats at your next meeting. Ask neighbours, friends and colleagues to be careful of their own cats, and to watch over each other's.

* If you have a purebred cat, or one with unusual colouring, consider marking the fur so it is useless to a fur trader. A few streaks of vegetable food dye will suffice, or you can clip a few patches down the spine.

* Please report all missing cats in your neighbourhood to The Cat Protection Society on 51-1011 or 519-7201. The more information we have, the more certain we can be of patterns occurring.

In other words, let's start a CAT WATCH!

We may add that The Minister for Local Government, approached about missing cats, has suggested that cats are "roamers," that road accidents account for a lot of them not returning, and that the local police should be approached for help.

These are easy answers, but facts don't bear them out. As we said, bodies are not turning up on roads. Desexed cats who are loved and well fed do not "roam" to the point where they are lost. And police are disinterested in reports of missing cats.

In any case, police cannot do as much as the caring owner has already done to recover a beloved pet.

We always suggest the following steps when a cat goes missing:

1. Knock on doors within a really wide radius of your

home, at least 6 to 8 blocks. Leave behind a leaflet with a description of the cat and a couple of contact numbers. If there is no-one at home, leave the leaflet in the letter box.

2. Put up large signs on telegraph poles over an even wider area than the door knock appeal. Put more in libraries and community centres and local shops.

3. Contact veterinarians in your own and surrounding suburbs, the Council, The RSPCA and The Animal Welfare League as well as the Society. Sometimes, the Principal of the local school can be persuaded to read out an announcement to children during assembly.

* Advertise in the local papers and The Sydney Morning Herald. Offer a reward.

* Scout the local parks, behind bushes, in common areas in unit buildings, in car parks, factories and service stations. Think of a frightened cat squeezing into a small space, and don't overlook a nook or cranny.

This is especially important around your own and your neighbours' homes. Sometimes neighbours are away, and the cat may have run under the house. Or they may have gone out and unknowingly locked it in a garage or laundry. Always go back a second time.

* Call the cat's name constantly on your travels, and go out at night with a torch, as well as during the day. Distressed owners do all this, sometimes for days and nights on end.

Yet still, cats aren't found.

Where are they?

We hope you can help.

S.A.F.E. is also helping

These initials stand for Save Animals From Exploitation. It is a group of young people who are primarily interested in saving fur bearing animals being bred and hunted for their fur.

S.A.F.E. has already been instrumental in having a number of fur shops in Sydney close down. It shares our concern that domestic cats are being stolen and killed, and their skins exported to trim fashion garments.

We will work with S.A.F.E. to collate information sent in by our members, and to follow up on any leads.

At weekends and out of office hours, when the Society's phones are not manned, you can ring S.A.F.E. direct on 327 2593.

Central Coast Calling



Photographed at Central Coast Cat Care's
April Meeting

Back row, June Brown (President) Sandra Eden (secretary) Daphne Cambridge (observed) Una Erickson (Op Shop Committee) Lynne Haines, Phyl Allen.

Front row, Lyn Campbell (Treasurer) and Merlene Nicholls with the latest little "rescue."

Yes, the Cat Carers are still busy on the Central Coast, due to the continuing wonderful support of all concerned, and the great volume of really saleable items which come in and out of our Op Shop at Umina like an XPT train!

The April meeting of Central Coast Cat Care Incorporated reported an all-time record of daily takings, worthy of mention in the Guinness Book of Records.

In fact, the shop has assumed an up market air, in some ways a little boutique. We have loads of fashion goods, in new or mint condition; bargains in good jewellery; kitchen and home wares of every description, even typewriters and a computer! Toys are popular, too. So even in times of gloom and doom, we've proved that you can appeal to customers with well presented stock, cheerful, bright sales ladies, and a pleasant atmosphere. Yes, our Thrift Shop at Umina is a little goldmine, and keeps our finances running very smoothly. Any Sydney members up our way, please pop in and say hello!

With the resignation of Mrs Judith Parsons, a new committee was appointed to manage the shop affairs. It comprises Mrs Una Erickson, Mrs June Brown (our President) and Mrs Lyn Campbell. It's amazing what three supportive people can achieve, the shop is running on oiled wheels. Another resignation was that of

Mrs Joan Lessells as Treasurer, and Mrs Lyn Campbell stepped into the breach, for which the group is truly thankful.

Over the summer season - really an Indian summer, and rather too long - kittens were still arriving on the scene in April. For the two Welfare Officers who handle the whole territory, Merlene Nichols and Jenny Robinson, business was really brisk.

We are proud to advise that Merlene notched up another wonderful score of 1656 desexings, female and male, from August 1988 to mid-April 1991. Under the present economic circumstances this took a bit of arranging, as many calls were received from cat owners in really dire financial straits.

Easter Saturday saw the group's stalwarts standing firm behind a street stall outside Fleming's supermarket at Umina. The weather man let us down badly! It was the only terrible, cold, wet day for many, many weeks. However, stalls are always a source of goodwill as well as revenue. We have found we always make new friends among local cat lovers, as well as visitors to our seaside resort, and this was the case even on a miserable day.

Secretary Sandra Eden has nobly offered to set up and edit a bi-annual newsletter for the group. Appeals have been made to members for contributions, and with the enthusiastic support we know will be forthcoming, we are sure the newsletter will go from strength to strength.

News is abroad that the RSPCA locally is to open its refuge at Somersby up in the hills area, probably with a cat boarding facility. With the long established and highly esteemed cattery (also for dogs) run by Mrs Jeanette McGowan, also at Somersby, our pets hereabouts will be extremely well catered for when it comes time to board them.

About the only thing we're missing at the moment is another experienced cat person to act as Welfare Officer, and fill the gap in the Woy Woy peninsula area. It is hoped someone will come forward in the near future, and volunteer for this most essential part of our work. Merlene and Jenny are working wonders, but this is such a huge area to cover.

The picture shows a number of the group who attended the April meeting in Umina, but excludes our "golden girl" Jenny Robinson, and the picture taker - me!

With fraternal greetings to the CPS from all here at Central Coast Cat Care.

Dorothy Haines (Honorary Life Members, CPS)



Sanctuary

*Enveloped in a peaceful purr,
I pause, and touching hand to fur,
Find sanctuary in my chair
While life, around me everywhere,
Roars on; yet quietly I sit
And hold the very heart of it
Which curls itself upon my lap
To take itself a little nap.*

- D. Siebert

Welfare Report

There's good news in the Welfare section. Sales of cats and kittens have suddenly soared, in fact we've almost been "cleaned out" on some weekends. We don't know why, but we're grateful anyway.

The office and Welfare girls are also incredibly busy. About this time of the year in the past, work has slackened off - but not this year. We're not complaining, of course! The message about desexing is getting through as never before, and our Society is better known than ever. Requests for help and information are coming in from every direction.

We are fortunate we now have a well trained team of Welfare officers, with Sandy Moss coming up to her 10th year with us in June. Congratulations, Sandy.

Despite the economic situation, we're happy to report that up to date, no cats are being handed in for financial reasons - their owners can't afford to keep them. Of course, we do have surrenders, but they're for the usual reasons - allergies, new baby, unable to take their pet to a flat, etc.

Now, here are two pieces of advice that members can pass on to friends, neighbours, colleagues:

1. Advise people to consider the responsibilities of owning a cat - not only the costs of vaccination and desexing, but the commitment to love and care for it for many years.

2. When transporting a cat, it is essential to have a suitable carrier. Carrying a cat in your arms is certainly asking for trouble. We've had several little animals who have escaped their owners' arms into busy Enmore Road. One terrified mite was never recovered.

Failing a proper carrying cage, get two strong cardboard boxes from a fruit shop, the type with holes around them. Place one over another, the holes coinciding, so the cat has ample fresh air. Tie securely, so the cat can't push its way out.

Finally, thanks to our latest office helper, Councillor Beverley Walsh. Bev comes in on Friday mornings to help us with our busy phones. Councillor Lena Larsen is on deck most days, of course, attending to a dozen and one matters in the office, and Councillor June Chapman has provided invaluable help for many years.

With work coming in at its present rate, we certainly couldn't do without you!

- Nance Iredale



Announcement



Mrs Sybil Cozens announces her retirement from the Opportunity Shop Auxiliary and the State Council of The Cat Protection Society.

It is with deep regret that State Council was notified of the resignation of Mrs Cozens as Vice President of the Council at its meeting held on April 24. Simultaneously, Sybil resigned as President of the Auxiliary, and will resign from the Auxiliary itself at the Annual General Meeting.

As Jo Tomkin says in her message from the Auxiliary, Sybil has had the unflinching help of her husband Gordon during all these years.

