

HOLLY HEDGE Newsletter

SPRING/SUMMER 2006 ISSUE



Providing shelter from harm and the promise of a brighter future

SAFE IN CUSTODY

*Our grateful thanks to P.C. Mounter and P.C. Doe for their prompt action resulting in **Rio** being returned safely to Holly Hedge. Also to HTV, Star Radio, Evening Post, Clevedon Mercury and North Somerset Times for the publicity. Last, but not least, the foot soldiers who searched relentlessly looking for Franco.*



Rio with PC Doe, Chris Martin and PC Mounter

Rio & Franco were both stolen from Holly Hedge on the night of Thursday 6th April 2006. When our kennel supervisor went to let the dogs out at 8am on Friday 7th she found that Rio, a semi-long haired german shepherd and Franco, a white boxer with a distinguishing black patch on his right ear, were missing from their kennels. Everyone was shocked and devastated. Why would anyone want to steal from an animal sanctuary? The perpetrators had gained access by breaking the padlock on the woodland walk gate. It was all the more worrying as the two dogs didn't particularly like each other and we knew they wouldn't get on.

Continued overleaf...

Thank you...

...to everyone who has donated towards our new kennel block fund. We now have **£42,000** towards the cost, a great achievement so far, but we still have a long way to go. **Friends of Holly Hedge fund raising team** are working so hard to reach our goal of £250,000 and with their tremendous effort along with kind people's generosity we're determined to get there, because our rescued animals deserve the best. If anyone would like to donate towards this project or help with fund raising please contact Holly Hedge, it really is a very worthy cause.

A huge thank you to **Somerfield** supermarket at Whitchurch who raised a brilliant £800 towards the new kennels by holding a dress down day. An excellent result and very much appreciated.

Thanks to Katy and Sue of **SP Fayre Management Ltd** who chose Holly Hedge to be their nominated charity of the year. We are fortunate to have a pitch free of charge at the Shepton Mallet Showground every month at the giant flea and collectors market. We are so grateful for this opportunity to raise funds.

How do you like our new logo and 'new look' newsletter? We're thrilled to bits with it all. Our sincere thanks to graphic designer **Tania Taber** for all her effort and expertise, she's done us proud - and at no expense to the Charity. We are sure all our readers agree, Tania's done an excellent job.



..SAFE IN CUSTODY

continued...

We had a good idea who the culprits were as we had our suspicions about 4 people who came to look around that day. On looking in the visitors book we found a name and address and informed the police, who acted straight away. Their prompt response resulted in Rio being found and returned to us safely – we can't begin to thank them enough for all their help. No further information can be given as a 24 year old man has been questioned and bailed. Staff welcomed Rio with open arms and made such a fuss of her. Thankfully she was none the worse for her adventure.

Sadly Franco was nowhere to be seen. Ironically he had been reserved to go to a new home just before he was taken. Notices and flyers were distributed everywhere and newspapers printed the story. A member of the public rang Holly Hedge certain he had seen Franco on Friday afternoon with 2 men outside a pub close to where Rio was found. Search parties scoured the area day and night; many volunteers gave up their time knocking on doors, trekking the streets and stopping people to give information leaflets in the hope of tracing him. None of us were going to give up until he was found however long it took. As time went on we were becoming increasingly worried. On Sunday 9th April the story appeared on HTV news. About a quarter of an hour later we received a phone call to say that a white boxer answering Franco's description had been found in Ashton Court that morning!!!!?? We are unable to give any further details except to say it was our Franco. We all breathed a huge sigh of relief, the nightmare was over. He came back to a rapturous welcome and was so pleased to see his carers. Poor Franco had lost weight and seemed quite nervous after his ordeal, but at least he was safe.

Franco, the most loveable 14 month old white boxer came to Holly Hedge on 31st January 2006 due to a relationship break up. He had taken the split badly and had lost weight when he was brought in. He had been much loved by both his owners who he had lived with since a puppy, but neither party could give him the secure future that he needed. He settled well with us and enjoyed socialising with the other dogs. For some reason, white boxers don't rehome easily and it was 10 weeks before Franco was chosen for his wonderful fun-loving personality, but before we could do the home check Franco was stolen – and the rest you know. Franco's new owners have a few words to say about him (see above right).



Franco with PC Munter, Mr Mansell and PC Doe

Dear Pauline and all at Holly Hedge

We would like to reassure you of **Franco's** wellbeing. Since he arrived, we have seen such a vast change in him mentally as well as physically. He was very unsure of himself at first, followed us everywhere just to make sure he was not going to be left alone, really sad to see. But over the weeks he soon put his stamp on the place, and it's great to see him play and charge around the garden. He enjoys his walks across the field and has made a friend with another of your dogs, Sampson, a close neighbour.

I hope he thinks he is lucky coming to us. I know we can't quite believe our luck in having him. Thanks to you all.

