



THE CATWORK YEAR

2010

BOOTSY and FLUFF

our front cover cats this year

This year we have two "front cover" cats - Bootsy and Fluff, both of whom we lost in 2010. They go back to the early days of our life with FIV cats, and both escaped being put to sleep when very young by vets who considered FIV to merit a death sentence.

Bootsy and Fluff also brought with them funding in different ways by the people who cared for them, so both left a legacy for helping other unfortunate cats.

Bootsy was delivered to us in 2003 by Barry and Angela, who subsequently went on to set up Animal Affairs charity shop in Bristol, which helps small rescues like Catwork. Having seen our sanctuary, they have sponsored us ever since.

Fluff was brought here in 2001 by Margaret and Maurice, who had been putting food out for him in their garden in Chipping Sodbury. In those early days we had very little accommodation, and the Haywards gave a substantial cheque, with which we purchased three more chalets, which have been in use ever since, so helping many more cats.

Both Bootsy and Fluff lived their natural span in our garden, and both were delightful cats, so different, but so full of character.

The saving of Bootsy and Fluff enabled us to help many more FIV cats.

See also pages 16 & 17.



The Catwork Year 2010

2010 was full of the usual "ups and downs", beginning and ending on a very wintery note: a year in which we lost several of our early FIVs dating back to the early days of the sanctuary, and in which we took in several new cats, including three young leukaemia positives (FeLVs), all from different locations. This was surprising, as, thanks to a very good vaccine, leukaemia these days is rarely seen.

Our visitors were as abundant as ever and people's generosity as amazing as ever.

We have continued to have contact with, and try to help, people around the country experiencing "cat problems". Some of their stories, where we were able to have a direct effect, appear in this yearbook.

The bitterly cold and snowy start to 2010 found us coping with two very sick cats, Jordan and Nick, who had been giving us so much concern over the festive period. Not long into 2010 we lost them both: Jordan succumbed to cancer of the jaw, and Nick, last year's front cover cat, to kidney and liver problems.

We also lost our teenage oldies - Lucky, Sammy and Spider - so a very distressing start to the new year.

Spring finally arrived, along with some new intakes (see New Arrivals), and the visitors started coming to see the cats once more.

Summer saw us busier than ever, and much preoccupied with long overdue renovations and improvements to our cottage.

Thankfully, we had a reasonable summer; the building work went well and the cats did a fair bit of sun worshipping.

Things got tough again in the autumn due to Barbara's poor health and the early onset of the "big freeze". The cats' heaters went on particularly

early and stayed on day and night as we all struggled to get through to Christmas - made extra difficult because of the weather.

As always, cards arriving from across the country from friends old and new helped spur us on.

A big thank you to all our regular sponsors and everyone who sent donations at Christmas, some in addition to regular sponsorship.

Friend Lisa once more did a lucrative tombola for the cats, even though she was moving home and it was just before Christmas. Lisa's sister Heather, with husband Sean, also provided a substantial Christmas bonus.

Thanks go, as ever, to Animal Affairs charity shop in Bristol who have been sending regular donations for many years.

Thanks to Portishead Spiritualist Church who have given donations ever since Margaret (one of their members) needed our help for her mum's cat, Lucky, when she went into a home.

Bristol and District Cat Club and West of England/S. Wales Club have once more donated to Catwork from their charity fund.



Bernie gives Cecil a hug



Claire with Jasper, Bruce and Woody



Lesley with her rescue, Bear



Mary introducing Mr Darcy to his new home. Darcy quickly scent marks his approval



Mary and Kirsty also find time to cuddle some of the Fivery gang

Our links remain, through Thomas, with Albert Cottage Vet Clinic in Cornwall where vet Rob still collects funds for Thomas and friends.

Thanks to the Dennis sisters in Berkshire who have continued to send parcels for the cats.

Thank you to the anonymous lady from Forest of Dean Cats Protection who donated a cheque long after Tutts (who came via the group) had left us.

Ongoing thanks to Moira in Leicester who fosters Oscar for Catwork, and Sue in Minehead who fosters Brandy.

A big thank you to old friend Pete who came to the rescue just before Christmas when Barbara asked his help for an elderly cat whose owner had suddenly died. Pete took on Fluff who joined his three other rescues in Minehead; what a star!

Thanks, once again, to Bob from Taunton who has kept us supplied with sawdust/woodchip for the garden litter trays, bringing it over to us several times a year.



Lisa with Thomas and Bruce



Lesley (left) and friends, after delivering Ruffles, visit the Fivery too



Sara hands out treats!



Mary with the usual up-front cats!



Carol with poorly Bootsy, Dave with Thomas

Thank you this year to our builders, Rick and Gary, who were brilliant while they were working here, being vigilant about shutting the front door every time they went in and out, because of the house cats. (Barbara had been very worried about how the cats would cope with the work, but all went well.)

Yet again a very big thank you to the vets, nurses and staff at Quantock Veterinary Hospital who go out of their way to be supportive and deliver excellent care to the cats.

On behalf of the cats, our heartfelt thanks to everyone who supports Catwork.



Annie with her special Cecil



The Bristol gang: Annie, Lorna, Lyn and Sara



David and Trish visit to see Minstrel



Stan and Dot with Jasper and friends



Zoe and Liz meet the Fivory gang having delivered Harry and Barley



Kath, Jean and Debbie meet the gang



Debbie has a quiet word with Cecil



Jackie and Pete, having delivered Danny from Brum, spare time to say hello to the Fivory cats



Vera gives Cecil a cuddle, with Big Boy and Bruce's attention elsewhere!



Gail and John, having delivered Timmy, also are keen to meet the Fivory gang



Rebecca and Megan give grandad a hand to share some biscuit snacks around



Barbara's son Ted, with Katy... and a few cats

So, time to record the Catwork year and tell you how we spent the money you so generously gave and what it enabled us to do for the cats.

