



Front cover cat - Donny

We have put a picture of Donny, one of our FIV cats, on this year's front cover as a tribute to his courage and resilience.

Donny, the subject of a cruelty case before coming to us in 2003, has survived nearly being starved to death, really serious flu, and, in 2006, a major ear operation. He has survived all this and remains such a good-natured cat and, we think, still looks great too.

See more details of Donny in the 2006 FIV cats section (p25).



THE CATWORK YEAR
2006



Donny, before his ear op.



The Ups and Downs of 2006

2006 was, as ever, full of the usual ups and downs.

The 'downs' consisted of the usual frustrations about the misunderstandings that persist amongst some vets and most rescue organisations about the true nature of FIV, and the ignorance about FeLV testing.

We were emotionally very drained over a long drawn out dispute over two special needs cats we had rescued when their owner couldn't cope and wanted rid of them, only to change her mind many months later when she was feeling better! Once we have 'rescued' cats they come into Catwork care and, apart from the house cats, are funded by sponsors; we are not therefore going to hand them back into the same situation from which we rescued them.

Another distressing incident was being told what to do from afar by another rescue who was unable to cope with an FIV but insisted on telling us how to look after him and gave us grief when we listened to our vet's advice and not her suggestions!

Mostly then a year of much aggravation because of certain individuals.

The highpoints were there as well – lots of visits, as ever, from our lovely Catwork friends, some great fundraising done for the cats involving much effort from others, the continuing support of wonderful sponsors and the joining of some new ones.

Seven new cats came into our care:

4 were FIV positive

1 turned out to be FeLV positive after his second essential test

1 "special needs" - a very frightened feral

1 found "lost" in the village (again) was unclaimed and ended up staying (again!)

Losses, thankfully, have not been as heavy as 2005 and almost all who died were elderly.

However, there were some sad losses of cats we had homed. The

only consolation is that these cats knew a home environment for a while where they were much loved and are now greatly missed.

At the time of writing, Catwork is home to 21 FIVs, 5 FeLVs, 6 special needs and 8 cats live in the house, making a total of 40.

We have continued to offer advice on FIV and FeLV matters – Barbara over the phone, and Bob via the Internet.

Barbara attended a dog show and a cat show where fundraising tombolas had been organised by a sponsor friend.

The top end of the garden was cleared and more construction work done to provide a secure area for the little feral cat we took on. She has yet to move into it as we are waiting till spring before we move her.

Quite a lot of tree surgery had once again to be done to prevent Jasper (one of the new FIVs) from continually escaping – he turned out to be a real escape artist with amazing climbing skills.

A health check was organised for some of our older cats who had never needed veterinary attention. One of our vets and a nurse came over to the fivory and gave the oldies a check over; no major problems

were found. The oldest of our FIV cats who have had no health problems were also the ones who had once been in homes, supporting our theory that those FIVs who were well cared for in early life can do as well as non-FIVs and remain healthy to a good age. Molly, Florence and Tutts are good examples of geriatric good health.



Vet check in the fivory

November 2006 saw Barbara and Bob celebrating their silver wedding anniversary with – guess what – an unforgettable trip to Bristol Hippodrome to see "Cats", also celebrating its 25th year! What could be more appropriate? We had a very enjoyable and memorable evening.

Christmas followed shortly after with its shower of cards and many donations which we always find truly overwhelming.

Thank you to everyone who has supported Catwork in various ways, both financially and emotionally, throughout the year. We couldn't do what we do without you!

SPECIAL THANKS

Thanks as ever to our Bristol friends who contribute to Catwork on a regular basis and also did a very successful car boot in the spring. We look forward to their quarterly visits when the afternoon is spent cat cuddling whatever the weather.

Once again our bus driver friend Bob has continued to supply us with the sawdust for the cats' litter boxes in the garden. He even brings it over to us from Taunton – thank you so much.

Thank you again to Barry & Angela of 'Animal Affairs' who support small rescues such as ours through sales in their charity shop. Several large cheques have found their way to us.

The shop "Only Cats" in Bourton-on-the-Water has continued to buy cards from us to sell in the shop and maintain a display of Catwork leaflets telling people about our work with FIV & FeLV cats.



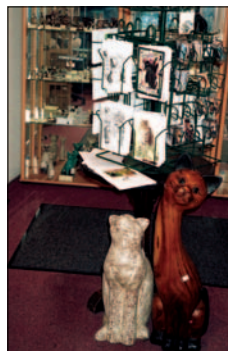
Sian, Sara (with Bruce and Percy Pollen),
Lyn and Nocola



Cecil keeps an eye on Kim and Sian with
Jasper and Tutts



Shop in Bourton-on-the-Water, owned by
supporters, helps to spread the word



Display of Catwork
cards and leaflets



Daphne (left) and Stella with their tombola stall
at a dog show

Our sponsor Stuart Strong also did a car boot sale with Catwork receiving a large slice of the takings. Another 'memorial' donation was given to us after the very sad loss of Daisy May (Kitty) whom Stuart and Chris had taken on from Catwork and had for two years. We have still to think of a suitable memorial for this characterful little FIV cat who had been part of a cruelty case. The two years she had with the Strongs were undoubtedly the best years of her life.

Our friend and sponsor Stella has once again masterminded two very successful tombolas for Catwork – one at Langford Vet School's dog show in September and the other at a cat show at Hutton in November. Stella was ably helped by Daphne, Janice and Ann on these occasions.

Thank you to Lisa once again for her car boot efforts and also for holding a coffee morning where the children had fun painting their faces to look like cats.



Painted faces at Lisa's coffee morning

Thank you to the Forest of Dean Cats Protection who have continued to have a box in their charity shop for Tutts (whom they sponsor) and friends. A special thank you also to Ruth who works in the shop each week and has sent us several consignments of Felix cushions which the cats really love. Thank you also to Sue Smith who sent donations of a percentage of sales of her collection of cat stories.

