



Coventry Cat Group Newsletter

Registered charity 1065043

Winter 2011

Chairperson – Angie Willems

Homing Co-ordinator – Judith Stanley

Secretary and fosterer Co-ordinator – Brenda Williams

Treasurer and Membership Secretary – Angie Willems

Trustees : Angela Willems, Judith Stanley and Nicky Clark

Website - <http://www.coventrycatgroup.org.uk/>

About Coventry Cat Group

We are small group dedicated to the care, welfare and improving the lives of abandoned or feral cats in and around Coventry.

We take calls from the public and other organisations e.g. RSPCA and Cats Protection for cats and kittens that are abandoned or found surviving rough. We catch strays and take them to a veterinary centre for an assessment on their condition. They are treated as necessary and checked for a micro chip. If there is no chip, they are placed with fosterers while we try to identify and contact owners. If that fails the cats are then adopted into the charity and continue to be cared for by fosterers and go up for re-homing until adopted into a loving home.

Our methods are extremely successful.

We follow a policy of NEVER having a cat ‘put to sleep’ unless it is suffering extreme pain or distress from untreatable conditions.

We are always looking for volunteers to help us out. This ranges from fostering cats and administration to helping us out on fundraising events. Volunteers must be 16 years old or over



Becoming a member helps us out and any donations are also thankfully received. See back page for donations and membership application. Or for more information visit our site <http://www.coventrycatgroup.org.uk/>

Membership renewal

Dear all, at the end of this newsletter is the renewal form for membership. Membership is still set at a nominal £5 per year (or £2.50). Some of the membership money is spent on producing a yearly newsletter and the rest goes towards our work each year.

For those of you that elect to pay by direct debit, obviously your membership will be renewed automatically.

Please note that membership payments do qualify for Gift Aid so please let us know if you are a UK tax payer and are happy to collect this tax back from your membership money/donations as it is true every little helps!

2010 – A difficult year

Last year we highlighted how tough the year was for the Group. This continued through to the end of the financial year and indeed continues through this year. In May's AGM we presented the financial and homing statistics Year ending March 31st 2011.

Expenditure for year was £24084. Vets bills alone came to £14000 for the year. This was mainly due to a few poorly cats that required surgery and the routine vaccination of foster cats

Income for year was £10217, thus giving us a net loss for the year of nearly £14,000.

Homing continued to be very slow and we only homed 84 cats and kittens, down 50% from 2009.

2011 – The trend continues

Homing rates remain slow this year from April to October we have homed 58 cats (compared to 50 in the same period last year).

Expenditure to October is £14,500. Once again, due to need, at any one time we have had between 60 and 80 cats and kittens in and expenses for food, litter, flea and worming treatment have so far cost £8000. Vet bills account for nearly £6000.

Income to October this year is £14000. This includes some very generous donations made by members (who we are very grateful to!) and Pets at Home.

Thanks to Tina and the London Marathon



Tina adopted “Cookie” in November 2009.

When she began training for the London Marathon Tina got in touch to ask if she could raise money for the group.

Tina completed the Marathon in a very respectable 4 hours and 9 minutes and managed to raise £413 for us at the same time.

Pets at Home “Support Adoption For Pets”



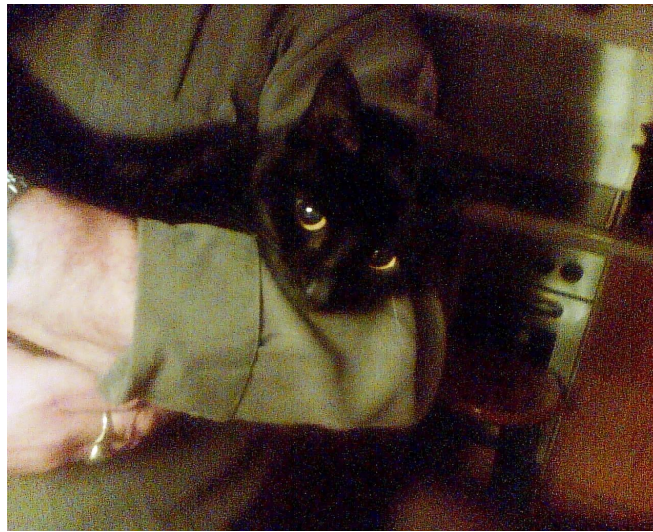
We applied to Pets at Home for a grant and we were delighted to be offered the full amount of £5000.

