

FOR PETS

The magazine for Blue Cross supporters

AUTUMN 2020



AGAINST ALL ODDS

**AMAZING BUMBLE'S
BUCKET LIST MISSION**

Kitten saves sick brother's life

Helping pets through lockdown

Hamster's big new world



Pets change lives
We change theirs



Pets change lives
We change theirs



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COVER STORY

04 Against all odds

Amazing Bumble's zest for life

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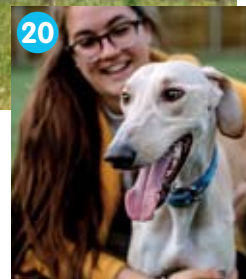
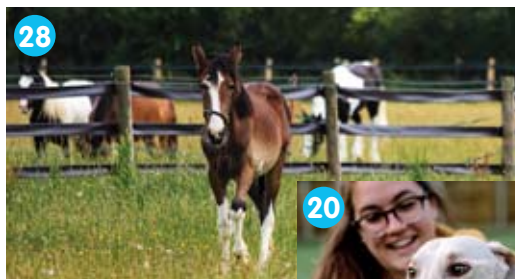


WELCOME

It has been a challenging time here at Blue Cross, as it has been for everyone everywhere. When the UK went into lockdown in March, many of our funding streams disappeared overnight, with shops closing and big fundraising events cancelled. But not once did we close our doors to pets in the greatest need, as you'll read about on pages 18 and 19. As always, For Pets brings you uplifting stories of hope and strength through adversity – needed now, more than ever. There are few tales as heartwarming as that of our beautiful cover star, Bumble, who's living life to the full despite a devastating diagnosis. And there is plenty more I hope will bring a smile to your face in this issue.

Aimee Brannen, Editor

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BUMBLE AND HER BUCKET LIST

After being diagnosed with incurable kidney cancer, this one-of-a-kind dog is spending the time she has left cramming in as many adventures as possible, all while helping other Blue Cross dogs in need...





Bumble may not have the years ahead of her that such a special dog deserves, but the love, fun and adventure filling her remaining days will surely be enough to last any pet a lifetime.

From beach trips and shopping sprees to parties and painting sessions, the staffie-cross is busy ticking off experiences on an ambitious bucket list, all in between helping dogs arriving at Blue Cross.

DIFFICULT START

Bumble found herself at the doors of our Tiverton centre back in November last year. She had been seized by police after her previous owner allegedly used her to threaten officers, something that anyone who meets this sweet girl struggles to get

their head around. Nobody knows what other sad times lie in her past.

She immediately stole the heart of Charlotte Mullarkey, an Animal Behaviour Coordinator at the Devonshire centre, who agreed to foster Bumble due to health concerns flagged on the four-year-old's arrival.

Although otherwise bright, Bumble was urinating blood and a scan at the vets soon revealed that she had a mass in her tummy.

Vets investigated further when neutering her and discovered a cyst on her kidney.

Antibiotics failed to cure the condition, so the kidney was removed and the tumour on it found to be cancerous.

Devastatingly, the cancer spread to her remaining kidney and she was given months to live.

ADVENTURES

Charlotte then officially adopted her, determined to give her the best life possible in what time she had left. She soon created Bumble's bucket list and a scrapbook documents all their adventures together.

Charlotte said: "Because I don't really know what kind of life she's had before, I want to give her the best time she can have for however long she's got.

"Some of it is just kind of normal for dogs to do, like going to the beach – but those are things that I don't think she's ever done. Some are obviously more extreme things that I'd love to try and do, but it's just about spending time with her. She's so happy-go-lucky so she enjoys everything, really."

Charlotte, after going through a

"I want to give her the best time she can have for however long she's got."



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centre



Watch Bumble's video
bluecross.org.uk/bumblebucketlist



difficult relationship breakdown, initially feared that she might not be able to keep Bumble after she suddenly found herself living alone while in a full-time job.

But the centre made arrangements for Bumble to become part of the team there so she could join Charlotte at work, especially since she had shown such wonderful manners when greeting other dogs.

And so, Charlotte and Bumble were able to be there for each other when they needed it the most.

"Mental health-wise I was really struggling, so around the same time I'd just been put on anti-depressants. It was awful," said Charlotte.

"I happened to have a doctors' appointment the day after Bumble's operation and the doctor actually told me that she wanted me to keep her because from hearing about her, she said: 'I think this will help you'.

"Bumble is very tuned into emotions. She gets quite worried when people are crying, she'll come up and lick your face and she's very

cuddly. She's quite a caring dog.

"So, she's kind of pulled me out of that really. She's just changed my life, which is why it has been so difficult [to deal with the diagnosis], but obviously the good still outweighs the bad."

INTUITIVE

Due to her gentle and intuitive nature around her own species as well as humans, Bumble has gone on to help Blue Cross with dog introduction assessments and with socialising dogs of all sizes and ages to build their confidence around those on four legs. She has even helped to foster a litter of newborn puppies who lost their mum.

Laura Sayer, Operational Supervisor at the centre, explained: "Bumble is an extremely important member of the team here. She's an excellent ambassador for the charity; she is really useful when we have new dogs coming into the centre. We can use her – her enthusiasm and love for people – to introduce

other dogs. So, it's great to see from a behavioural perspective how those dogs interact with her."

SHOPPING SPREE

Things Bumble has ticked off her bucket list so far include a £600 shopping spree courtesy of Pets at Home, a cheese night, forest walks, paddling at the beach, a birthday party and creating her own piece of artwork.

Charlotte added: "It's really nice, but it is still sad at the same time.

"Although it's lovely that we're cramming it all in, in the back of my head I'm thinking: 'what if I don't get to do this thing or that thing?'

