

HOLLY HEDGE Newsletter CHRISTMAS 2010 ISSUE



Providing shelter from harm and the promise of a brighter future

KING ARTHUR FINDS HIS CASTLE



will always remember the first time I set eyes on Arthur. In all my fifteen years at Holly Hedge I can honestly say that it was the worst injury that I had

seen, probably, we think, done deliberately. Just who could inflict this injury on an animal? The whole area of his back was completely raw and covered with some scabbing. His beautiful white fur had come off in places, and what was left was hanging off of his back. Despite this, Arthur was the friendliest, sweetest boy. Even over the months that followed, with endless bathing of his raw scalded skin, he was very tolerant, and it was as if he knew we were there to help him. Slowly but surely we noticed hair growing back on the healing skin. We were all very pleased as we were not expecting to see this. Over the next few weeks and months more "tufts" of hair appeared. He still had a way to go, but at last he was on the road to recovery. We could at last take his head collar off during the day and replace it with a cotton vest top - he had to wear this because as soon as he started to wash himself the rasping of his tongue made his new skin, which was very delicate, red raw. He took to wearing his vest quite well, and different members of staff kindly donated him a variety - sporting different slogans! Arthur was a very popular cat in the cattery and the search was on to find him a very special owner.



Well there I was lazing in my room at Holly Hedge, when my adoptive parents came in to see me. I knew at once I was the one for them; they admired my long white fur and thought I looked like a football mascot as I was wearing a red coat! At that time I was still on anti-depressants due to the trauma and injuries I previously sustained. But my parents never wavered on their decision to adopt me. On the 19th September I said "goodbye" to my carers at Holly Hedge and took over running my parents' house! At first I felt very nervous of my new surroundings: my past came back to haunt me when I caught sight of a pair of trainers, and a can of lager really freaked me out. However, I have now found peace and contentment with my kind, gentle, patient parents; I have a selection of fluffy beds throughout my house, in case I need a nap en route to my food, and if I'm feeling very energetic, I have a selection of toys to play with. Nowadays, I am totally chilled and relaxed and I don't need anti depressants anymore. However, I do still have to wear my coat as the skin on my back is so thin it still bleeds if I lick it. I have noticed a variety of wildlife out of the conservatory door, while I have been soaking up the sun, but as yet I have not been outside to meet them. I now know that whatever I experience in the future, with the combination of my constantly growing confidence and my ever watchful parents, together we will be happy ever after ...

Love From Arthur and Caroline and Andy Burgess



Chief Executive's Report by Pauline Leeson

Christmas is only just around the corner, and another challenging year has almost gone by.

It is a sign of the times that the waiting list of animals needing to find new homes has considerably increased. The financial crisis has also become our crisis. We receive significantly more calls requesting us to take animals, some of the reasons being: people losing their homes due to financial problems, and moving into rented accommodation where pets aren't allowed, having to increase working hours to make ends meet, and animals, mainly dogs, are not coping, unable to afford food or vet bills for their pets, and even more relationships breaking up because of financial stress. The numbers of abandoned animals have soared, and we are needed now more than ever. Unfortunately, prospective owners are thinking twice about the cost implications of taking on a new pet, and in the case of cats and kittens, whereas people would often be happy to take two, now it is more likely to be just one.

It is a sad fact that Holly Hedge too are suffering the effects of the credit crunch. We have had no choice other than to make significant cutbacks, including staff redundancies and reducing working hours, but we are doing our utmost to enlist more reliable volunteers to interact with our rescues as we are determined to maintain the high level of care and attention they have always been used to, and that Holly Hedge is renowned for.

In spite of all the setbacks and hurdles that are sent to try us, we remain resolute and confident that the Sanctuary will overcome any obstacles that lie ahead. How can we fail when we have such loyal supporters rooting for us?

Famous Friends

Talking of loyal supporters, Monty Halls and Reuben, the wonder dog of Holly Hedge have given us so much help and support during these difficult times, and we didn't even have to ask – Monty heard we were struggling and contacted the Sanctuary as he wanted to do something to help. And he did just that. He and his friends organised another Great Escape presentation, book-signing evening and auction at Clifton College, and raised a brilliant £2,800. The hall was packed out, and it was a memorable night for Holly Hedge, especially when the grand finale was a very moving clip of Monty filming staff at the Sanctuary with our rescues. The genuine love and care emanating from that clip couldn't fail to shine through, and was testament to our dedication for the animals we care for.

Monty has promised to give another presentation early next year telling us about his latest Great Escape in Ireland. Recently Monty and Reuben led a sponsored walk around the grounds of Ashton Court, raising a

brilliant £3,172.60 and he's got his friends at it too – riding around the Black Sea on ancient mopeds to raise funds for the Sanctuary, how brave is that? More good news is that Monty has become our patron and we are indeed privileged. We couldn't ask for more – he and Reuben are wonderful ambassadors for Holly Hedge. The media have given us lots of coverage this year, including Points West and Radio Bristol – and a photo shoot with the Lord Mayor.

Our charity has so much to be thankful for. We are very fortunate that a professional fund-raising team called Ethicall have given us such golden opportunities. Not only did they make it possible for us to refurbish our puppy and dog isolation kennels, making it so much cosier for our rescues, but they also gave us the opportunity to apply for a grant to make our reception area bigger enabling us to be a 'one stop shop'. Instead of having to refer our adopters to their nearest pet supplier, the extended area has given us scope to supply our rescues with all they need to move on from being homeless to being a very important addition to their new owners lives.

Not only have Ethicall enhanced the quality of life for our rescues, but they have given us the chance to seal their future. They have invested a lot of faith in Holly Hedge and we'll be sure never to let them down. We really can't thank them enough for their kindness.

Charity begins at home

We are now the proud leaseholders of a charity shop in Clevedon which we could not have even contemplated had it not been for the generosity of Ethicall. The shop will be opening on Friday, 10th December, along with the relaunch of our sponsor a kennel/cattery scheme. We are also selling our own brand of merchandise to boost the coffers, including Monty & Reuben mugs and key rings, and Christmas cards designed by Tania Taber our brilliant graphic designer, and her father, local artist Dave Long, so it's onwards and upwards! I have to add that Linda Reeves, our chairperson and legal advisor, has spent many hours negotiating terms on the lease of the shop. Needless to say she has come up trumps. Linda is a cat person – and I might add, a force to be reckoned with – but for all the right reasons – a person in her own right with her own values, and a champion for Holly Hedge. She has also saved us thousands of pounds over the years in legal fees.