Their contribution to the Society has been invaluable, backed by a dedicated group of volunteers working "behind the scenes" at the shop, as well as the front counter.

Council joins with the Auxiliary in wishing Sybil and Gordon a fulfilling retirement.

We know they will watch the progress of the shop with interest, confident that Council regards it as a vital part of the Society's operations, and will continue to offer it every support and encouragement.

Now, here is Sybil's last "Auxiliary Jottings." The Auxiliary's tribute appears on the facing page.

AUXILIARY JOTTINGS

By Sybil Cozens

After twelve years of being the "Anchor Woman" for the Auxiliary, I'm weighing anchor and sailing into the calmest waters.

I well remember that wintery June afternoon in 1979 amid the organised chaos of preparation of 103, when at the request of the then President, Mr. Ron Carberry, I chaired a meeting of a small group of ladies to form the Auxiliary to run the Op Shop. Only Jo, Hilda and I remain of that dedicated group.

I could write reams about incidents, happenings and disasters that have occurred during the past twelve years, but instead I want to thank all the workers who have passed through our doors, the member donors for varied and beautiful shop stock, and the pick up people, for all the kilometres they have travelled to collect these donated goods. The Auxiliary is indeed indebted to one and all.

Over the years the Auxiliary has established guidelines both through trial and error and brilliant ideas.

I'm handing the anchor over to Jo. As she is currently the Vice-President, she will organise the continued running of the Op Shop until the Annual General Meeting. She has agreed to stand for the position of President and with her knowledge of the day to day operations of the Op Shop, I know she will be a popular choice.

Pick-up for Donated Goods

Jo is arranging "pick ups" as from this journal, so please telephone her on 713 8576.

Stamps

Please send your Australian and overseas stamps to -
Dr. Barbara Levien,
5 Tupper Street,
MARRICKVILLE. 2204.

or to the Op Shop marked for her attention. Barbara is going to organise the bulk sale of stamps so can you please keep them separate - Australian in one bundle and overseas in the other. This is required by law.



Vale, Mrs Eileen Green

It is with extreme sadness that I report the passing of Mrs. Eileen Green, formerly of Bankstown. You may not remember her name but you will recall the "bouquets" written about the lady in Bankstown for her never-ending supply of work. We used to pick up whole car loads of hand-crafted goods. She was the person responsible for those beautiful hand knitted children's jumpers and clothes, and many other things.

About three years ago, her son Alan and Gwen built a home at Kings Langley complete with "Granny Flat" and so Mrs. Green moved - with all her cats - and contentment reigned supreme.

Here is a picture of her cat Emma, 16 and still enjoying the "good life".

The Auxiliary mourns her passing, and cats everywhere have lost a friend.

- Sybil Cozens.





To Sybil and Gordon from the Auxiliary



It's twenty five years since The Cat Protection Society was fortunate enough to have you both join as Life Members. For many years you both worked so hard organising garden parties, stalls, product demonstration afternoons, and many other functions as a means of raising funds for the welfare of cats.

A lot of hard work went into organising and running all the above, but not nearly as much as was to follow in the "behind the scenes" running of the Opportunity Shop which opened in September 1979.

The "Op Shop" has gone from strength to strength, donating in these twelve years over a quarter of a million dollars to the work of the Society. Most of this

attainment has been due to the hard and constant work of both of you - driving all over Sydney almost every day to pick up goods, the hard and unenviable job of unpacking, sorting, tagging, pricing of the goods and clothing - to mention just a few. Some folk have thought there is a "good fairy" who comes every night and replenishes and tidies the shop, etc., but those of us who are wiser know that most of that replenishment, etc. is the outcome of much hard work by Sybil and Gordon.

Our thanks seem quite inadequate. But we do thank you most sincerely for all you have done in the past, and we wish you both the best of health and happiness for the years that lie ahead.

How the Gulf War affected animals in Israel

One of our Councillors, Shirley Pikler, receives a regular newsletter from the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in Israel. This account is taken from the March newsletter. It vividly points up how "the simple things of life" go on, despite catastrophes.



Our sources in England and America informed us that there were no known gas masks for dogs. We were able to give the telephone numbers of firms and private individuals who offered gas-free containers for dogs and cats, but the price demanded was apparently more than the average pet owner could afford.

The advice we gave our members and the public was to take the pet into the sealed room they used, and to use a muzzle, with gauze soaked in water and bicarbonate of soda as a filter in the muzzle.

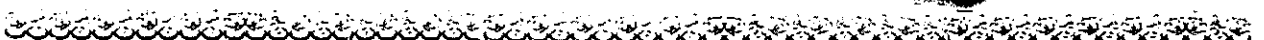
On the first day of hostilities, the whole of Israel was told to remain at home, and when alerted, to go into the sealed room prepared for the purpose. Essential services worked on an emergency basis. From the outset, our shelter functioned with an emergency staff and volunteers doing the essentials of cleaning and feeding only, until the authorities allowed people back to work. When this happened we were open to the public again but went on to a shorter working day. We had to be sure that our workers would be home safe before dark, because the rocket firing took place towards evening and at night.

The public brought in pets for medical attention. There were two specific cases connected with the war. The first was a mixed breed terrier handed in after the first rocket attack. It was alive but had convulsions, and was paralysed in the hindquarters. The vet had to put it to sleep. In the second case, explosions and sirens kept a terrified cat up a high tree for four days, unable to descend because of its fear. We were able to rescue the cat with the help of a very long aluminium pole, used as a lasso. It showed no visible signs of its ordeal.

Obviously, with the public having a survival problem themselves, adopting pets was not a priority during this time. However, we must draw attention to the fact that more people than we expected took pet dogs and cats from the shelter during these difficult days. We think the reason was for the comfort and diversion they provided the family. Throughout the country, salaries were paid in full during the whole war period, despite the fact that most businesses did not function for up to a week. And activities at the shelter are back to normal again as from the last day of February. To end this post war newsletter on an optimistic note, our shelter in Jaffa and the new shelter being built in the area survived the rockets.



- Hilda Friedstein,
Chairperson.



Second Runner-up in our Cat Story Contest

Beau's Story

By Mrs I Smith of Arcadia

When I was 16, my girl friend and I rescued Beau from the Year 12 boys at school, who were using him as a football. He was about four months old, a small grey bundle with curly fur around his ears.

An ancestor was obviously some sort of long hair, as Beau's fur was some centimetres in length. I took him home and named him after a character in "Gone With The Wind," which I was reading at the time.

Beau formed an instant friendship with my horse Chester. Beau would climb up the stable wall and jump onto Chester's rump, nicely padded with a warm New Zealand rug. There he would sleep for some hours.

The memory of the warm stable in the evenings, with Chester munching into his feed, and Beau purring away his content, is still very clear after 15 years.

Sometimes Beau would jump onto Chester's back when he was not wearing a rug. Chester used to tolerate this until a playful claw pricked his thoroughbred skin, and then he would give a couple of shakes. When this happened, Beau would jump lightly to the ground and wait for another time.

Beau also used to lick Chester's hooves. We came to the conclusion that the hoof oil was providing some deficiency in Beau's diet. Chester used to stand like a rock while Beau licked away, and never once even stood on the cat's tail. It was amazing how many times Chester used to stand on MY feet, though!

Beau had two happy years with Chester, then very sadly, was one night killed by a snake. Chester was put to sleep four years ago, at the ripe old age of 30, after breaking a leg.

I very much hope that Beau and Chester have been reunited in their stable in the sky.



Pen Friends' Column

To get in touch with the following members, just send a letter addressed to their pen-name, c/- The Cat Protection Society, 103 Enmore Road, Enmore, 2042.



I am a sole parent with a 15 year old daughter. Have been divorced for years, and am 50 years old.

I am a musician and gravitate towards classical music. I love all animals, especially cats, and love travelling when the opportunity arises. My main interests are gardening, psychology, medicine, cooking and enjoying good movies.

I would really love a pen friend or two!

Pisces



My name at school was Felix. Felix the Cat cartoons were popular then, and also it was close to my maiden name. So that will be my pen name now!

I only have one old cat at the moment, though usually I have two or three.

I live alone now, and my hobbies are gardening, photography, travel, theatre, reading and movies - mainly on TV. I also enjoy some TV programmes, especially wild life, and music.

I collect plates - the kind that hang on the wall - and music boxes. I also love trying ethnic foods, usually at their restaurants.

I would especially like to write to those in units or retirement villages who cannot have a cat.

Felix.



I am responding to the idea of a pen friends' column, which I think would be great. I would love to correspond with other cat lovers.

My interests and hobbies are Cats, Cats, Cats! travel, language (German), collecting dolls, teddy bears and thimbles.