The money was divided into £2000 to help pay for Mog who arrived in February (more about him later!) and £3000 for a neutering fund.

The cheque was presented to us at the Pets at Home Store in Canley, Coventry in August. Hoping that the local press would turn up, we took along a few of the cat and kittens we had in at the time.



Squirt, Romeo and Midnight – In memory of Footsie



Footsie

Footsie started it for us with cats. We got her from Keresley, Coventry when she was just weaned. She didn't want to go in the hold-all on the way home, choosing to climb on my shoulder and she remained there as I drove her home. A tiny black, fist sized fuzzy ball, hooked into my shirt and collar, watching with fascination as a new unfamiliar world passed by.

She became a dainty and slinky black lady as she grew up. A house cat that never went out except to sit in the garden, but only then, if we were out there with her, otherwise she had no inclination to explore the world and we knew at night that she was safe and at no risk. She was a real little darling becoming more affectionate as the years passed, particularly towards Christmas time; as she loved presents and wrapping paper, but pass the years did. In all truth, the seventeen plus years that she was with us in the house she never had a single day's illness, and still looked a young cat, even in old age.

Then there came a change in her, and over a day or two we noticed she'd reduced her food intake, and finally a day or so later on again she stopped eating. In hindsight she seems to have decided that it was time to fade away with dignity.

Doing what we could, we tried to encourage her to eat and then resorted to syringes and baby foods and pleading with her to take in something solid. Strangely she kept her youthful looks through all of those dark bad days and as everything failed in all treatments. The vet said she had a lump. Obviously, her weight dropped, but only when she was picked up was the under-fur bony skeleton truly felt. And as one there was suddenly a consensus in the home that she'd gone far as we'd allow her to. From the neck up she looked no different but from the neck down; her rocking gaunt walk and emaciation was so obvious and we knew, irreversible. We called in the vet for the dreaded end to our long friendship to end in the comfort of a favourite chair.

The hurt..., hurt. The guilt too at choosing to remove her from our home and so we decided adamantly that it would be a long time before we has another cat. No cat could replace her, she was so special.

It was at the vets when I went to pay for her treatment and ashes that I saw the

animated photo display of The Coventry Cat Group. One of the pictures was of three black cats together and it seemed to scar me because the image stayed with me all day.



I can't explain it but I knew then that I was going to give them a home if I could.

That night I brought up the subject of having a new cat, well perhaps three more to be exact. Plus there were added complications as we were told they were to be indoor cats. This in itself wasn't a problem but their health issues meant extra focus was needed.

Romeo was FIV+ and Squirt suffered from a problem called Cerebellar Hypoplasia. This was nerve damage caused during pregnancy to his back legs making him very unsteady and he wobbled. Along with Midnight, they were a family and how do you split them. I'd seen them as a trio and it fitted well with my original plans of giving a home to a needing family.

In January 2011, I made the approach and I, my son and his girlfriend made a visit to view the boys. Then on Sunday, 23rd January, the three boys arrived with Angie Willems. Initially, I suspect Angie was perturbed at the thought of our dog with her cats. Lou is a very large Staff, but incredibly tolerant and easy going. She was so benign she didn't even show the slightest interest as the cats began nosing around, content to carry on snoozing totally unconcerned, after all Footsie had been her companion too.

Because of Squirt's inabilities we made provisions for him to be comfortable downstairs but before long he was somehow making his way up and down the stairs following Romeo and Midnight. The three would nestle on the fireside rug and Romeo; as dad, would clean the two youngsters and be the pillow for sleep. Things were a little chaotic for a start as we'd try to place the cats location before going out so we knew they were all in.



Squirt in Foreground.

As the days passed and the exploration diminished; as the new territory became the norm, they began wander away from one another and find individual places to rest themselves although still in eye contact.

Squirt of course was the one we watched the closest. He was fragile and easily toppled over by Romeo and Midnight. In fact Midnight would play with him and sometimes get a little rough, but having said that Squirt would call him on to fight when the mood took him.