Yours sincerely

Rosemarie Mancell

Rio, a beautiful, sweet natured 2 year old german shepherd came to us in February this year, also a casualty of a relationship break up. She was upset and confused about her situation and was desperate to bond with that special someone. As you have already read, Rio was stolen on 6th April. Call it a 'lucky break' (if you'll pardon the pun) but one of the policemen who saw her when she was taken to the station for identification thought she was such a lovely girl and told his wife's parents about her. They came to Holly Hedge to meet Rio and they too were smitten and couldn't wait to take her home once their home check passed. Her new owners have a few words to say about her (see below).

We got **Rio** on her third birthday from Holly Hedge, and the moment I opened the car door she was in and made herself comfortable on the back seat. She came with a large crocodile (soft toy), this was soon discarded in favour of a small teddy that she carries around the house and garden.

It soon became apparent that she had been trained very well, once she arrived at her new home she made a tour of the house and that was her settled. Over the next few days and weeks she had made several new friends; the neighbour's and their children along with our own children and grand children. Some call her the Bear cause she is so fluffy. When walking **Rio** we have to be as alert as she is, should she meet a cat she might try and run after it and if you were not ready you would be on the floor.

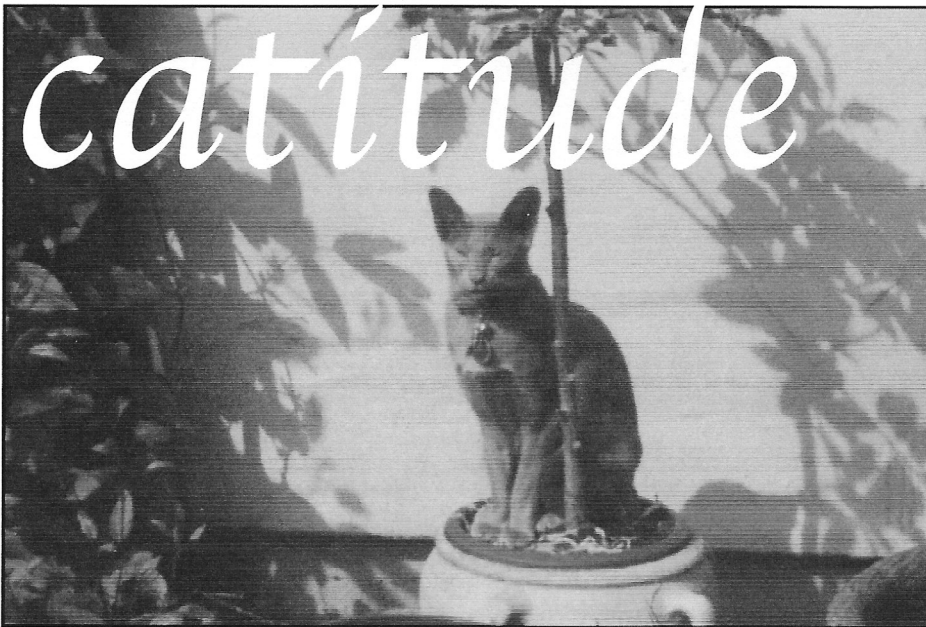
Rio is a gentle soft and very lovable dog. Watching her with the grandchildren is a joy. Should our youngest grandchild cry she is by his side to see what is wrong and often her being there is enough to stop the crying.

Who needs an alarm clock? She will nuzzle us awake when it is time to wake up and will give us the five or ten minutes we ask before face wash time.

Carol and Dave Martin



catitude



Pasha aged about 3

Pasha - an oriental lilac - was a feisty little feline with a great deal of 'catitude' when she arrived at Holly Hedge with her two 7 day old kittens, but who could blame her? She had been fending for herself since at least January 2005 when she had been found living rough in a cardboard box. No one could get near her, as she was so terrified that she would lash out. Luckily kind people noticed her plight and provided food so she didn't go hungry. Then in July 2005 two tiny little black kittens barely a week old, were seen in the box, too. Now something would have to be done, as they were so vulnerable. Holly Hedge were called and went straightaway to collect them. However, there was a problem in that the kittens were not in the box, but their mother was still around so we knew they couldn't be far away. Emma, our warden, noticed mum going behind a tree in the garden so she quietly went to look and found the kittens cocooned in a carrier bag in a hole sheltered by the tree. Pasha, as we named her, had moved her offspring to what she thought was a safe, secluded place. We knew no one would be able to handle her, so we reluctantly set a cat trap. She was so suspicious that it took some time before she ventured in. When the trap finally closed on her, everyone got a mouthful of abuse as though she was cursing the human race for getting her into this mess in the first place. Her two little ones were carefully placed in a bed beside her on the journey to Holly Hedge so she could see they were unharmed.