"But I try not to think about it too much. I just kind of act like she's every other dog.

"It is really rewarding as well as I know she otherwise wouldn't be able to do this."



TINY KITTEN SAVES SICK BROTHER'S LIFE

Little Specks was found poorly and vulnerable, huddled up to protective sibling Dot as they fought to survive alone and outside in the freezing cold...



Without his devoted brother by his side, Specks probably wouldn't have made it.

The poorly black kitten was found huddled up with sibling, Dot, in a west London garden, as the pair desperately battled to keep warm in the grip of winter.

As well as being freezing cold, filthy and frightened, the four-month-old brothers were hungry, underweight and riddled with fleas.

Sadly, Specks was also suffering with health problems which made him even more vulnerable.

A kind member of the public brought the duo to our Hammersmith animal hospital in London just in time, and they were soon taken to our flagship Victoria site for further treatment.

BLIND

Specks was found to have cataracts covering both eyeballs, leaving him with little to no vision. He was also diagnosed with a nervous system disorder called cerebellar ataxia, which causes loss of balance, shaking and wobbly movements.

It's therefore unlikely that Specks would have survived without Dot's support, explained Amanda Rumball, London Welfare Officer for Blue Cross.

"Dot was found huddled up with his brother and I really think he stayed with Specks because he knew how much he needed him.

"He could have left him, but he never did," she said.

"I don't think Specks would have

survived without Dot. He cannot see, and his condition means that he would have been very easy prey. He would have been unaware of dangers around him like traffic and wild animals."

Amanda added: "They were both frightened initially but with some warmth, food, toys and love they were both purring away by the next morning and happy to be with us."

BONDED

Once the brothers were on the mend, they went to our Lewknor rehoming centre in Oxfordshire.

Jenna Martyn, Centre Manager, said: "We could see how bonded they were and how Specks relies on Dot for support.

"They both enjoyed being around people but definitely preferred to play together!"

Blue Cross was determined to keep

these inseparable brothers together and find them the very special and supportive home that Specks needed for his condition.

And after nearly 40 days in our care, they found just that with Karren Richards and son William, 17.

The kittens' bond is as strong as ever and Dot is even less wobbly since being rehomed.

"They're amazing. Very mischievous but very loving – they always want to know what I'm doing. And they are still very close," said Karren.

Soon after being rehomed, the UK was put into lockdown due to coronavirus, and the kittens provided a lifeline of companionship and support to Karren, who was not working due to being furloughed.

She said: "The boys have changed my life and given me a purpose. They've kept me going."



Read more on Dot and Speck's new life at bluecross.org.uk/dotandspecks

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A BIG NEW WORLD FOR FROST

Many small pets miss out on the enrichment, space and care they need due to a lack of understanding for their welfare. Thankfully, Blue Cross was there to give Frost the life she deserved...

Trapped in a wooden hut far too small and with a guinea pig she should never have been housed with, Frost's early life must have been so stressful and frustrating.

The hamster arrived at our Burford rehoming centre, Oxfordshire, inside a mop bucket in September last year when her owner realised she wasn't getting the care she needed.

Frost and her hut rival were bought from a pet shop as a pair – despite Syrian hamsters being solitary creatures, and guinea pigs needing the company of their own kind.

But, within four days, Kelly Grellier



“

When Kane and I are together in the evenings in the living room, it's really lovely to have Frost as a part of it. She is part of our time together.

”



HAMSTER WELFARE

Sadly, this wasn't the first case of its kind that Blue Cross has experienced, due a widespread lack of awareness of small pets' needs among those that sell them.

The ideal home for a hamster is a large wire cage with a plastic base no smaller than 60cm by 30cm, by 30cm tall.

Wood should be avoided as it absorbs urine and quickly becomes smelly and unhygienic.

We recommend that hamster wheels should be at least 21.5cm in diameter to avoid spinal problems.

and son Kane had given Frost a loving home, and she now has a palatial cage more than big enough for her needs.

FITTING IN

Due to a hamster's nocturnal habits, she fits perfectly into their busy London lifestyles.

Kelly said: "Because we live in a flat, and I travel a lot for work, she's perfect for us because she is awake in the evening so we just get to pet her and watch her running about.

"And then she goes back in her cage and explores in there for the rest of the night. So, it means we can

really give her a lovely quality of life."

Kelly said she also enjoys coming up with creative ways to provide Frost with crucial enrichment.

Some scars from Frost's past remain – she tends to get through food too fast as she was previously used to competing for it, so portions need to be managed carefully.

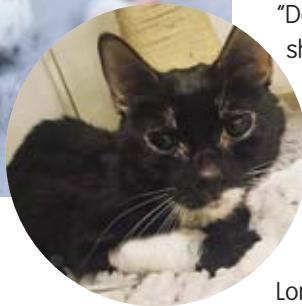
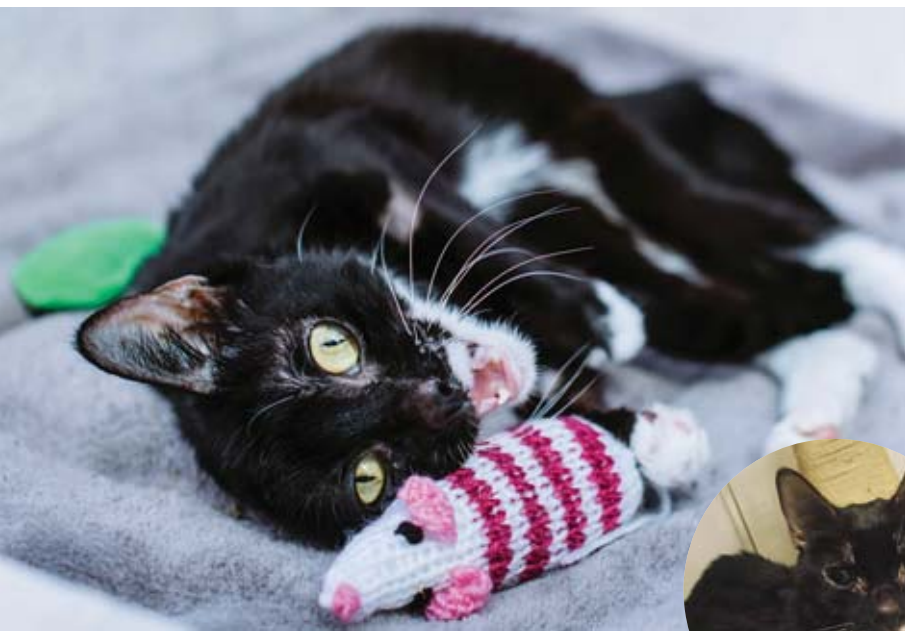
But the hamster is now as happy as she can be, and has made her owners happier too.