Raising the funds

Our Fun Day in July was a great success, and a profit of £8,437.09 was raised. Jodie and Steve did yet another brilliant job, as they do every year, of organising, and bringing it all together making the day very profitable and

enjoyable. This event takes months of planning – what would we do without you both?

Fundraising is going well with Dianne Stephens at the helm organising our supermarket collections and table top sales – she has surpassed all our expectations and is doing a fantastic job, along with our fabulous fund-raisers. We have some new fund-raisers on board, Janet Temperton and friends, who are also doing a grand job in boosting our coffers.

There are so many people who are instrumental in making the Sanctuary such a special place.

Tracey and Jamie who produce 'The Flyer' magazine – and have not only given us free advertising space, but highlighted our every event, and given us so much coverage and support.

Sue Lilley, who has taken ownership of our Kennel/Cattery Sponsorship Scheme, and does cat lock-ups voluntarily because she cares so much for our rescued felines. Sue also helps us out with thank you letters during our busy Christmas period.

David and Sandy Bailey, our long standing volunteers who devote their lives to giving our rescued dogs individual attention, especially the harder to home dogs, and a better quality of life during their stay with us.

Tania, our overworked, and underpaid graphic designer (actually she doesn't get paid at all), for always being so willing to design our newsletters, posters, and anything else we ask her to do, no matter how busy she is. Tania has now designed some beautiful Christmas cards which will go to print this week.

Thea Clark, another long standing volunteer, who for the last 10 years has worked in our office practically every Monday, and was one of our first dog walkers when we opened in 1992. An amazing lady.

And so many others too numerous to mention in my report, but hopefully we haven't forgotten anyone on our 'thank you page'.

Whatever the odds are against us, we will survive because we have the strength and commitment to go forward, and to do our very best for the animals that need our help.

We cannot even contemplate letting them down, or the people that believe in our work.

The charity faces another challenging year ahead, but we are determined to remain a safe haven and crucial lifeline for animals in need of help.

Wishing all our members and supporters a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.





Asda, Budgens, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Tesco, Waitrose, Roadchef M5, Yate Shopping Centre, Bath and North East Council and North Somerset Council for allowing us to do collections.

Jolley's Pet Supplies, Aarons' Pets, Posh Pets, Practically Everything, Warmley Tower Post Office and Portishead Pet and Garden Centre for collecting food for us.

Bristol Water for raising money to allow us to buy more vet bed - keeping our cats and dogs even cosier this cold winter.



Thank yous

Laura Delderfield, Sophie Chippendall, Beth Chippendall, Clementine Brown and Elaine Welsh for running the Bristol Half Marathon, Kevin O'Flaherty for competing in a triathlon and Dawn Cann and friends for taking part in the Hairy Haggis Team Relay 2010. All of whom raised money for us.

Terry and Barbara Pavey for their unwavering support over many many years. Barbara - In spite of having 3 major operations which she is still recovering from, she is still making 'plumptious' dog and cat beds for Holly Hedge - such dedication.

Cherry for her beautiful handmade cards.

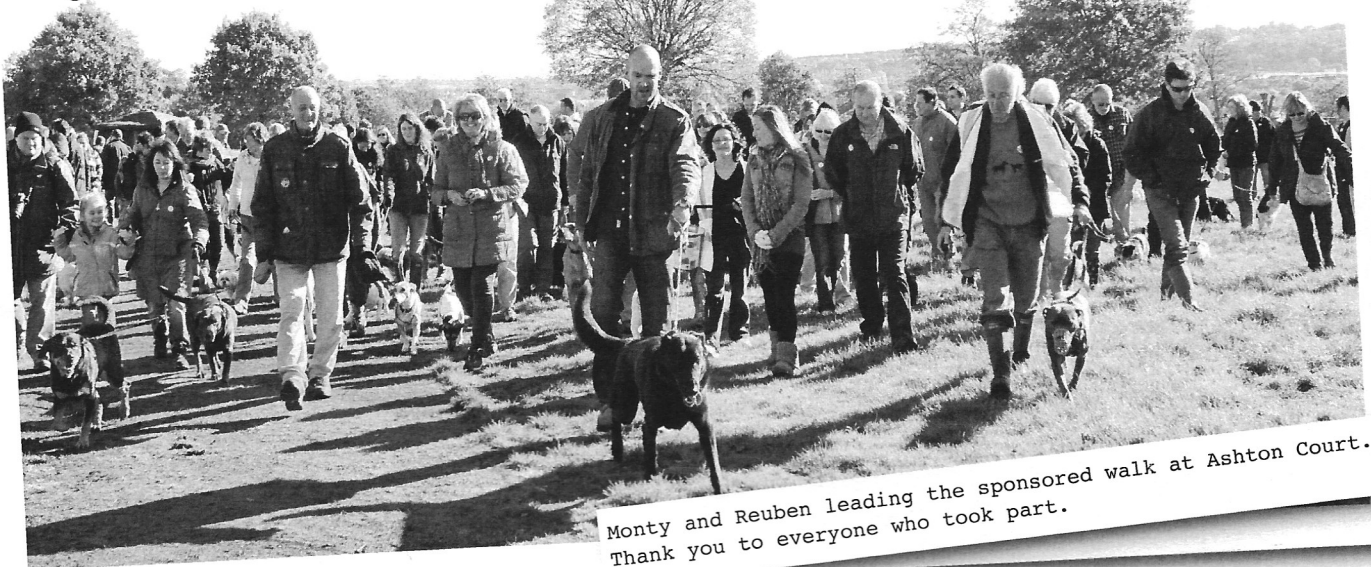


Krawczenko family for continuing to supply us with carpet off-cuts to use in our kennels.

Steve of Active Dogs Services for all his expert advice to new dog owners to help their new pet through the settling in process and for giving Holly Hedge a donation from his services. Also for organising food and toy collections for us at his dog training club.

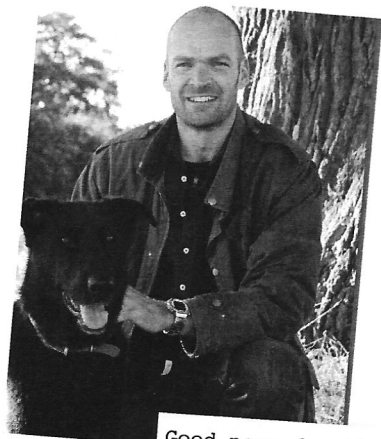
Malcolm Stephens for taking all the photos of our dogs and cats for use on the website and display boards.

Sponsored walk



Monty and Reuben leading the sponsored walk at Ashton Court. Thank you to everyone who took part.

Monty and Reuben



Good news for those of you who, like us, are eagerly awaiting Monty and Reuben's return.