On arrival, she was put into a spacious, comfortable cattery with her kittens in a cosy bed and left to settle with plenty of food and water. That night, there was a thunderstorm with torrential rain and lightning! Thank goodness, the little family were safe and dry. When they were next checked to see if all was well, Pasha was still in no mood to tolerate human beings, but it was necessary for the kittens to be checked over. When staff went into the cattery she jumped on top of the door, hissing and spitting for all she was worth. When the kittens were examined they were found to be anaemic and flea-ridden, so a trip to the vet was needed. It was lucky they were rescued then or they could well have died. It took two of our experienced staff to de-flea and worm Pasha - they were scratched and bitten for their trouble but it's all in a day's work for our dedicated staff.

It was necessary to handle the kittens so that they would learn to trust people (unlike their mother) - when this happened Pasha looked ready to pounce if anyone made a wrong move, but gradually she became more relaxed with the 'human enemies' who did their utmost to gain her confidence and befriend her, but at first she was having none of it. This didn't put us off as we had had many a hissing ball of fire turn into a purring softie once staff had worked their magic.

However, Pasha was no pushover, but slowly she began to respond and allowed certain people to stroke her. She still liked to sit on the door giving the 'evil eye', although on the whole she was a lot more tolerant and decided some people weren't so bad after all. She was a good mother but as the kittens grew to be lively and energetic, she began telling them off! Pasha had had enough and she wanted some peace. At eight weeks Dic and Dom were rehomed together and soon after Pasha was speyed. We thought it was about time she was found a quiet home where she could continue to gain trust. Most visitors weren't so keen to take on the challenge until one day Eva came along and thought what a beautiful girl she was. It was obvious the little cat with catitude took to Eva too as she actually allowed this complete stranger to stroke her. As Eva now had only one cat, she wanted to take Pasha home to make up for everything she had gone through in the past. Judging by the lovely photo, Pasha's days of fending for herself are well and truly over.

Letter from Eva who adopted Pasha

I went to Holly Hedge to find a companion for my existing cat, Bubbles. I felt because I was working full-time she was lonely and could do with a playmate. I saw several cats before I noticed a sign on one of the pens saying only go in with a member of staff. Pasha was inside and I was told to be cautious because she was very nervous and traumatised. If I wanted to stroke her I was to use a stick with a feather attached. Well that didn't last long before I found myself stroking her with my hands and after a few hisses and whimpers we seemed to get along fine. I asked if I could take her home and in a short time, after checks were completed, I went to pick her up.

After the journey home with Pasha wailing like a demented banshee, I settled her into the spare room with food, water and a litter tray. She stayed there for a couple of days with me going in and softly talking to her, while she tried desperately to avoid me, hissing and hiding away.

Two days later I left the door open for her to roam the house at will. She was like a little phantom and I would glimpse her occasionally while watching TV but if I moved she was gone.

The real change came about a week later, when I was wrapping a birthday present and I felt the string go taut and on the other end was Pasha!! She wanted to play!! Soon Bubbles joined in and before I knew it she had made herself at home, even creeping up onto my bed at night, much to Bubbles' disgust.

It was after she had been with me about three weeks that I let her into the garden, she went straight over the wall and I frantically spent an hour looking for her. When I returned home I found her waiting for me in the house (she had already worked out the cat flap) - she is a clever little cat!!

Bubbles and Pasha are not exactly best buddies but this is down to Bubbles and not Pasha, who wants to be friends. I do think Bubbles enjoys the company and they chase each other around the garden. One day I hope to see them cuddled up together but I have to be patient as I was with Pasha, everything takes time and to see a little cat that had to be stroked with a feather, now so happy is well worth the wait.



FUN DAY!

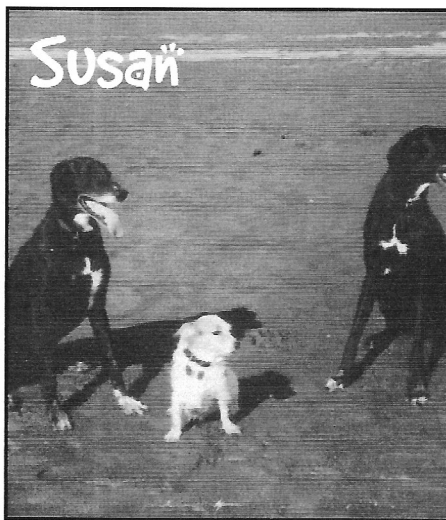
We would like to thank the organisers and helpers for all their hard work at our 'Fun Day' at Ashton Court on 21st May. Most had given up their Sunday morning lie-in to help raise funds for a much needed new kennel block at Holly Hedge Sanctuary. The weather was against us as it poured with rain almost all day, and everyone got drenched to the skin. Yet no one complained and made the best of what could have been a huge disappointment.