John Spratley, another Catwork sponsor, gave the cats a large consignment of tuna. Barbara got 'mugged' when tuna was on the menu – thanks for that, a real treat for the cats.

Thanks also to Mrs Page who kindly sent Purina vouchers which she had left over in connection with her charity work with Newfoundland dogs. Barbara made good use of them buying Felix pouches which all the cats love but don't get too often.

More pouches found their way here thanks to Ron and Ann Weavers' cats not liking a certain variety – ours in the fivery are not so fussy!



Lynda with Tutts and Janice with Percy Pollen - 2 laps, 2 cats - seems fair!



Ann's lap is taken, while Ron has a queue!



Sara with Jake and Lyn with Cecil



Bernie with Captain, and Claire with Bootsy and Percy Pollen

Very sadly, a friend of Catwork – Greta Staples – died during the year. Greta was a great cat lover and had in 2005 supported us over the losses of some of the Catwork cats. Her husband Stephen wanted the money collected at her funeral to come to Catwork, and this he personally brought and has himself become a sponsor. We would like to thank him and the family for thinking of the cats at such a sad time in their lives.

At the end of the year Heather and Sean Cave, two more sponsors, did a raffle at their work and raised a handsome sum. They also brought a large hamper for the cats just before Christmas, which the cats much enjoyed investigating. Many thanks for your efforts.

As always, we end with our grateful thanks to the staff of Quantock Veterinary Hospital who are always on hand to treat our cats and go out of their way to help and support us.



Stephen with Donny and Tabby Thomas



Captain takes charge of distribution of Heather and Sean's Christmas hamper

SEVEN NEW ARRIVALS IN 2006

BEAU (FeLV)

Beau was featured in last year's "Stop press" as he had just been saved from being put down on the instruction of a Cats Protection group having tested positive on a first test for leukaemia. As is always necessary with FeLVs, Beau was tested again after he had been with us for three months (in this time, some cats "deal" with the virus and do not become persistently infected).

Whatever the outcome, we had decided that Beau would stay with us. In the event, his second test was positive also, so he joined the other four FeLVs.

He did well for a while, then we noticed a change in his behaviour and appearance, and investigations were carried out at the hospital to reveal that Beau also has another problem – a heart defect – meaning he will be on a daily capsule for the rest of his life. Fortunately for us, he is a good patient and we manage to accomplish giving this without any difficulty.

Beau is quite a strong little character and, although the newcomer in the felvery, keeps the others in their place, especially poor Dylan!



Sara finds that special spot between the shoulder blades!

CONNER & GINGE (FIV)

2 part-Siamese brothers

Conner and Ginge had a narrow escape when, having been accepted into a "sanctuary" in Dorset, their owner, who had to move into a flat where she couldn't have them, mentioned that Conner was FIV positive. She was not told that the cat known to be FIV would be put down! The manageress did find our website and asked if we could take them because of the sanctuary policy.

Barbara had some strong words to say on the subject of a sanctuary putting down anything which wasn't suffering. Their website, moreover, mentions that no animal is put down unless it is ill - if only that were true! When will people who should know better stop saying that FIV cats are ill?

Obviously we had to make room for the two brothers, who had always been together. They settled in very well straight away and, being part Siamese, they would follow us around and be very vocal.

Very, very sadly, we only had Ginge a few months as he was found to have sugar diabetes, which, on its own, could have been managed, but he also had a chest tumour – everything was against him – two major problems and his old age. He looked so poorly when Barbara went to see him in hospital and reluctantly had to let him go as nothing could be done.

Ironically, Conner, who would have been put down at the Dorset sanctuary, is doing well and has put on weight, and his general condition has improved.

It is sad that he has lost his brother as he doesn't mix with the other cats, but loves people. He has the endearing habit of using our shoulder



as a launching pad to jump onto the food platform in the chalet, which can be a bit disconcerting, especially when he occasionally lands on our head rather than our shoulders!

MAY (Special needs)

May came to us from a homing centre as, because of her temperament, she was never going to be homeable. She was on a farm due to be sold with other ferals who tamed down enough to be handled and homed. May, however, is absolutely terrified of people and at the farm had always sat on her own away from the other cats.

We took her on into a secure area with the idea of creating a nicer, bigger space for her later at the top of the garden, which has now been done.

May had always had mouth problems and not long after she came here, the mouth problems returned and she stopped eating. Taking her across the road to the vet was tricky as she is really feral, and not the sort of cat we are used to. In the vet's surgery, she slipped the vet's grasp and ran around the room. The vet went to get a towel to throw over her, but couldn't see her; she is so small and was hiding behind a bag of cat biscuits! Only a major dental was going to address her mouth problems and little May ended up having all her teeth out. Amazingly, she now eats better than she ever has done, including biscuits. In an attempt to make May feel more at home, we put hay in her little house, which she seems to like. As yet we have made no progress in taming her, she is just so scared.



GEORGE (FIV)

George arrived on Barbara's birthday in May, all the way from Cheshire, a four hour trip!

George is one of those sweet cats who had been pushed around all his life and had more than his fair share of misfortune.

A small rescue in Cheshire had taken him in from an old lady who had been feeding him as a stray but didn't want to continue and threatened the worst if he wasn't taken in. George developed ringworm which was successfully treated but left him with a bald patch on the side of his neck. Upon receiving his vaccination prior to being homed, George reacted to the vaccine, went into anaphylactic shock and almost died! Obviously, any further vaccinations were out of the question. George was duly homed to a lady with other cats, but developed mouth problems. Upon being taken to the vet, he was blood tested and it came to light for the first time that he was FIV+. Upon hearing this, George was taken back to the rescue where he'd come from and dumped in his basket on the doorstep, accused of possibly passing "Aids" to the other cats!