Kelly added: "When Kane and I are together in the evenings in the living room, it's really lovely to have Frost as a part of it.

"She's part of our time together."

Find out more about keeping hamsters happy at bluecross.org.uk/pet-advice/hamsterwelfare





A LEAP OF FAITH

Minnie was left with no choice but to risk her life by jumping two storeys after being abandoned alone in a flat...

Her owners just upped and left one day to never return, leaving Minnie all alone in a flat without enough food or water, if any at all.

It was in the height of summer and the black and white moggy was soon starving and severely dehydrated. In a desperate bid for survival, she leapt out of the window and fell two storeys.

The fall alone could have killed her, and while she was lucky enough to emerge from it unscathed, she had no energy left in her fragile body to

move from where she had landed. So, she just laid there, emaciated, alone and scared.

RESCUED

Thankfully, she was found just in time by a member of the public who brought her to our animal hospital in Victoria, central London.

Nobody knows exactly how long she had been cooped up for, but by the time she arrived in our care, she weighed just 1.4kg – almost half of what a healthy kitten her age should have been.

She was also in terrible condition, with a flaky coat, bald patches around her eyes and sparse fur on her ears.

Amanda Rumball, London Welfare Officer, said: "She was severely emaciated and dehydrated. Thankfully, nothing showed up as broken on her X-rays. She was ravenously hungry and had to be put on fluids and pain relief. We had to start to slowly rehydrate and feed her.

"Despite all she had been through she was so gentle and just craved attention. She was so sweet."

After a week of round-the-clock care, Minnie went off to our Lewisham rehoming service, based at Hadlow College, located in the south London borough.

Danielle Durnford, Centre Manager at Lewisham Blue Cross, said: "We fed her little but often, and she was put on a special digestive diet. If she was suddenly overfed it would make her really ill, as she had gone so long without anything.

NERVOUS

"She was a little bit wary of new things, and was nervous on the first day, but once she realised we were feeding her, she was OK. But if you left food in there and walked away, she didn't actually eat it, so we had to sit with her every time we fed her. If we got up and left, she wouldn't touch it and would go straight back into her bed.

"She's very loving considering her background but I guess she doesn't know that she was abandoned."

After more than 50 days recovering in our care, Minnie found a happy home.





LOOKING LIKE A TRUE SURVIVOR

From underneath the low-hanging branches of a bush you can't easily be seen by potential predators, and you can keep away from harsh winter winds. So it's no wonder this was the shelter Elton sought when he was alone on the street.

The little lop-eared rabbit must have been so frightened in unfamiliar surroundings and with no one to take care of him.

SURPRISE

Fortunately, Elton was discovered in the front garden of a very surprised, but kind, person's home. His finder knocked

on neighbours' doors to check whether the bunny was in fact a known escape artist, but no one knew who his owner might be.

Elton was nervous when he came to Blue Cross, but we slowly gained his confidence and he has now found a loving home. He came to our Burford rehoming centre in a box containing lots of glitter, and as there was an Elton John song playing in the background when he arrived, it made sense to name him after the living legend.

"Elton has the sweetest eyes we've ever seen," says Hollie Jones, Animal Welfare Assistant. "We've heard from his new owners just how wonderful life is now he's in their world."



Hundreds
of pets are
just waiting
to meet
you

COULD YOU TAKE ME HOME?

Can you give any of these Blue Cross pets a place in your heart and your home?

HARVEY

Howdy! I just love to hang out with my human friends, but I'm a bit unsure about the ones with four legs, so I need an understanding home with quiet walks aplenty.

Southampton, 0300 777 1530



TOBY

Hiya! I'm a friendly, companion pony on the lookout for a lovely human who understands my health needs. Could you be the one for me?

Burford, 0300 777 1570

CRUMPET

Hiya, me and my five friends are all looking for new homes after a bit of a rough time of it. If you could give me the chance of a fresh start, I'll make a wonderful friend.

Newport, 0300 777 1590



KASSIE

Hey! I'm a playful girl with a sensitive soul, and I just adore company and fuss. If you could give me some help with my medical needs I'd be your bestest friend in return.

Lewknor, 0300 777 1500



TRISTAN

I may be small, but I more than make up for it in love! I've had a tough past but I'm so excited to find a special someone to trust. Have you got space for a Shetland?

Rolleston, 0300 777 1520

TESS

You may think I'm an old girl at the age of 13, but I can promise you, I've still got a lifetime of love to give! Have you got space on your sofa for me to put my paws up in my twilight years?

Bromsgrove, 0300 777 1460



Find your new best friend at bluecross.org.uk/rehome

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HELPING PETS IN THE PANDEMIC

Since our first animal hospital opened in 1906, not once have we closed our doors to pets in need – and this year has been no exception.

Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, and the huge challenges and uncertainty it has brought, we have continued to be there for the pets that rely on us so greatly.

Our animal hospitals in Victoria in central London and Grimsby remained open for emergency care during lockdown and found new ways of working, including remote consultations, to ensure no animal went without vital medication or urgent attention. Some prescriptions were even delivered on push bikes.

Among the crisis cases we saw were numerous stray animals hurt in traffic accidents, a cat called Bluebell who needed urgent surgery

after swallowing a bundle of elastic bands, several dogs who had eaten toxic food such as grapes and poor Larry the cat, who was dumped outside our Merton hospital having been born with no eyes.

VOLUNTEERS

Meanwhile, our rehoming centres and services enlisted an army of volunteer foster carers to look after pets still waiting to find homes when government restrictions put most rehoming processes on hold.

Just some of the pets in foster homes were Rosie and her five kittens (pictured top) who were born in our care in February, right before the country was locked down.

As soon as regulations eased, we began matching pets with owners while adapting ways of working to comply with social distancing.



Larry the cat

Our Education Team has also delivered virtual pet welfare talks to more than 3,000 children since April.

We couldn't have done any of this without the generosity of our kind supporters, who rallied urgent calls for donations after many of our funding streams ground to a halt. To all of you, thank you.



STRAY LOCKDOWN PUPPY RESCUED

A four-month-old puppy found wandering alone on a busy main road during lockdown is now enjoying a life of love, thanks to Blue Cross.

Terrier-cross Marvin was found by a dog walker and taken to our Suffolk rehoming centre in March.

He was not microchipped so when no one came forward to claim the youngster, the team took him into their care, with the dog warden's approval.

SLEEPOVER

Marvin was in good health but was nervous, so Animal Welfare Assistant Bradley Tovell set up a camp bed to stay with the youngster in his kennel the first night.

Marvin quickly found a new home when Blue Cross started to take applications for some pets by holding virtual 'visits' with potential new owners through video calls. He's now thriving.

KITTEN'S LUCKY RESCUE

Our dedicated foster carers cared for so many pets during the lockdown, giving vital round-the-clock care. Pets just like little kitten Logan...

Logan is lucky to be alive after being found in a garden

shed and rushed into our care during the height of the coronavirus pandemic.

Believed to be around a week old, the kitten was taken to our Grimsby animal hospital in Lincolnshire by a member of public who heard his desperate cries.

The kitten was then transferred to Lewknor. Hannah Owen, Animal Welfare Assistant, said: "When Logan first arrived here his eyes weren't fully

open, and we needed to hand-feed him using a bottle.

"He was so tiny that we popped him into a small crate so he could spend lunch in the team room with us in safety. He was happily cuddled up with a teddy that was double his size and had a good snooze."

Foster carer Amy Mowforth then cared for him day and night, hand-rearing him every three hours.

In June, once he was strong and old enough, we found him a loving home.





FINDING HAPPINESS

Wally's soul was crushed when he arrived at Blue Cross, and the poor boy struggled to find a home as a result – until he met a loving new owner, who needed help rebuilding her life as much as he did...



found myself laughing when Wally was running in the garden and, I thought: 'That's the first time I've done that since losing Martin.'

Those are the poignant words of Gai Cox, who rehomed dog Wally from Blue Cross after her beloved husband of 34 years passed away, followed by their dog, Basil, a year later.

At her darkest time, the lurcher became the mum-of-two's shining light – and for Wally, Gai was his.

FRIGHTENED

He arrived at our rehoming centre in Bromsgrove, West Midlands, in March last year with his brother Gromit, having been found straying,

frightened and hungry.

Nobody knew what trauma lay in the siblings' past, but while resilient Gromit quickly grew in confidence, all Wally could do was hide and quiver in his shadow. The only way to build his independence and trust in humans was to get him used to spending time away from Gromit.

"The two brothers were so different," said Claire Spiers, Animal Welfare Assistant. "Gromit was much more confident, and a new family soon fell in love with him and took him home.

"Wally was much more timid. He had probably had a traumatic experience when he was a stray, as he had very little confidence with new people."

TRUSTED CIRCLE

The now four-year-old dog started to make good progress and showed great affection for his trusted circle of people but remained petrified of strangers – particularly men.

He would cower in the corner when meeting potential new owners, leaving the sweet boy struggling more than most pets at Blue Cross to find a home; more than 100 days, in fact.

Claire said: "I felt so sad for Wally. Every day he hoped to be picked out by someone who would make him their forever companion. Yet his hopes were dashed, time after time."

But when Gai walked through the door, she could see past Wally's fears and into his kind eyes – and knew



Every day I know I'm so lucky to have him. Apart from being a bit scared of men, he's just perfect. He's an amazing dog.



Wally, Gai and her daughter Millie

that they needed each other equally.

Gai said: "He has helped me massively. I don't know where I would have been, given the situation I had found myself in. We've helped each other."

She continued: "At the start, he was

really scared of men – walking him, he was just on edge. He was even scared of the television if there were pictures of men. But within a week, he got used to the TV.

"He comes into the office with me every day. He's still worried by men but is much better now."

SMILING AGAIN

Soon after rehoming Wally, Gai's daughter Millie went to work as a vet with wildlife in South Africa for three months, and found huge comfort in seeing the lurcher helping her mum to smile again before departing.

Wally has now been living with Gai for more than a year, and he is unrecognisable from the shell of a dog he once was. "We just had to help him find his feet," said Gai.

She added: "Every day I know I'm so lucky to have him. Apart from being a bit scared of men, he's just perfect. He's an amazing dog."