I am almost 50 and on my own now, no family except for my four-legged variety. Love all cats, but am especially partial to Siamese, Balinese and Burman varieties.

I loved the comment in the last magazine about a home for tabbies. I just wish I could provide food and vet care for a dozen moggies, but since I was deserted several years ago things have become tighter, and there isn't the cash for the care I would wish to give them.

I live in the country, but sometimes wish I could be in Sydney, and help the Society in some way with voluntary work.

My pen name, incidentally, is the German word for kitten.

- Katzchen.



My name is Barbara, but I like Babs!

I am just 40 (alas!) and would love to write to any feline fanciers. I am completely in love with all cats, and also love reading, writing and gardens.

Maybe there are some older people out there, or lonely people (good sense of humour would be great!) who would like a pen-friendship. Or someone who is in hospital or a nursing home, perhaps.

I have a glossy black velvet cat named Jet, who, while appreciating affectionate, loving care, retains her wildness. She leaps to the tops of trees, pounces at me from behind bushes, even bites when I stroke her too much. But I love her!

I would love to hear about your pets, past or present, and promise to answer any letters received.

Babs.



To The Secretary, Cat Protection Society of NSW,
103 Enmore Road, ENMORE, 2042.

Membership

I/We apply for membership or renewal of membership for the year commencing June, 1991. (Note: Those joining between January and June remain financial until June, 1992.)

Subscription:

Life membership - \$250.00 Annual membership - \$10.00

Pensioner Membership - \$5.00 Pension Number

Junior membership (16 and under) - \$5.00

Enclosed is cheque/money order for \$.....

My name and address are given below.

Donation

I/We would like to make a donation towards the humane work of the Society.

Enclosed is cheque/money order for \$.....

Please cross all cheques and make payable to
THE CAT PROTECTION SOCIETY OF NSW

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss Initials
SURNAME, Block letters please.

Address:

Postcode: Telephone:



Change of Address Form

The Membership Secretary,
The Cat Protection Society of N.S.W.
103 Enmore Road, ENMORE, 2042.

(Please cut out and return
to address shown)

If you have changed your address since applying for new membership or renewal, would you be kind enough to fill in this form

Surname Initials
(BLOCK LETTERS, PLEASE)

New Address
..... Postcode

Previous Address:

Thank you for your co-operation

The Bicentennial Cat

By Joan Rudd

*I'm Gilbert. I'm a cat with style, a multi-cultural cat,
for my lineage is varied - and I'm rather proud of that.
My forebears had connections from Old Egypt to Siam,
so, to represent Australia, you can guess who's tops. I am.*

*I was born just north of Sydney in nineteen eighty-eight,
on the twenty-sixth of January, a very special date.
It's important to our family as it celebrates the day
when our illustrious ancestor arrived at Botany Bay.
My mother tells the story of that drama long ago,
Now - in this bicentennial year - I think the world should know.*

*So . . . let's go back two hundred years, to London's waterfront
where lived a young ambitious Tom, whose job it was to hunt
the mice and rats around the wharves. But he had a secret wish,
to sail on a ship to distant lands, over seas with the flying fish.
For he'd heard strange tales that the sailors told about life before the mast,
so he seized an opportunity when it came his way at last.*

*He heard a Fleet was sailing to a place called Botany Bay,
so he said good-bye to all his friends and secretly stowed away.*

*Meanwhile, on another ship, some mice had crept on board
and found a little hidey-hole down where the grain was stored.*

The Fleet set sail; the voyage was long; Tom's black-cat luck held good.

Some friendly sailors found him and they fed him when they could.

*At last, one blazing summer's day, they reached their destination
and everybody cheered, they saw the end of all privation.*

*But oh how wrong they proved to be! They'd not been long on land
when troubles seemed to multiply and nothing went as planned.*

*They were short of tools, of clothes, of food. And then the wheat crop failed.
They were down to the last few bags of grain, stored when the ship had sailed.*

*But when the bags were brought they found that every one was burst,
for though they'd been stacked carefully, those mice had got there first.
Worse still, the mice now swarmed ashore, in hundreds, nibbling madly.*

"What can we do? We have no traps," the people grumbled sadly.

Tom knew the answer. In a flash he streaked off into action.

He worked so fast that Governor Phillip beamed his satisfaction.

*Tom killed those wild colonial mice, though some just rushed away
to hide for safety in the bush. What's more, they stayed away.*

*"Saved by this cat!" The Governor cried, "just when our hopes were zero
He must receive a just reward. What can we give our hero?"*

A lady from the crowd spoke up. "Oh sir, now that you ask it,

I have the very thing for him, here, hidden in my basket."

and up she held a little cat she'd smuggled on the ship.

Tom met this pretty tabby girl; his whiskers twitched with joy.

She fluttered sea-green eyes at him, demure and sweetly coy.

Well . . . they made a home in Sydney Town, none happier could be found.

Soon there were kittens everywhere, in homes for miles around.

Now - I am their descendant. No doubt at all of that.

And I was born on Australia Day . . . I'm a Bicentennial Cat!

*Ed's note: CPS member Joan wrote this poem especially for Australia's
Bicentenary, and received an award for it.*





All the *Fun* and **Facts** about your Cat's first year

By Dr Kim Kendall

This is a very appropriate period for a vet to write about, as it is the time when you will be visiting your vet most frequently.

In fact, the first year can seem like one long appointment at the clinic, if your cat is particularly adventuresome or accident prone!

I do recommend that owners consider getting some pet insurance for the first year or two of a cat's life (yes, there is some insurance available), as it's certainly the most likely age for being stepped on, run over, being stung by bees, running away and generally getting into fights and "curiosity troubles." You could ask your vet about it.

Be that as it may, there is a structure of events in which your vet features as part of the routine rather than emergency, and it is these predictable events I will discuss.

Motherhood and early kittenhood is usually taken care of by Someone Else, and a new owner's responsibility to a kitten most often starts when it's between 6 and 12 weeks old.

Kittens start playing with solid food from about 3 weeks, and usually are weaned and able to eat by themselves from 6 weeks. For kittens between 6 and 10 weeks I

recommend feeding small amounts 3 to 5 times a day (small portions won't overload the digestive system.)

Use a good quality canned food, varying the types and including meat as well as fish. Make sure fresh water is always available - a few bowls placed here and there, so the kitten won't have to think too hard about where to go to find a drink!

It is possible for an owner to make up a well balanced diet without using canned food, but if this is the case, careful attention must be paid to calcium and vitamin requirements. It certainly makes it easy to use the canned product, varying it now and then with chopped fresh meat, boned fresh fish, and (no more than once a week) a little chopped liver or kidney. Should your kitten have milk? It's not a requirement in a balanced diet, and some cats cannot tolerate it. Others don't suffer any digestive upsets, so a small bowl very occasionally can be offered as a treat. Don't give your kitten milk again if there is any sign of diarrhoea after drinking it.

The next essential requirement after a good diet is a warm, dry place for your kitten to sleep, away from draughts. A sturdy cardboard box lined with an old sweater or blanket is fine, with one side cut down so the kitten can jump in and out.

Litter training shouldn't be a problem. Kittens of 6 weeks are usually trained already, so accidents usually mean there's a digestive or social problem to be corrected. Just make sure the litter is replaced as often as necessary - faeces should be removed at once, and the litter musn't become damp or smelly or it will repel your fastidious little cat.

It is very important to keep the kitten inside until its full vaccination course is completed, hence the litter tray. Every backyard and garden is visited by other cats, and you don't want to expose your kitten to the risk of infection.

Your first visit to the vet should be within a few days of adopting your new companion, unless she has already had her first vaccination. At this first visit, the vet will check the kitten for all manner of congenital problems, including hernias, heart murmurs and obvious malformations, as well as infectious problems such as flu, fever, ringworms, and ear mites.

Don't be frightened to ask questions! Your vet will be happy to discuss diet or anything else of an individual nature. This first visit will probably also include a vaccination for flu and enteritis, and a complete worming, which will need to be repeated at home as the vet advises.

The next few weeks will be taken up in a mutual learning process . . . you getting to know your kitten, and the kitten getting to know everyone in the household - including other cats, goldfish, moths and people. It will also be exploring, with close attention paid to curtain rails, cupboard tops, the insides of closets as well as the more obvious pieces of furniture.

You will find that your kitten does an enormous amount of playing - even cat owners tend to forget how frisky a kitten can be, with an average of 12 to 20 years between kittens! This is one of the reasons why it is actually easier to raise two kittens together - they become each other's play objects, without much involvement necessary from you.

In fact, a kitten deprived of play can become "play aggressive," attacking toes and moving its legs too powerfully for comfort.