Squirt's health took a turn for the worse and concerned, we took him to the vet. Apart from Squirt's ongoing health condition it appeared no more than a viral infection and the vet treated him accordingly. The other two had no symptoms which were, a sort of relief, but we were becoming alarmed as Squirt had stopped eating and lost interest in all, and everything. He was cold and unmoving and we took turns holding him; wrapped in blankets, feeding a syringe of diluted food. It was Footsie all over again and we were filled with dread.

We nursed him around the clock but he wasn't even taking water without forcing him. A return to the vet confirmed our worry. Squirt was seriously ill and the vet was worried too. We admitted him into the vets care but little fighter Squirt had no more fight left in him and he passed away the following day.

We still had Romeo and Midnight being so active around the house but the house had a void in it. The hours of care and attention Squirt had needed were now spare time and we were all aimless. Over the next few days as we shifted and changed our daily patterns, distraught as to why this had happened to us again.



Life carries on and the two boys and the rest of our animals became our focus. Its ten months now since the cats arrived and life here would not be the same without them.

Romeo has become one big affectionate bundle weighing in at some sixteen pounds of solid cat. He certainly is a big British cat but has the softest talking voice when it comes to cat talk. Most certainly a lap cat his purr too is almost imperceptible. Usually he's totally unhurried and laid back. That is when Midnight allows him to be. Sometimes, just sometimes Romeo becomes a heavy in just more than weight, pinning down the wild Midnight who wants to rough and tumble when Romeo is napping.

Midnight is the other side of the coin. He has no voice, only a high pitched whining that is almost out of hearing range. Many a time we've thought Romeo was beating him up only to find Romeo asleep and Midnight bombing around the house in glee and squealing with happiness as he overpowers something like a sweet wrapper he retrieved. Midnight's a long slinky cat and he does have a loud purr though.

The boys are chalk and cheese but inseparable and that's exactly why we took them on. The fun they bring outweighs the shredded wall paper. No, I won't go there. Chuckle....

Rick Kriaun



If you have a story you wish to share in the next newsletter please email angie@coventrycatgroup.org.uk or write to us – address on the membership renewal form on the last page.



Heavens Above! We have a Clone!

We suffered a truly awful month in September 2006. Three relatives died, including tragically hubby's mom. We also lost our very much loved cat Aslan. We were left with two cats, Billy Whiz aged 2 and Thomas aged 16. Two short haired black boys. Billy had come to us from rescue with Aslan. Billy was desolate. He just sat looking out of the window for days on end, waiting for his pal to come home. It was heartbreaking especially as he does not allow cuddles. We still can't pick him up to this day. We all desperately needed some distraction which is how Freddie entered our lives.



Freddie

He was trouble from day one and never changed for the 5 very precious years he spent with us. We were told he was 5 years old. The fact that he had to have virtually all his teeth removed when he arrived should have made us query his age. He had only just been neutered and was in every way the dominant male despite looking like a big fluff ball. He attacked poor Billy and Tom so we borrowed a cage from our vet in an effort to introduce him more slowly. He hated it. It took quite some time before things settled down. Of course Billy latched on to him in time and they became firm friends.

Freddie's inappropriate urinating around the house was always a major problem. He simply would not use a litter tray and it only got worse when sadly he was diagnosed with kidney disease in January 2010. He was trouble with a capital T and a great deal of worry. No doubt about it.

So why on earth was I so blown away when we had to let him go on 24 July this year? Why am I in tears as I type? I am so proud to say that he loved his mom and I idolised him back. We bonded. He owned me completely. It's crazy but I still miss having to get up in the "wee" hours to clean up where he had just used the strategically placed newspaper. I frequent a lovely cat forum on the Internet called "Purrs in Our Hearts" and posted a tribute to my beautiful, special boy when we let him go.

The following day a weird and rather wonderful thing happened! I received a tentative email from Judith at our favourite Cat Rescue, Coventry Cat Group. She explained that she had a kitten in her care, Boris, that she loved very much and wanted to find him a special home. It seems we came to mind when she heard the news about Freddie as they look so alike.



Boris

Hubby is utterly convinced that Boris was sent to us by Freddie. The clincher it seems is the way Boris bunny hops down the stairs just like Fred. I roll my eyes to the ceiling and tell him not to be so silly..... but you do wonder!