At the time of writing, Catwork sanctuary is home to 18 FIVs, 3 FeLVs, 3 special needs and 3 foster cats, making 27 funded by our sponsors.

Our personal pets number six plus one rabbit.

NEW ARRIVALS IN 2010



FIZZ (FeLV)

Fizz, our young tortie girl, came early in the year as a direct result of us actually looking for a FeLV, via the Internet, as a friend for Billy, left on his own after the tragic loss of Jordan.

Fizz's fosterer saw our posting and responded. She was looking after Fizz for the RSPCA.

Fizz and her brother had been dumped as youngsters in a box outside the centre. The boy tested negative for leukaemia virus but Fizz tested positive.

The centre knew the right thing to do, fortunately, and Fizz was fostered for three months and a second test done, which, again, came back positive. The brother was homed but Fizz was proving impossible to home, and the RSPCA didn't want another "rescue" to take on her care.

The fosterer, however, being unwilling to keep Fizz, clearly put pressure on and we were visited and quizzed about our work and where Fizz would live etc. Billy, the clown, made a good showing and Fizz was produced from the back of the van and left with us for a trial period - we seemed to have passed the test!

With a very slim chance of ever finding a home for a leukaemia cat, Fizz was given the chance of a life here at Catwork in the sanctuary.

We were, unusually, much impressed by this RSPCA centre, who travelled a long distance to check us out, as most centres put FeLV positives to sleep.

We were duly visited a second time, some weeks later, and generously showered with food and blankets and toys, and Fizz was signed over.

Fizz's name definitely suits her - she's a very bright little tortie, dashing about and enjoying fusses, food and the Felvery garden.

RUFFLES (FIV & SN)

Ruffles was a sad old beaten up stray in Kent, known as Mr Wonky. He was being fed and given shelter, but when new unneutered cats moved in next door, they started pinching his food and attacking him.

We saw his plight mentioned on the CatChat forum, and decided he was a "special needs" cat if ever there was one and said he could come to Catwork.

Everyone involved was delighted and "Mr Wonky" was duly brought all the way from Kent to Somerset.



At first we put him in the main Fivery garden with an area on his own, but he seemed worried by the other cats, so after a while we put him in a separate little area where the old girls used to live, near the house.

We changed his name to Ruffles (as he'd had such a rough time) and for a few months he thrived and thoroughly enjoyed his food, which at last he could consume without looking over his shoulder and being frightened of other cats.

His stay with us was, sadly, all too brief as, one day he seemed off colour and not wanting to eat, which was very unusual for him, so we had him checked out. A spell in hospital with tests revealed advanced liver cancer. Poor Ruffles had to be put to sleep.

All one can say is that his last six months were hassle-free and he seemed to enjoy being here.



BEAR (FIV)

We were contacted by one of the receptionists at a Bristol Vet about help for an FIV stray who'd walked into her home and settled himself on the bed!

Being reluctant to take on a young cat, we pointed Lesley to the CatChat website where more and more homes are being found for needy cats, including FIVs. A home for him did not materialise, and when we saw a picture, the cat looked old and miserable, and his seven days at the vet before being put to sleep were nearly up - we had to help.

Bear, as Lesley called him, quickly picked up and soon looked very different from the photo taken at the back of the vets.

Bear is now rather fat, but is not happy around other cats, and he prefers to keep himself to himself. He is actually well-named as he can often sound like a "bear with a sore head" grizzling at all the other cats.

MINSTREL (FIV)

Shortly after Bear, the same Bristol vets ended up with another FIV stray taken in for treatment by a client.

Minstrel, as he became known, stayed with us for some weeks before being taken on as a pet by David and Trish who had been looking out for him as a stray (see Minstrel's story p30)



LUCY (FIV)

This sweet little tortie came to us from our own vets. She was an unclaimed stray; so loving and sweet that its hard to believe nobody was looking for her!

She had what appeared to be a skin problem, which was treated during her stay with the

vets and a home was found for her. However, she tested FIV positive, the home offer evaporated, so we took her on.

The skin issue, however, did not clear up; in fact, despite treatment, it got worse. Tests eventually revealed that Lucy is suffering from a type of skin cancer.

When she first came, in the spring, we put Lucy in the geriatric area near the house where we have a couple of small chalets in little garden areas. This suited her well, until the bitter November weather arrived, when we put her in the 'hospital bay' in the top chalet where she can look down on all the FIV boys, and stay much warmer.





DANNY (FeLV)

Danny was a Birmingham stray being fed, along with several other cats, in the garden of an Asian lady who was trying her best to sort out the 'cat problems' in her immediate area by getting cats neutered. Danny was one of these and Zaynab even found a home for him. Sadly, Danny tested positive for leukaemia and

Zaynab phoned many rescues for help. Nobody wanted to know about a FeLV+ cat until she was given our number. We said we would take him, but first he had to be trapped as he had disappeared under the floorboards into the house next door.

Our friend Jackie, who lives in Birmingham and, amazingly, close to where Danny was, lent her trap, caught him in it, and brought him down to Somerset.

A very frightened Danny showed his gratitude by biting Bob. It took just a couple of days for Danny to get over his fear and tuck into as much food as he could possibly consume - which he's been doing ever since!

Danny in a short time has grown into a strapping big lad; unfortunately, he dislikes other cats and has to be kept separate instead of being able to enjoy the full extent of the FeLV garden. Towards humans he is ultra affectionate.

HARRY and BARLEY (FIV)

These handsome brothers came from Bath Cats & Dogs Home, where they had been for more than 18 months. They are FIV+ and so nervous that they were never going to get a home.

Their carers became increasingly worried for their future, as they couldn't be kept in a pod in a rescue centre for the rest of their lives.

Everyone seemed pleased when we agreed to help, and the brothers were duly brought to Catwork with several beds and all their favourite toys!

Zoe and Liz came to see them several times before Christmas and some enjoyable hours were spent getting to know all the other residents as well.