Being middle aged and now known to be FIV, there was a problem with rehoming him again and permanent care was sought. We agreed to take him at Catwork. On arrival, George just rolled over as if he had always been here. His much needed dental was done a few weeks later and George settled into life in the fivory and enjoyed a good summer.



George stretches out after a 4-hour trip to Somerset

Very sadly, there is a sequel to George's story - see "Cats who left us" section.

JASPER (FIV)

Jasper was the only FIV caught up in a multi cat household where the owner had already been prosecuted – the same household from which, the first time round, little Kitty had come to us after two long years in an RSPCA centre waiting for the case to be heard.

Jasper was signed over too, but didn't have to wait for court proceedings.

He is a big tabby and white, very bouncy and bursting with health and energy.

We have had a great deal of trouble keeping him confined to the fivory garden, as he climbs like a monkey and was able to get out for a pastime when he first arrived. Reinforcements were carried out and the overhang was increased, but still he managed to get out, turning up at the fivory gate for breakfast next morning!

Finally, Bob saw him climb high up the main tree, then walk along the slenderest of branches, to a point where he could get on to a small branch of the next tree, which gave him a route out of the garden, and all over 30ft up in the air! A touch of tree surgery was required to stop that route. Finally, that seemed to do the trick, and he has not escaped again (yet!)



POLLY

Polly was a stray in the village, being fed for some weeks by a cat lover, but her own cat wasn't going to allow her to stay long in the house. Despite "found" notices being put up, no one claimed the little black cat, neither could she be taken on by any of the local rehoming centres as they were all full.

Things couldn't stay as they were as Polly's feeder lived on a busy corner near the school and she had already narrowly missed being run over.

You've guessed what happened next – Polly was put in Jack's bedroom, much to his dismay, but he was now old enough to join the rest of the cats anyway and sleep downstairs with them.

Polly owes her name to the fact that she has five toes on every foot – quite unusual it seems; such cats are known as polydactyl, so "Polly" it had to be.

Polly had no ID but, when she went in for spaying, the vet saw, after shaving the area, that she had already been done. Her origins, like so many, will remain a mystery. She never stopped hissing at first and appeared to dislike other cats – quite a disadvantage in this household!

As time went on, Polly stopped hissing and hiding, and has learnt to put up with the others, though she hasn't shown any desire to come downstairs, let alone outside (although free to do so). She does venture half way down the stairs if we are late with supper and she thinks she may be missing out. Otherwise, she remains an upstairs cat, but does act as a good paperweight in Bob's office!



THOSE WHO LEFT US IN 2006

We lost five cats from the sanctuary during 2006, all of a good age. Sadly, however, seven Catwork cats we had previously homed, died, some of them very unexpectedly.

TABBY THOMAS

TT, who had come to Catwork in its earliest days, was in a home for many years but came back to us when he was elderly. He finally reached the end of his long life in the summer of 2006. TT was one of those characters! Very cantankerous and strong-willed, he persuaded the neighbour to feed him “special food”, which made life difficult



for us trying to treat his digestive problems. In the end we had to put him in the garden where he lived for most of the long hot summer. One night, having eaten a big supper, he went to bed in his own area, but that was to be the last night of his life.

JAKE

We lost our ‘busy’ little cat with no tail after a very short period of being unwell. He was actually owned by our friend Lisa, as is Percy Pollen, but when Lisa got married and her rescue closed, her two FIV cats, Jake and Percy, came to live in the garden with all the other FIV cats. Jake had been tailless since a kitten; it had to be removed after a bad bite which probably accounted for his FIV status. Jake had a long



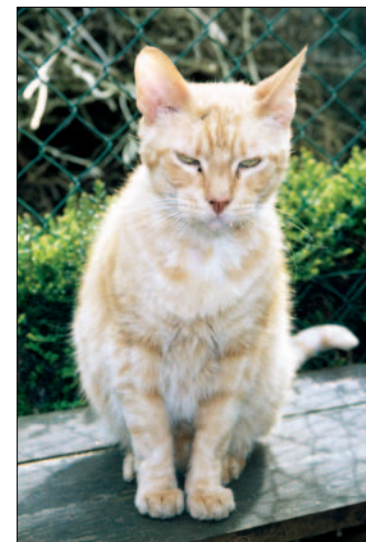
life with hardly any health problems, so his rapid deterioration took us all by surprise.

Percy Pollen has a new companion now as Guy decided to move in with him after we lost Jake.

GINGE

Ginge came to us with his brother Conner in the spring when they narrowly escaped being put down at the ‘sanctuary’ in Dorset (see New Arrivals section for full story).

After a few hopefully happy months in the fivory, Ginge became unwell and a spell in hospital revealed sugar diabetes and a chest tumour. Because of his age and deterioration, we were advised he would not cope with an operation which itself held out little hope of success.



Ginge was quietly put to sleep, his suffering ended and we brought him home.

SEAMUS

We had Seamus for many years and he was not that young when we took him on from our vets. It had looked like the end for Seamus back in 2004 when he kept having blocked anal glands which were inoperable. Nothing less than a ‘magic’ cure – the right homoeopathic remedy – and bran on his food kept him free of this unpleasant problem until he died of old age in the autumn.



Seamus was always one of Catwork’s characters, quite feisty with the other cats when younger, and he and Bootsy were known as the “bovver boys”.

He had originally been collected from the vets on St Patrick’s Day and he looked a bit of a bruiser, so his name seemed to suit him well.

REGGIE

Reggie came from the local Cats Protection group three years ago at Christmas time. They were full to bursting and because he was FIV we were asked to help.

Reggie probably had more health issues than any other cat we've dealt with; worst of all was his badly scarred nose, which would not respond to any treatment. During last year some biopsies were carried out and finally the answer to the nose problem emerged – a rare mite was attacking it – unusual in cats and no easy treatment for it. The best solution was thought to be three applications of Stronghold at short intervals, which amazingly worked a treat.