Other than looks, Boris is like Fred in other ways. He snuggles and sleeps under your chin. He has a high pitched incessant meow when he wants food. He is a very confident little chap with other cats. Naturally Billy Whiz is already a firm pal. In fact, I had difficulty finding a photo of him on his own as he snuggles up to the others all the time; except Dinah of course.

In other ways he is quite different. He is far more confident with humans than Fred and, much to our relief, he *always* uses a litter tray. He is his own little man and a very special loving one at that. By the time you read this he will have been neutered and introduced to the big outdoors.

We now have seven rescue cats. The Mognificent Seven. Four have arrived with the benefit of much loving care provided by Judith at Coventry Cat Group and we love them all. Boris, Dinah and her two girls Millie and Ruby. We so much appreciate the hard work everyone at Covcats puts in to finding homes for their precious furry charges and are so grateful for the boy and girls they entrusted to our care.

Rosella. Harborne, Birmingham



How to make a donation



It is now possible to make donations to Coventry Cat Group by standing order payments (Coventry building Society, Sort-code 40-63-01 account 060180178 Coventry Cat Group Trust – please put your name as a reference so that we know who you are – we have one donor we cannot trace!) or a one off payment via our website. The contribution can be any amount and on a regular basis or a one time donation, all are gratefully received. If you would like to send a cheque please make it payable to “Coventry Cat Group Trust” and send to us at 175 Butt Lane, Allesley, Coventry. CV5 9FD. We are now registered with gift aid so if you are a tax payer please indicate that we can claim back the extra money. Thank you.

If you would like to ask any questions please feel free to visit our website and/ or contact us via

<http://www.coventrycatgroup.org.uk/> or telephone on 02476 268073

Sponsor An Oldie

We continue to pay for the upkeep of up to 10 (actually 13 at the moment!) resident oldies. To help with the cost of this, we run a regular auction on Ebay and also seek sponsorship.

Each Resident costs the group £10 a month to feed and we also pay vet bills. The following is a list of those we are currently sponsoring. Because of the nature of the cats, the list changes quite frequently.



Maddie (RIP)

Felix (31/10/11) - quite a young one for us at 12 or 13 years old. His owner was moving into sheltered accommodation and couldn't take Felix with her (Why these places refuse to allow pets is beyond my understanding!)

Charlie and Murphy (25/10/11) - Charlie and Murphy are 15 years old. Their owner was dying of cancer and sadly died early in the morning of the day we took them in. Luckily, she had been already told that we were arranging to take them in as residents and seemed to acknowledge this.

Disney and Simba (02/10/11) - Disney is 17 and Simba her Daughter 12. Owner had a stroke and going in to home. Both arrived covered in fleas, heavily matted with ingrown nails.

Bodica - (02/09/11) - Tortie female 14 years +. Owner had been evicted from home and was sleeping on a friend's floor temporarily and facing homelessness.

Lucy (02/09/11) - Black and White. 14 years old. Owner marrying chap she'd met on internet a few weeks ago and he didn't want cat. Sadly gone AWOL.

Mindy - (Mar 2011). Mindy is a plump black and white lady of 16 years and she is one of the majority that has settled in fine. Her family were moving away and couldn't take her.

Susie - (Feb 2010) and is 16. Her owner had to go into a care home as she has alzheimers. Susie Has not settled in very well yet.

Max - a very fat 8 year old Tabby and White boy found as a stray. Friendly when he wants to be but can viciously lash out with no warning. Been with us since 2007.

Vandell - a white and ginger boy, falls into the same category as Max. Both these cats are house cats but we decided they could not be homed because of their temperament. Been with us since 2008.

Sooty - 16 years + whose owner died and remaining family all live in America. He has been with us since 2009.

Fluff - A black and White cat with many extra toes. Fluffy also came to us in 2009 and was 17 years old. His owner phoned up Saturday afternoon to say she was emigrating and when asked when, told us the removal men had just left! Her neighbour had told her to put him out then lock the doors.

If you would like to sponsor one of these place please contact
angie@coventrycatgroup.org.uk



An interesting way to spend a Monday night?