Harry and Barley were, understandably, very wary of us and their new situation at first, but familiarity and the regular daily routine worked the usual magic and they are beginning to "get there". We haven't tried to touch them yet as they are worried if we reach out other than with food, but they seem very relaxed as long as we are just around. We are allowing them to set their own pace as to actual contact. One day over Christmas, when chicken was on the menu, they almost forgot to be frightened!

They are such a handsome pair of cats, and very dependent on each other. Harry and Barley live in the main part of what was the geriatric area near the house, as it seemed too big a jump to put them in the main Fivery after being in a small 'pod' in the rescue centre for such a long time.





TIMMY (FeLV)

This sweet little black FeLV cat from Devon, got himself adopted, after a period of strydom, by a cat-loving family with several other rescues.

When neutered and blood tested, Timmy's positive FeLV status was a problem, as leukaemia is a much more serious virus than FIV and posed a threat to the other cats.

We received an email asking for help with the situation, and we said we would take Timmy, hoping he might be a friend for Fizz if his second test came back positive, as Danny had shown he didn't want a cat friend.

Timmy's test did come back positive and, luckily, he and Fizz seem to have a "working arrangement" (Timmy is inquisitive and Fizz is a 'drama queen who shrieks for the slightest reason!)

Timmy is a gentle little cat, unlike Danny, who poses no threat. He is, however, extremely fussy and rarely eats the same food two days running - good job we have a large stock of different brands and flavours.

Timmy makes number three FeLV this year - unusual in that they are less numerous these days and our three are all young.

We hope to learn more about FeLV through them, as, mostly, our FeLVs have been much older and have done well for some years.

Mr DARCY

Mr Darcy had ended up as a stray bunny in an RSPCA centre in Wales, where friend Mary works. The rabbit fosterer had gone sick and staff were asked if anyone could foster a rabbit. Mary took Mr Darcy (as she named him because she considered him so handsome) and set him up in her garage.

When Barbara next spoke to Mary, she mentioned we had lost our rabbit, Button, so Mary, knowing us well, saw an

opportunity for a home for her Mr Darcy, of whom she had grown very fond.

In early spring, Mary came with a car full of goodies for the cats, and Mr Darcy, who immediately inspected his new territory and began thumping loudly to announce he was moving in, and that the new pad was his!

Unlike dear Button, Darcy isn't the least bit nervous; he loves people and rushes around excitedly when ever anyone goes near or into his enclosure.

Darcy also likes the cats and rushes up and down when they go past, trying to attract their attention, like some displaying bird.

He enjoys his food, is very clean and a real little character.



THOSE WHO LEFT US IN 2010



SAMMY

This affectionate little cat was called "Sally" and fed a strange diet by his eccentric owner, who had to go into a home. Friend Pete cared for him for a while before we took him on at Catwork in 2008.

Sammy seemed to enjoy his time here, eating extremely well and being good with the other cats. He died of old age quite suddenly in his bed in early January 2010.



LUCKY

Lucky came to us when her owner went into a home in 2005. She was terribly nervous at first, but soon learned to trust us and relax into the routine of life here.

Despite a heart condition, Lucky made it into her late teens. We had brought her into the house in a pen in the severe weather of January 2010, but she suffered a stroke and we had to have her put to sleep.



SPIDER

Spider, a cat of character, came to us in the earliest days of Catwork (1995) when we did a bit of homing. Spider was homed in the village where he spent most of his life, coming back to us in old age when his owner went into a home.

Spider became hyperthyroid but did very well here until old age caught up with him. He must have been 17-18 years old.

JORDAN

Jordan was one of our early FeLVs, brought to us all the way from East Anglia in 2004. He was big, black and beautiful, with a gentle nature.

Jordan enjoyed very good health for some years until, in 2010, he developed cancer of the jaw. We were able to give him palliative treatment for some time, but when the cancer began spreading down his face and he didn't want to eat, we had to call it a day.



The euthanasia of Jordan was especially difficult to bear as he looked so fit and handsome until you saw the side of his face, which cancer was destroying. He was put to sleep on the same day as elderly Lucky who had suffered a stroke - one of the saddest days of 2010.

NICK

Nick, last year's front cover cat, we knew would not survive long into the New Year 2010 as he was suffering from kidney and liver failure. He too was able to be given palliative care for some time.

Nick, in 2004, had been rescued from the Blue Cross in the "nick" of time as a youngster who was going to be put to sleep, as he was an unclaimed stray and FIV positive. Unbelievable that organisations most people think rescue and help all cats, could put down a sweet little cat who'd had such a bad start in life and was still only about 18 months old.



Nick was always one of Barbara's favourites; he grew into a really handsome cat with a very sweet nature. Barbara found Nick dead in his bed one morning. He left such a big hole in the Fivery.

BOOTSY

Bootsy, our front cover cat, was one of our early FIVs, arriving in 2003. One of our Bristol rehoming friends asked if we could take him as he was about to be put to sleep at the vet - another unclaimed FIV stray.

Bootsy overcame many health issues; we nearly lost him to urinary tract blockage (very serious in male cats) and he was always prone to eye problems. However, in the end it was cancer that claimed him.

Bootsy, so named because he was a bit of a "bossy boots" around the others, was a great little character, much loved by visitors.



BLACKIE

Blackie was a long-term stray in Weston-super-Mare, where he used to do the rounds trying to survive. One of his stops was friend Stella's garden where he got some food. One day Stella saw he was in a bad way, and it was only because Blackie was ill that he was able to be caught.

Barbara had said we would help and she met Stella half way with the cat and took him straight to our vet hospital where he remained for a while being treated and neutered. Blackie's bladder was so enlarged that it was fit to burst; he must have been in a lot of pain; however, he made a quick recovery and, being FIV, came to live at Catwork in 2007.

Having been a long-term stray, he was at first very wary of humans, but when he learnt to trust and knew that he wouldn't have to go searching for food any more, he became quite affectionate and rather possessive when he found a lap to sit on!