Many dogs and their owners braved the elements to enter the novelty dog show, including lots of our Holly Hedge rescues. Even though the weather was a wash-out, tails were still wagging excitedly. We are so proud of all our wonderful volunteers and supporters who proved they weren't 'fair weather friends'. Their combined efforts and team spirit was inspirational and made the day a success against the odds.

We managed to raise approximately **£3,000**, a brilliant achievement in torrential rain.

Thank you all once again!



A gentleman rang Holly Hedge back in September 1999 asking for help as his wife had passed away and, due to his working hours changing, he could no longer give his little 4 year old dog Susan the time and care she needed. Since losing her mistress, she relied totally on her master and being left 10 hours, 5 days a week wouldn't be fair.

Unfortunately Susan suffered from Epilepsy and was on medication permanently. We were told this was her 3rd home and now life had dealt her yet another bitter blow. We thought a kennel situation would be too stressful for her and probably bring on more fits, so a nice photo with an appealing write-up was displayed in reception.

Three weeks later, Janet came along, looking to rescue a dog that wouldn't be easily rehomed for whatever the reason. She and her sister were at home most of the time and had the commitment and patience to give a dog with special needs a happy life.

It really was 4th time lucky for this little lady and 7 years on Susan's still enjoying happy times secure in the knowledge she will never be passed on again. A real happy ending.

KAZ - OBITUARY

Kaz was a gentle soul who loved everybody. She was not great with other dogs so it was hard to find her a home but she was quite happy living in our staff room.

When Kaz became ill suddenly there was nothing the vets could do.

We'll all remember Kaz with great affection. Always muddy in winter, clever enough to open any door or gate, a fussy eater, a squeaky toy addict and a kind friend to us all.



Dear Holly Hedge

For some time now I've been meaning to write and let you know how Susan our little Jack Russell x is getting on. We had her from you but via her home as she was a 'special needs' dog of 4 years old, suffering fits. This is her fourth home.

The first few weeks or so we noticed she didn't wag her tail, didn't know how to respond to all sorts of things. On average she'd have a fit once a fortnight which after a few months started to occur more often and on vet's advice we had to increase her tablets. Things went from bad to worse! Her fits got worse and much more often and Susan was quite 'spaced out' from the effect. Then she had a series of 14 fits in 24 hours and ended up at the vet on a drip. Her fits were stabilized and she returned home with stronger medication. The following weekend she became very poorly - her skin went yellow and she was being sick. Back for another stay at the vet, she was found to have jaundice and pancreatitis, and was very poorly. By the middle of the week our vet didn't hold out much hope and I was prepared to go up and be with Susan when she was put to sleep. But our vet said "let's give her another 12 hours" and to phone tomorrow. This I did and there had been some improvement through that time. She had taken a little food and had a short walk in their yard. We were thrilled. Two days later we brought her home. Now on her constant medication and low fat diet she hasn't looked back. Susan is happy, responsive, and hasn't had a fit now for 5 years. She's a normal, canny little dog. Here's a few prints of her sitting between her two best friends Barnaby and May on one of her regular trips to Weston. Susan will be 11 years old in August but acts like a 2 year old! She didn't have a good start in life but now she's living it to the full.

Thank you Holly Hedge for your continued support with Susan's medication. She's very happy and so are we.

Grateful thanks...

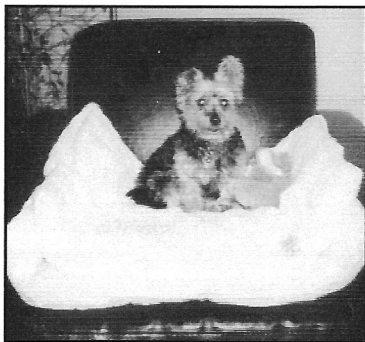
Our grateful thanks to **THE CARPET FITTERS of CONGRESBURY** and **TRIANGLE CARPETS OF CLEVEDON** who very kindly donate carpet off-cuts and samples which have made our rescued animals much more comfortable in their kennels and catterys while they wait to be chosen.

A big THANK YOU to **MR DEAN** for making the beautiful wooden wishing-well which now has pride of place in our gardens.

Thank you to **CHRIS THOMPSON, Manager of SAINSBURY'S, Stoke Gifford** for allowing us to collect donations of food and money throughout the year. We are very grateful for all your support.



Dear little blind Belle



Belle, the sweetest little 9 year old Yorkshire terrier came to us when her owners decided they could no longer keep her as they were expecting a baby. We were told she suffered from "separation anxiety" and would sometimes toilet in the house. On several occasions she had escaped from the garden and had been brought home by the local dog warden. It seemed she had had at least two previous owners and this together with her cataract-related blindness must have added to her insecurities.