Monty and Reuben will be back on our screens early 2011 for another Great Escape series. This time they were living on the west coast of Ireland in the village of Roundstone, where Monty was working with The Irish Whale and Dolphin Conservation Group and Reuben made lots of new friends and chased a lot of hares!



Thank yous

The bikers from Weston-super-Mare who continue to support Holly Hedge.

Gary and Charlotte at the Plough in Congresbury for letting us hold our quiz nights.

Maggs, our lovely volunteer cat lock up lady who has never let us down over many years of volunteering.

Everyone who has sponsored a kennel/cattery. We are very grateful.

All the staff, volunteers and home checkers who have worked so hard and given so much of their time and energy to help our rescue animals.

Anyone who's given an animal a home - thank you. Without you our work would be in vain.





Happy Dog Tails

Shay

Back in the summer Shay was brought to Holly Hedge as a stray. We did trace her owner but they had already rehomed her due to not having enough time to look after her. Although initially a little nervous, Shay soon settled in and was a big favourite with the staff. We were delighted that she found her perfect new home fairly quickly, and she even wrote in to let us know how well she's doing!



Hi, my name is Shay. I stayed at Hollyhedge for a few months in the summer. The carers were very kind to me. I used to play in the run with a ball and go for nice walks in the woods. I even went for trips in a car. I didn't mind staying there, but some of the other dogs liked the sound of their own barks too much and kept me awake at night!

One day, a nice lady and man came to visit and made a real fuss of me. Their 12 year old German Shepherd called Sasha had just died and they were very sad. Before I knew it, they were taking me home.

Well, I settled in right away. I go for long walks in the country and play with my new toys in the garden. I love going out with my Dad in the car. I do my bit to help by jumping up and catching the flies in the garden. Most of all, I love cuddling on the sofa with my big brother and sister. At night, I even help keep my Mum's feet warm, by sleeping on the bed.

Although my Mum and Dad still miss Sasha and often tell me about her, they say that my joining the family has brought a smile to their faces once more!

Shay
(and the Mountford family)

Daisy

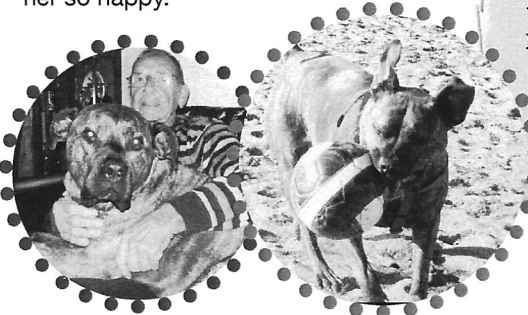
Daisy was at Holly Hedge for over a year after her owners were evicted. She became our staff room dog and what a great dog she was!

A big bundle of joy with lots of love to give. You would always find her giving cuddles in the staff room or sat in her chair looking all proud. However Daisy's favourite place was the exercise compound, she would stay out there all day if she could. She loved her squeaky toys and wanted all the other dogs toys too! For some reason Daisy never got much interest, we never knew why as she is the perfect dog. Finally her new owners came along and its great to see her so happy.

Daisy is a 5¹/₂ year old mastiff cross who we adopted from Holly Hedge earlier this year. She was loved by all due to her endearing nature. On first sight I was taken aback by the size of her, but once we met her, we knew instantly that this gentle giant was for us. Our family ranges from 8 to 85 years and Daisy offers something for all of us, from cuddles and afternoon naps, to walking, playing and companionship! Daisy is a joy!

Best wishes

Kathryn Cook & family



Sunni (was Dakota)

This little cutie was one of the many Jack Russells Holly Hedge homed this year. Many people think of Jack Russells as snappy but Suni, like most others of her breed, has an excellent friendly temperament. She also has the typical fun-loving spirit, so it's lovely to see her settled with a fun new family.

Hi, this is our gorgeous little Jack Russell cross dog who we have renamed "Sunni" as she has such a SUNNY disposition.

We are a family of Mum, Dad and 13 year old daughter, and it was daughter, Nikki, who expressed, at the beginning of this year, a deep desire to give a rescue dog a home. Although Mum and Dad felt very unsure at first, we agreed to consider the possibility.

So, after much deliberation, we made a visit to Holly Hedge in July and knew as soon as we saw this little girl that she was the one for us. She sat very quietly in her kennel and we could see how friendly and affectionate she was. We also felt that her size and age would suit us perfectly.

So, we now have a much loved addition to our family and look forward to many happy Christmasses together.

The Gorringe family





Rascal

At the end of June this year Holly Hedge took in a group of 6 dogs who'd been seized by the dog warden. Their owner originally only had 4 dogs but when one of them had puppies he found himself with 10 dogs, and as the pups got older they started to get out of control. Although the owner loved them very much, and had even gone on the run with his dogs to prevent them being taken from him, eventually he had to concede that he couldn't manage them all and signed 6 of them over to Holly Hedge for re-homing.

5 of the 6 dogs we took in were, the now 6 month old, puppies None of them had had much socialising with people or other dogs outside their pack, and they were initially very scared. One of the most nervous was Rascal, it was 2 weeks before anyone could get close enough to stroke him or put on a lead to take him for walks. However with time and patience he was soon coming on in leaps and bounds. His new owners know he'll need further training to help him overcome all his fears but fell in love with him and are up for the challenge - he is well worth it!

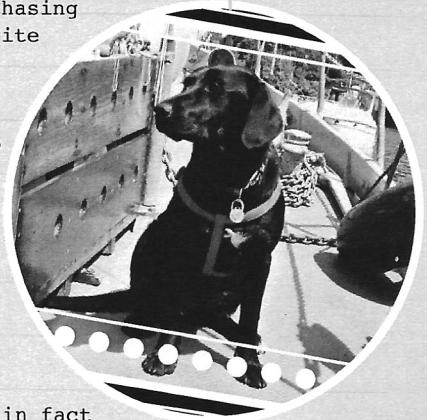
Megan (was Dakota)

This adorable Labrador cross didn't have the best start in life. At just 12 weeks old she was sold in a pub to a family who couldn't look after her. Luckily they did the right thing and brought her to Holly Hedge. From then on her luck improved. Her new owners are keen sailors and Megan gets to go on frequent adventures on their converted lifeboat. It seems like she's taken well to life on the ocean waves!

It was a great pleasure to adopt Megan (Dakota) at the age of 16 weeks in March 2010, she very quickly adapted to her new life and unaccustomed freedom.