Blackie went downhill very quickly, taking us by surprise. We took him to the hospital one Saturday night as he looked unwell and he seemed to pick up during his stay there, though liver problems were found. Blackie was actually allowed home, but, sadly, died peacefully in his bed the next day.



FLUFF

Fluff was a stray from a young age, visiting the garden of cat lovers Margaret and Maurice in Chipping Sodbury. One day, in 2001, he turned up injured, so they took him to the vet, and upon being diagnosed as FIV+, they were told he should be put to sleep!

Margaret was having none of it, even though she, like so many people, had never heard of FIV. Many phone calls and refusals to help later, she was given our number. This was in the really early days when accommodation was minimal and we had nowhere to put "Scruff" as he was then known. However, we had to help, and so he was brought to Somerset and ended up for a while sleeping in a very large adapted rabbit hutch in an enclosure. The Haywards were so grateful that they gave us a very large cheque, which enabled us to buy some more chalets and be able to help more cats like Scruff.

Scruff did well and grew into a handsome longhaired cat whose name was changed to Fluff.

Fluff's coat was a nightmare to deal with and he was a very fussy eater, but so lovable, always dashing about.

Fluff became persistently afflicted with diarrhea in the autumn of 2010, which no treatment seemed to help. When the vet said he could feel a lump, we knew it had to be investigated. It was really sad to see him taken off to the hospital, still as bright as a button, and receive a phone call some hours later saying that an inoperable tumour of the intestines had been found which was spreading fast. We had to let Fluff go under the anaesthetic. Our only comfort was that Fluff was only days away from suffering a possibly painful end due to the spreading of the cancer in the stomach.

It is always sad not to be able to say goodbye. Fluff was brought back and buried in the Fivery garden around which he'd pranced for many years that he nearly didn't have.



RUFFLES

Ruffles was a sad little cat who came to us all the way from Kent. His stay here was only brief (see New Arrivals), but he seemed to enjoy his last few months in his own little area, not bothered by other cats. Ruffles had to be put to sleep when cancer of the liver was discovered. Such a shame, having reached the sanctuary, he could not have had longer here.



TEDDY

Teddy was our special needs deaf/blind cat who lived in the house. Again, very unexpectedly, we lost him, and on the same day as we lost dear Billy.



Teddy, after supper, started fitting. As there was an evening surgery over the road, Barbara was able to take him across to be seen. Teddy had to go to the hospital to be treated, but the fitting continued and it became clear that the only kind thing to do was to let him go. Such a shock when he'd eaten supper just as normal!

In retrospect we felt that, for a deaf and blind cat, a long drawn out illness would have been worse than a swift end which he knew nothing about. A great shock for us though.

We had had Teddy for a couple of years; he had been found wandering around an industrial estate near Bristol and was never claimed. He had obviously been well cared for and was in good condition, so couldn't have been straying for long.

Teddy adapted to life here in the house and quickly learnt to negotiate the stairs, liking to spend his days outside of Bob's open office door. At night we put him in a puppy pen for security and so the other house cats didn't bother him. Despite his major disabilities, he was a colourful cantankerous old cat - a real character.

BILLY

Billy FeLV was a most unexpected loss, as he had never shown any signs of illness.



When leukaemia virus "kicks in", however, it is usually a swift decline - this is what happened with Billy. He suddenly wasn't his usual clown of a self, dashing about, and became withdrawn and lost weight. Blood tests revealed his white cell count was very high and we knew it was the beginning of the end. When he stopped eating altogether, all we could do was have him put to sleep.

Having gone out of our way to find a friend for Billy, it was very sad to lose him so soon after Fizz came.

Billy was a delightful character whom we took on in 2008, from an animal rescue contact in Middlesex who saved him from being put to sleep when he first tested positive for leukaemia. At least he had a few years here which he seemed to enjoy.

BUTTON

This sweet little rabbit was with us hardly any time at all. We had taken him on from a rabbit rescue hoping to give him a good life, but it was not to be.



We only had him for a few months before it became apparent that he had major mouth abnormalities. For the short time Button was with us he lost much of his initial nervousness and enjoyed giving us the run around at night when we tried to put him back in his hutch.

Right from the start, Button never ate much and was rather thin. It seemed as if teeth were the problem and he underwent an operation to sort it out, but only a week later he was back on the operating table and the vet was shocked to see that he had hardly any tongue left - quite extraordinary! Poor little Button would never have been able to eat properly, and so he was not brought round from the anaesthetic.

Six months of TLC in a nice big enclosure with a large new hutch was all we could give this pretty little rabbit.

UPDATE ON OTHER CATWORK CATS

THE FIVs



CAPTAIN

Captain is one of our very first FIVs, coming to us in 1997, about 2-3 years old. He is still with us and in remarkably good health for his age. Captain is always in the middle of a pile of other cats in the big basket where many of them cuddle up in the winter. He's still looking as handsome as the day he came - from our very own veterinary practice.



GUY

Guy, who has been with us since 2004, has again enjoyed good health throughout 2010. Unlike Captain, he doesn't much enjoy the company of other cats, especially Jasper, and is a bit of a loner, but has the odd affectionate moment with us. He has a big appetite, enjoying his meals - don't all strays?



JIM

Jim came to us in 2007 from Surrey. His mouth, which has always given trouble in the past, has been much better after putting him on interferon (a natural protein that helps the immune system). Although it doesn't always work we are very pleased that in Jim's case it seems to have helped, enabling him to eat more easily.

Jim is a lovely cat, full of character.



THOMAS CORNWALL

Thomas is another lovely character who adores people, and somehow seems to manage to get into every picture in the yearbook!

Thomas is still sent donations from clients at Albert Street Vet Clinic in Saltash from which he came, thanks to vet Rob's box on the counter since he came to us in 2007.