Having finally got the nose problem sorted out, we were disappointed when he began losing weight over the summer/autumn. Tests were carried out to try and find the cause, and all his organ function was fine, but Reggie got thinner, stopped eating, and all quality of life rapidly disappeared. We had to do the kindest thing by having him put to sleep and not let him carry on being ill and miserable. Reggie had a special friend in Sara, one of our several Bristol friends; she had sent him a special treat for Christmas, so we made sure he had it early before he became too ill.



Sara gives Reggie a cuddle



GEORGE – brain damage

George, the very sad case from Cheshire who had come to us in May, went into a major decline later in the year.

One winter evening George seemed to lose his balance and fell over. He was taken back and forth to the vets for several weeks and was diagnosed with a neurological problem after all else had been eliminated.

Over the Christmas period, George's condition rapidly deteriorated and he became almost unable to walk without stumbling. We brought him into the house as he was not able to cope in the garden; fortunately the other house cats did not bother him, they seemed to recognise that he was not well.

We had the added problem that George had never been a good eater, and when he became ill, he stopped eating completely, so we had to liquidise his food and syringe feed him, a very messy business for all concerned. We tried all sorts of foods and all sorts of textures, but George simply would not eat. He did not appear to be in any pain and

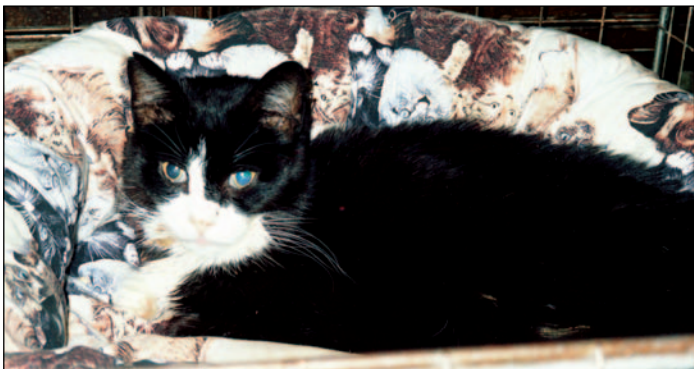


mixed in with everybody despite his mobility problems.

It seems highly likely that his problems began long before we ever knew him, possibly when he had a severe reaction to vaccination and went into anaphylactic shock and almost died. Reading up on the subject, it would seem that in rare cases animals (and people) can have severe allergic reactions to many substances, vaccines being one.

We were told to expect that George's mobility would get less and less and his condition was both progressive and irreversible.

In early January, as predicted, George deteriorated, and all we could do was give him lots of TLC. When he reached the stage when he could not cope and had no quality of life left, we took the decision to put him to sleep. We hope he enjoyed a good summer when he was well here at Catwork, and knew lots of love at Christmas.



Update on cats we rescued and rehomed who died during 2006



KITTY (renamed Daisy May)

Taken on by sponsors Stuart and Chris who loved her to bits and had her for two years – certainly the best she ever knew, having been an RSPCA cruelty case.

GINGER

Here at Catwork for a few months in 2001 recovering from a broken jaw but taken on by the couple who had been feeding him prior to his accident. Once their fears about FIV had been allayed, Ginger enjoyed the best of everything and was in good health until the end.



PEBBLES

The cat who lived in a hedge much of the time before coming to Catwork had two “spoilt rotten” years with friend Pete in Minehead before succumbing to a stomach tumour. The tumour was in fact removed, but

Pebbles never recovered from the op. Pete has since taken on three rescue cats – Rocky, Smokey and Damian.

HENRY

Henry was an FIV+ maine coon kitten in the earliest days of Catwork. He lacked for nothing in his Plymouth home and left a hole impossible to fill when he died a few weeks ago. Henry was a super cat and the apple of his mum and dad's eye.



O'MALLY

Many of you will remember O'Mally's story from last year's book – a huge black and white fluffy cat with attitude! He had escaped being put down at a Swansea RSPCA centre because he was FIV and Mary, one of the staff and a Catwork sponsor, took him and brought him to us.

O'Mally caught the eye of a couple in the next village who have always taken on strays and were without a cat at the time. Having explained to them about the FIV virus they had no problem with it – if only more people were like that! With a large house and garden as his territory, we took O'Mally over to the nearby village in January 2006.

When Mary paid a visit (bringing Jasper with her) we went to see O'Mally in his home (he was busy hunting things in the long grass at the time and didn't pay us much attention). Imagine how shocked we were when we got a phone call a few weeks ago with the news that O'Mally had developed a large

lump in the throat, dramatically lost weight in a very short time and had died. All we can say is that he died when he was meant to and not at the "say so" of a 'rescue' organisation.



LEO

Leo, the elderly cat featured in last year's booklet, found in the garden by Sadie the dog, also escaped death because of being FIV. A vet who knew us, had asked for our help being reluctant to put the poor cat down.



Sadie's owner was given the talk about FIV and Barbara went to see her and Leo later only to find the cottage was in the middle of nowhere and no other cats around – so why on earth was it ever suggested by another vet in the practice, that Leo be killed?

Dear old Leo had an idyllic life for more than a year being taken care of by his owners and the dog!

UPDATE ON OTHER CATWORK CATS



THE FIVs

CAPTAIN

Our three-legged ginger tabby from the earliest days is still with us and doing well, although he sleeps more than he used to. Captain is a 'no nonsense' cat and, it must be confessed, Barbara's favourite male FIV.

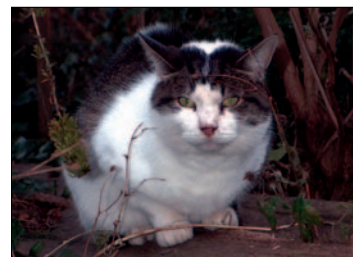


Bootsy (in front) with friend Seamus

BOOTSY

Bootsy, for once, since he was quite accident prone for a spell, has had a good year health-wise, though he recently lost his long-term companion Seamus.

