

Maystar Mews



Issue Two

2024

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A note from the Editor

It has been a great year with no one calling for boys. We tried to run Eros on to be a stud cat but his hormones got the better of him and it made him quite poorly; so we neutered him and he is here as a pet and play mate for Gazoo and Mae.

Viktori's health was a real quandary but is now very much under control. Faith began her monthly dose of Solensia Serum to aid her arthritis, and this has come with a number of side effects we are still tackling. Gazoo had loads of tests on her poop which brought up nothing more than to change her food. A few of the middle aged cats may need dentals this year and everyone else seems purrfect!

It never fails to amaze me just how willing our Maystar Family is and how much you all care and cherish your babies from here and other catteries. This is apparent in your articles and I can't thank you enough for taking the time to fill this little 'mewsletter' with interesting and poignant pieces.

Our aim for 2024 is to kick back, enjoy this bigger 16 page issue, in the comfort of our new Catio. We plan for a quiet spring and summer ahead then maybe, if the girls and boys are feeling frisky, fire up late autumn to make all you patient families the kittens you long awaited for.

Nicole SG Rankin



Our Pride – Our Passion

Cats in

Art



Cheetah watercolour

I studied art as part of my teaching degree about a million years ago. In recent years my love of painting and drawing has resurfaced as I now have more time to do things in which I am interested. I love drawing and painting pictures of my own cats and other peoples'. Sometimes I do big cats too. I am fortunate that I have done commissions of others' pets which is something I really enjoy. I am also developing skills in batik - a skill that I found again on a course I went on with Nicole.



Saoirse, Batik on Watercolour Paper

Time spent with cats is never wasted,

Sigmund Freud



Saoirse, Batik on fabric

I live with six cats at the moment; three Cornish and three Devons called Nimh, Astra, Tilly, Elfin, Saoirse and Rowan. At various points I have drawn and painted them all although the Cornish are all too high energy to paint from life! All I need is a good photograph and most are very photogenic indeed.

Denise Burgess

Wildlife & Pet Artist

www.instagram.com/deniseburgessanimalart

I enjoy working in watercolour and in many drawing mediums but especially pencil, watercolour pencil and soft pastel and pencil pastels too. The images tend to be A4 size though I sometimes work on smaller pictures as some of the larger ones can take up to thirty hours!

I like to use good quality art paper; hot pressed Fabiano or Clairefontaine Pastelmat, Polychromos or Albrecht Durer pencils, Unison soft pastels, CarbOthello Caran Dache pastel pencils.



The blue picture is of Saoirse, my tiny Devon Rex. This one took hours and was completed in soft pastels. Several people have prints of this image.

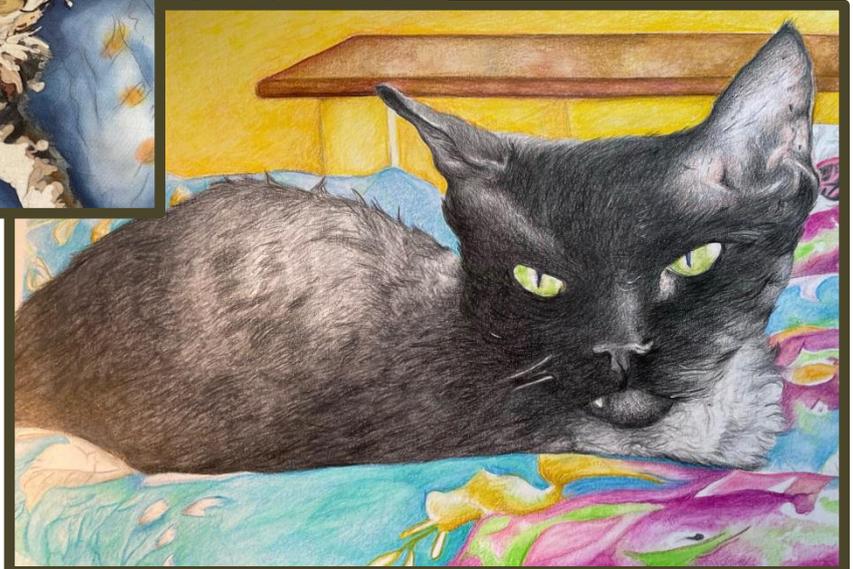


I have always been passionate about art.....and cats!