If you just have one kitten, it's a good idea to have suitable objects for it to play with. Ping pong balls and scrunched up pieces of paper make fine toys, so do empty cotton reels. A great favourite is a piece of scrunched up paper tied with a string to the back of a chair, low enough for the kitten to bat with its paw. (Just be careful the string isn't the unravelley kind that might snag its claws.) A bell firmly tied to the top of the string will produce a musical toy. Remember, the point is

FIRMLY tied - cats can swallow the string, and require subsequent surgery. You will also need to handle the kitten often, and not always in a stimulating manner. A calm time on your lap after a hard session of play is a good habit to start now, if you want your cat to enjoy being nursed regularly.

It is counter productive to try to hold an excited, playful kitten on your knee by force. This early time of its life is the only stage when a kitten learns long lasting habits - after about 14 weeks, you can only modify habits that have become more or less established. So, try to make sure everything you do is directed at helping the kitten learn "the rules of the house."

That means, if the rule is "no cats on the best sofa," you should start now, and be firm and consistent. Use a water pistol, if necessary, to make the point. A scratching post should also be introduced at an early age, especially for a cat that will be primarily kept indoors. Remember, the fewer bad habits now, the fewer problems later!

About 4 weeks after your first visit to the vet, you will probably have your next appointment. Depending on the age of the kitten (10 to 11 weeks), this may be the second of three injections, or, if the kitten is 12 to 14 weeks, its last injection for the year.



At these vaccination visits, any problems can be discussed, and desexing is usually mentioned, with an appropriate age recommended by the vet. The worming programme becomes less intense (adults need worming only 2 to 4 times a year), and the number of feeds is reduced to two or three times a day.

Dried food can be introduced in small amounts from 14 weeks, if you so wish (there is a discussion of the dried food debate in the Questions and Answers page.) Flea control can start from 16 weeks, and is also dealt with in Questions and Answers.

Your kitten at 16 weeks is now an adolescent, and can be allowed outdoors if you wish. But some cats have happily spent all their lives indoors, and in any case, all cats should be kept indoors at night if this is at all possible.

It's outdoors that cats get into the most trouble, with cars, dogs, and wild or dominant cats. Now is also the age for falling off balconies, rooftops and trees - yes, cats can fall, and despite their agility can be injured.

The next scheduled visit to the vet will probably be for desexing. Your own vet will have views on the age this should take place, but personally, I recommend doing female cats from 4 months on. I have seen a percentage of females in season at 4 and a half months, and consequently very pregnant at 6 months. This is particularly so for kittens born in late winter or early spring. As summer days increase in length, the extra hours of daylight provide an intense stimulus to hormonal maturation. So the young cat comes into season earlier than a kitten born in summer or early autumn.

In addition, most house cats these days are well fed. They reach two thirds of their mature body weight fairly early, and this weight gives them an early entry to "puberty," as it were. An additional consideration is that it is progesterone, the hormone of pregnancy, that stimulates breast cancer in cats. So if a female cat is allowed to become pregnant, there is a greater likelihood of malignant breast cancer later in life.

I feel these are all good arguments for spaying before 6 months, and can reassure you that there will not be a decrease in adult size, or a greater tendency to put on excess weight.

On the other hand, wait until six months to have your male cat desexed. The longer you leave a male, the more masculine he looks - more solid, and with a wider face.

By the time you get to the first annual booster vaccination, you and your cat will know each other very well.

If she is an only cat, she will have trained you perfectly. If she is part of a group of felines, she has become an additional supervisor of your efforts.

And if she stays out of trouble from here on, your visits to the vet will just be for her annual boosters. Given good food, a warm bed and lots of love, there is every chance she'll remain in good health for many, many years as part of your mutual admiration society.



Emily and Chirpa

At 3 and a half years old, Emily of Arcadia is one of the very youngest members of the Society. Her mother Ingrid is teaching her to care for pets, and she and Chirpa already have a devoted partnership. Yes, Emily attends to Chirpa's meals all by herself, and also brushes and combs him. Clever Emily, lucky tabby!



SIAMESE CATS

But what are their faults compared with their virtues... with their sense of humour, their fidelity, their dauntless courage (unless they think they've seen a ghost, when they will tear away like so many animated brushes), their playfulness (they will retrieve a piece of paper as many times as you will throw it for them), their awareness of themselves so that each one of my eleven knows its own name, their love of people rather than place; their honesty (by which I mean they'll take a lobster off the table in front of you), their continuous passionate interest in all that is going on around them, and their depth of affection, which they are able to show in so many exquisite ways?

- Compton MacKenzie

?

QUESTIONNAIRE

Let's Learn About Each Other's Cats

Please fill in this questionnaire and return it to the editor, Cat Affairs, 103 Enmore Road, Enmore, 2042. I'll collate the information and publish the results in the next issue of "Cat Affairs."

It will be interesting and useful to learn about each other's companions, and we may turn up a few surprises!

If there's not enough room for some of your replies, attach a separate sheet of paper. I do look forward to hearing from you.

- Julie Gorrick.

Section 1. General Information.

How many cats do you have?

How did you acquire them?

Brief description of each cat (names, ages, colour, desexed or not)

Are the cats your responsibility, or do you share this with others in the house?

Section 2. Feeding.

How many times a day do you feed them?

Please describe their diet (including brand names of canned and dried food.)

Do they drink milk, water, or both?

Have you ever had a feeding problem - eg, they have "gone off" a certain brand of food?

Have you ever had to seek veterinary advice about their diet?

Section 3. Life Styles.

Are they indoor or outdoor cats (or a bit of both)

Where do they sleep?

Do they get on with each other?

Do they use a litter tray or the garden?

Do they have special toys or playthings?

Section 4. Communication.

Do your cats come when you call them?

Do you have a favourite, and why?

Have you ever had a telepathic experience with a cat?

Can they generally make their needs understood?

Do they ever do inexplicable things?

Do they welcome visitors?

Section 5. Health.

Do your cats have a booster vaccination each year?

What illnesses have they had?

Were you happy with the care received?

Do you use any home remedies on your cats?

.....

.....

Do you worm them regularly?

How do you cope with fleas?

.....

.....

Anything else you'd like to add about health in

general?

.....

.....

Section 6. Grooming.

How often do you brush and/or comb your cats?

.....

Do they ever have a bath (please describe!)

.....

.....

Do you allow them on furniture?

.....

Do they have a scratching post?

Do you clean their teeth?

Any special grooming tips?

.....

.....

.....

Section 7. Travel.

What do you do with your cats when you go on

holiday?

.....

.....

Would you like to mention the name of a cattery or pet

care service?

.....

Do you take your cats out in the car? Any tips on car

travel?

.....

.....

Have you ever put off holidays because of the cats?

.....

Are they pleased to see you when you return, or does

it take time for them to adjust?

.....

Section 8. Special Mentions.

What is your favourite cat book or books?

.....

Do you celebrate your cats' birthdays?

How do you cope with friends who don't like cats?

.....

.....

How would you rank these adjectives in describing the

special appeal cats have for you? (Put an A against the

one that appeals to you most, then B, and so on.)

Beautiful Affectionate Loyal

Intelligent Independent Loving

Companionable Mysterious Graceful.....

Are there other words you would like to add?

.....

.....

If you live in a unit or flat where cats aren't allowed,

have you tried to have the rules changed?

Have you made provision for your cats' welfare in case

of your death? (Please describe)

.....

Do you carry a card in your wallet with instructions for

your cat's welfare in case of emergency?

.....

.....

Is there a problem with stray cats in your neighbour-

hood?

Anything else you'd like to say about your cats, or cats

in general?

.....

.....

Name:

Address:

.....P/C.....

Thank you for taking the time to answer





QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

with Dr Kim Kendall

Do you have any questions you'd like answered about your own cat, or cats in general? Just send them in to "Questions and Answers," 103 Enmore Road, Enmore, 2042.

Flea Control

Question:

I would like your view on flea collars, please. Are the herbal ones less inclined to cause an allergic reaction than the conventional ones? Can either of them be worn safely by kittens and young cats?

Personally, I find the flea comb the most effective method of flea control, but some of my friends don't like removing fleas from the comb and use collars instead. To me, there's a lot of satisfaction in cracking the fleas, but they're more squeamish!

Fran (Epping)

Answer:

Let me establish at the start that unless you and your cat live in a hermetically sealed environment, you will not eliminate fleas from your lives. Secondly, there are people more technically experienced in this field from whom I try to take advice. And thirdly, there are some cats who seem to be more repellant to fleas than others, and some who cannot tolerate one flea. I have seen a kitten very distressed by fleas, while his siblings seem to rest comfortably though reddened by flea dirt.