A TRIBUTE TO STREETCAT BOB

Their story touched the world over. A recovering heroin addict and a stray cat, whose incredible bond healed the scars of their pasts and transformed both lives.

Everyone at Blue Cross was saddened to hear of Bob the Streetcat's death in June, aged at least 14, and sent our love and sympathy to owner James Bowen.

We knew the pair well and are grateful to them both for their generous support over many years.

James was trying to put his life back together in 2007 when he met the ginger tomcat, who needed

a friend as much as he did. Bob walked into his life and never left.

FRIENDSHIP

The incredible story of their friendship and adventures on the streets of London became a number one bestselling book internationally, called *A Street Cat Named Bob*, and was even turned into a film. But most importantly, James got his life back.

Their success was extra special for Blue Cross because we were there for James and Bob at our weekly mobile pet clinic in Islington, London, which helps those that can't afford private vet fees.

When James and Bob became world famous, they didn't forget the help we gave them at their toughest time, and the pair generously supported us for many years. The funds they've raised have directly helped many more sick and injured pets and their owners.

We will always be grateful to them.

Mark Bossley, Blue Cross Chief Vet, said: "We're proud to have been there for Bob and James when Bob needed veterinary treatment and it was always clear to our team how much of a close bond they had.

"James and Bob have done a huge amount to support our charity by fundraising for us since James's recovery, and because of them we've been able to help so many more sick and injured pets. We're really grateful to them and Bob will be truly missed."

If you are struggling to come to terms with losing a pet, our free and confidential Pet Bereavement Support Service is here for you on 0800 096 6606.

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GET READY TO PAW-TY

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Give back to pets in need by hosting a socially distancing Tea Party at home, in your garden or local park.

You could hold a virtual party; simply pop the kettle on and invite your friends to connect online for a chat and catch up over a cuppa with each person making a small donation.

Simply fill in the coupon at the back of this magazine or visit bluecross.org.uk/teaparty



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Blue Cross is a charity that has been helping sick, injured and homeless pets since 1897.

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★ JASMINE

I had two elderly rabbits, Max and Millie, who were both nine-year-old Netherland dwarf rabbits. Last June, Millie died unexpectedly, with no sign of illness or distress. Max was by her side when she passed away and I left him with her for about an hour to say his goodbyes but, as he had always had a lady bun, he went into depression. The vet advised that he was too old to be bonded with another rabbit and I walked away feeling really sad for my elderly rabbit. I then spoke to someone from Blue Cross who said I should get another one and encouraged me to try it – it was then that I found a one-and-a-half-year-old white crossbreed rabbit, who needed a home. It's taken five months, but to see them both now happy together and playing is an absolute joy! Fluff, who has been renamed as Jasmine has settled in well and is a little treasure. But to see Max so happy again is the best thing ever! In addition, a robin has arrived ever since Jasmine came home with us and comes and joins her when they go out and play!

Sue Rodgers



BRUCE

My name is Bruce. I am a rescue dog just taking time out from my busy schedule to drop you a line. Two years ago, I was asked to go to live with Mary as she was very sad because her husband had died, and she was very lonely. Well, I said I would give it a go as I am always up for a challenge. So, I moved in with her and began my task straight away. I decided the best thing I could do was to be by her side all the time, so as to keep an eye on her. I learnt how to make her smile and encouraged her to

teach me tricks which I also enjoy, but I don't tell her that or she might stop giving me treats.

I take her for a walk each day but not when it is raining as she might catch a chill. Much better to cuddle up on the settee until the weather improves. Sometimes we visit the coast. She likes to paddle in the sea. It's not for me, nasty wet stuff! I prefer sitting on a bench and sharing an ice cream.

We often go on little trips and we have even been on a train. So, you see that I take my job very seriously and I must be doing something right as I have heard people say that I am the best thing that has happened to Mary.

I try not to be too big headed, but I was very proud when I was awarded a first-place rosette at a dog show. I know I am a lucky dog to have such a good billet and I really hope that lots of other dogs (and I suppose, cats) are as lucky.

I must go now as Mary wants to play ball.

Bruce

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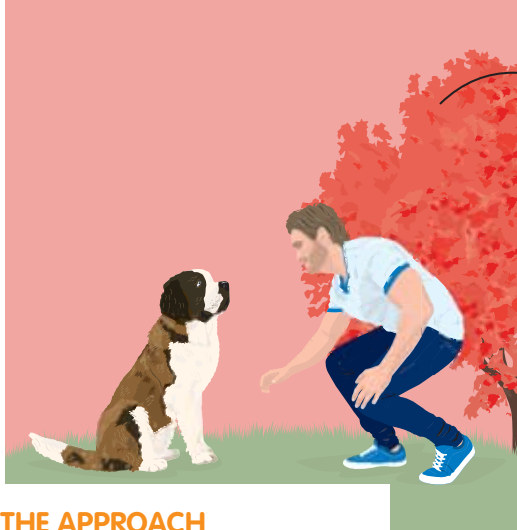
For Pets letters is kindly sponsored by Burgess, with the star letter awarded a £100 goody bag for a pet of choice!

bluecross.org.uk **25**

HOW TO TEACH YOUR PET TO HIGH FIVE

If you have a dog who's keen to learn, or even if they're a bit on the reluctant side, teaching them to high five is nice and simple, so you'll have them doing it in no time at all. You can teach your cat too! Though you may need just a touch more patience.