He had a rather major dental in 2010 when 12 teeth were removed. Apart from that, he is a chunky cat who enjoys good health.



BERTIE

Bertie, an FIV stray found just next door to our cottage in 2008 and never claimed, is now an established friendly member of the Fivery. He has had an excellent year healthwise.

He is rather shy amongst the other cats, but loves attention from people, so enjoys it when visitors come.

CECIL

Cecil, who has been with us since 2002, sadly lost his two chalet companions in 2010 - Percy and, later, Fluff. We moved him in with Captain's night-time group and he has fitted in well.

Cecil, healthwise, had a very good year in 2010 and appears these days to be eating for England!

Cecil is a great favourite with visitors.





DONNY

Despite his ordeal in early life when he was nearly starved by his callous owner, Donny has done extremely well here since 2003, even after a big, complex operation to remove one ear a few years ago when it became full of tumours.

Donny has a large appetite, but we can forgive him that after suffering such deprivation in early life.



BRUCE

Bruce, who has also been with us since 2003, had a good year in 2010, bar the odd trip to the vet for minor problems. He's a large, quiet cat but does like it when visitors come, when he can be quite affectionate.

BATMAN

Batty, as we call him, having come from 'death row' at Battersea in 2005, had a good year in 2010, but did need a dental, as most cats do at some point.

Batty, the little streetwise cat, seemed to miss his friend Nick for some time after he died - they used to 'hang out' together. Although he pretends to be a 'toughie', Batty has his affectionate moments, often following Bob around the Fivory while he does chores.



JASPER

Jasper has been at Catwork since 2006. We managed to get Jasper's urinary problems under control, but he remains on a prescription diet to help prevent crystals forming.

His health otherwise is good, and he is a big solid cat, still fond of the limelight when visitors come.



BT

Saved by a phone call in 2007 when at a Berkshire vets about to be put to sleep, BT is in good health and managing to steer clear of the vet. He mixes well with the other cats and has a healthy appetite - as most strays seem to!



WOODY

Woody's Gloucester fans came to see him in 2010, which was very pleasant. He had come from a vet in Wood Street, Gloucester in 2007.

Always desperate for food, he is in good health with no problems since he arrived.



BIG BOY

Big Boy from Berkshire had a good year except for needing a major dental (2010 seemed to be a year for dentals!)

He has settled well into the Fivery and is a very pleasant character.

Shy when he first came, he has grown to be very fond of visitors and cuddles.



THOMAS

Another Thomas from Cornwall, but this one is tabby and came with friend Ralph, when their owner could no longer look after them.

Thomas is a very vocal cat, especially when waiting for the food. He enjoys very good health.

Thomas has gained greatly in confidence since he came.



RALPH

Ralph, cross-eyed and bent-eared, is no oil-painting, but a great character and no longer having to do as much minding of companion Thomas.

Ralph has the occasional sore mouth which responds to treatment and does not stop him eating for long! Ralph is quite an affectionate fellow.

SPECIAL NEEDS



MAY

May, who has been at Catwork since 2006, remains terrified of people and lives in her own little world, even more restricted now as she has gone blind - very sad. We have seriously

questioned ourselves as to her quality of life as she stays in her little house and no longer goes out. How are we to know what May feels about such an impoverished life?

For the moment, she eats reasonably well, looks healthy and manages to keep warm with a heat pad under her bed and a heater in the hutch.

Thankfully, she finally seems to be getting the hang of using the dirt tray in the hutch. We frequently have to trim May's nails - a two person job; Barbara does the holding, having got May into a basket, and Bob does the clipping. Such a pretty, sad little cat..



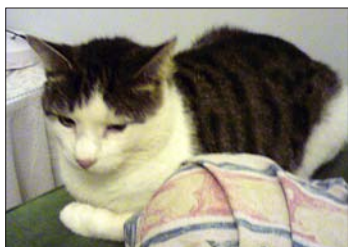
SANDY

Sandy, so frightened when she came to us in 2005, and now so bossy, is doing well. She did need a dental in 2010 and protested much about the indignity of being put in a basket and taken off to the hospital. (She is a bit of a drama queen!)

Sandy is also a very fussy eater, but she has grown into a nice confident cat who is very affectionate.

Although she chooses rarely to come into the house, she spends much time close to it, much to the concern of the other house cats, who are rather worried by her bossiness.

CATWORK FOSTER CATS



OSCAR

Moira, who fosters Oscar for Catwork, tells us he is doing well and growing in confidence all the time. He's fond of being outside but gets on okay with the other members of Moira's feline household.



BRANDY

Brandy is looked after by Sue, who found him when he ran off after his owner died. He is another cat who doesn't look his age (We homed him back in the '90s) and another old cat who knows his own mind. He is doing very well.



FLUFF

Fostered by friend Pete, Fluff goes from strength to strength after being taken on just before Christmas when his owner died suddenly. He eats very well and has learnt to fit in with Pete's three other rescues, letting them know he's boss. (see also p31.)



MAX

Max, the Maine Coon look-alike rescue, who lived with us while Barbara's daughter took a year out for study, went back home in the summer.

Being so large and boisterous, he had rather frightened some of the house cats. Max is enjoying life as the only cat in his proper home, and has some great feline friends next door where he spends much of his time, we hear.

THE HOUSE CATS

MILLIE

Millie, the model for the Catwork logo, had some health issues in 2010 and also needed a dental. Barbara spent a worrying Bank Holiday weekend in the summer when her special little black cat was hospitalised and tests run to find what the problem was.



Millie turned out to be hyperthyroid but also lacking in the important mineral

potassium, making her not want to eat. Barbara received a daily report on Millie's progress and she quickly responded to treatment and probably coped with being in hospital better than Barbara!

Millie is now on a daily tablet for her hyperthyroid condition and is doing very well. She is looking really good for her age, which has to be around 15. She's still bossing the young ones about, and "looking after" Barbara.