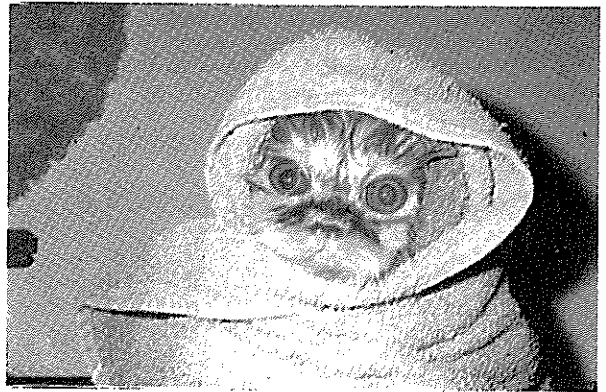
Rather than answer each of your questions individually, I will present a general flea control discussion, and answer the questions within that context.

To begin with, just relying on a flea collar of any sort, or capturing individual fleas, is only skimming the surface of the problem, and ensures a large and thriving flea population.

For instance, even a thorough search will only reveal 10 to 15% of the fleas that are currently on the cat. Further, the fleas on the cat are only 5-10% of the total number in the environment! This means you really are only seeing the tip of the iceberg when you sight or catch a few fleas on your pet. Therefore, any discussion of flea control has to include a discussion of environmental control, and until recently, only pretty toxic agents were available to help in this area.

*Now there is methoprene, a growth inhibitor which prevents flea larvae from maturing, and is very safe for any animal - including insects - other than the flea itself. Methoprene is the ingredient in several new types of flea bombs, which provide up to nine months' protection from fleas **INDOORS**.*

Once your home is effectively defleaed, then cat collars of various types, powders, sprays and food additives are useful, as they only have to deal with the occasional flea collected out of doors. (Or one which physically hops inside under its own steam.)



Make sure the kitten is dried thoroughly after a bath.

As for flea collars, no type should be used on a cat aged less than 3 to 4 months, and if a cat licks or chews a collar with some of the volatile oils such as pennyroyal, tea tree or eucalyptus, it can have an adverse reaction. I think, myself, that good quality insectidal flea collars, applied at the correct length for the cat (no excess "for luck"), and changed at least as often as the label recommends, are effective when combined with environment control. A tip: take the collar out of the pack and air it for 24 hours before putting on the cat.

For cats sensitive to plastic, weekly sprays or powders can be used instead of the collar.

With all this, a cat who is allergic to fleas will still have occasional problems, but reducing its exposure by the measures outlined is often enough to bring a good measure of freedom from continual flea searching and skin itching.

Young kittens with fleas can be bathed in warm water, preferably using a pyrethrin shampoo. This will stun the fleas long enough for them to be removed. Make sure to rinse thoroughly after washing, and either blow dry the fur or towel thoroughly. Keep the kitten inside till thoroughly dried.

And yes, as well as everything else, a daily comb with a flea comb is a good idea, as it combines grooming with catching fleas. How you dispose of the captured enemy is up to you!

The Dried Food Debate

Question:

I read with interest your article on nutrition in the September issue of "Cat Affairs." You referred briefly to the "dried food debate," but I would like specific answers to my questions, if that's possible.

About four times a week I add about half a cup of dried food to my cats' evening meal. I put it on the side of their plates with canned fish or meat. They enjoy it, and have shown no ill effects. I have been doing this for many years, and the cats are now aged 10, 8 and 6. There are two neutered males and a desexed female. As they are getting on in years, should I continue feeding dried food in these amounts, or give it up entirely? How do you know if your cat is one of the 1% who might have acid urine, and so have a bad response to dried food? I know of some cat owners who give their pets more dried food than I do, with no apparent ill effect. I know others who will never feed dried food, "just in case." Naturally, my cats always have access to fresh water, and seem to drink quite a lot. I suppose dried food is fairly salty, which encourages them to drink.

Anyway to sum it up, would you feed dried food to your own cats, and in what amount?

William (Sans Souci)

Answer:

In my experience, cats who are going to have a problem with dried food are usually in trouble by the age of 2 years. The females have episodes of blood in their urine and straining, the males have the same, and may have sufficient crystals to cause a blockage of the urethra (the exit from the bladder), leading to a severe crisis. There are cats with cystitis who have never eaten dried food, and some who have not been neutered, so the problem is not simply one of a dried food diet or desexing.

Anecdotally, the problem is so common in Bahrain, that one vet does a "sex change" on male cats, routinely with castration, to avoid blockage problems later. In answer to your specific questions, I would say at their ages, your cats have proven that they can tolerate the mixture of tinned and dried food that you have been providing. However, with regard to the general principles of feeding dried food, the debate is complicated by the fact that the acidity of urine changes, depending on whether the cats eat only once/twice a day or eat snacks all day. In the former case, more alkaline urine is produced, which can lead to problems. If the cat is a "snacker," the urine is more acid, which is better.

In looking for the 1% likely to be affected by dried food, and as it is alkaline urine that is part of the problem, you might wish to have your cats' urine tested. Your vet may be able to encourage them to urinate during their next visit, or you can collect urine at home. Take the litter out of the tray and line the tray with cling film, then take the urine to the vet as soon as possible afterwards.

Some cats just won't cooperate by giving a sample, though, and unless you really suspect something is wrong, I wouldn't harrass the cat any further.

I would like to be able to state without reservations or qualifications that every cat will be fine on "A grammes of tinned plus B grammes of dried food, fed at X am and Y pm, with Z cc's of fresh water to be drunk each day." It is just not possible, and besides, then cats would be machines and not the individuals they are.

In general, introducing cats to a mixed diet when they are kittens, keeping a plentiful supply of water available - and being aware of any changes in eating or drinking habits - is the commonsense approach. If your cats are happy and healthy with their current routine, don't change it.



It was quite a party

When Siamese Cricket turned the grand old age of 16, owner Joan Haub of West Wyalong decided it was time for a special party.

That's Cricket blowing out the candles on her cake (she asked for a sponge with pink icing.) One of her favourite gifts, a handsome sleep igloo, is in the background. Cricket's hat had fallen off by this stage but two of the guests - Rama and Sinta - managed to keep theirs in place right through the party.



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FORM OF BEQUEST

To those caring persons who may be disposed to assist our Society in its work, the following Form of Bequest is suggested:

I give and bequeath to "The Cat Protection Society of New South Wales," for the use and purpose of the said Society, the sum of _____ dollars, free of all death and estate duties, and the receipt of the treasurer of the said Society shall be sufficient discharge to my Executors.

The Society, being a corporate body, can receive bequests of real estate as well as money.

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR LETTERS



This is Bambi with her annual treat of Christmas bush.



From Elizabeth Strachan of Chatswood:

This is a photo of my cat Bambi. Her favourite occupation at Christmas time is eating Christmas bush.

She does not touch other flowers I have in the house during the year, but as soon as I pick the Christmas bush she jumps on the table and starts to nibble. Do

any other members have cats with similar peculiar habits, I wonder?

Keep up the good work with "Cat Affairs." I keep all my copies, as they are handy to refer to at a later date for articles such as "The Geriatric Cat."



From Senta Jerabek of Matraville:

My name is Senta, and I'm the "Pick Up Lady" in the Eastern Suburbs for goods donated to the Opportunity Shop.

Like most volunteers, I'm neither young nor a superwoman. So I hope you won't mind a few hints on how you can help us when donating goods:

1. Please don't use very large boxes, they are hard to fit in cars and impossible to carry down stairs in blocks of flats.
2. Kindly collect your goods until you have about one car load ready, to save us unnecessary trips.

3. As much as you can, make sure all goods are saleable. Once I was given a huge bag of shoes, most of them with the heels missing! Another time I drove almost an hour to be given a very small parcel.

Your assistance in these matters would really be appreciated, and you can further help the Society by telling your friends and neighbours about the shop.

A good idea, next time you or a friend plan a party, is to ask guests to bring along any spare clothing or small knick knacks for the shop. Then a "Pick Up Lady" can collect them all from the one address.



New members . . . Thank you for joining us!

The following members joined the Society during February, March and the first part of April. We thank you all for your interest and support, and hope you'll be with us for many years to come.

Please don't hesitate to send stories and/or pictures of your cats to the magazine. We get to know each other in this way, and being able to share our love of cats is one of the nicest things about membership of the Society.