It took a little longer to adapt to boat life with wobbly dinghies, noisy engines and occasionally a seriously unsteady platform in rough seas. Her way of dealing with this unwelcome environment is to retreat to her basket in a relatively dry and steady berth until things improve. Once conditions are to her liking a king of the castle attitude takes over as she surveys the scene and sniffs the air.

The ability to go ashore is an important element in her boat life and the means to the end is the dinghy which she looks at from time to time with great concentration. Chasing oystercatchers and gulls is a favourite pastime, all day if given the opportunity. It seems to be a case of mutual enjoyment, as the oystercatchers particularly, seem to play a game of catch me if you can. In the dinghy Megan adopts a position as far forward as possible with the view clearly that it is absolutely vital to reach the shore a split second earlier than might otherwise be the case. Megan has great social skills with adults and children alike and has shown no aggressive behaviour to other dogs, in fact really enjoys their company. She is a happy, fun loving dog, is working towards level bronze at puppy class and has become a great member of our family.



Charles and Liz

Rascal is doing really well and is certainly living up to his name! He's come out of his shell and absolutely loves his rawhide bones, and snuggles on the sofa. He's turned out to not be a fan of early mornings and being sent out in the garden when it's cold and wet, but is loving having so much open green space to run about in, and always comes when we call him. He comes to the stables with me most days and although a little nervous the first time he met our horse, they have now developed a good understanding, and he seems to guard her stable whenever I walk away to fetch tack or a wheelbarrow. We get so many compliments about how cute he is..... and I think he knows it too!

We've started puppy classes, on a 1:1 basis as he still has some issues with other dogs, and can be nervous if strangers make any sudden movements. Our trainer Zoe has agreed that he's purely lacking in confidence, and so he barks in order to hopefully scare dogs he's not sure about. He has however developed a fab relationship with Tilly the dog next door. They constantly sniff each other through Tilly's fence when we walk home, and they both look so disappointed when we call him into our garden.

We are both so pleased with how well Rascal has settled in, and is definitely one of the family.

Sara and Nick Stiddard and of course Rascal!!



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Happy Cat Tails

Heather

We did re-name Heather when we first got her as we felt the name Izzy matched her personality more. She enjoys running from outside all the way up the stairs, so we call her Izzy Whizzy! Myself and Andy wanted to get a cat to make our house feel more like a home, with a pet. We saw her on the website and thought she was so beautiful that we would have to go and meet her.

When we saw her hiding under her bed we went into her cage and stroked her. She was very shy but started purring with affection immediately! We knew it would take time for her to be comfortable around people but she seemed so cute and shy we wanted to give her the chance to be the loving cat we knew she would be.

We have had Izzy now for over 6 months. She has come a long way from when we first got her. She now sleeps on the sofa next to us, waits in the kitchen as we prepare her food, and can hear the rustle of the bag of treats and come running from miles! She is still a little wary of strangers but will come and see them for a bit before deciding when she's had enough. She is very affectionate, and very happy. We also got her a friend to play with called Mikey, they play together and clean each other and it has also helped Izzy come out of her shell, seeing Mikey not scared of people.

We absolutely love Izzy and are so happy that we chose her.

Thank you very much

Lucy and Andy

Heather, Andrew and Phillip

In September 2009 3 very frightened 12 week old kittens were brought to Holly Hedge. The owner of the mother cat hadn't bothered to get her spayed and had no interest in the resulting kittens, thus they had been living outside and had had very little human contact. Luckily a cat-loving neighbour recognised their plight and intervened, managing to trap them and bring them to Holly Hedge. We called them Andrew, Phillip and Heather. Because they were so timid, the trio went to live in a foster home for a few months so they could have extra time spent with them. Once they were braver they came back in to the sanctuary and have all individually found loving homes.

Andrew

Andrew has been with us in Portishead since March. He is a smashing little fella with a big personality. We initially were looking for a companion for our other cat Tass (who lost her brother in January after 12 years together) but we certainly got much more than that. Andrew is now definitely one of the family and pretty popular with all the other cats in the neighbourhood. Maybe it's his looks!

Thank you Holly Hedge for providing not only a friend for Tass but a new family member. We're looking forward to seeing whether the Christmas tree survives!!!

John and Sharon Welfoot

Phillip

We first saw Philip on the Holly Hedge website, we weren't really looking for another cat, but there was just something about him and those big eyes that made us think he was the cat for us. When we went to see him it was clear he wasn't too keen on us humans but we felt we could turn him around. He moved in the day before his first birthday. The first few weeks were a bit stressful as he stayed under a desk, then in his room before slowly venturing further round the house. We sat near him and talked to him to help him adjust but let him go at his own pace. He seemed to like his new sister Abbey, although to his surprise she wasn't quite as keen. After a few weeks of watching us with Abbey one morning he just decided he wanted to be stroked and since then he's never looked back.

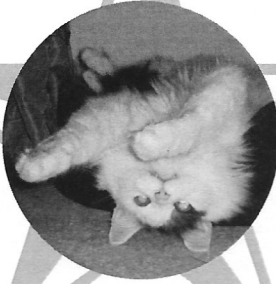
Philip is a very kind natured and friendly cat. Once he realised humans weren't all that bad and he grew to trust us he's really become a great little character and a great presence around the house. He loves his bed, toys and scratching post, but most of all his food.

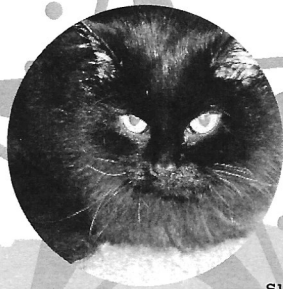
He is now confident enough to welcome guests into the house, and they all fall in love with him straight away.

To be honest we weren't massively keen on his name Phillip, but after a few days it just seemed to suit him so it has stuck. He has settled into our family so well, and we can't imagine life without him now.

Thankyou to Holly Hedge for helping Phillip and helping us find him and for all the hard work and dedication that goes into helping all these great animals get the homes they deserve.

Edward, Wendy, Phillip and Abbey Hartridge





Angel Dust

Angel was one of our longest residents this year, staying at the sanctuary for nearly 8 months. She was a favourite amongst the staff who were delighted when she was finally chosen.

Our beloved Birman cat, Mr. Bertie, died very suddenly for no apparent reason back in August.

My husband and I were both devastated, and did not feel, at the time, that we wanted another cat. However the house seemed very empty, and one day I was driving near Holly Hedge and decided to call in and take a look at the available cats.

Angel, as she was then called, was about 4 1/2 years old, a very attractive black, semi-long haired cat, with lovely green eyes and one white curly whisker! She had been at Holly Hedge since January, so I must admit she pulled at the heart strings. She seemed to take to me when I went into her pen, and came over to be stroked, although I had been told she might nip me! (We have cured her of this habit now, which I put down to the stress of her being away from her former home for so long.)