When she arrived at Holly Hedge her bewildered little face captured our hearts. Finding herself in a strange place with people she didn't know confused and upset

her. All she did was go round in circles which was pitiful to see. It was never our intention to put her in a kennel, she couldn't have coped. So home she came with me to meet my motley crew of 10 dogs, all gentle souls, most of them elderly, who accepted her immediately.

I was worried Belle might feel overwhelmed by so many, but not her, she soon made herself at home. Jumping on the settee and generally joining in. She especially enjoyed going for long walks, following along, behind the others, and never once attempted to escape. Belle definitely had a good quality of life but it could be even better if only she could see. An appointment was made to see Tim Knott, a brilliant vet and eye specialist who we highly recommend, in the hope he might be able to operate on at least 1 eye to restore her sight, but this wasn't to be, nothing could be done. It was disappointing news but Belle coped admirably with her blindness. She was such a loving little dog and craved so much affection I felt she really needed more individual attention than I could give her so an appealing advert was placed, which resulted in the ideal home being found for Belle.

A lovely couple and their 14 year old Jack Russell who had recently lost his old friend and needed another canine companion saw the advert. It was such a tough decision to consider re-homing her as she would have to get used to a different environment all over again - but Belle had gained so much confidence and would benefit by only having to share cuddles with 1 other dog. It was with great trepidation that she was taken to meet her prospective new owners, Susan and Michael and their lovely old dog Toby. She really liked them all and found their garden interesting, sniffing all the different plants. She wandered around the house, bumping into a few things along the way which was only to be expected. All went well, so little Belle stayed in her new home with the promise that if she didn't settle she would come back to stay. As you can see Belle is happy and contented and has a wonderful home for the rest of her life. **Pauline Leeson**

Last Summer Belle came to stay with us. She is a sweet little Yorkshire terrier who is totally blind. When she first came to us she was nervous and of course, disorientated because of the blindness. Our initial response to her was that we wanted to give to her the love, stability and social contact that we have provided for all our dogs.

She has now settled so well and, one year on, she has her basket next to our bed and a special niche on the sofa.

Belle is now mischievous, sassy, funny and an opportunist - she loves treats and sweeps in to leap on the sofa and demand them. She loves apples and once left two pips and a stalk on the sofa. She will drink tea from a mug (if you let her) and sweet wrappers found on walks have to be wrestled from her as we have found she has a stubborn streak when she likes something as equally as when she doesn't. We love all her characteristics that have emerged throughout her time with us.

Our Jack Russell, Toby, tolerates Belle walking over his head, as she divides her time and love between the two of us when we're all sitting on the sofa. They both get on very well considering he is now seventeen years old - cuddling up together on the back seat of the car when we go on excursions and holidays. She also visits the local pub with us and all our neighbours are quite taken with her too.

Belle has 'mad moments' on the sofa as she scuffs, scrapes and submerges her head underneath the cushions only to re-surface looking like a latter day Toyah Wilcox in her wilder days.

We love Belle totally and unconditionally and she returns this love to us in many ways.

Susan and Michael Stall

Sammy age 3 and

George age 9 -

Inseparable friends

These lovely cats came to us after their owner passed away. Suddenly their lives changed dramatically from having company all day to being completely alone.

Sammy had an outgoing personality, whereas George was quite reticent and shy. At the Sanctuary we found that they turned to one another at this sad time in their lives, despite having been told by a relative that they were not close. Having seen this bond develop between them we felt they could not be re-homed separately so this made it more difficult to find the right home for them, as they were two different personalities.

We chose **Sammy** and **George**, because they had been at the Sanctuary for a while.

When we first brought them home they were very timid and stuck together like glue. As they began to trust us more they would sit with us in our living room albeit at the far end of the sofa.

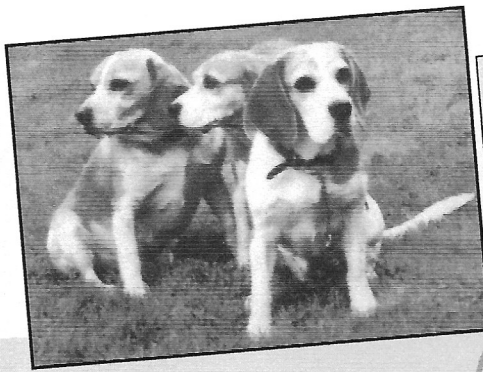
6 months on and they have completely settled in and made this their home. They enjoy playing together in the garden and Sammy likes to explore the local farm. George craves human contact and loves to be brushed or stroked. He sits on our laps to watch TV and follows us from room to room. Sammy is more independent and enjoys being out but as soon as it's meal time he magically appears with a big meow as if to say I'm home, and he sleeps on my feet most nights but I can't move them otherwise he pounces on them. We love their different characters and couldn't imagine life without them.

Sharon and Pete



Bramble

This is a letter and poem from the owner of **Bramble**, one of our Holly Hedge rescues who was adopted eight years ago. It is so comforting to know she is still fit and well and extremely happy. Her story could have been so different if the infamous Consort Kennels had not been closed down.