I have drawn Cornish Rex less often but here is Rowan sitting on the sofa.



This is a recurring image of 'Saucy' that I completed on a batik workshop at Shambellie House in Scotland last year, using all sorts of techniques including colour reduction using household bleach!



My special boy, Ralphie Rex

Life on the Waterways

A woman with glasses and a green jacket is smiling, holding a ginger and white cat. In the background, a man in a red jacket is waving.

My name is Clare Henney. The year 2023 brought me my first Devon Rex, Heidi, from a little cattery called Minoan. Little did I know how much joy a kitten could give and bring a whole new dimension to travelling on our Narrowboat.

Heidi took to boating like a duck to water, of which I may add she saw many of and never once attempted to jump in. As long as Heidi was with me, she was one happy cat.

As my place was steering the boat most of the time, Heidi found her favourite spot to sit, which was on the roof of the boat. I had to build a trust with her letting her sit on top for short periods until she eventually just leaped on top of the roof through most of our journeys, under bridges, through locks and even flooded waters. Heidi was certainly an adventurous cat and very inquisitive.

Going through Stoke locks one day after much deliberation, I decided to get Heidi a little sister. I called her Lockie, as she was black and white, just like the lock gates.

Little did I know how much attention and love these two cats would give and also receive from many passers-by, whether by boat or on foot. They either both sat on top of the boat watching the world go by or on their favourite chair instead, staring through the windows. I always knew if they were sitting by the window as so many people used to point at them, always saying how cute, or unusual and funny they both were. They were like a little double act.



Heidi calling out "Bridge".

When I have moored up, both cats have come out with my husband and I into town, along the canals, pubs and restaurants and have been very well socialised. People can't quite believe how well behaved two cats can be. I think because I started out with them so young and just took them everywhere with me, they just know as long as I'm there, they are safe. We genuinely have a loving bond.

Heidi has sat many a time on my shoulder whilst steering the boat as she is a lot more confident than Lockie, but then again she is 3 months older than the fluffy little teddy bear that her sister is. She is a good neck warmer and instead of a pirate ship with a parrot on my shoulder, she was definitely my Narrowboat cat. They have both given me lots of love and laughter on our adventures on the waterways.



<https://www.facebook.com/HeidiandLockie>

A move to the country



By Angela Donnachie

In late 2023 we found our forever home in a semi-rural village in Ayrshire, Scotland. Then began the planning to get ourselves, five housecats and a rescue greyhound, along with 23 years worth of belongings safely moved. We decided to put the cats into cattery for a few days around the moving date as our fear was the moving day might be too stressful for them and we didn't want them shut in cat carriers for hours. My friend kept our dog for the day and 12 hours later we were in our new home, surrounded by more boxes than we could have imagined!



The cattery was great but our 8yr old black Devon Rex girls, Khalisi & Mishka, didn't cope well with being there and were so scared of the strange surroundings that they huddled in bed with 3 year old Calico Devon Rex, Sia, for the entire stay. However, our other two cats seemed perfectly happy. Cooper is a bold Siberian boy of a year old, he is a mackerel tabby and nothing fazes him. He was joined by loving and affectionate 9yr old Mocha a DSH tortie that lacks tortitude. It was the first any of them had stayed away from the house and they all did so well.

We brought the five cats home and our 8yr old rescue greyhound, Pasha, was so excited to see them that his tail was whizzing in full circles and every cat was checked head to toe by his long nose. We let the cats have access to a couple of rooms initially, with their cat trees, beds and toys.

We used plug-ins to help keep them calm but they settled straight away and were soon itching to come out and help with the unpacking. They are really loving country life and have already spotted two wild rabbits, a woodpecker, an owl and lots of other beautiful rural birds that are visiting our garden daily. They spend most of the day watching them from the big windows or dozing on their heated throw.

In hindsight, I don't think we would use a cattery again unless it was an emergency or a house move. There hasn't been any long lasting effects from it though, every one ate well on their return and they seem so happy in our new home. We have lots of plans for their new catio so they will be able to spend their summer days safely playing out in the garden and definitely unable to chase rabbits!