Although kept on a special diet due to a urinary tract infection he once had, he is as round as a barrel and rather bossy.



MR CHIPS

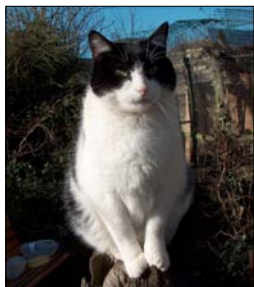
Mr Chips has had a vet-free year and is looking good. He keeps himself to himself and is never any trouble, especially now that he isn't quite so fussy over food as he once was.



FLUFF

Fluff too has had an excellent year. He now has a look-alike in Charlie who came at the end of 2005 and both cats are crazy for biscuits.

Fluff has been here some years now being just a youngster when he came - yet another stray FIV youngster threatened with death.



CECIL

Cecil has had a vet-free year and is also looking good. He is never any trouble, doesn't look for trouble, and avoids it if there is any. Cecil always comes to the fore when visitors come. Cats like Cecil should definitely be somebody's pet, but having FIV, with its 'bad press', means that few people are willing to take them on..



TABBY PERCY

Shy little Percy is more 'up front' these days, putting himself forward for attention. He is very 'easy to run'. Being one of the older cats he has had no obvious health problems and is yet another example of how healthy FIV cats can be with general care.



GUY

The handsome tabby who escaped on bonfire weekend two years ago is still with us. Unfortunately Guy really doesn't like being with other cats so is usually on his own. Originally in the big chalet with the 'lager louts' he moved himself in with Percy Pollen after his companion Jake died. Guy is a good looking cat who seems very intelligent and sensitive.



DOUGAL

During 2006, Dougal's thyroid troubles returned. One thyroid gland had been removed, but another operation was not advised. Blood tests showed what dosage of tablets he needs to keep him stable and he is on two tablets a day, this being reviewed at six-month intervals. Dougal recently had such a review and the results were fine, showing that the current dose is containing the problem.



PERCY POLLEN

Percy has always had sniffles due to having caught flu as a kitten. He has regular courses of antibiotics when the sniffles get worse, and 'steaming' with olbas oil. Currently his chalet resembles a pharmacy as he has so many preparations to help with his various problems.

Percy began losing weight during the year and his nose looked cancerous and we all feared the worst. However, a biopsy revealed that the nose was being attacked by the herpes virus, probably due to the nose being weakened through the chronic sniffles. The weight loss was addressed through a monthly injection of a preparation, which helps him make better use of the food; we also sprinkle a herbal remedy - tree bark powder - which aids the digestion.

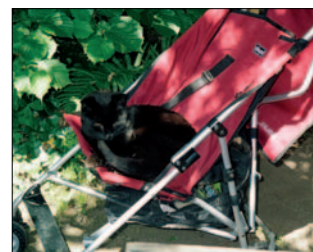
Percy's weight is now creeping up again and he is doing well despite all the problems.

2007 update - Percy Pollen

Percy Pollen, who used to 'mug' visitors for attention, surprised us all by passing away in his sleep one night in January. He had been doing so well, so much so that, as he had been gaining weight each time he was taken to the vet for his monthly jab to help the digestive process, less frequent visits had been proposed.



Percy, Lisa and Amelia



Percy borrows Amelia's pushchair



BRUCE

Bruce, the big ginger rescue who had had so many mouth problems in 2004 hasn't looked back since the major dental. He has enjoyed a healthy year free of visits to the vet. Bruce too, like so many of the cats in the garden, just loves it when visitors come.



NICK

Nick, saved from the Blue Cross in the 'nick' of time when just a youngster but with FIV, is a really nice cat – good natured and chubby with amazing amber eyes. It is an absolute tragedy that cats like him and most of the ones at Catwork are being destroyed, and for no good reason.

Nick also had a vet-free year and is looking good. He likes to 'spar' with Batty while waiting for food to be dished up – they look quite similar, black and chubby, and it is easy to mistake one for the other.



BATMAN

Batman, shortened to Batty, certainly lives up to his name, as he is always quick to 'bat' another cat. He was called Batman as he was on death row at Battersea Cats and Dogs Home – yet another frightened youngster with FIV for whose life to be spared we had to argue and plead all day!

Batty has grown sleek and fat, and one can really imagine him living on his wits on the London streets. He likes to play fisty cuffs with Nick while food is being served up. He has needed no veterinary treatment in 2006.



TUTTS

Tutts is our senior citizen, very well supported by Forest of Dean Cats Protection who not only sponsor him but have a 'Tutts and friends' box in their charity shop, the contents of which also get sent to us. We have also been at the receiving end of many Felix cushions from Ruth, one of the ladies who works in the shop. The cats love them.

Tutts, despite his years, has had no health problems during 2006 and remains as fit and active as ever.



CHARLIE

Charlie came to us at the very end of 2005 when his owner became homeless, and was very unhappy about it – doing nothing but hiss and growl. Poor Charlie really doesn't like other cats, but the alternative would be much worse!

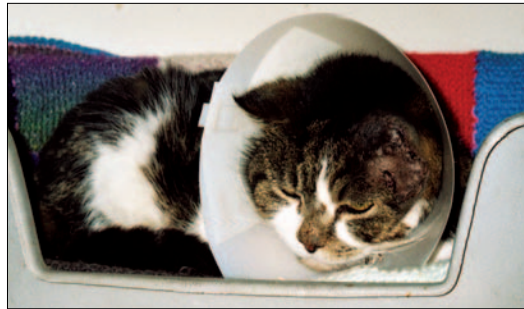
After a lengthy hormone treatment to calm him down, Charlie turned out to be manageable and far less scary than when he first came. He keeps himself to himself but is more amenable to us. Apart from a slight mouth problem, Charlie's health has been good.