Dear Holly Hedge Staff,

About eight years ago you rescued six beagles who came from the Consort Kennels in Hereford. They were used to breed puppies, which were sent to Spain for chemical experiments. At the time we already had two beagles who came from the Beagle Welfare in Hampshire. We did not intend to have three dogs but after reading your article in the Bristol Evening Post we were so upset that we had to contact you. One of the dogs was so nervous that she was with foster carers in Yate, and after visiting her for a month we were allowed to adopt her. Bramble, as we named her, settled into our family immediately (hence our saying "Bramble's a star"). She was quite nervous at first but now she is so friendly that she insists on being friends with everyone. It can make a short walk last a long time, especially if there are children around, as they are her favourites!

Bramble is twelve years old now and very fit and happy. When we adopted her she didn't know how to run, so we had to teach her. To begin with she went up in the air instead of along the ground but once she got the hang of it there was no stopping her. Along with our other two beagles, she comes everywhere with us and her behaviour is perfect. She has given us eight years of pleasure.

HELLO I'M BRAMBLE

Hello I'm Bramble, How do you do?
You've got to like me, because I like you.
You've got to like me whoever you are,
Because my Mum and Dad say - "Bramble's a star".

My Dad says I'm special, my Mum says I'm sweet,
Everyone else says "I fell on my feet".
If you're not a dog lover, you still must like me,
I'm the sweetest natured beagle you ever will see.

I make lots of friends when I go for my walk,
I just sit at their feet 'til they stop for a talk.
You can't just ignore me, I won't go away,
Unless some attention to me you will pay.

I'm not very pretty, but you shouldn't mind,
Because I'm the beagle who is gentle and kind.
Your children will love me, they always do,
They know I'm the beagle who is faithful and true.

Hello I'm Bramble. How do you do?
I know you'll like me because I like you.
So walk up and stroke me and soon you will see,
There isn't a beagle who's nicer than me.

Mary Cue

My Motley Crew

by **Rachael Mills**, Kennel Supervisor



My friends see me as a collector of dysfunctional animals. I suppose I do have a bitey terrier, a collie cross with skin problems and an epileptic cat with a limp.

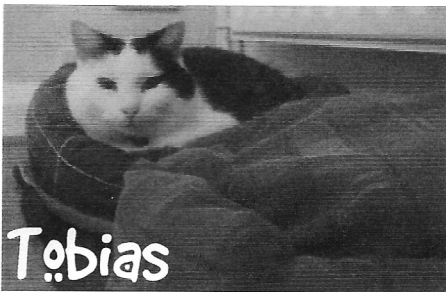
First on the scene was Tibbs, my lovely plump ginger cat who adopted me 5 years ago when my housemate moved out. Tibbs had had a chequered past, originally from a small village in Wales, Tibbs could wander happily and everyone knew how to look after him if he had a fit. When he and his family moved away, he wandered off and had to be dug out of a slurry pit with a digger. Years later he developed a terrible limp which has defied veterinary explanation but he still runs up and down the stairs from 4 a.m. onwards trying to wake me to do breakfast. Tibbs has to have medication for his epilepsy and has occasional fits, but otherwise he's a

happy chap who is looking forward to celebrating his 15th birthday next week. (Cards c/o Holly Hedge please!)

Missy was a kind of accident. Her old owners brought her to Holly Hedge because she kept escaping, she was 8 years old and they'd had her since she was a pup. When she arrived she was very thin and she scratched at her infected ears so much her left ear swelled into a haematoma. The vets operated and sewed buttons on her ear to hold it flat. She was a pitiful sight, lots of people felt sorry for her, but for some reason no-one wanted to give her a home. Missy wasn't happy in kennels and went on hunger strike. I started taking her home in the hope she would eat in the evenings. She was absolutely no trouble and by the end of the first week I knew I couldn't give her up. Her ears are fine now, she has skin problems and she'll chew her feet till they're sore- but she has a special shampoo that quickly sorts it out. At home she'll sleep in strange positions for hours and on walks she loves to run, swim, and play tug of war with Buddy and a stick. She is great with kids and loves meeting people - perfect really!

I adopted Buddy 4 years ago because, although I had become immensely fond of him, I wasn't sure anyone else ever would! Bud was 5 years old and had had 2 previous homes. He has a nervous disposition and had learnt from a young age that snapping at new people meant they kept away. When I first took him on I thought I could cure all his problems. I haven't, but he is great with me - because he trusts me, he is calm (if not entirely relaxed) in most situations. Buddy may be a grouchy terrier who guards his toys and food and won't let strangers touch him, but he has lots of good points too. For a start he's very intelligent - he can sniff out a squeaky toy even when it's wrapped in Christmas paper and hidden in a cupboard. He'll sit nearby whining and tap-dancing and even missing meals until you give in and let him have it. Buddy is also a very licky dog - he especially loves to lick my feet while I watch telly. Owning Buddy is a big commitment - I have to be careful around visitors and can't go on holiday without him. But hey, I wouldn't want to anyway - I really love the little rascal.