Sia's Top Moving Tips!

- Use secure carriers
- Plug-ins with pheromones
- Bedding that smells of home
- Wipe us with cloths and leave around the new home
- Safe room with toys, cat trees and sustenance
- Heat pads on cold days
- Keep friends together
- Be calm around us
- Small meals for travelling
- Big door sign "DO NOT OPEN"
- Pay the cattery so we can come home!!

MEOW! OPEN WIDE

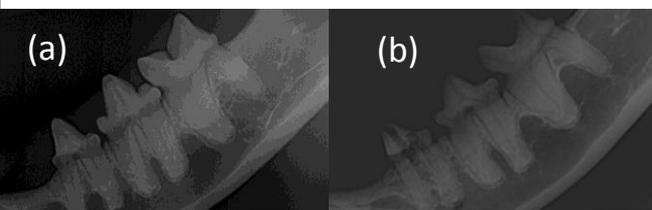
Dental disease is a common issue in cats and can affect patients of any age. Having a good dental care routine at home can help to reduce the need for dental work at the vets. Dental disease in cats can range from plaque (an accumulation of bacteria) to tartar (hardening of the plaque) to gingivitis (inflammation of the gums).

Gingivitis has a number of causes including infectious diseases such as feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV), feline leukaemia virus (FeLV) or feline calicivirus (FCV). FIV and FeLV cause a predisposition to dental diseases by causing suppression of the immune system.



Mr Elton's mouth last month with Gingivitis. It all started with a case of bad breath but with daily brushing for 6 weeks it has reversed this painful condition.

Cats are also predisposed to Feline Resorptive Lesions, commonly referred to as FORLs. This is when part of the tooth starts to reabsorb and quite often this occurs below the gumline and is only detectable with the use of a dental x-ray machine under anaesthetic. Sadly we do not know the underlying cause of FORLs but they are quite common with it being estimated that more than 70% of cats over five years have at least one FORL(1).



Xrays of good sound tooth (a) and the other side with FORL (b) courtesy of Vet Maddy Clark, Broad Lane Vet of her own cat, Enzo. You can clearly see where the tooth is beginning to reabsorb. It is very painful and requires immediate attention. Its not just our cats, it happens to vets cats too!

Tooth brushing is the single most effective action you can take to help reduce the risk of dental issues. Daily tooth brushing prevents the build-up of bacteria and prevents plaque and tartar from forming.

Simrath Dhillon

BVSc MRCVS
Veterinary Surgeon

Graduated from University of Bristol in 2020. Member of Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, British Small Animal & Veterinary Association. Works alongside the Broad Lane team.



It is important to start a good dental hygiene routine from a young age and maintain this as the cat grows older. Sadly, if your cat already has tartar then the only way to remove this will be a dental procedure carried out by your vet.

Feeding only wet food can predispose to dental disease. Dry food can help to disrupt the formation of tartar as it rubs against the tooth's surface and disrupts the bacteria which make up plaque. Dental diets are also available which are made up of specially shaped biscuits that rubs the tooth's surface when the cat chews; however, these are not as effective as brushing the teeth. We recommend using an enzymatic toothpaste as these are proven to be more effective. 'Plaqtiv' is a chicken flavoured powder which can be added to drinking water to help reduce halitosis (bad breath) but again this will not help to reduce plaque or tartar. Look out for any product which has the label VOHC (Veterinary Oral Health Council) as these products have been clinically proven to help improve overall oral health in cats.

Veterinary advice is to get cats used to a dental care routine which includes tooth brushing from a young age and continue this into adulthood. Veterinary dental work can be complex and requires a general anaesthetic which carries a risk, particularly in older patients with other underlying issues. Taking care of your cat's teeth from kittenhood can help to greatly reduce the risk of dental disease in the future. If you are concerned about your cat's teeth then please contact your local vets for further advice.

1. From International Cat Care website



£10.50

LOGIC: We use this at Maystar HQ and highly recommend it due to its ease of use and acceptance of the texture.



£14.99

VIRBAC: This is our routine weekly clean paste, it sticks to the teeth really well. The cats hate but accept their fate.