DONNY - Our front cover cat this year

Donny is our cruelty case cat who has lost several of his nine lives already. He had been starved to within an inch of his life but recovered well only to catch flu which almost finished him off. Donny did really well for about two years with us, getting fat and, contrary to predictions, able to eat the same food as all the others. Then early in 2006 we noticed he was subdued and seemed to have a problem with his ears.

An examination revealed both his ears were full of tiny tumours, one so bad that the canal was almost blocked. The only way to sort this out was going to be a big operation to remove both the affected ear and the



Donny recovering in hospital bay with stylish bonnet!

complete ear canal. Fears were expressed about doing such a big op on a FIV cat because of recovery issues through being immune-suppressed, but the alternative was to do nothing and let him have what life was possible for a few months. We decided to go for the op as we were convinced Donny had showed enough resilience to cope with it.

He was built up prior to the op, which went very well and he needed lots of post-operative care, which we gave him in the hospital bay in the top chalet with all his mates on the ground floor. It all paid off and we don't think being one-eared spoils his looks either. The other ear



Donny relaxed with his 'new one-eared look'

at some future date may need the same operation, but for the moment it isn't getting any worse.

We think he looks great and that being one-eared doesn't spoil his good looks.

THE OLD LADIES

Our three elderly FIV ladies

MOLLY



Molly, our lovely chubby black girl whose owners are in Greece doing rescue work with the ARK, had another really good year. She has been health checked but no apparent problems presented.

Molly is a friendly, vocal cat with a really good appetite and is amusing to watch as she trundles around on her wobbly back legs, a problem she has had since birth.

FLORENCE



Florence is Gemima's long-term companion, and she too has had a really good year with no health problems. She still likes the basket chair to sit in and only goes inside when it is particularly cold – the chalet and outside are under cover, so the cats can be in the fresh air without getting wet.

JEMIMA



Jemima's biggest problem has always been her bad mouth – she is very prone to stomatitis (like mouth ulcers) making it painful for her to eat. At the end of 2005 after trying out all sorts of treatments, conventional and otherwise to help the problem, we hit upon a herbal remedy – red clover. It is in tablet form with other ingredients and amazingly it would appear to have kept her able to eat comfortably all year without trips to the vet for steroid jabs. When we see signs that her mouth is getting bad again, we resume the herbal treatment. Jemima's health is good in other respects, though she is beginning to show signs of old age.

THE FELVs



GILES

Giles's only problem during 2006 was ear mites, otherwise he has had a healthy year and looks in good condition – just as well as the few trips across the road to the vet were quite traumatic since he is a nervous little cat. Giles is affectionate in his quiet way and gets on well with the other FelVs.

GINNY



We have had Ginny, a large tabby cat since 2002 with no health problems until recently when a bad mouth led to a dental being necessary. Imagine our surprise when our vet phoned to say he'd done the dental but how did we spell the cat's name? Surprised at this question, we were even more surprised when told that "Ginny" was in fact a neutered male! All these years, having been told the cat was female, we never knew, having no reason to check that particular part of the anatomy!

Ginny has become Jimmy, which has been rather difficult to get to grips with after all this time!

"His" mouth still gave trouble, and he unfortunately has had to have his two remaining teeth removed as they had been hurting his upper lip.

DYLAN



Our large tabby from Wales has had a good year except for one minor infection, which soon cleared up. Dylan is a really big cat with an appetite to match. Although looking a real bruiser, Dylan is actually a bit of a wimp and little Beau is always putting him in his place.



JORDAN

Another big cat, but black this time, from East Anglia, has had a vet free year. Like Dylan, Jordan is a really big solid cat with an appetite to match.



BEAU

See 'New Arrivals' section.

SPECIAL NEEDS and OTHERS

LUCKY



Lucky came to us at the end of 2006, and was a really nervous cat. One year later she has blossomed into a lovely little cat who is even okay with strangers. Although she doesn't look it, Lucky is well into her teenage years. She gave us a scare early

in 2006 when she looked really poorly one day and tests at the hospital revealed that she had a heart condition. The tablets prescribed needed to be given three times a day but this proved almost impossible as she has such a small appetite and is quite fussy over food. Physically putting tablets into her was a problem as that was very stressful for her and stress is not good for a cat with heart problems. Once again, Barbara resorted to herbal remedies and the one for the heart (crataegus) made up with some other constituents seems to have kept her going with no further problems. The remedy can be given by just applying a couple of drops to the mucous membrane so it is much less stressful for her than putting tablets down her throat.

We are very pleased with the way Lucky is doing and that she no longer seems the frightened little cat she once was.



RANI

Rani, our smallest cat, has had another vet free year. She is quite a character and no longer the scary little person she once was who had to be approached with caution and with gloves! For such a small cat, Rani has an enormous appetite and shouts loudly for food – frequently! Barbara usually feeds her first in the morning, but by the time she’s gone round everyone else and is back at the start, Rani thinks she should be fed again!

SANDY



Sandy who had come to us after her owner died and had always been a cat who was terrified of everyone apart from her owner, has amazed us by learning to trust and responding accordingly.

She hid at first behind her chalet and we hardly saw her for the first couple of months. Since the breakthrough came and she allowed us to touch her, we haven’t looked back. Sandy has come on in leaps and bounds, being very affectionate with us and now very “bossy”. Just before Christmas, having had her microchipped first, we opened the gate of her chalet area and gave her the freedom of the garden. She doesn’t appear to go far and seems to be enjoying life to the full. It really is such a joy to see how a cat as scared as she was can come round when it knows it can trust and feel secure.



CATWORK CATS IN HOMES AND DOING WELL



BLAKE

Blake, the Bridgwater stray we homed to a life in the country being spoiled rotten is looking great. Barbara saw him in the summer when meeting up with his owner. He had settled in from day one and has never been any trouble integrating into the household.