Ms A Churchill of Elanora Heights. Mr S Renshaw of Petersham. Mr R Hungerford of Wentworth Falls. Mrs A Chessell of Dulwich Hill. Ms V Gordon of Glebe. Ms H Hanson of Dee Why. Ms D Cross of Warrawee. Mrs M Smith of Rydalmere. Ms J Hodge of Balgowlah. Miss J Harding of Petersham. Mr T Smith of Greenacre. Mrs M Cavanagh of Bligh Park. Mrs D Mathews of West Clair. Ms L Davies of Erskine Park. Miss C Parker of South Coogee. Mrs G Findley of Lidcombe. Miss E Smith of Arcadia. Mrs Bullock



From Joan Clarke of Cremorne:

Although not accepting the word "only," I was moved by this poignant tribute to a cat, found in a book I read recently. It was seen in a London garden in a residential street. Cemented on to the low wall was a black memorial plaque with white lettering. The inscription read:

Naughty puss. Died Boxing Day 1914.

He was only a cat, but he did his best.

Ed's note: Do any other readers know of epitaphs to cats? There isn't really a logical link, but this inscription reminds me of a poem I learned as a little girl:

I had a little dog called Tim.

I put him in the bath to see if he could swim.

He drank all the water, and ate all the soap . . .

I too him to the doctor and the doctor said

"No hope."

Isn't it amazing the silly rhymes that stick in your head through the years, when nobler ones come and go!

of West Ryde. Mrs L Swan of Normanhurst. Mrs E Senz of Winston Hills. Miss P Rogers of Darlinghurst. Mrs J Ronai of Vacluse. Mrs K Carley of East Killara. Mr P Andrew of Bellevue Hill. Ms K Vesik of Enmore. Ms O Roth of Drummoyne. Mr J Coughlan of Drummoyne. Mr R Hickel of Avoca Beach. Ms C Lewins of Coogee. Mr R Yuke of Bondi Beach. Mrs J Lee of Springwood. Mrs M Chappell of Carey Bay. Miss S Harvey of Kensington. Mrs S Rando of Kingsgrove. Mrs M McGowan of Copacabana. Mrs R Deemer of Seven Hills. Mrs E McMahon of Gladesville. Ms P Della-Fiorentina of Quakers Hill. Mrs I Key of Blacktown. Mrs L Clark of Blacktown. Mr G Foster of Roseville. Ms W Francis of Narrabeen North. Mrs E Spark of Bayview. Mrs M Wait of Bass Hill. Mr C Newman of Blacktown. Mrs S Hartley of Five Dock. Mrs D Helder of Auburn. Mrs A Kensell of Bondi. Mr and Mrs O'Hanian of Lane Cove. Mr and Mrs Tolliday of Bankstown. Master D Gorrick of Randwick. Master T Fenwick of Glebe. Miss J Rahe of Villawood. Miss E Moxon of Villawood. Ms N Mills of Wollongong. Ms N Reidy of Grays Point. Ms C Dillon of Raby. Mrs J Law of Annandale. Ms L Jockel of Paddington. Mr and Mrs Davies of Plumpton. Mrs H Dockrill of Lidcombe. Ms C Johnston of Auburn. Ms G Winch of Auburn. Ms A Reynolds of Leichardt. Ms J Marion of Lidcombe. Ms R Crowhurst of Dundas. Mr G Tsousis of Annandale. Ms D Richardson of Curtin, ACT. Ms M Joce of Auburn. Mr J Roveen of Auburn. Mr W Cantrill of Marrickville. Mrs K Duvall of Norfolk Island. Mrs G Bamber of St Ives. Mrs J Vanderheyden of Elanora Heights. Ms V Gray of Mortdale.



From Mrs Mabs Finch of Winston Hills:

Thank you for sending me the wonderful Christmas edition of "Cat Affairs." I only wish I could take a more active interest in your practical work . . . but at 86, and in a retirement village on a limited income, I can only manage the barest of extras.

We have a lot of birds here . . . sparrows, bulbuls, mynahs and some doves. I buy a bag of wild bird seed every week or two for them.

Neighbouring cats come night and morning for a little hand out - mainly any meat I can't eat at my own meals, plus some tinned fish and dried food.

When I was living in the country I could do a lot to help Mrs Duport of Chittaway Point, and boarded many a pregnant cat for her until the kittens were born, and old enough for new homes. I do miss that life!

Wishing a happy year to all my fellow members, Mabs.

First runner up in our Cat Story Contest

Old One-eye

By Natalie Mills of Wollongong

"Get that cat out of the garden!"

Old One-Eye, as my mother and I affectionately termed him, gave my father a quick, tentative glance from behind the azalea bush.

He was clearly so used to rejection. He walked with a limp, one ear was ripped, he was so thin, his coat was all matted and he only had one eye. A poor lost or abandoned cat, no longer the cute black kitten he must once have been.

Our other feline resident, the glossy spoilt Agatha, sat prettily on kitchen chairs. They seemed from different worlds, though Agatha had once been a dumped kitten herself.

Although Dad used to ask us not to, Mum and I would secretly feed Old One - Eye on the back verandah. This went on for a while, until even he accepted that the waif was here to stay.

We named him Joe after he moved in. For all his years of neglect (the vet estimated he was about four), Joe was instantly trusting, friendly and very affectionate. He put up with everything without complaint, even the cold shoulder he received from Miss Agatha.

He let her eat his food, licked her lovingly, gave up his place on the sofa, in short, adored her. And he watched proudly through one golden eye whenever Agatha brought home a mouse . . . which was often, as we lived just near a mountain that was a haven for the little creatures.

Joe, for all his loving ways, was not a dainty cat. His balance was awry, and he tended to be clumsy. Dad sometimes teased his "stupidity," but he was not stupid. He always tried his best.

One day he disappeared. For five days the family called him, left food out, searched the neighbourhood . . . then, the next night after dinner, there was a broken miaowing at the front door. Joe!

We all rushed outside to find it certainly was Joe, pacing up and down, miaowing, smiling . . . and tapping at the mouse he'd brought us.

He was so proud of his achievement, and so was I. I felt so much love for him then.

It took him five days to find that mouse to give to us, but he finally made it!

Joe was put to sleep at the age of 14. He lived a happy life, even with Agatha (who was as amazed as my father was about the mouse.) He will always be my favourite, though there have been cats since. Dear street boy Joe, with his one golden eye, was magic.



Always Remembered

A donation in memory of dearly loved companion Sox, who died on the 19th of May, 1990, aged 16 years. Greatly missed by Bea Robinson.



The Good Life

CPS member Nona Wilkinson sent us this photo of Tony and Ricky. They live in Wodonga with Robyn and Bev Boulton, and were rescued from the streets . . . two tiny, frightened little brothers, trying to fend for themselves.

As Nona says, looking at them now, you could hardly imagine their sad beginnings. With love, food and all the comforts of home, today they are at peace with the world.

OUR VIEWS ON VIVISECTION

Vivisection literally means the cutting up of live animals but is now widely used to describe all the experiments performed on live animals.

In Australia alone, these involve millions of animals a year.

In line with increasing public support for the banning of vivisection in this country, The Cat Protection Society repeats number one of its main aims:

TO PROTECT FROM CRUELTY, VIVISECTION, EXPERIMENTATION, COMMERCIAL EXPLOITATION AND OTHER FORMS OF CRUELTY, ALL ANIMALS

To those who say that animals must be used in experiments for the benefit of humans, there is an increasing body of evidence that refutes this belief.

The following article by English scientist and researcher Dr Robert Sharpe is abridged from one in the current issue of *Animal Liberation* magazine.

We respect the right of all our members to have their own opinions about vivisection, but we do ask you to read Dr Sharpe's article with an open mind.

Hell on Earth For What?

Scientist Dr Robert Sharpe used to believe that experimenting on animals was necessary for the advance of medicine. Now he thinks it is dangerous and unscientific.

Every year, millions of animals suffer and die in the world's laboratories. They are burnt, blinded, poisoned, irradiated and starved. They are given electric shocks, made to smoke cigarettes and addicted to drugs.

Their limbs are amputated, their eyes surgically removed and their brains damaged. They are deprived of sleep, kept in solitary confinement and infected with diseases like cancer, diabetes, herpes and AIDS. For many animals the experimental laboratory must be hell on earth.

I did not always think so. Like most scientists, I gave the issue little serious attention, even

though, as a research chemist at London's Royal Postgraduate Medical School, I witnessed many experiments. Animals were regarded as "models" or "preparations," who were not killed but "sacrificed."

The truth finally dawned when I read *Animal Liberation*, in which Peter Singer argued that there was no morally relevant difference between ourselves and other animals which could justify their terrible oppression.

Animal abuse, he said, was another form of prejudice which, like racism and sexism, had no reasonable basis. It was simply that animals, like disadvantaged groups within human society, lacked the power of effective protest. They were the ultimate slave class.

Moral objections sharpen the critical faculties. Rather than accept the prevailing dogma that vivisection is essential to the advance of medicine, I soon found that many other doctors and researchers have grave doubts about the validity of animal experiments.