BILLY

Billy has snuffled his way through life (due to flu, we think, as a young stray) and has gradually become less frightened as time's gone by.



After the death of his friend Ginger Tom, Billy started coming indoors more and, these days, hardly goes out at all, spending evenings on a lap.

Billy was giving us much cause for concern towards the end of 2010, as his snuffles were not responding so well to his usual tablets.

An investigation was planned to take a look at his head and chest under anaesthetic - if we could catch him and get him in the basket!

For what happened next, in early 2011, see pages 36-37.

MARMADUKE

Marmaduke is the only one of our house cats who isn't black. Our very handsome ginger has a lovely 'naughty' personality. He's been with us since a tiny kitten, found on the village bypass with a back leg he was unable to use (it seems like he might have been stepped on as the bones had started to fuse at an angle).

Incredibly, Marmaduke didn't lose the leg and he is now the most agile and adventurous of all the house cats. He's a great little guy even though he steals pouches and always seems to be on the wrong side of the door!



JACK

Jack was another stray from the village, brought to the house as a small kitten and never claimed, Jack is a really big lad - or is the word these days "obese"?

Jack has an insatiable appetite and is always trying to pinch other cats' food. He was very proud of himself one day when, to our amazement, he caught the mouse that we knew lived in the store cupboard where we keep the large bags of cat biscuits. Every bag we opened seemed to have a hole gnawed in the bottom. Jack started spending a lot of time near the cupboard door, and one day Bob opened the door saying Jack would never find the mouse amongst all the bags. Imagine his surprise when Jack ran into the kitchen with the mouse dangling from his mouth! Poor mouse must have been too fat to get out of the way after living in the biscuit cupboard for many months.

Jack doesn't meow but 'squeaks' for attention. He's a real home-loving cat.



POLLY

Polly, our five-toed cat, lives upstairs in the daytime and looks after Oliver. They look so much alike that they could be mum and son, except they are not.

Polly, when she comes downstairs in the evenings, can be quite naughty and too interested in cooking smells and what's in the waste paper basket. She has her favourite chair for the evening, then runs back upstairs with Oliver for the night.



OLIVER

Oliver, found by the postman near Christmas three years ago, is a lovely little chap, easily frightened and wanting to be upstairs most of the time. He likes the occasional play fight with Marmaduke and likes to chase Polly around a couple of times most days.

Oliver is addicted to the little Cheddar cheese biscuits and Barbara gets mugged most evenings till he gets one (or two!) Oliver is still very small for his age, but is a real little character.



MR DARCY

Darcy is one of the friendliest rabbits. We took him on after nervous little Button had to be put to sleep due to a mouth deformity, preventing him eating.

Darcy loves people and other animals and is a great little character (see "New Arrivals" p13 for more about him.)



CATS WE'VE HELPED FURTHER AFIELD



MINSTREL

Minstrel, a beautiful young stray black cat, was being fed by David and Trish in Bristol. One day he turned up injured, so they took him to their vet for treatment. A blood test showed him to be FIV positive and David & Trish were told that, if unclaimed after

seven days, the cat would be put down because of it. Knowing nothing about FIV and passionate about cats, David & Trish couldn't believe their ears.

Fortunately, the receptionist on duty knew us and phoned to see if Barbara could help by talking to David & Trish about FIV, which she duly did. They also came to the sanctuary for a visit and we talked some more. David & Trish were quite adamant that the cat should not be put to sleep, but the vet was advising them not to take him on as they had cats of their own.

Minstrel was already known to their cats as he had been coming round for a while, and had never shown any aggression towards them - we couldn't see what the problem was in taking him on. David & Trish were so fond of Minstrel that they did offer him a home, but first he spent some weeks at Catwork where he was neutered by our vets and made a full recovery from his injuries.

Minstrel now lives with David & Trish in Bristol with the other cats in the household where he's doing well. His wandering days are well and truly over.



SCRUFF

We were emailed by Karen in Northampton for advice when her vet said the little scruffy stray she'd tried to help should be put down when he tested positive for FIV. The lady did not know anything about the virus but

was determined the little cat would not be put to sleep.

The website provided much information, and in a phone chat, Barbara was able to dispel all the myths about FIV. The conclusion was that Scruff was sorted out and taken on as a much-loved pet. We get lovely updates about him and how he's doing well.

Our well used website was found to be helpful once more and help for the cat was just an email and a phone call away.



FLUFF

Just before Christmas Barbara was, at a friend's request, desperately seeking a home for an elderly cat whose owner had died suddenly whilst away from home.

Barbara called up Pete, an old friend who has taken on many needy cats and whose feline family numbered three.

Despite having only recently taken on an abused cat, Pete rose to the occasion. Barbara and Pete went to

Bridgwater to pick Fluff up, had him checked out with our vet and Pete took him home to Minehead.

Considering Fluff had been an only cat, he settled in remarkably quickly and seems to be enjoying his new life. We know he won't go short of anything, thanks to Pete.



JAMES and HENRY

James and Henry were leading a feral existence in and around the garden of Sarah in Leominster. Sarah was putting out food for them and some others, but it was only when first one, and then the other seemed very unwell that she was able to capture them. The local Cats Protection refused to help with their treatment as Sarah had given them names - so,

in their view, they had to be pets! Crazy bureaucracy is one of the things that drives us mad - if a cat is in need, it should be helped. So Catwork agreed to fund their treatment

Arrangements were made with Sarah's vet to have the "ferals" treated and neutered. James, the first one to be caught because he was so poorly, is a feisty young cat. He was treated and neutered and kept confined long enough to recover. He has since returned to his feisty feral ways, but Sarah sees him around.



The second cat to be helped was Henry, who turned out later not to be feral at all, just plain terrified!

Like James, it was only when Henry was poorly and in a sorry state that Sarah was able to catch him. He was treated, thoroughly checked over and, of course, neutered.

Henry decided humans weren't so bad after all and quickly adapted to home comforts. Sarah has since been able to find a home for Henry with a friend nearby and sees him often.