I called in again to see her a few days later, and she was very endearing again then too - I think she realised that she might be on to a good thing!

I then decided to broach the subject of getting a new cat with my husband, and he agreed to "check out" Angel the following weekend. I think when he saw her he felt, as I had, that we couldn't leave such a lovely cat without a home for any longer, so we arranged to collect her on the 1st October.

She was very timid at first, and hid in corners and under the furniture, emerging with her face and tail covered in cobwebs. It was then we decided to re-name her "Duster". We kept her shut in the house for the first few weeks, then gradually started letting her out in the garden for short periods of time until we were satisfied that she knew her way back. She very quickly found her feet in this respect, and very happily comes and goes through the cat flap, though we always lock it at night. She has now really settled in and is well and truly part of the family! We are looking forward to having her with us as a little furry companion at Christmas, and I will make sure we include a new toy mouse, which she loves to play with, in her Christmas stocking!

Best wishes

Wendy and Jack Rowley

Interview with a cat cuddler



Nicky is one of our volunteer cat cuddlers.

We interviewed

her to find out more about why she enjoys this role.

Q. What a great job title! Is it as lovely as it sounds?

Oh it's even better than that! I love coming here, it's extremely rewarding, the cats and staff are always so welcoming and appreciative. I'd recommend it to anyone!

Q. Are there any bad points? Do you get scratched or bitten a lot?

No I don't and if I do get scratched it's just because they had a bad start and no

T.L.C. I've noticed new cats are often shy for their first few days but then they become friendly, which is lovely. They just need some love.

Q. For someone who loves cats but has never owned one, and wants to become a cat cuddler, are there any hints or tips you could give them?

Cat cuddling is one of the easiest but most rewarding jobs. Just come in with an open mind and be prepared to accept that just like humans, cats all have their own personalities. Some will curl up on your lap and go to sleep, others will demand constant attention, others just want to play. If you can give them just some of your time then I'm sure they'll appreciate it.

Pickle

Poor Pickle was not a happy camper during her stay with us. During her 4 months at Holly Hedge, and despite our best efforts, she managed to keep us all at arms length. Most people want a cat they can stroke straight away, so we were overjoyed when she found her special people. She certainly looks happier now.

You may remember me. My name is PICKLE. I am about six years old and a tortoiseshell with a temper!

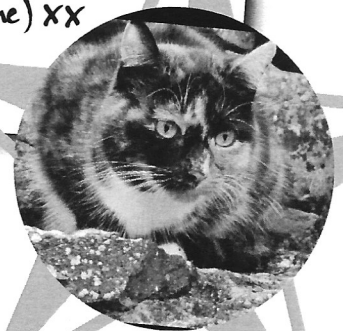
Everyone at Holly Hedge was really kind to me and I had a lot of guests come to visit during my stay to chat and size me up. Of course, they had no idea I could understand every word they said. I could tell you a few stories that would make you laugh. Let me know if you wish to hear some.

Holly Hedge went to a lot of trouble to make sure my new home would be really suitable and they involved me in all the discussions so I knew what to expect.

In time I was collected by a man and a woman who seem OK and are up for a challenge. I have a great home with a private bedroom and ablutions, a decent garden and a black cat to chase anytime I like!

I am settling in just fine but taking my time. I still swear and stamp my feet if things do not go exactly as I planned. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you All. With Love,

PICKLE (and Patrick and Jill Smallbone) XX



Q. Is it sad when one of your favourites gets a home?

I do have favourites but no, it's the best part of coming here, seeing the reserved signs and the empty pens especially when it's one who's been here a while. So anyone fancy taking Basil? - a gorgeous 14 year old boy who's deaf and really deserves a loving home - he'd make the ideal pet.



Interview with a dog walker

Valerie is one of Holly Hedge's regular volunteer dog walkers. Here we find out what keeps her walking – no matter what the weather!

Q. How long have you been volunteering at Holly Hedge?

I'd say about 3 years now. The reason I come to Holly Hedge is because Holly Hedge treat the animals as if they are their own pets. Being at Holly Hedge is the next best thing to having a home of their own. The animals are treated so well and with so much love by the staff.

Q. Why does Holly Hedge need people like you to walk the dogs?

Well I imagine the staff have more important things to do, not that walking's not important but it does take a lot of time and staff have other things to do that volunteers wouldn't want or wouldn't be able to do. Walking is good for people who aren't all that experienced with animals. I'm not but I do enjoy the walking. Also it gives the dogs a variety of walks and helps socialise them with different people.

Q. Do you find being a volunteer dog walker rewarding?

Yes I do enjoy walking the dogs. It's good to do things other than your normal everyday job. I love walking anyway, so having a dog with you makes the walk even nicer, and it's a good excuse to walk more.

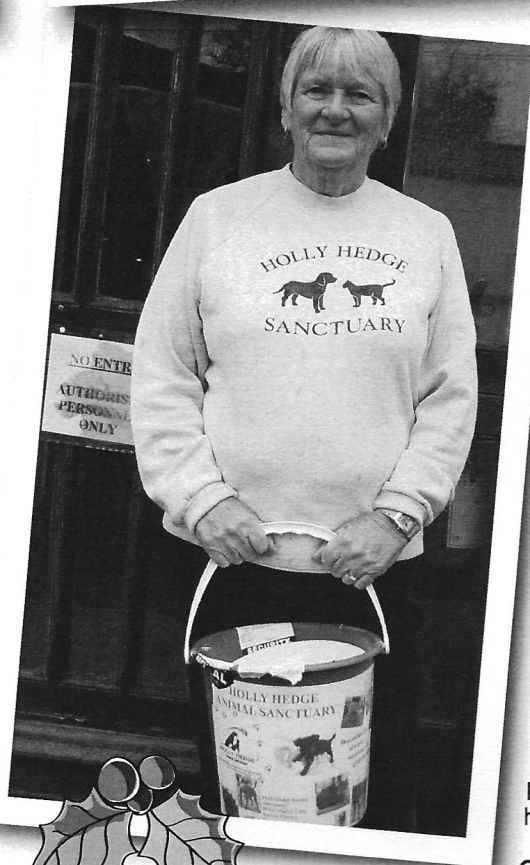
Q. Are certain breeds of dog easier to walk than others?

Greyhounds and Lurchers are usually really good on the lead. I do love the Staffies and find they are usually pretty easy to walk on a harness. Some of the bigger dogs that look strong actually plod along nicely on the lead so always ask the staff.