In 1980 an editorial in the cancer research magazine *Clinical Oncology* asked why so much attention is devoted to the study of animal tumours, when most human cancers behave differently to the artificially induced animal model. (The writer concluded that it is the study of human patients which will ultimately yield relevant results.)

More recently, *Perspectives on Animal Research* reviewed 10 randomly chosen examples of human diseases injected into animals, and found little, if any, contribution from the experiments towards the treatment of human patients.

False Sense of Security

With such differences, tests on animals can be either worthless or positively dangerous, because they provide a false sense of security. In the case of Opren (Oraflex), an arthritis drug, unforeseen effects led to the drug's withdrawal. Deaths occurred mainly through liver damage, but company literature stated that, "the effects of Opren in the rhesus monkey were studied for one year. There were no apparent adverse effects on survival."

The failure of animal tests to warn against toxic hazards is not unusual.

The US General Accounting Office found that 51.5% of 198 drugs marketed between 1976 and 1985 had to be re-labelled due to "serious" unexpected side effects such as heart, liver and kidney failure, severe blood disorders, birth defects and blindness.

Human Studies More Important

Vivisection is an error, not only because of its unreliability, but because it diverts attention and resources from the study of people. The consequences can be devastating.

Unsuccessful attempts to induce lung cancer in laboratory animals by forcing them to breathe tobacco smoke cast doubt on human clinical findings, delaying health warnings for years and costing thousands of lives.

Far more could be achieved, and without harm to animals, by concentrating on methods directly relevant to people. This would include carrying out human population studies, clinical investigation work with healthy volunteers, and test-tube studies with human tissues.

The 19th century social reformers used population studies (epidemiology) to influence sanitary reform, and the resulting improvements in public health were chiefly responsible for the dramatic increase in life expectancy. Drugs and vaccines had only a comparatively small effect.

The same measures would transform health in Third World countries, where the pressing needs are for food, clean water, sanitation and improved living and working conditions.

It is careful detective work by modern-day epidemiologists that has enabled us to identify the main causes of heart disease, cancer, strokes and AIDS, and has shown how the West's major killers can be prevented.

This does not mean putting people at risk. New medical-imaging techniques allow for the safe, clinical study of individual patients. This must be the way ahead.

In the January 1990 issue of Stroke, researchers at the Mayo Clinic, California, revealed that of 25 drugs found to be useful in treating animals with artificially-induced stroke over the past 10 years, not one had worked in clinical practice. They concluded that ultimately the answer did not "lie with continued attempts to model the human situation per-

fectly in animals, but rather with the development of techniques to enable the study of living humans."

Test-tube studies with human cells offer an alternative means of assessing the hazardous and beneficial effects of new drugs. In a major change of strategy, the US National Cancer Institute recently substituted many of its animal tests with tests using cultures of human cancer cells.

Even if animal research had contributed significantly in the past, that is no reason for uncritical acceptance of the method for all time.

What can you do?

One of the major issues being pursued by anti-vivisectionists in Sydney at this moment is the use of pound animals for vivisection.

Hundreds of lost and abandoned dogs go to research laboratories each year. These animals have already suffered by the time they are impounded. Should they not be reunited with their families, or find a new home, they should, at the very least, be euthanised humanely at the pound.

If you are against the use of pound animals in experimentation, find out if your own Council sends animals to a pound, and if the pound provides them to research institutions. Or get in touch with People Against Vivisection, PO Box 23, Blacktown, 2148. Tel: 688 1443.

Do we really need the drugs we take?

Drugs are tested on animals. If we used fewer drugs, fewer animals would suffer.

* We would also be healthier. Last year alone, 40% of all drug-related poisoning cases admitted to public hospitals in Australia were caused by prescription medicines.

* 20% of all hospital admission of the elderly were directly due to the way medication had been taken.

Drugs can make us sick. If we followed the simple rules of a healthy diet, regular exercise and sufficient sleep, we wouldn't have to use so many of them.

We can help ourselves, and animals, by taking more responsibility for our own health.

* Statistics supplied by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, a Commonwealth Government Health Programme, May, 1991.



From Alf Wood of Collaroy Plateau:

Am just wondering if any members have seen the enclosed poem before?

I came across it - in Coronet magazine, I think - at least 30 years ago. For many years I have had it framed on my kitchen wall, and it has comforted me after the loss of a friend more than once.

The other day I took it out of the frame, and went down to Mona Vale library to copy it for "Cat Affairs." Stupid me, when I got home I realized I had left the original in the copier.

I rang the library frantically, but it was gone. Another cat lover must have seen it first. So next week I copied the copy, which I send now. I have never come across the poem since, or heard of Edith McWhirter, but would be interested to know if anybody else has heard of it before, or the poet.

I must add that I enjoy the lovely "catty" atmosphere of the magazine, and feel we are all one big cat loving community - so purry and cosy.

To A much-Loved Cat

*In your cat's Heaven will there be
 An ample lap, a cradling knee,
 Paper to rustle, wool to tease,
 Provocative birds on climbable trees?
 Will milk be served at each miaow
 Creamy and warm from some godly cow.
 And fish leap straight
 From stream to plate?
 Will warmth be yours as you desire,
 Basking in sunshine, drowsing by fire;
 And eternal mice with saucy eyes
 Provide celestial exercise?
 In your cat's Heaven will there be
 Place for a mortal memory?
 The shape of a hand that know your fur,
 The tune of a voice that roused your purr -
 Will these persist to comfort you,
 When all the way of life you knew
 Has been transposed by earthly years
 To timeless, cat-ordered, heavenly spheres?*

- Edith McWhirter



From Ashley and Marie Schwartz and daughter Sheri.

As new members of your Society I thought I would write and tell you about our much-loved-greatly-missed black and white domestic cat, Esmerelda. From the day she arrived at our home at six weeks old she was an absolute madame. She stayed with us for 3 months short of 19 years and I then had to make the heart-breaking decision to put her out of her suffering.

I was most concerned that the vets saw fit to keep her going in kidney failure and in great pain which was not obvious to them. They said as long as she was eating and grooming herself she was not in pain. They were wrong. My daughters who were sensitive to her told me that she was in pain many years earlier but I chose to believe the vets.

No such suffering should be permitted. What a lesson in stoicism. When she got up in the morning she walked as if on stilts until her joints loosened, but this did not deter her from climbing up our olive tree to sit on the roof, almost up to the time we had to put her to sleep. That was almost two years ago, but I find I still cannot fill the void. Any suggestions, anybody?

I would like to finish on a lighter note. About ten years earlier, for some reason she got into the habit of waking me up at 2 in the morning. After putting up with this for about a week and after a late night I said to her "Esmerelda, I don't want you to wake me until 6 in the morning," and she woke me at 6 am on the dot!



This lovely ginger tabby is called Honey, and belongs to Sarah Diver. Isn't Honey a perfect name for a golden cat with a sweet expression?



From Wendy Wenban of Harbord:

Thought I'd send you a recent photograph of our tabby "Clare."

She is a born actress, and simply loves having a camera focused on her. In the photograph she is laughing at my pleas to move off a patch of bulbs. As you see, she has succeeded in flattening them with just a few movements of her rather hefty body.

During the recent searing summer days, she sought out cool spots in the garden and found perfect places to sleep. No thought for the plants, and she SNORES!



Regarding recommendation for a cattery, as asked for in your March issue: While my daughter and I were overseas in June/July of 1990, Clare stayed at a cattery called Meadowmist. They also take dogs.

Meadowmist is at Dromana Road, Marsden Park. Clare was there for 8 weeks, and came home fat, healthy and so happy. The cattery is run by Jeanette Roche, and the tariff is reasonable. The phone number is 627 2395, and they pick up and deliver.



From Mrs Gwen Green

Dear Fellow Cat Lovers,

I wonder if there is someone - single, couple, or even a family - who would be prepared to "live in" and care for our eight cats and two dogs for four weeks, from Boxing day 1991 until 22nd January, 1992.

The reason for contacting the Society should be obvious. We would only entrust the care of our animals to someone as potty as we are, and who would be prepared to treat them as our own during our absence.

Our only insistence is that all the animals are inside at night. However, they should be free to come and go in the day time, as should their carer/s.

The home is two storey, with self contained accommodation downstairs.

Ed's note: Any members who are interested should get in touch with Mrs Green c/o The Society, and I will pass her letter on.



From Miss Margery Mitchell

Firstly, thank you for the March "Cat Affairs." It gets better with each edition.

The President asked for suggestions in her column, and I now put forward the following idea:

Whenever I wish to go away, and it could be twice a year, it is very difficult to find someone to look after my four cats at my home. They could be boarded, but neither they nor I are very happy when this happens, as they fret when away from their surroundings.