MANI-PEDI

By Charlotte Davies



I am the proud cat Mummy to 3 Maystar babies, Pearl and her Grandkits, Rufus and Marlee. When I first got the babies and had to start clipping their claws, I was really nervous as I had never done this before. The first couple of times I felt worried that I might hurt them but as time went on I got used to it and then it became part of my weekly routine.

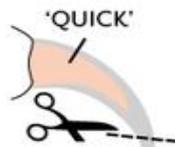
I always start with sitting them on my lap, their bum rested on my legs and then I use my arm to secure them, watch out for the wriggly ones, I have 2! I usually start with the front paws and using the same arm that is securing them I gently push the pads of each paw which will then expose the claws. You need to ensure that you do not cut them too short staying away from the soft blood filled quick, you only need to snip off the sharp tip. This helps save our backs when they climb up and our furniture and carpets.

Every cat will differ, from the speed that their claws grow to how they react whilst you are doing it. Rufus is the most relaxed whilst having his claws clipped, he will sit there patiently and does not make any fuss. However, the girls are a different story! They both huff, grumble & wriggle, I must hold them firmly as will wriggle out of position otherwise. I generally talk to and rub their tummies to stop them from huffing.

A great way to end the clipping session is to give them treats as they will then associate it with something nice and it makes me feel better about it all too!

CUT TO THE QUICK:

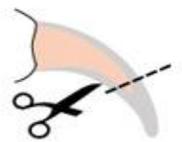
Angle the clippers down in the direction away from the quick, the soft blood filled membrane, and trim off just the sharp tip of the claw.



TRIM HERE



AVOID



NO!



1



We love this small, neat nail clipper style. It's really easy to use and very smooth to cut with. It's very useful for tiny kittens as the hole for trimming is so small. At Maystar HQ we have many of these in every draw in the house because with 9 Rex you never know when a sharp nail needs doing!

2

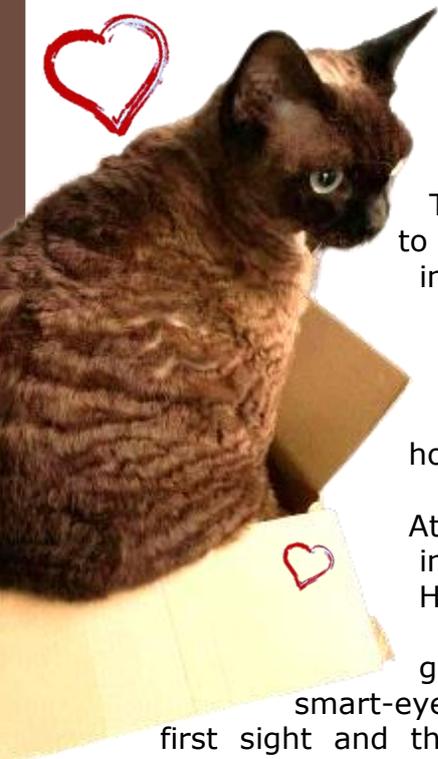


A bigger style clipper, some with spring loading, nail guards and built in files. They are more of a professional clipper and will have the longevity when used weekly for larger cat households.

3



We also have a number of these dotted around Maystar HQ, a joe-bloggs human nail clipper, the kind you get in a Xmas cracker! They do the job so long as they are razor sharp and have a lovely satisfying click when you trim the nail. For 3wk old kittens, these are the go to!



Killing by cruel love

By Dr Anna Motrescu-Mayes

This is not an opportunity for me to offer excuses for the cruel way in which I continue to treat our beloved three-year old DRX boy. It is a list of events that could help others avoid some - all, I should hope - mistakes I have made.