Q. Don't you want to take them all home?

I thought when I started I would, but I work so don't have time for a dog. I thought I'd be upset all the time but I can see that they're happy and well looked after here and Holly Hedge does a lot of good and it's nice to be a part of that.

Interview with a fundraiser



Dianne is one of Holly Hedge's most faithful and long standing volunteers. For years she has tirelessly helped with cat-cuddling, dog-walking and fundraising, not to mention doing vast quantities of home-checks. At the beginning of 2010 Dianne got a new job title - Volunteer Fundraising Coordinator. In this interview she explains why fundraising is so important to Holly Hedge and why we always need people to help.

Q. Dianne, you seem to have been involved with Holly Hedge since the very beginning. Is this the case and how did it happen?

I first got involved with Holly Hedge about 2 years after the sanctuary opened. It happened when I visited a friend one Sunday. They knew how much I loved animals and asked if I'd ever thought about cat cuddling at Holly Hedge. I had never even heard of the place, but I went that very afternoon and have practically been there ever since!

Q. What does your role as fund-raising co-ordinator involve?

In February 2010 I took on a new job title of voluntary fund-raising co-ordinator. I love it! To start with it was only temporary but I've enjoyed it so much I've decided to take the role on permanently. It's completely voluntary. The main part of the job is writing to all supermarkets to ask for dates to do collections and then finding volunteers to fill the dates. I also attend all fundraising meetings to thank all the volunteers and give a short report.

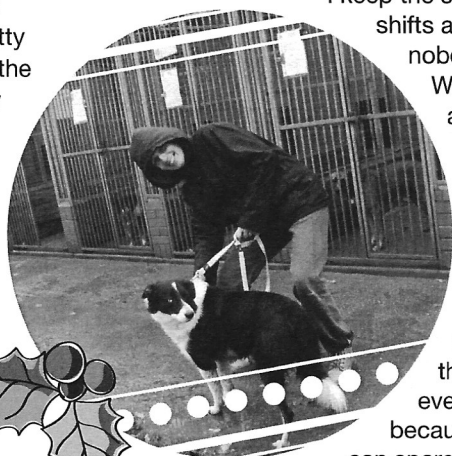
Q. I can see why it would be fun to volunteer to walk dogs or cuddle cats, but why should anyone volunteer to fundraise, isn't that boring?

In terms of the supermarket collections, people volunteer because they know how vital it is for Holly Hedge to raise money in order to keep going. They know the collection money is going straight to Holly Hedge and is doing good.

I keep the supermarket collection stints short – only 2 hour shifts and then someone else takes over. This means nobody has to give up a whole day of their weekend. We only arrange collections on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays in many different areas of Bristol or North Somerset.

Q. For people who want to get involved, what is the most useful way they can help?

Put your name down on the list of fundraisers. We always need collectors and even if you can only do 1 or 2 a year it is a big help. Don't worry that you'll be put under pressure to do collections every weekend, I never try and force people because it puts them off and any time you can spare is always appreciated.



Jackson - one smart cookie!

It was with much regret that Jack was returned to Holly Hedge in June this year. He had been adopted by a couple in 2007 who had given him a lovely home, but now they had a young daughter and despite getting expert advice, Jack was not happy being around her. As he was now nearly 8 years old, with some quirky behaviours and a history of chewing up his tail when stressed at being in kennels, we were all worried for him. Luckily it was only a month before Jack found a perfect home once more.



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In January our lovely dog Bert died leaving his sister Mo (12 years old) and ourselves bereft. We watched Mo slowly decline until by the end of June she wouldn't leave the house and was reluctant to eat. After a lot of careful thinking we decided we would try to find a dog who would encourage Mo to feel more like her former self. There were several difficulties attached to our plan. Mo is the strangest dog we have come across and we've had a fair few wonderdogs over the years! So the problem of finding a dog that would be compatible with all of Mo's foibles could have been huge - had we not met Jack.

We paid Holly Hedge a visit at the end of July. Now we didn't set out to adopt a border collie (we owned a wonderful collie called Bess for many years and came to appreciate the total life style change that is needed to keep such magnificently intelligent dogs balanced and happy), nor did we want a dog that didn't like to be hugged, we didn't set out to look for a large dog, we didn't particularly want an older dog, we didn't plan to be captivated by a dog that totally ignored us unless we were holding food or a ragger, we didn't really want a dog that rumbled everytime you walked near them, we didn't really want a dog that was aloof, self contained, obsessed with internal thoughts and amusements nor a dog that would watch shadows to the exclusion of all else for hours.

But there you have it - that is exactly what we got!

As we walked by his pen Jack was fixated on watching drops of water running along the ground in the corner of his run. No eye contact, no bounding up to humans, no response to the door opening, nothing... until someone produced a ragger. Then ... attentive, keen, alert... We watched Jack running round the grass enclosure, ears pricked, eyes alert, coat wonderfully glossy, tail up (well, what was left of it - he'd chased and bitten it to the point of a stump) and were um... intrigued? There was something about Jack that made us arrange a home visit. Maybe we are just used to living with quirky dogs, maybe something connected in all of us - including Jack.

Jack has been with us for nearly four months now and we needn't have worried about Mo and Jack getting along. They aren't great mates but then they aren't sworn enemies either. Mo won't go for a walk unless Jack is with her and Jack will place himself between other dogs and Mo if they approach her. It isn't an aggressive stance - just an 'I've got your back' sort of thing.

Jack will now let me touch his face, tum, legs and back. Sometimes he rumbles, sometimes he will sneak up and put his head towards my hand. He still watches shadows, but only for a couple of minutes - he is now more likely to be found asleep by a wall than watching it. He is still self-contained and for the most part aloof. So why are we all totally in love with him ... boy is this one smart cookie! It took one walk for me to discover that this was the most obedient, polite dog in the world. He is perfection on four legs when it comes to being out and about. During the last months Jack and I have walked miles and miles round our area. We don't say much but we always end up in our local park where I take Jack through some advanced dog training. Within a week Jack could distinguish left from right, retrieve a named object when four were placed at a distance from him, do pickup, walk on, stay, come across the whole length of the park (and it's quite large!), would remain stationary on a command of stay while I walked round the whole park, would seek and find his ragger after the command stay and then me hiding it a long way away from him, etc. As our training sessions progressed I was completely unaware that quite a group of people would come to watch us, timing their dog walking to coincide with ours.