One evening in July, Judith and I went to answer a call for help. A lady phoned to say her neighbour had died, and his 2 cats had been left homeless. Several concerned people were feeding them but obviously this was not ideal.

This resulted in us being found, in the twilight, on our hands and knees, posteriors to the sky, trying to retrieve a heavily pregnant cat from underneath a building. Judith bravely manned the exit hole whilst I encouraged her out. The neighbours didn't know her name as they were not even aware she existed until the chap died. We finally managed to get the terrified little one to make an appearance and with lightning speed Judith took her chance to pop her safe and soundly into a carrier. The other cat came to see what we were doing, and in a moment he too was safely confined. Now what the heck do we do with them?

As we got back to the car, another neighbour came over and said he would like the male, but he didn't let him indoors as he sprayed. Within a few minutes we arranged to take "Larry" back to Judith's for boarding whilst he was waiting to be neutered and chipped. I offered to have "Lois" for her confinement as she looked almost ready to have her babies and my bedroom was rather empty without a nursing pen in it (for once).

Larry was quickly back with his new owner, but Lois kept us waiting for almost 3 weeks until her 6 babies made an appearance. Sadly 2 of the little ones died soon after birth, but happily Womble, Lulu, William and Lottie thrived under Lois` care. She was an excellent mum, feeding and caring for them like a pro. Womble and Lulu were reserved early on and now live happily with Brando the dog in a lovely home in Warwick.



As for Lottie-Lulubelle the 3rd (thanks kids!) and William, more of them later on . . .

Nicky Clark



Animal Action Days and helping Each Other Out.

Animal charities like a lot of other small groups often get the reputation of being Clique and closed to helping /getting help from other groups.

We don't think that way, and in fact, go one further in that we believe that **without** helping each other where we can, we are reducing the amount of benefit we can provide to the local cats.

By combining our resources we can do things with as individual rescues we cannot do. It does not mean that we lose any of our separate identities as different rescues but it does mean we can help each other to do things where individually one group working alone couldn't.

Such an example is the Animal Action days that we have continued to do this year. Together with the RSPCA, Coventry Cats Protection (Yvonne Cartwright) and Cat Action Trust we have planned and organised days in Canley, Stoke Heath and Bell Green in Coventry and Stockingford in Nuneaton. Together we have planned, advertised, attended offering microchipping and neutering services as well as taken the odd cat or two in.

These days have seen a total of 67 cats neutered and 23 chipped (in addition to 16 dogs neutered and 68 chipped as well as 6 rabbits neutered and 1 chipped). That's a lot of kittens we will not have to find homes for next year.



As well as helping to run events, we also help each other in smaller ways. This may just be passing information about fundraising opportunities or passing on the request for that much wanted long haired ginger kitten that we do not have – a kitten homed from one of us is potentially a spare space after all!

The latest co-operation saw us (that's the combined us!) being able to help a family of cats just last month. - A social worker contacted CCG asking if we could help one of her clients who needed to home her cats. In all there was a mum and 3 young kittens and three older kittens that needed to come in.

This is the email that Judith, who is our cat co-ordinator sent out.

“Hi Folks

The garden cats are out of the cold winds now, and have gone in a pen together at the RSPCA centre today. Yvonne pulled some strings on our behalf, so thanks to a multitude of help they are now in safe hands. The centre manager tells us that they cannot get enough young cats of that age though they cannot get homes for the young kittens. It is a lovely thought that we are all there for the cats, and not point scoring one charity against another. Our thanks must go to Bell and Partners for kennelling them for 5 days while we paid for them to be neutered before returning them to the owner - being as that's all we could offer not having any space, Yvonne from Cats Protection helping catch them and fostering for a night, Jill for helping me run them around. Also, to Win for finding a fosterer who was willing to take the Mum and three kittens, so thank you Cat Action Trust.

I hope I have remembered everyone!
Thanks so much, 7 cats now sorted!

Judithx”



Please remember to renew your membership – 2012 renewal form is on the back page on this newsletter



Mog and the price of Insurance

A phone call at two in the morning is always a bad thing. Visions of disaster to loved ones instantly come to mind. This time it was a call from the police to say that a cat RTA has been phoned in and could we help.