It was so good to be able to help these two needy cats outside of our own sanctuary. Thanks to all the supporters for making such things possible!

Thinking on FIV

Since we first became involved with FIVs, their plight has improved markedly, but there is still some way to go yet.

In the early days, the norm was for a positive FIV test to be a signal for the cat to be destroyed. This, with a few exceptions, has now changed. Most have learnt something about the virus and have begun to recognise that the virus is not the 'plague' after all. Exceptions, sadly, are a few CP groups, and the mainstream RSPCA - as always, one cannot generalise, and now the majority of CP groups try to rehome FIVs instead of destroying them, and some of the RSPCA centres that are not strictly under the thumb of the head office, also recognise the true facts.

Vets also vary enormously regarding their opinion about FIV, and tragically, it seems to be the younger, more recently qualified vets who seem to have the worst views on the virus. This really is sad, as it suggests that the veterinary training has not kept up with current understanding about FIV, so there seems to be a stream of new, ill-informed, vets coming into the arena - one would have hoped for the opposite!

The next hurdle that needs to be tackled is the policy that the more enlightened rescues have that, although FIVs can now be homed, they should be so as only cats to indoor-only homes. As we say, that is a vast improvement on a few years ago, but it does restrict the potential homes severely, which in turn means the plight of the FIV is still one that is perceived as a problem.

There are two main reasons that rescues give for their FIV homing policy: they revolve around their opinion that FIV is a real problem for the cat, and that they are likely to pass it on to any other cat they meet - neither of these reasons is actually valid!

We, along with many others now who have had FIVs for years, know from experience that they are no more likely to become ill than a cat without the virus. So where does the scare factor come from?

The problem arises because the majority of FIVs that show illness

are the ones who picked up the virus whilst strays. The very fact of being a stray means a cat is having a poor diet, no veterinary care and is exposed to aggression from other strays fighting to survive. These are the cats who, when caught and taken to vets, are observed to be in a very poor state of health and, on testing, found to be FIV (remember, vets tend only to see sick FIVs, they don't see all the healthy ones). The immediate assumption is that they are in poor health because they are FIV; whereas, in fact, they are in poor health because they have been strays - the fact that they also picked up FIV is a coincidence of the environment in which they have been living and is not the cause of any illness - but that never seems to get past the prejudice of the observer.

Once an FIV cat receives good care, it can quickly recover from past problems and go on to live a healthy life with no more health issues than an uninfected cat - okay, there are exceptions, but we would firstly assume their problems are due to their past lives more than their FIV status, whereas most others would first assume the opposite, wrongly in our view!

The fallacy that, as soon as a cat gets FIV, its immune system rapidly goes downhill, is just plain wrong - after another seven or eight years perhaps there may be a scientifically detectable decline in the CD4 lymphocytes (cells that form part of the immune system), but in reality, without scientific tests, neither the owner nor the cat will know, they will just remain like any other cat getting older. FIV cats often live longer and more healthily than their uninfected housemates.

Through our website, Catwork has been seeking examples of homes where FIVs are living together with cats without the virus; when tested, these cats show consistently that the virus is NOT transmitted in a normal domestic multi-cat home. This is quite logical, as the virus, being spread through bites, is only transmitted when cats have serious fights, and neutered cats who are well cared for have no need to fight, so consequently the virus is not spread to the other cats in the household.

One example is little Figaro up in Northumberland (mentioned in last year's yearbook). Figaro was taken in as an FIV stray and has since

been living with several other cats who have recently been tested and proved to have remained negative for the virus. We have numerous other examples of this; in fact, we have yet to find a single example where the virus has spread within a normal cat household.

Another example was included in our yearbook from 2005. Candy took in three kittens, only one of whom was FIV, to join their existing adult cat. Six years on, she tells me that the FIV has been the most healthy of them all and that



RJ (on the left) the FIV, with siblings who, together with the other cat in the household, have remained negative six years on.

the adult has been tested and has not picked up the virus.

A more extreme, example is in our own Fivery, where one special needs cat who does not have the virus, has been living closely for several years with a changing population of around 20 FIVs, sharing bowls, beds and often grooming his friends. A recent blood test confirmed that he remains negative for the virus even after extreme and prolonged exposure to it.

When it comes to rescues looking for a home for an FIV, the people most likely to offer homes are those who know and care enough about cats to learn about the virus - these are also the very people who are most likely to have cats already - so, by restricting potential homes for FIVs to those that have no other cats, rescues are effectively cutting out the very people most likely to take them on; thus increasing dramatically the difficulty of finding homes.

Special needs cats are special

Our sympathy has always been, and still is, with the "misfit" cats of this world whom few people want to take on - the really terrified, those with health issues, the elderly.

In the early days of Catwork, FIVs and FeLVs were 'special needs' because they were routinely being put to sleep. It is still not good news for FeLVs, though thankfully there are few around now, thanks to a good vaccine, but for FIVs the picture has changed quite a bit.

Only a few rescues still put FIVs to sleep, and some unenlightened vets, and more are getting homes. They certainly do not need to be in a sanctuary any more.

However, there are, and always will be, many cats who do not fit into the average household and need careful handling and understanding.

As well as mostly FIVs and FeLVs at Catwork, we have always had a few special needs cats. Strangely, our very first FIV, Harry, needed to be here more because he was terrified than because he was FIV.

In the house, we have two cats who stand out as being special needs when they came to us - Millie and Billy. Both were very frightened of people and would never have been able to cope with the normal happenings in the average home.

Both have come a long way over the years, overcoming their fears and repaying us with trust and affection.

Billy's story -

Billy was a stray from a young age and would seem to have had flu which has caused him to be snuffly all his life.

Being so absolutely terrified, it took a long time for a friend to catch him and bring him to us. When he was eventually caught we straightway had him off to our vet to be neutered and microchipped, knowing we wouldn't be able to catch him easily again.