At the first ease of the lockdown in May 2020 we went to Maystar HQ to meet and bring home our DRX boy: an indescribably gorgeous, perfectly healthy, and smart-eyed baby boy. It was love at first sight and the start of my non-negotiable, addictive devotion to him. Once we returned home, I took to spoiling with revenge. I immediately subjected him to a sumptuous buffet of numerous cans and trays of organic food for kittens. Twenty-four hours later I was having a very poorly baby boy unable to hold any of his calorically rich (and posh!) foods. He kept losing weight at a dangerously rapid pace over a long number of months. We saw death making its way across his puny, almost skeletal body. Our vet, Mini, who has been with us through thick and thin while caring for our first generation of DRXs, lost patience with me, and for good reason too. Why would anyone endanger such a young kitten by subjecting him to an ill-advised, unnecessary calorically abundant diet?! All the various blood tests and medications led to little, and we were ready to play the card of wait-and-hope-for-the-best. So, I turned to my mentor, Nicole. As always, she taught me judiciously, unjudgementally, how and what to feed Bruno - test and trial, one meal at a time, day by day. By the end of 2020, Bruno started improving and holding onto his food for longer periods until we almost reached the shore of a balanced diet and a reliable feeding routine.



The following year Bruno got infected with Giardia (I covered this story in a previous issue of this Newsletter) and, again, Nicole helped us get him back on the straight and narrow. What she could not foresee was my decision to revert to the all-you-can-eat buffet for Bruno. This time, I was using his well-established menu, so I felt that, for once, I was doing the right thing. I was wrong, of course, and I hid my misplaced strategy behind the (tiny) shoulders of my partner in 'crime': Bruno's stepsister, Tootsie. For almost a decade now she has been renowned for sporting a flawless Twiggy-like catwalk silhouette. Despite her model looks, she can wolf down large amounts of food on daily basis with not a scratch nor dent in her enviable 3.5Kg - the perfect weight for her svelte silhouette. Predictably to most sensible DR owners, but not to me despite having had DRX fur babies for over twenty years, Bruno echoed Tootsie's eating manners.

He started gulping his kibbles with unassailable fervour and so, in less than a year, he quickly reached a whooping weight of 6.3Kg. I was convinced that my big-boned boy deserved to be opulently plump, happy, and constantly spoiled with the food which he was storing stubbornly under his perfectly curled DR 'golden fleece'.



Bruno and I shared so many fun moments during those days when I was on the verge of killing him with my overindulgent, blindfolded love. For instance, I would see him lounging on our cast-iron radiators, barely capable to balance his overfed sealion-like body. More than half of his body would be slipping slowly toward the floor. I would pick him up for us to share an avalanche of cuddles. It is common knowledge that the DR's loving purrs heal, even if for a few minutes at a time, any trauma we might bother to remember. Multiply this by 6,300 grams and you reach addictive levels of 'DR purrinating bliss'.



Then the 'cardboard box' moment happened, and I realised that something terribly wrong was underway. Bruno likes making most boxes into his armchairs of choice, a habit I believe he inherited from his father, Ikon. One day, I noticed that Bruno could not fit into one of his favourite cardboard boxes. It was only then (!) that I became aware of my cruelty: I had been harming my boy with my misplaced fear of him ever being too skinny again. By ignoring his excessive weight, I made him risk getting a series of life-threatening illnesses. How easily I could have noticed such a mistake in anybody else's behaviour! Once again, I sought Nicole's help, dreading that my damage inflicted on Bruno's health was beyond repair. I was filled with shame and self-hatred beyond any excuse.



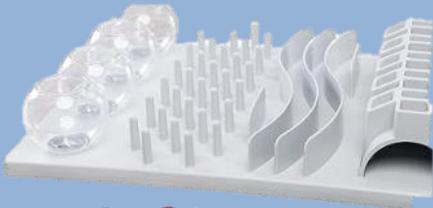
Cont...



Cont... Nicole did her traditional spiel with her usual wonderful patience and generosity. She took the time to send me what in my discipline is called a thoroughly peer reviewed research paper that includes a robust theoretical framework and an immediately realistic strategy. She sent me charts of caloric values per food types, recommended menus, tactical feeding protocols, and lots of humorous tips – her tactful way of saying “Look, you still have a chance to save your boy”. I started immediately doing my homework with sharp determination. I was finally aware that Bruno deserves my informed not fearful love. 