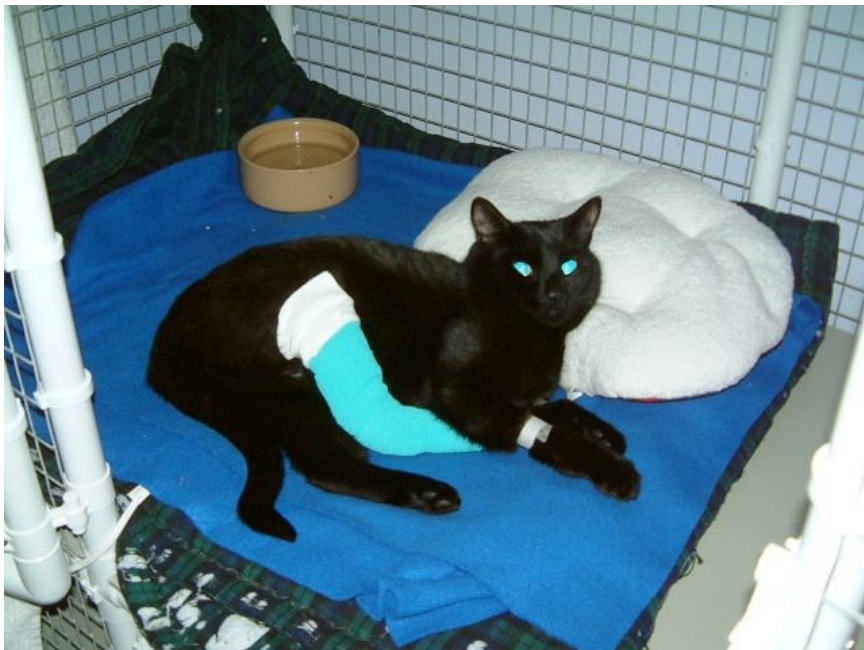
Half an hour later, me and Jill were walking around trying to find this cat “that was screaming in pain”, “feral” and had serious damage to its legs.

We found the poor thing and managed to get it into a carrier with much trepidation as it was not a happy cat and despite the pain, or more likely because of the pain he was in, he was swearing and lashing out at anything that went near him.

A 10 minute journey got us all to the emergency vet and surprisingly he was chipped. So the vet called the owner and we were all hopeful of a happy ending.

However, at first the owner wanted to know if it could wait until the morning – not a good sign - and when he eventually arrived decided that they could not afford treatment and promptly handed the cat over to us.

Mog was with the emergency vet overnight and we took him to the day vet for X-rays that confirmed the he had a skull fracture on his forehead and a badly broken back ankle, but at least the pain medication had kicked in and he was no longer the vicious black lump he had been a few hours earlier.

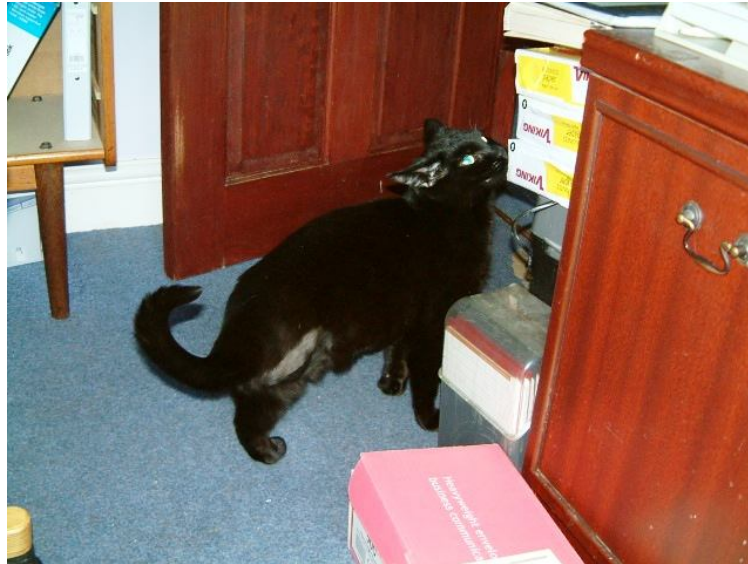


For two weeks we tried to pin his leg, but the damage was so great that the pin failed and we were left with no option but to remove his leg.