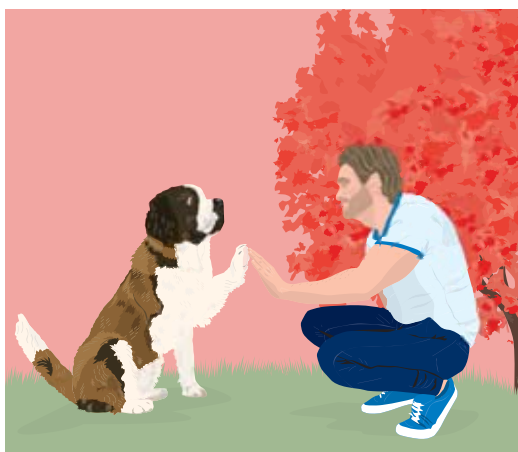
2 PAW RAISE

First, conceal your pet's favourite treat in a closed fist. Their natural curiosity will usually cause them to start sniffing or pawing at your hand. As soon as their paw leaves the ground to move towards your hand, mark their action with a clicker or the word 'yes', followed by giving them the treat in your hand.



1 THE APPROACH

It works best to approach your pet when they are in the sitting position, but this can also be done when they are standing.



3 SAY 'HIGH FIVE'

When your pet has touched your hand with their paw a few times, begin marking the action by saying 'high five' and rewarding them.



4 SWITCH HAND POSITION

Once they seem to have this mastered, switch your hand position to meet your palm with their paw. Then repeat until they meet your hand every time with the 'high five' instruction cue. Don't be afraid to go back a step if they lose interest or aren't raising their paw straight away – patience is key.

Illustrations by Eve Cahalarn

Not only does this trick look great, it also helps your pet feel more comfortable having their paws handled; useful for a vet check-up. Training your pet, especially dogs, also increases the bond between you and keeps your four-legged friend mentally stimulated.





RESCUED FROM MISERY

After being left to fend for themselves, a group of ponies are now healthy and happy after being rehabilitated by Blue Cross...

Nine ponies found living feral without the care they needed are now enjoying the lives they deserve.

Popeye, Summer and Sebastian, four, Indigo and Wesley, three, and two-year-olds Little Beauty, Nigel, Ayla and Mango, were found with dozens of other mistreated ponies roaming across 500 acres.

They were brought to our Burford horse unit in Oxfordshire by the RSPCA in two rescue missions in summer last year, stepping off the trailer weak and bewildered.

Another pony taken in by Blue Cross from the same site was lame due to suspected pelvic injuries and sadly had to be put to sleep to end his suffering.



The horses had been left to live feral and breed beyond the control of their owner, allowing for little to no care.

When the ponies were rescued, pregnant mares were found with several foals still suckling from them.

On arrival in our care, the ponies in the group taken in by Blue Cross were so terrified of being without their friends that the team had to quickly assess them before letting them run free in grassy paddocks in their groups.

Once they were more settled, we got them all the vet and farrier care

they needed and placed them on the road to rehabilitation.

REHABILITATION

Mango, an emaciated bay cob, arrived in the worst condition. Wobbling as she walked, she weighed just 203kg and was given a body score of just one – the second from lowest possible.

“It was so sad to see them in this condition, especially when they were so young,” said Louise Lock, Senior Groom.

Understandably, the ponies were

afraid of people, so the grooms had to work hard to build their trust.

But all of them except Indigo, who was particularly scared, took to handling faster than expected due to their inquisitive nature. So much so, that only Summer and Ayla are now waiting to find loving homes.

Clare Bevin, Veterinary and Yard Supervisor, said: “Indigo took a long time to build a relationship with anyone and every time something changed, he went back a step.

“Him being confidently caught in the field earlier this year was a highlight for everyone as it marked the turning of a corner.

“The others were fairly plain-sailing but their main highlight, as always, has been finding a nice new home.”

HORRIBLE PAST 'A DISTANT MEMORY'

Baloo was found with suspected burns as he battled to survive as a stray, but the tabby was soon on the road to recovery, thanks to Blue Cross...



H

He must have been in agony. With painful sores around his neck and lesions on his little legs, Baloo was in a sorry state when he arrived at our doors.

Vets at our animal hospital in Victoria, London, suspected that his sore skin was down to an old, untreated burn.

It was so painful for the tabby that we had to put him under general anaesthetic to clean and

inspect his wounds. Baloo, four, was also prescribed anti-inflammatories, antibiotics and creams to help his skin heal.

Once he was stable, he went to our Southampton rehoming centre and transferred to a foster home, where he wore a tiny

T-shirt to protect his skin and a

collar to prevent him from licking his sores.

Megan Baverstock, Southampton Supervisor, said: "After being on his treatment for a few weeks and getting lots of love and affection, Baloo's skin started to heal and was much clearer and less itchy."

It was a long road to recovery, as his damaged skin kept flaring up when his medication was eased. But the team kept it under control and, after 131 days, he found a loving home.



LITTLE CHARACTER

Unrecognisable from the sad cat we first saw, he is now an integral member of the Frost family in Hampshire, living with Joanne, husband Ian and their two daughters Georgia, 16 and Maia, 12.

"Baloo has brought great joy into our lives. He has proved to be a great addition to our family, and we have fallen in love with him. He is a great little character," said Joanne.

She added: "I think he knows he's going to be OK now and his horrible past is well and truly a distant memory."

BITESIZE STORIES

ALL THE LATEST NEWS FROM BLUE CROSS



while she rested so that her spine could heal. She has lived with her ever since.

And despite living with lifelong mobility issues, Sammy has helped Megan care for and nurture countless other pets in need in foster care. Not only has her work included helping dogs and puppies, but cats, kittens and even rabbits, giving them all much-needed respite from centre life and helping to build their confidence.

BIRTHDAY PARTY

To recognise Sammy's incredible work, she was thrown a special 17th birthday party earlier this year.

Ryan Neile, Head of Behaviour, said: "Sammy's amazing ability to read, interpret and respond to the subtle body language of other animals makes her the perfect foster friend.