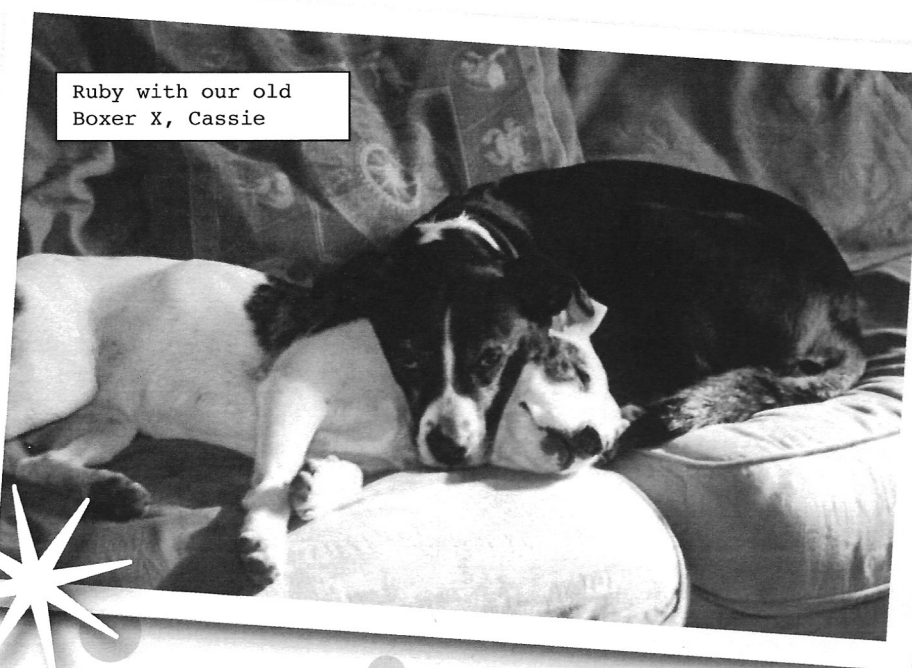
Jack is a work in progress and our aim, to be able to throw our arms round him and give him a hug without a rumble, has yet to be reached. Would we be without him - never. He is totally Captain Jack Flash - Intelligentsia Supremo. Odd he may be but on the day he licks my hand I shall be ecstatic. In your own time Jack... you are worth waiting for.

Ruth, Wills, Ed, Kate, Fred, Ellie and Barbara.



Consider a staffie!

When we first visited Holly Hedge looking for a companion for our 11 year old boxer cross, none of the dogs there really fitted the bill for us; after all we had a garden full of (mostly free range) rescued animals, a disabled son and an older dog, so choosing the *right* dog was essential. A couple of days later we received a surprise phone call from Holly Hedge to say that they had a litter of Staffie X pups that had been found in a box and would we like to come and have a look? Being put on the spot, we agreed to go over the next day and see the pups. But I must admit that of all the dog breeds (or cross breeds) that we had been considering, Staffie never entered our minds. I'm not sure why, but this breed had never been on my radar, they just didn't strike me as family pets. So, we asked around and did some research, only to find that despite their tough appearance, Staffies actually make excellent family dogs, and that they are in fact one of the most common breeds in the country. Still slightly hesitant about taking on a breed we knew little about, we walked into the puppy area and were greeted by five very cute pups, which of course our children instantly fell for (very cunning of Holly Hedge to insist we brought the kids!).

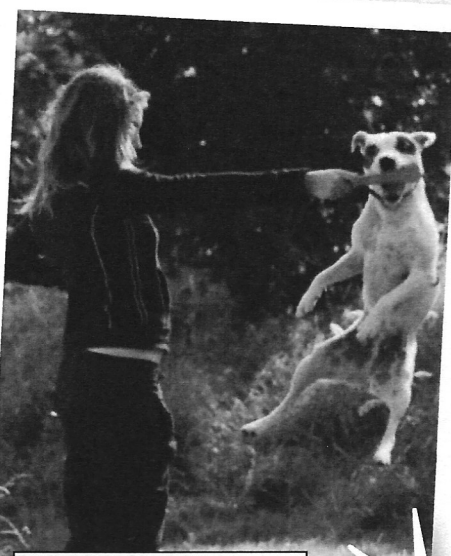


Ruby with our old Boxer X, Cassie

They picked a white pup with brindle patches – then called Poppy – and we left to await our home check. We collected Ruby (the new name our children had chosen) a few days later and took her home to settle in.

Ruby was nervous of everything to begin with – she wouldn't even venture upstairs for the first four weeks (which was actually fine because it gave our other dog somewhere to escape when she needed a break from having her ears chewed), but gradually she overcame her nerves and started to enjoy herself. There were a few set-backs along the way, like when our giant rabbit cornered her under the steps and stood guard while she cried for us to come and rescue her! She did well at puppy training, though, and really started to come out of her shell. As she got older it became obvious that she didn't like other dogs much, and being bitten by a large Collie didn't help, but this was a small price to pay for such a great dog.

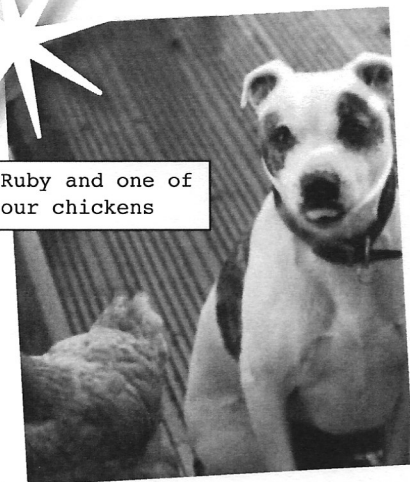
Ruby loves children, and children love Ruby. She has a huge personality, and is incredibly loyal. In fact, when we took her to the vets to be spayed she howled so much that they had to call us to collect her just 1 hour after the operation because no-one could stand the noise any longer – the howling was not from pain but from separation from her family. We collected her and she immediately shut up, and within a couple of hours was up and playing like nothing had happened. This loyalty is unwavering to the point that she won't even go for walks with anyone outside of our family, even people she knows. She doesn't