We were also very worried about brain damage as for the first week he showed no signs of being able to see but gradually he responded to cotton wool balls being dropped in front of him and every day his eyesight improved. He also seemed to have forgotten how to eat and was spoon fed pureed food for the first two weeks.

Five weeks after the initial accident he was coming to terms with the lack of a back leg and eating cat biscuits.

His owners called for progress over the first few days and then the calls stopped after they were told that they would have to pay towards his treatment if they wanted him back. They did not understand that if we gave him back to them, then we would be inundated with calls to pick up, pay and nurse back to health and then return more cats. The reality is, there is no NHS for cats.



It is very sad that they had not thought about the cost of major accidents and either insured him or had money they could access for an emergency. His vet bills to the group have been over £1000.

His owners could not understand what he was doing at the front of the house as “he always went out the back” but roads are quiet at night and cats, if allowed out, are not as careful to avoid them. Poor Mog, being black would not be very obvious to any motorist.

So, do you let your cat out at night? If you do remember that just to see a vet at that time of night is in excess of £100 before any treatment. It’s much easier and certainly a lot cheaper to lock the cat flap and put a tray down (If you don’t have one down anyway). Cats out at night face all sorts of dangers from cars, people and other bigger animals.

Pet insurance is an expensive business nowadays but, unless you have access to spare cash, becoming a necessary evil. Make sure you don’t just go for the cheapest without reading the small print as some of them have so many restrictions you may find that they will not cover the whole of a major incident – a cat in intensive care at an emergency vet can set you back £600 for the first night without any X-rays or repairs.

MOG is still looking for a secure home.

Angie Willems



Lottie and William



At 3 weeks of age, Lois` babies made their move from the relative quiet of my bedroom to the sitting room for socialising. I noticed almost straight away that Lottie was moving in a strange way and we took the whole litter to the vet for a check-up. Judith came too for moral support, and quickly thought of a name for “Womble” for one of the males as I don’t normally name my kittens until about 5 weeks old. “William” is named after a wonderfully wobbly elderly cat a dear friend of mine took in and cared for until he passed away aged 21.

Ross the vet confirmed that both Lottie and William were born with a condition known as CH, or “Wobbly kitten syndrome”. It is similar to cerebral palsy in humans, and is caused by the kitten not developing normally in the womb. William is only slightly affected but Lottie is moderately disabled. At first, she walked with a distinct sway, and her head bobbed especially when she was focusing on something but she is getting stronger by the day. She was about 2 weeks behind her siblings in development too. CH doesn’t cause any long-term health issues. As Ross said, “she’ll either break your heart, or thrive”. Lottie has thrived, and is such a joy to have around, if a bit cheeky! They both love playing with other kittens too.

Now aged 5 months, she can do all the things a kitten should, like climb the stairs, cuddle up on your knee for a sleep, and steal the dog’s dinner from under its nose! She is proving to be one determined little miss, the first to try to do anything naughty, typically tortie! William is growing into a stunning black boy, chunky with a big round face and stubby tail.

Ideally we would like to see them in a forever home together, where there are no small children and where they will be kept as indoor cats due their vulnerability if outside. Dogs, other cats and cuddles optional but much appreciated! For more details please call or email.

Nicky Clark



Coventry cat group membership application

**2012 Coventry Cat Group Membership Application
(Registered Charity 1065043)**

Name:

Address:.....

.....

.....

.....

Post Code:

Tel No.

Email:

(The email address will only be used for sending out E-newsletters and other COVCAT news)

Please Tick

Membership to 31 March 2013

- Membership - £5.00
- Senior citizen/unwaged - £2.50
- Under 16 years old - £2.00

Donation £____.____ (Thank you)

Please tick box if you are a UK Tax payer and agree to allow us to claim tax on your membership and donation for this year and the last 6 years. This enables us to claim an extra 25p for each pound donated.

Total - £____.____

(Please make cheques payable to "Coventry Cat Group Trust")

Signature: Date:

Please return to the membership secretary:
Coventry Cat Group
175 Butt Lane
Allesley
Coventry
CV5 9FD

Please enclose a SAE for return of membership card



That's it for this issue; all of us at the charity wish you a lovely
Christmas and a happy new year.
Coventry Cat Group