"Sammy will show and teach other animals how to behave in the world and that things aren't quite as scary as they seem. This special gift, however simple it may seem, can never be underestimated as a hugely important part of helping Blue Cross pets overcome fears, to socialise and learn new skills."

FOSTER HERO

An inspirational dog, who was found unable to walk as a stray puppy 17 years ago, has been celebrated for her remarkable work in helping other rescue pets overcome their fears.

Sammy arrived at Blue Cross

Southampton in 2003 after being abandoned in terrible pain in a supermarket car park with her spine broken in two places.

She quickly stole the heart of Megan Baverstock, Centre Supervisor, who fostered Sammy



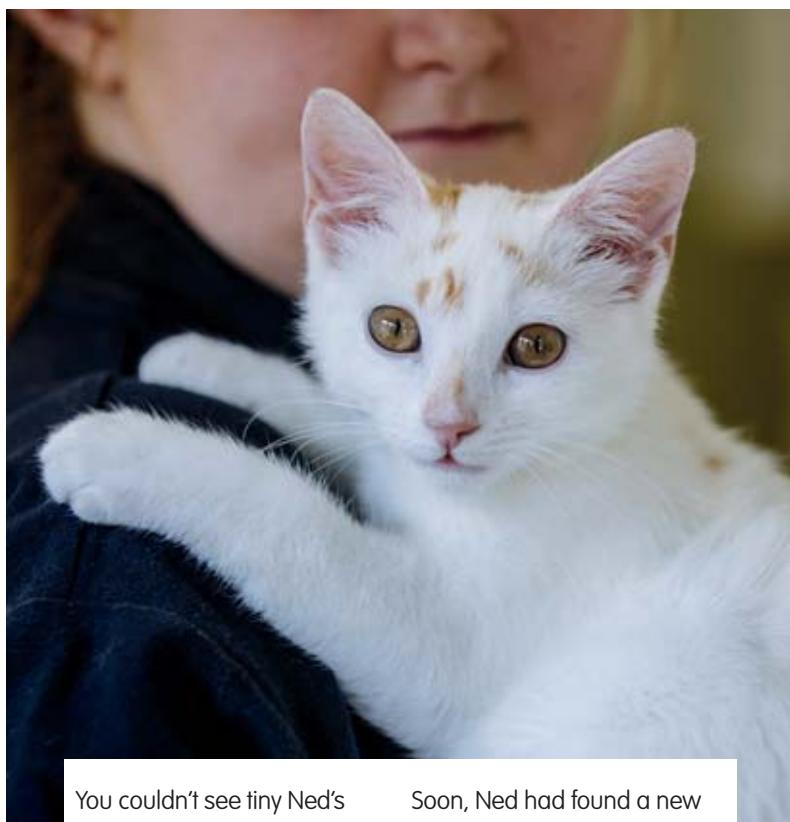
HERTFORDSHIRE REBUILD GETS UNDERWAY

Work has started on the long-awaited rebuild of our outdated Hertfordshire rehoming centre. Despite the challenges brought by Covid-19, our builders broke ground on the site on 8 June, with strict social distancing measures in place.

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, the 70-year-old dilapidated facility will be replaced with a modern centre at the forefront of animal welfare standards.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO?

Every year Blue Cross finds families for thousands of homeless pets. We've caught up with a familiar face to see how she's doing...



You couldn't see tiny Ned's beautiful white fur beneath the filth when she was found all alone in Grimsby docks. She was dangerously thin and suffering from potentially deadly cat flu as well as a stomach infection. At just six weeks old, she was clinging to life.

Our Grimsby animal hospital in Lincolnshire cleaned her up and nursed her better, before transferring her to our Cambridge rehoming centre.

Soon, Ned had found a new home – and a new name – with Nancy and James Hughes, and four-year-old son Sebastian, who has followed in his dad's footsteps to become a huge *Star Wars* fan. In fact, it was Sebastian who named his new four-legged friend Phasma, after the stormtrooper captain of the same name in his favourite film franchise. "It has been really lovely to have her," said Nancy.

WARNING OVER CAT BREED ISSUES

Blue Cross has warned people to think carefully before taking on flat-faced pet breeds after a homeless Persian cat needed urgent surgery.

Mr Magoo arrived at our Burford rehoming centre aged 18 months with sticky and swollen eyes, as well as difficulty breathing.

Due to their short, 'squashed' flat-faces which cause narrow airways and large eyes, Persians are predisposed to a number of conditions which can lead to a lifetime of discomfort and pain.

Mr Magoo was treated for a common condition in which the eyelids and lashes grow inwards, causing irritation to the eye and a risk of blindness.

Caroline Reay, Head of Veterinary Services, said: "Many people still don't know that the perceived 'cute' wheezy noises made by these breeds of dogs and cats, as with Mr Magoo, are actually the pet struggling to breathe due to their narrowed airways, resulting from how they have been bred to look the way they do."





WIN! A YEAR OF PET TREATS

Love Louie has teamed up with Blue Cross to donate £5 plus VAT from every box of pet goodies sold on its website. To celebrate, it's offering two lucky readers one of its 12-month subscription packages for dog or cat boxes, valued at more than £300.

With a focus on enrichment, boxes are packed with high quality items, such as Kong toys and natural treats, designed to keep pets entertained and mentally stimulated.

One-off treat boxes are available, as well as monthly deliveries to your door. To find out more, visit www.lovelouie.co.uk/blue-cross



Nicola Batty is the winner of a pet portrait in our spring 2020 For Pets competition Congratulations!