SADIE

Sadie was at risk of being put to sleep after a false positive leukaemia test but found her way to Catwork where, a few months later she was found to be negative. She now lives in an idyllic spot with Claire, one of our friends in the country, along with Pogol, Flora, Katy and Danny – all Catwork rescues at different stages. We hear they are all well having enjoyed turkey dinners at Christmas and a fresh mouse caught by Katy, and enjoyed playing with the tinsel. Grateful thanks to Claire at the ‘Catwork Outpost’ for looking after them all so well.

CURLY



Curly came to Catwork FIV positive and was taken on by Beccy in Bristol as an indoor cat. The most up to date news is that she is doing well having had nothing more serious than a minor infection easily dealt with.

Curly too is spoiled rotten bringing much pleasure to her owners.

THE HOUSE CATS

CHARLIE BROWN



Barbara visited friend Marilyn who had rescued Charlie from death row at the RSPCA Coventry and spent a couple of days with Charlie and the others. He is looking great, even bigger than ever, and rules the roost.

Charlie was going to be put down because of being FIV – same old story – Charlie is a threat to nobody because he is not a fighter and lives happily with other cats in a great cat household.

PENNY



Penny had been found dumped in the Quantock Hills in a basket outside the public toilets. After a few months at Catwork trying to find her a new home, friends and supporters of ours from Chipping Sodbury came to visit and took her home with them. We hear she is doing well, but again, is quite bossy - typical tortie (Bob says: “typical female!”) and keeping Margaret and Maurice on their toes.

WILLIAM and BENJAMIN (Bill & Ben)



Bill and Ben, who predate all the other cats and even Catwork itself, achieved their 16th birthday in September. They are both showing their age and more or less ‘hibernate’ in the winter.

William gave us a fright in the summer when he seemed to be having trouble with his vision. Tests showed he had high blood pressure – fairly uncommon in cats, apparently. A blood test did not reveal the cause of the high blood pressure but, untreated, he would probably have gone blind.

Willie has to have a quarter of a ‘human’ tablet every day to keep his bp normal, and have tests to check it every few months. He is doing well and actually looks forward to his tablet as he has it in cream cheese spread, which he loves.

Ben seems to be having lots of “senior” moments when he shouts very loudly for no apparent reason. Otherwise, his appetite is good, and he likes to cuddle up to his brother on our bed or in front of the fire just like they’ve always done.

BILLY



Billy is the most nervous of all the house cats and every bit as difficult as Millie to take to the vet. Apart from a couple of ‘off days’ Billy has had a good year health-wise. In the summer he enjoys spending time with Barnaby the rabbit as he always has.

Billy is very sweet natured and gets on well with all the cats, but seems especially fond of Millie – two nervous black cats together.



MILLIE

Our last year's 'cover girl' and Barbara's favourite, had a few health problems in 2006 – unusual for her as she has always enjoyed extremely good health.

The first of her problems was that she needed a dental. She's always been a nightmare to get into a basket to take to the vets and the day she had to go into the hospital was no exception. Everyone at the hospital had been told that Barbara's favourite cat was in for an op, including the vet. Barbara was like a 'cat on hot bricks' all morning, but Millie was fine and came home in the evening minus a few teeth.

In the autumn, poor Millie had a very bad eye infection which proved difficult to cure. We had to put drops in her eyes three times a day for a fortnight, which became more and more difficult as she would keep out of our way. Finally her eye cleared up, but then the infection appeared in the other eye and the whole process had to be repeated. Millie is now fine, but she too is beginning to show her age a bit; she must be into double figures as she came to us at the beginning of Catwork more than ten years ago.



GINGER TOM

Ginger Tom has had a very good year and is looking good. He tends to 'bully' the other cats a bit and frequently gets told off for pinching the others' food. Tom has a habit of chewing poor Billy's ear while they are all waiting for their tea to be

served up, and Billy lets him do it! Nothing bothers Tom as he is very laid back and often a favourite with visitors to the home.



MARMADUKE

Marmaduke is probably the naughtiest of our house cats and takes great delight in stealing any food he can find - he is more interested in pinching it than eating it as, in fact, he's very fussy.

Despite his back leg, damaged as a small kitten before he came to us, causing him to sit awkwardly, when it comes to running and climbing it causes him no problem at all.

Marmaduke is very handsome, very loving, and good with other cats, enjoying the occasional rough and tumble with the now adult Jack.



JACK

Our other abandoned kitten brought to us, like Marmaduke, and never claimed, has grown into a very handsome, sleek adult with an oriental look about him. He is long and lean despite the fact that he is very fond of his food. Jack grew out of his kitten naughtiness and has actually become quite a home-loving cat.

Jack, finally allowed out, takes his first look out into the big outside - our garden



Jack, in Barnaby's hutch, samples his food



Jack explores the dizzy heights in the gardenis this the way down?



When in doubt...have a playfight with Marmaduke

Jack - 2007 update

The last weekend in January saw Jack rushed into hospital with breathing difficulties. Barbara was, unusually, away for the weekend leaving Bob to deal with what turned into a very worrying situation, with vet and nurse trying to save Jack's life that Saturday night.

Fluid had collected in Jack's chest making it difficult for him to breathe. He was put into an oxygen tent and it was by no means certain he would make it through the night.

We're so glad to be able to report that he did make it, but remained poorly for some time and had to stay in hospital having x-rays and being closely monitored, coming home on much medication for what was probably bronchial pneumonia.

Now, at the end of February, Jack, having caused us much worry and heartache, seems to be his old self once more.



POLLY

Polly, so named because of her five toes on each foot (Polydactyl), stayed with us after being found as a stray in the village and, again, never claimed – see 'new arrivals' section. We have had Polly since July 2006

and it is only now, six months later, that she is beginning to venture down stairs.

Polly disliked the other cats at first and hissed a lot, but she seems to have got used to them, at least. She's quite plump and rather bossy.