This dear old cat who was 12 years old, was brought into Holly Hedge because his elderly owner and constant companion had to go into a nursing home. Tobias had lived in the house on his own for a month with the family going in to see him but he was deprived of the company and affection that he had always enjoyed and thrived on.

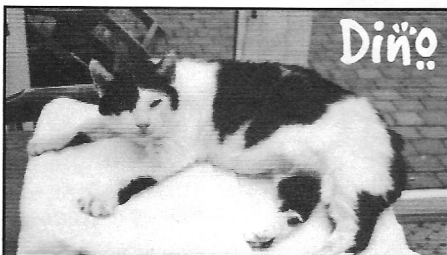
Tobias was a healthy boy and a favourite with our Cat Cuddlers as he liked sitting on laps and appreciated all the fuss he could get. He didn't seem to mind mixing with other rescued cats in the large cat garden, he was such an easy-going, dignified old gentleman. However, he missed the good times he had in his previous home and we knew he would need someone special who could give him the love and security he had been used to. As he was 12 years old he was overlooked for almost three months although he tried his best to be noticed. Most prospective owners were looking for younger cats but thankfully Lisa and Mark fell for his charm and gentle nature. Tobias was at last going back to the sort of life that he had known, with an abundance of company, love and affection.

Re-homing older cats

Older cats are great to re-home. They may not be as cute as they were when they were a few months old and have to come up against some tough competition when kittens seem so irresistible to adopt.

One overriding factor is many older cats are already house and toilet trained. They have also developed their own character and can give so much love and affection in return. The oldies really are a pleasure to own!

Lisa Rushin



The first time I saw Toby he had not long arrived at the Sanctuary. He didn't look his best, as not only was he having treatment for his ears, he was thin and seemed quite shy. It wasn't long though until I began to see the lovable side to this little scruff. From the moment I touched him and started to groom him he began purring loudly.

We already had 2 cats - Whiskey and Soda - and had often thought about getting a third. Toby was aged about 12 and with both our other cats being 11 we thought it would be easier for them to adapt and live with an older cat. Our minds were made up we had to have him! When we brought Toby home we allowed him to settle for the first few days in our spare bedroom. He seemed to be enjoying his new surroundings and often when we'd go into the room he would jump up onto our laps.

It was now time to do the introduction!

Wondering who this new playmate was, the initial meeting went better than we thought with Whiskey and Soda welcoming Toby into our household. Soda (being the female) would hiss at Toby if he got too close. He soon realised who was the boss and would keep his distance. 3 weeks later it was time for Toby to explore the garden! Toby has proved to be quite the little acrobat. He loves having his tummy tickled and being groomed and invariably will perform a "roly - poly". He loves to explore and sometimes can be seen swinging by his front paws on a wooden plank and then pulls himself up onto a ledge. Pass him a ping-pong ball and he'll quickly flick it back with his paw! Finding the security amongst the bamboo plants at first, he soon loved being out in the open and trying to get him to come in at night proved a little difficult. However, with a bit of patience and encouragement he has now got into the routine of coming in for the night. When my alarm goes off in the morning Toby takes on a new meaning to the snooze button. He will often tap me on the head with his paw letting me know it's time for his breakfast. I have never known a cat to purr so loudly. Quite strange, when his meow is very quiet. Often he will curl up in his own bed, on our landing, and will drift off into such a deep sleep that he ends up snoring! At first it was difficult to tell the difference between the cat and my husband, as it was so deep and loud!

When we considered adopting Toby we knew he had a slight problem with his right eye due to ingrowing eyelashes and this caused him to squint. We got a second opinion from our vet and decided he should have a minor operation, which would help to restore the eye back to its normal size. It was very successful. We've had Toby over a year now and although he is still very wary of strangers, he has settled in well. He is such a soft and lovable cat. The fun and enjoyment he has brought to the household has been great to see - we wouldn't be without him.

Dino

Dino was shut outside his home with no shelter for a week after his owner suddenly passed away. A relative took him to another animal shelter, but as it was Sunday they were closed. We had a phone call from the relative who said under no circumstances could he take him home as he had two dogs who would attack him. Poor Dino was in a cat basket with nowhere to go, how could we refuse him? On arrival it was discovered that he had very scabby skin and his coat was quite sparse in places. His body felt quite clammy and hot to touch and his ears were very grubby and sore. The next day he was taken to the vet who diagnosed severe allergic dermatitis. He was given anti-biotics, anti-inflammatories and a special bath to soothe his inflamed skin and make him more comfortable. As soon as his skin began to look better the steroids were reduced, unfortunately it immediately flared up again. It took lots of TLC from staff to get his condition under control. The poor little chap was such a good patient in spite of being constantly medicated and bathed. It was as though he knew it was being done to help him. The vet said he may have to be on a low dosage of steroids for the rest of his life but at least he no longer had to be bathed.