Our daughter, Leah, playing with Ruby

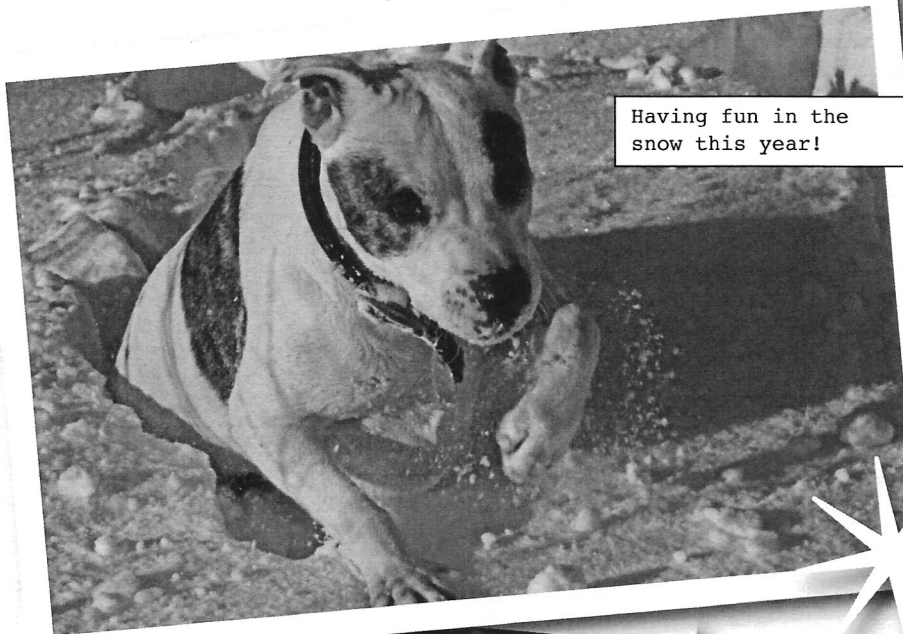
fuss at being left alone at home or in the car though. And, strangely she is a very quiet dog who doesn't bark at anything. Above all, Ruby is playful and affectionate, in essence the ideal dog for a family with kids. We don't know what she is crossed with – probably a lurcher type – but she has all the traits of a Staffie and we love her for it! I find it very sad that so many of these wonderful dogs end up in kennels because too many people breed them and give them to the wrong people.

Ruby has been in our family for more than five years now, and I love taking her out into the countryside with me to watch wildlife. We will always need to be careful



Ruby and one of our chickens





Having fun in the snow this year!

Buddy

This bouncy Staffie cross first came to Holly Hedge as a 4 month old pup. Unfortunately his youthful exuberance proved too much for the first family he was re-homed with, and he was returned to us 6 months later. He soon found a new home with a big sister to help burn off his excess energy and before he knew it he was off on his holidays!

My new Mum and Dad collected me on 27th August 2010 and my new big sister Lottie (who also came from Holly Hedge) told me that we were going on holiday in a few weeks. I was a little worried at first but Lottie said it would be fun.

We went in a motor-home and stayed in Corfe and Swanage in Dorset. On the first night we all shared one bed which was great fun because Lottie and I had most of the bed.

Next day we went to the beach at Studland, where Lottie introduced me to the sea, which I did not like at first. I soon realised that it was great fun running and splashing and rolling in the sand. It did not taste good to drink but Lottie and I enjoyed eating and playing with the seaweed. I ate so much that it made my tummy upset and we had to play in the sand dunes instead, and then Lottie found a lake which was nice to drink and play in. When we returned to the car park we were soaking wet, covered in sand and duck weed and ready for our dinner and a snooze.

The rest of the holiday we went on lots of long walks and trips to the beach, we saw steam trains and visited the castle where we saw lots of children who wanted to say hello. On one of our walks a big horse came up behind us and snorted. Lottie was so scared she pulled Mum over and this frightened me and I pulled Dad over into the horse poo which tasted quite nice. Then Lottie found some fox poo which I rolled in but Mum and Dad were not too pleased with this and I had to have a bath. Mum said I was smelly but I did not mind.

I like holidays but it is nice to come back to my forever home.

Thank you Holly Hedge for looking after me.

Lots of love Buddy (and Kath, Pat & Lottie)



Warming up after playing in the lake!

around other dogs, but she is actually improving all the time. I am definitely now a Staffie fan, and would urge anyone who is thinking of getting a dog to consider a rescue Staffie.

Oh, and by the way, if you ever go to meet a Staffie at Holly Hedge, do take the kids ;)

Chris Sperring MBE, November 2010



Buddy and Lottie



Dogs and cats still needing homes write their letters to Santa.

We're on the web!
www.hollyhedge.org.uk

Aimee

Dear Father Christmas,
I would really love....

- Energetic new owners
- Walks where I can make friends
- Tasty meals and occasional treats

Love Aimee aged 3 years



Patch

Dear Santa, please can I have...

- Fun and active new owners
- Long country walks
- Acceptance that I may never be great with all other dogs but am still very loveable

Love Patch aged 1 1/2 years



Snowy

Please Santa, I would like.....

- a mature household
- owners who will give me lots of love
- not too many turkey sandwiches!

love Snowy aged 9 years



Basil

Dear Father Christmas, I need....

- a cosy home away from lots of traffic (as I am an older boy who is a little hard of hearing)
- to be the only cat in the home
- lots of cuddles

love Basil aged 14 years



Pearl

I've been a very good girl so I'd like...

- A loving family of my own
- Comfy laps to sit on
- Interesting new walks

Love Pearl aged 4 years



Whisky

Dear Santa "Claws"

For Christmas can you bring me...

- a quiet home
- people who'll welcome a tabby who's lovable but has cattitude

love Whiskey aged 3 years



Butch

All I want for Christmas is ...

- Gentle owners to look after me
- Time for training to boost my confidence
- Plenty of cuddles

Love Butch aged 3 years



Cassie

My Christmas wish list

- A calm, yet active new home
- Lots and lots and lots of games of fetch
- Maybe the chance to learn flyball or agility

Love Cassie aged 13 months



Fizz

Dear Santa "Paws"

- a nice quiet loving home for me please
- a cosy fire
- no young children to disturb me

love Fizz aged 8 years



Katie

This year I would like.....

- A home to call my own once more
- A chance to show off all my tricks
- Lots of nice walks

Love Katie aged 3 years



HOLLY HEDGE Animal Sanctuary NEW CHARITY SHOP

opening December 2010

RELIABLE VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED

Quality items needed including:

Clothing, Handbags, Jewellery, Books, CDs/DVDs,
Unwanted Gifts

As the economic downturn continues, an increasing number of abandoned and unwanted animals are desperate for help, many needing veterinary treatment.

Any support will be truly appreciated, especially by our four legged friends at Holly Hedge.

This project has only been made possible due to a grant from Ethicall for which we are so very grateful.

7A The Triangle, Clevedon, Bristol BS21 6NB

OPEN 9am-5pm, Monday to Saturday

For more information please contact Holly Hedge

If you would like to support Holly Hedge please use this great search engine, everyclick.com, which raises money for charity every time you search the web. It won't cost you a penny, but will help raise money for Holly Hedge once you have chosen your charity!

www.everyclick.com/hollyhedgeanimalsanctuary

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