Barnaby gives Billy a nudge, wanting his attention

BARNABY

Our rescue rabbit, a lovely character, had a good year. He lives very close to the house, so we see lots of him. He enjoys the company of the cats, especially Billy. Barnaby is a large and very friendly rabbit.



Billy holds Barnaby back at paw's length

WHAT WE ARE UP AGAINST

We find we are up against the same things we have been all along – matters don't seem to have improved at all, and many of the major rescue organisations and vets are killing FIV and FeLV cats. In the case of FIVs they, once neutered, hardly pose any risk to others at all. In the case of FeLVs, these are often incorrectly diagnosed due to the inaccuracy of the in-house tests, and rarely are positive tests followed up three months later as they should be, as it takes this time for a cat to 'deal with' the leukaemia virus. It either 'shakes it off' or becomes persistently infected, and only two tests done at a proper laboratory, three months apart, will give a reliable result.

There is so much good information out there on the subject of feline immunodeficiency and feline leukaemia, put together by bodies such as Glasgow University, Feline Advisory Bureau and Cats Protection, all explaining about the viruses and how to deal with them, that there is simply no excuse for not dealing with them at all and simply killing the cat that throws up the problem.

Early in the New Year (2007) we had two separate emails from couples who both had a pair of kittens. Both had been to their separate vets, one in Somerset, the other in Devon, and an FIV problem was diagnosed. Both couples, thankfully, refused their vet's offer to put the kittens down!

Any vet worth his or her salt should know that testing a kitten for FIV cannot be definitive. A positive test only shows that the kitten has the FIV antibodies (it doesn't test for the virus itself) and if antibodies are found, they will have been inherited from the mother if she is FIV; in most cases the kitten will not inherit the virus and will test negative a few months later when it loses the inherited antibodies. Kittens vary in the time they take to lose their mother's antibodies, anything from three to nine months or even more. There is therefore little point in testing a cat for FIV below the age of one year.

Our contacts in the Forest of Dean had an interesting scenario recently

where 18 farm kittens tested FIV+, but later valid testing revealed only one out of the 18 was positive for the virus.

We are, very sadly, hearing of more and more Cats Protection groups killing FIV cats. This is really sad as the very name "Protection" ought to mean something! The problem arises because CP groups 'do their own thing' with regard to FIV and FeLV cats. The group is only as good as the leader - some are excellent and will fight to the bitter end to save a cat's life, others take the 'easy option' (a particular shame as the CP website has some quite good information on FIV).

The following is an extract from an email we received recently:

"...We have rescued a lost cat recently only to find it has FIV. It is a very placid 2-3 year old ginger longhair male.....Cats Protection were going to foster him but have withdrawn because of his FIV.....both the vet and Cats Protection say euthanasia is best. He is otherwise a healthy cat..."

"...euthanasia is best" they say - "for whom", we ask? It is certainly not best for the cat!

Also, the term euthanasia is much misused; euthanasia means "a good death" i.e. an end to suffering. The ginger cat was not suffering, he was merely immuno suppressed - yet they suggested a death sentence!

Vets remain the key to helping these cats, but so many give out silly, inaccurate and bad advice. As long as this carries on, rescue groups are going to be unwilling to take on FIV and FeLV cats, so it is very much a 'chicken and egg' situation.

New Year crisis - excellent example of what we are up against

BT

A phone call from Berkshire on New Year weekend led to the saving of a beautiful tabby cat who, even a few minutes later we discovered, would have been put to sleep. This handsome fellow had been found as a stray, unclaimed, and destined to be rehomed by one of the local groups until he was discovered to be FIV positive – then his fate was sealed. Luckily for him, the vet ambulance driver went to great efforts to save him and was given our number by someone who had read one of our leaflets in the 'Only Cats' shop whilst on holiday in Gloucestershire. Barbara got through to the vets literally at the last minute, we are told, when the lethal dose had already been drawn up into the syringe. How can this be happening to such beautiful creatures who find themselves "rescued"?

Big Ted (shortened to BT because of the life-saving phone call) duly arrived at Catwork in the first week of January, brought down from Berkshire by Rosemary (the ambulance lady), husband and friend. As you can see, his arrival



caused quite some interest amongst the other cats. At the time of writing BT has just completed his 'probation' period in the fivory while his blood test results got checked at Glasgow University's virus unit. In that time he has got used to the other cats around and they him. BT is now free to be in the garden with all the other cats and seems very happy, if a little vocal, seeking attention when we are around.

Catwork cannot solve the problem of FIV and FeLV cats. All we can do is keep doing what we've been doing for the last ten years – spreading the word via website, emails, phone chats and leaflets. Despite all the fantastic support we receive which keeps everything going, we feel that it is very sad that there is a need for places like Catwork for the 'rejects' of the feline world.

Rescue organisations are not worthy of the name, in our view, if they continue to put down animals who aren't suffering; they should make provision for those more difficult to rehome not simply 'get rid' of the problem. It should not be left to the likes of Catwork to pick up the pieces that the larger organisations simply reject out of hand.

The cats who live at Catwork have almost all been on 'death row' and this cannot be right for such beautiful creatures who aren't even ill. Sometimes it has been quite a battle to save these cats, but we believe every life is worth saving.

There are times when we find the frustrations overpowering, and we wonder what we can achieve. To remind ourselves, we look at a few of those we have here, and renew our determination to help these cats -

Nick is just one such example:

The picture here shows Nick in spring 2004 when he came to us as a scruffy and frightened youngster, having been saved in the 'nick' of time from being put down at the Blue Cross - for being FIV!

See the photo on the next page of Nick now (pic taken Feb 2007) and see what simple care can do - he has needed no veterinary attention, just basic care.

(Yes, it really is the same cat!)





Nick, healthy, relaxed and confident in Feb 2007 - see bottom of previous page



Catwork is a sanctuary for cats with special needs,
particularly those who test positive for FIV or FeLV

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