Unfortunately, my cruel behaviour towards him did not stop there; I had to buy him the ‘kibbles maze’. This is a torturous feeding contraption that my, now constantly hungry, boy fights with unwavering furry every day once his 20g quota of kibbles evaporates under his firm paw-shake. ‘We’ lost 300g so far. Not a mean feat given that the torturer and the victim cannot yet fully compensate the lack of kibbles with a surplus of kisses. **1.5k to go!**

SLOW FEEDERS...



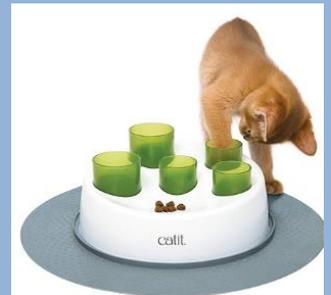
TRIXIE CAT ACTIVITY FUN BOARD - £15.99

We have a few of these at Maystar HQ for our stud boys, it makes having breakfast kibbles much more entertaining. Stretches their brains and muscles. I chuck it in the dishwasher and rotate which toys they get.



CATIT SENSES DIGGER - £12.99

I find these great for the kitchen cats at night time to keep the youngsters entertained. Freeze dried treats, catnip and valerian toys are all poked into the holes and they dig at it. The whole thing cleans and dries quickly too.



CATIT SENSES FOOD MAZE - £15.99

This is the ultimate in cat torture! Many years ago we first had one of these and the cat it was for figured it out in seconds by pushing it over with his body weight and kicking it to death. However, the slower brained and politer cats will tap and fiddle with the kibbles until they trickle through the feeder. Either way, it is a superior slow feeder and CatIT have worked hard on their new designs. It washes easily and the cats haven’t broken one yet!



MAYSTAR HQ REALLY LIKE THE LICKMATS & KONG BRAND OF TREAT BALLS TOO BECAUSE THEY LAST, WASH WELL AND KEEP OUR CATS ENTERTAINED



It's a Bonnie Life

Heidi Clifton, C-SQP, A-SQP

Bonnie's Cat Sitting Service

I love animals and have a small collection of my own including two Selkirk Rex, One Maine Coon, a Bearded Dragon and two horses at

livery. I have been cat sitting since 2017 and I look after a variety cats including moggies, Bengals and, of course, a number of different types of Rex breeds!

My first clients were a loveable bunch of Selkirk Rex who I still have the pleasure of seeing today. They have brought me much joy and challenges over the years. The first time I looked after them I remember I was greeted by balls of fluff zooming around and when I sat on the sofa to greet them all I was joined by George, his mum Bunny and Mr F pushing in front of each other to get to my lap. I immediately fell in love with the breed and George's loveable behaviour and two years ago I became the proud owner of my first Selkirk Rex when this goofy boy came to live with us.



My biggest worry as a cat sitter is going into the home and finding a sick cat, this has happened recently. I had to rush a very poorly kitten to the vets, he was losing weight and not suckling from his mother properly. Thankfully, after swift action from the vet and late night monitoring from me, the kitten made a swift recovery and grew to be the biggest in the litter!

Back in the summer, I also had the pleasure of looking after the Maystar Pride who brought me a whole new set of challenges and laughter! Viktori required medication morning and night and everyone else, all 8 of them, had different diets and three different types of cat litter! After a couple days of getting to know each other and with the guidance of Eros, who rode on my shoulder most of the time, it became much easier to know their likes, dislikes and routine.

A big part of cat sitting for me is to ensure they are always happy while their families are away. In my opinion cats prefer to be at home while their humans are on holiday, it's where they feel safe and are stress free. I visit twice a day providing them with their meals, biscuits, fresh water, clean litter trays and of course plenty of attention and play. Some are shy and will go about their daily life without wanting interaction with me which I always respect and others will gather for cuddles.

Rub A Dub Dub *Penny Pickering – The Dog Pamperer*

Most cats don't like water, but with careful introduction you can get them comfortable being in a bath. Firstly, I just let mine play with a toy in an empty bath. Simple as that! Then slowly trickle the tap to gain their interest in running water. They are attracted to the sound and soon investigate.

The next step is to place a non-slip mat in the bath and run some warm water around it and let them paddle with their toys.