Back at Catwork, he made an escape bid, but luckily we were able to stop him getting away, being bitten in the process by the terrified cat.

In time, Billy calmed down and started coming into the house, but preferred to be outside most of the time, hanging about with his friend Ginger Tom.

Many years have passed, Tom is no longer with us, and Billy, now in his teens, rarely goes out! He likes nothing better than a fire and a lap, of which he's very possessive.

Recently, Billy's snuffles worsened and he was not responding to his usual antibiotics; he was also having great difficulty eating and consequently losing weight. An investigation was planned to look at his head and chest. We really thought that we were going to lose our dear Billy, he seemed so poorly.

To our amazement, and the vet's, a huge polyp was found blocking his airways, as big as a gob-stopper! No wonder Billy had found such difficulty breathing and eating. Polyps are rarely found it seems, and certainly not ones the size of Billy's!

Thanks to the skill of vets and nurses, Billy came safely round from the anaesthetic, and, lump removed, was eager to eat. He is now a new creation, and always hungry; he's putting on weight and has even found a meow! Billy was voted "Pet of the month" by the vets for their website.

Billy is certainly a special needs cat who is very special.



Billy (on the left), at his lowest ebb, being 'looked after' by Millie...



...and just a few days after the operation, looking so much more comfortable and bright

A life saved - a difference made

This is the motto of Animal Affairs charity, which consists of a shop in Bristol selling goods to raise funds for small rescues in the area.

Barry and Angela McCormack, who founded the charity, brought front cover Bootsy to us in the early days of our FIV work, and have been supporting us ever since.

The phrase "A life saved - a difference made" has huge significance for us. Obviously, saving an animal's life benefits that individual, but the difference made to our lives in so doing is enormous.

Harry, our first nervous FIV, changed our lives for ever, leading us to create a sanctuary for the poor FIV cats we got to know about who, at that time (1990s) were being routinely destroyed.

Over the years, we have built up real 'hands-on' knowledge about FIV through caring for these cats over their lifetimes, and we have come to realise that FIV is 'no big deal'.

This knowledge and expertise is the basis of our website, which many have found helpful, leading to more cats being saved in many parts of the world, not just the UK.

Catwork has really become our 'life'. The rewards are enormous: many, ever increasing, cat loving friends, the privilege of being in a position to help the helpless, the joy of winning the trust of the very nervous and the never ending pleasure of observing cats just being themselves.

"A life saved" has certainly made a huge "difference" to our lives.



Harry, our first FIV - the cat who changed our lives

Then and Now

I look on the past and I know that tomorrow
Will bring me a joy that I dreamt not to find.

Amidst all the cares of the world and the sorrow
A mission I have which is uniquely mine.

The path to this moment has been steep and irksome,
Performing such roles as I never would choose;
Floundering in oceans of tasks fit to drown one,
Not knowing the gifts which I might later use.

The love for all creatures by which I've been haunted
Is put into practice each day of my life:
Care lavished on cats that are ill, lost, not wanted,
Who come here for healing away from the strife.
The trials of my past are all lost in this mission
Of helping the helpless forget all their pain;
With love, food, warmth, shelter, they reach a position
Of learning to trust, then mine too is the gain.

Barbara Hunt
January 1999

Time for cats



Time - to play



Time - to roll



Time - to share



Time - to wash



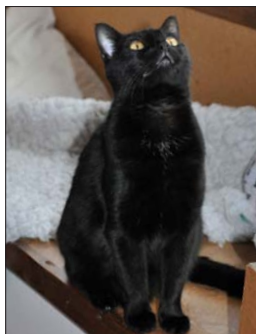
Time - for a bigger bed



Time - for a cuddle



Time - to doze



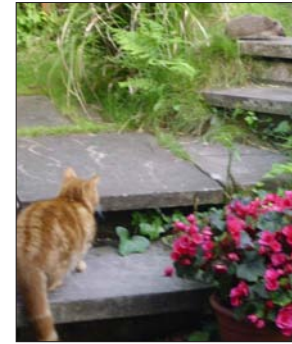
Time - to moon-gaze



Time - to explore

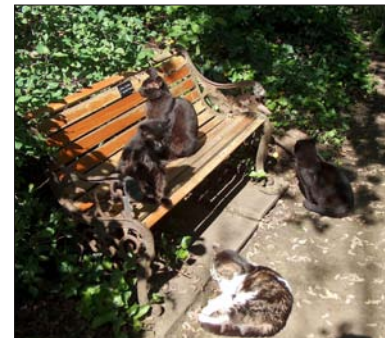


Time - for wildlife...
on the telly...and for real

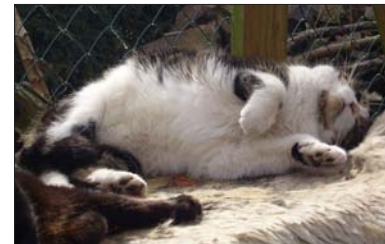


Time - for supper

Summer-time



Time - to 'chill out'

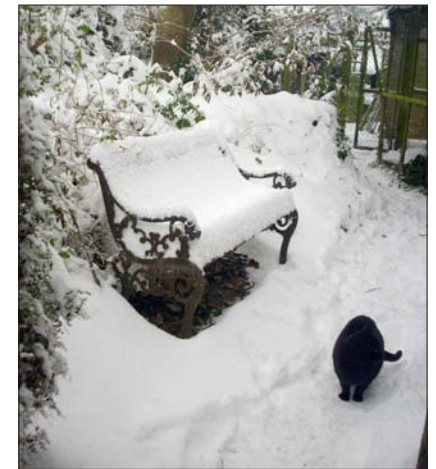


Time - to relax



Time - to sunbathe

Winter-time



S'no time to be out



Time - to huddle



Time to reflect - even the long-term inmates get to sit on the seat sometimes ... and cuddle a cat or two.



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

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