HOW TO ENTER

Answer the following question for your chance to win:

Which famous singer is the rabbit featured on page 16 named after?
(please tick)

- Elvis Costello
- Ella Fitzgerald
- Elton John

Fill in your name and contact details and post to:*

Freepost BLUE CROSS FOR PETS

Or, enter online at:
bluecross.org.uk/forpets

Closing date Friday, 2 October 2020
*Strictly one entry per household.

Name: _____

Address: _____

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*You can change your preferences at any time by contacting our Supporter Care Team on 0300 790 9903 or email info@bluecross.org.uk

We have **55 shops** and
20 national rehoming
network locations

FIND US

Discover your local Blue Cross

Our animal hospitals

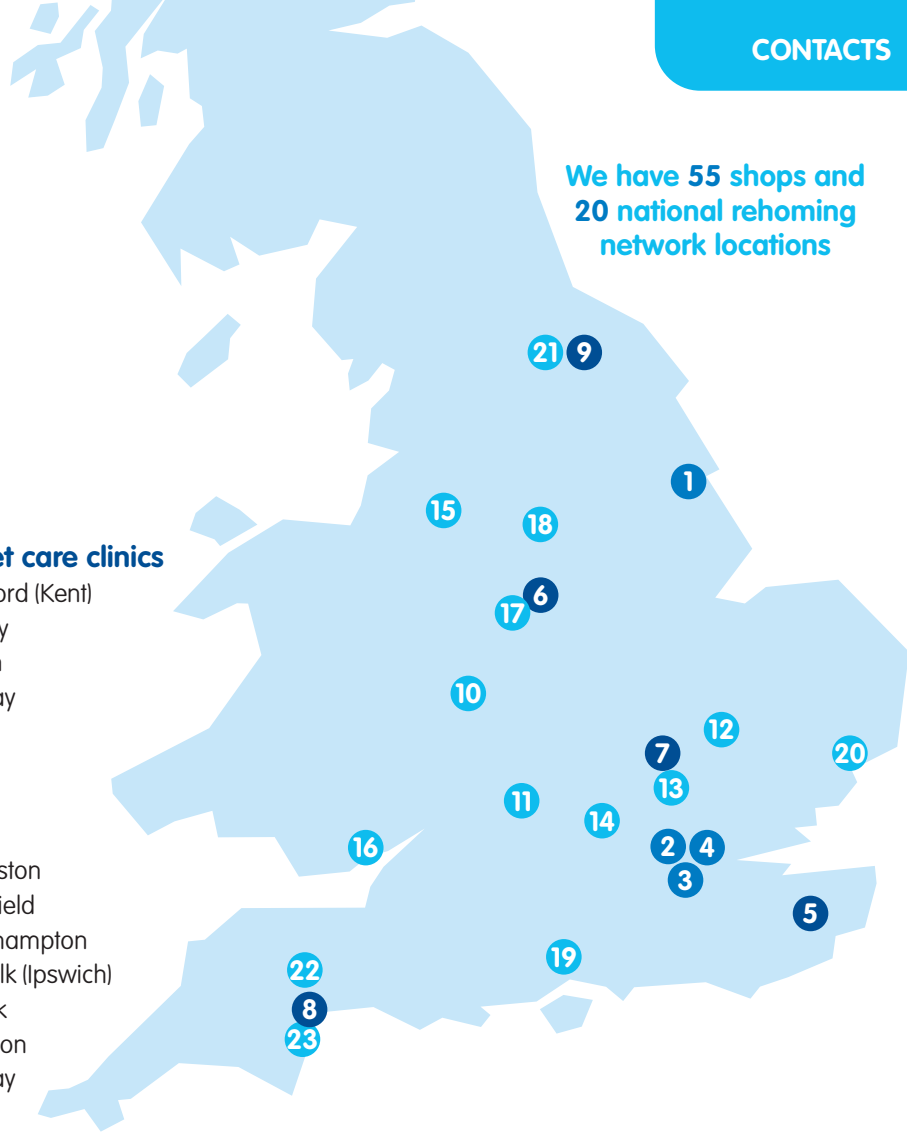
- 1 Grimsby
- 2 Hammersmith
- 3 Merton
- 4 Victoria

Our pet care clinics

- 5 Ashford (Kent)
- 6 Derby
- 7 Luton
- 8 Torbay
- 9 York

Our rehoming centres

- 10 Bromsgrove
- 11 Burford
- 12 Cambridge
- 13 Hertfordshire (Kimpton)
- 14 Lewknor
- 15 Manchester
- 16 Newport
- 17 Rolleston
- 18 Sheffield
- 19 Southampton
- 20 Suffolk (Ipswich)
- 21 Thirsk
- 22 Tiverton
- 23 Torbay



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Write to us: Freepost BLUE CROSS FOR PETS

Book a free education talk

Animal welfare and responsible pet ownership workshops for children and young people in schools, youth groups and clubs.

Call: 0300 111 8950 **Visit:** bluecross.org.uk/education

Pet Bereavement Support Service

Free and confidential support for anyone coping with the loss of a pet, for any reason.

Call: 0800 096 6606. Lines open every day, 8.30am to 8.30pm.

Email: pbssmail@bluecross.org.uk



Pets change lives
We change theirs

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Pets change lives
We change theirs



We're a charity that has been helping sick, injured and homeless pets since 1897

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If pets have a place in your heart, please find a place for them in your Will. A gift in your Will can help secure the future for thousands of pets.

Order your FREE information pack on making or amending a Will and leaving a gift to Blue Cross online at bluecross.org.uk/gift-your-will

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Thank you for your continued support.

Blue Cross is a charity registered in England and Wales (224392) and in Scotland (SC040154). *From time to time we may wish to communicate with you by phone with news about the pets you are helping and ways you can help in the future. If you are happy for us to do this, please fill in your details above.