I wonder whether there are people living in units, who are denied the pleasure of having an animal, who would be happy to spend a week or two at a seaside resort near Sydney. Being on a bus route there is no difficulty from here in getting to the city, or to Palm Beach or Manly for an outing.

I feel for people like Hilda York with her poem, "A Plea For the Elderly," and throw this thought into the melting pot.

Ed's note: You will see that Mrs Green shares your feelings. Personally, I feel you need to know people very well to allow them into your home and attend to your animals. However if there is time to get to know each other, and you feel you can make arrangements with absolute confidence, your suggestion could be mutually rewarding.

If any members are interested in contacting you, they can write care of the Society and I will pass the letter on.



Kittens

*I sometimes think the Pussy-Willows grey
Are Angel Kittens who have lost their way,
And every Bullrush on the river bank,
A cat Tail from some lovely Cat astray.*

OLIVER HERFORD

(From "The Rubaiyat of a Persian Kitten")



Thimbles and More Thimbles

by Joan Haub

My pretty little Easter thimble brought the total on my shelves to 524, since I began collecting in 1982.

They are many and varied - sterling silver thimbles, one in 9ct gold, porcelain, jade, horn, crystal, wood, venetian glass and more.

I began my collection with just two thimbles - the first an inexpensive one I'd used for sewing lessons at school, the second a pretty silver thimble that my mother received on her 21st birthday.

One of my favourites is a simple wooden one, given to me by a friend who found it in Nazareth.

I have them from all over the world, and many commemorate historic events, such as the America's Cup win, Royal happenings, anniversaries and so on.

My smallest is a tiny charm I wear on my bracelet, the largest is a spirit measure. My oldest is a silver thimble given to me by a dear old lady who received it for her 21st birthday in 1921.

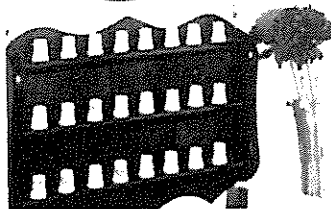
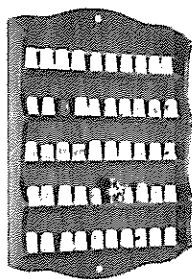
Of course, moggies are included in the collection too! A set of six hand painted ones, featuring various breeds and signed by the artist, is a favourite. I also love the one with a black cat on it, and "Good Luck."

An interesting thimble is in pewter, with a Christmas scene complete with a little cat sitting by the hearth. Some are pretty and totally useless, many are functional. However, one tends to forget the functional ones!

Recently my mother was doing a small hand mending job for my brother, and quite seriously asked, "Do you have a thimble I can use?" Amid much laughter, he replied, "I'm sure Joan can find you a suitable one among the 500 or so in the house."

And so she again used the little silver thimble she'd received 58 years ago on her 21st birthday.

Ed's note: Do you like collecting things? Do write in and share your hobby with us, including a photo if possible.



This is only a tiny part of Joans' collection. The bottom set of 24 are blue from Holland, featuring the coats of arms.



From Penny Ferguson, of Coalcliff:

I am writing to suggest that owners tag their cats. We may think that cats do not wander, but it is surprising where they do go, and they could easily be attacked by a dog or run over when out.

One of the worst things for an animal owner is for their pet to disappear without trace. We never know what has happened to them. If they are found dead, at least we know. If they wear a tag, we have a better chance of getting them back living, or finding out about them if they die.

I would also like to bring to members' attention the use of rice hulls for animal beds and/or litter trays. I saw an advertisement for this product, which comes from the Griffith area, and as I feel disposed to support any recycling initiative I wrote for details.

I obtained a sample bag of "composted" rice hulls, then bought two bales from a produce merchant near Wollongong to mulch my gardens. To me it seemed too rough for cat beds, but surprisingly, both cats seem to like sitting on it, and it certainly makes their hole digging much easier. Perhaps one of the catteries might like to try it out? Incidentally I use mined, crushed diatomaceous earth from Queensland instead of tomato dust or derris dust as insect control. The sharp slivers of shell puncture the carapace of bugs, and of course, it is non poisonous. Something else we must all be conscious of is cutting down waste in the garbage, as we are running out of landfill.

If any members wish to inquire about the rice hulls, incidentally, the company is Biocon, the address is PO Box 406, Griffith, 2680, and the phone number is (069) 262 100.

Matthew Flinders' Pioneer Cat

Most famous of all Australia's pioneer cats is Trim, companion of famous navigator Matthew Flinders.

According to Flinders, Trim was born at sea on a voyage to Australia in 1799. He was black, with four white feet, a white chin, and a neat white star on his chest.

Before long, he was popular with every man on the ship. Flinders commented, "I doubt whether Whittington's cat, of which so much has been written, was to be compared with him."

Trim learned to swim at an early age, while the ship was lying in harbour. He was scampering around with his brothers and sisters and in the excitement of the game fell overboard.

A rope was thrown to him, and in the words of Flinders, "He took hold of it like a man, and ran up it like a cat."

After that experience, Trim became an expert seaman. The crew loved to see him mount the gangway quicker than his master, and shin up the mast ahead of the men.

"The replacing of a topmast, or taking a reef in the sails, were what most attracted Trim's attention at sea," Flinders said. "When there was more bustle up on deck than usual, he never failed to be present. He knew what good discipline required, and never presumed to go aloft until the order was issued. But so soon as the officer had given the word, 'Away up aloft!' up he jumped along with the seamen, and was so active and zealous that none could reach the top before him."

Flinders added: "His zeal did not carry him beyond a sense of dignity. He did not lay out on the yard like a common seaman, but always remained seated upon the cap, to inspect like an officer. He always found some good friend ready to caress him after the business was done, and to take him down in his arms."

Trim went with Flinders on the Investigator on his exploration of the southern coast, and again when he sailed around the continent in 1803.

The following year, Flinders and Trim set sail for England in the Porpoise, but it was wrecked on a reef in the Coral Sea a week after leaving Sydney. The ship's cutter was saved, and with a picked crew Flinders returned to Sydney for a replacement vessel, leaving the rest of the men and Trim on a tiny island.

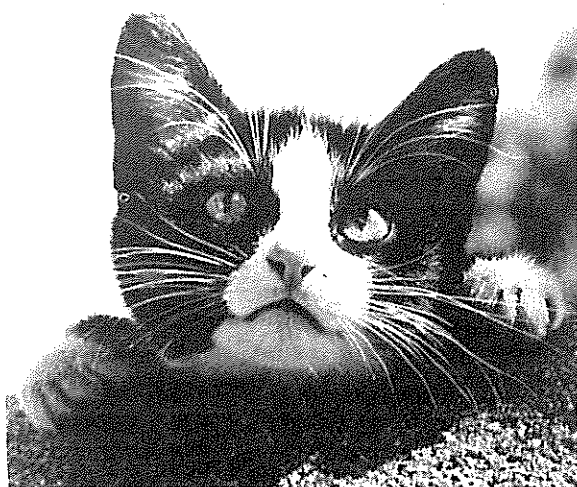
The Governor gave Flinders the Cumberland, of only 29 tons (little bigger than a ferry) to rescue his crew and return to England. It was filthy, rotten and leaking, but he picked up his men and Trim, and set sail again.

Battered by heavy seas, on short rations and in danger of sinking he made for the island of Mauritius, which was in French hands.

Flinders had a passport granting his immunity as a scientist but unknown to him, England and France were now at war. The Governor suspected Flinders was searching for military bases in the Pacific, and put him into detention — where he was to stay for nearly seven years.

But even in the shock of his confinement, Flinders managed to collect Trim and take him into his room. Later, with the consent of the Governor, he gave Trim into the care of a French family, where he thought the cat would have more comforts.

Alas, within a fortnight Trim disappeared and was never found again, despite the offer of a large reward. Flinders' sad thought was that the handsome cat may have been killed and eaten.



Matthew Flinders' cat Trim was black, with white feet and a white chin, like this handsome chap

In the archives of the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, England, in Flinders' own writing, is this epitaph to his beloved companion:

"To the memory of Trim, the best and most illustrious of his race, the most affectionate of friends, faithful of servants, and best of creatures.

"He made a tour of the globe, and a voyage to Australia, which he circumnavigated, and was ever the delight and pleasure of his fellow voyagers. Peace be to his shade, and honour to his memory."

Ed's note: The main text of this story is from a feature called "This Was Australia", which used to appear in the Sun newspaper. It was written by Noel Griffiths.

It is fitting that the statue of Matthew Flinders, located in Macquarie Street, Sydney, just outside the State Library, shows him with his beloved cat, Trim.



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