When he was chosen two months later by Catherine and Jason, he still looked a bit moth-eaten but that didn't put them off. They could see what a loveable boy he was, and a lap cat was just what they wanted. A happy ending for everyone!

Letter from Catherine Payne who adopted Dino

"Here is a photo of Dino, half-asleep in the conservatory, with one eye looking out the window at the birds. He is a keen ornithologist and occasionally ventures outside to follow the birds up into the trees - luckily he is as good at the descent as he is at the ascent!

His allergy is well under control, thanks to what is essentially a 'sweet itch' cream for horses. Each time a scab appears it's gone within 2-3 days of putting the cream on - so no more bald patches!

He likes his food and also likes to sample his housemate's food too! They now have to be fed separately so we don't end up with one skinny cat and one fat one!

Dino is a funny character and a much-loved member of our family. He likes to join in conversations with a well-informed 'miaow' and is always outside the bedroom door in the mornings waiting for a cuddle on the bed."

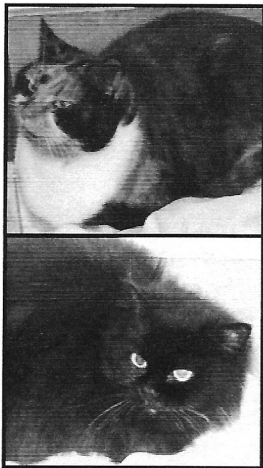


We're all hoping for happy endings too



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

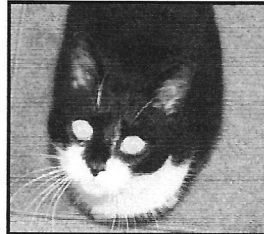
Lots of adorable kittens patiently waiting for caring, responsible owners.



CRUMBLE
 aged 6 yrs &
WILLOW
 aged 10 yrs.

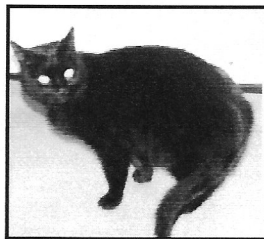
These affectionate cats seek a home together.

After the trauma of losing their home, these inseparable friends live in hope.



JET & JESSIE
 adorable
 12 yr olds.

They would love to spend their time sleeping on your lap or window sill.



A pleasure to own. The loss of their owner left them devastated. All they want is to be happy again.



SMOKEY & BANDIT

Two adorable chinchillas, abandoned in a pub car park.

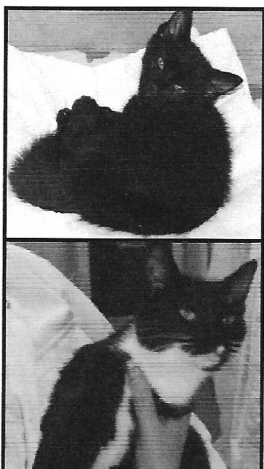
They love to entertain you in the evening with their antics.



PIP
 1 yr old female staffie x.

Small, lively and full of mischief, looking for a family with

time for training and cuddles.



MISCHIEF
 aged 2yrs
 & **LUCKY**
 aged 3 mths.

A mum and her only surviving kitten would love a home together.

They greet everyone, asking to be taken home. Please make their dreams come true.



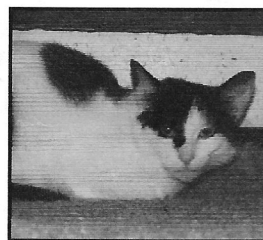
SHEBA
 7 yr old GSD left with a friend in 2nd floor flat when owner moved and didn't come back for her.

Desperate for a second chance in a family home.



SHADOW
 10 mth old male rottie x GSD.

Both he and his identical brother Bailey would love a family home, together or separately.



KERRY
 Left in hospital grounds, all her kittens found dead.

Slightly timid but loving, needs a quiet home to forget her troubled past.



NEMO & GRETA
 4 yr old male, aged 2yrs.

These gentle and loving greyhounds long for

the home comforts they have been deprived of.



IRENE- 17 mth old GSD x. This big, bubbly girl is inquisitive and highly intelligent. Seeking a home as an

only pet with owners committed to her ongoing training. A faithful companion given the chance.



NICK
 Approx 6 yrs, left to fend for himself on a farm.

Shy but responding to love and

kindness. Needs a quiet environment to rebuild his life.



SMUDGE
 10 mth old male. Lively, lovable Lab x.

Would suit an energetic family. Very eager to please.