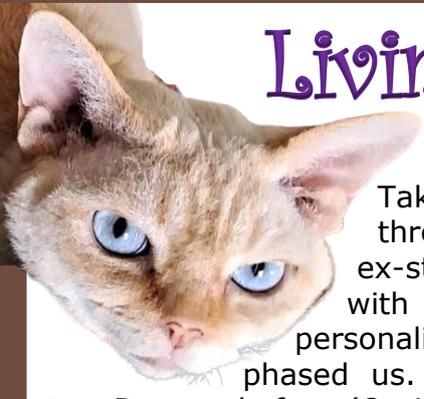
Next, run deeper warm water, about 3-4 inches for adults and let them play with their toys. (I really like the Robofish as they swim unpredictably to mimic real fish). Then start stroking them all over with wet hands, if they seem anxious, talk softly to reassure them. Once confident, I use a sensitive gel on a self-tan mitt (super soft) so I can rub that brown off my Sphynx.

Then I rinse off with nice clean warm water. Only wash the head with a cotton pad or flannel. Never pour water over your cats head. Once rinsed, I take the kitty out of the bath and wrap them in a nice warm towel and pat them dry all over. Rex breeds will take longer to dry so make sure you have a high ambient room temperature where they can wash themselves dry.



Living with a true Ikon

By Vanessa Castagnino,
Archaeomaterials Specialist



Taking on a three year-old ex-stud cat, with a big personality, slightly phased us. We'd had two Devons before (Ozzie, who lived until he was 15 years old, and Willow who left us at the grand old age of 18!) so we knew the quirks of these remarkable cats. However, how would Ikon fit in?

We knew we wanted a kitten or two from Maystar. We have two dogs and a crazy cockatoo so, sensibly, a couple of kittens would be easy to introduce. Ikon was an unexpected gift. And a gift is what he has been. The most loveable, squishy bundle of love you could ever imagine. The tighter you hold him the more he purrs. However, I wasn't quite sure how he'd fit with our very active household. I knew he needed a home, and I fell in love with him as soon as I drove down to meet him. He seemed to like me too, so I said we'd see how we all got on over a two-week trial.

A week later, I collected Ikon and brought him back to York. He was so scared and hid behind the wash bin, but that was to be expected. The dogs knew there was something up within an hour of his arrival and soon sniffed him out. I slept on the sofa with him the first few nights and I thought he might snuggle in with me, but he was off exploring. I kept him in the kitchen during the daytime with me whilst I worked on my PHD of which he was no help at all. On day three I let the dogs wander into the kitchen, with Ikon peering down from his tower of books on the kitchen table. He watched them but made no noise. This carried on for over a week. By then, the dogs had lost a lot of their interest and Ikon certainly had gained the upper paw.



It was around day eight, the brave little soul walked out and threw himself on the kitchen floor, in the large dog basket. My Cairn, Pants, was the first to have a sniff (she'd known Ozzie and Willow), and then went about her business. Trevor was more of a concern. As he is a Romanian Rescue, we had no idea how he'd relate to a cat. Thankfully, he too had a sniff but wasn't too bothered. Only when Ikon does a Parkour session around the house does Trevor become anxious. However, between them, they've set their boundaries.

Today, Ikon thinks he's a dog. The two dogs queue for a treat at the end of the day, and Ikon has learned to join the line for a little freeze-dried fish bite. He has a lovely relationship with Pants, they race about and play and watch birds in the garden together. Unfortunately, he hasn't quite done the same with the cockatoo, Mrs Miggins, who still swears at him.



The key to taking on an older cat is patience. That's all it is. The cat will guide YOU, not the other way around – it cannot be forced. Give it a quite space for a couple of days before introducing it to the rest of your brood and go from there.



When Ikon was a stud cat, he was allowed garden time which he really enjoyed, so we emulate that here and he goes out with us when we do gardening, but he really is a house cat. However, he has a habit of running outside with the dogs as soon as the kitchen door is open and on a few occasions he has brought back a live bird for me to catch. Some months ago, I was away and the day before my return he disappeared. My husband had our grown son over for dinner and neither could find Ikon, and he was not answering their calls. They walked the lane, walked the fields - calling all the time and shaking his kibble. They stopped in at the neighbours, who offered to help. After about two hours in the pouring rain, they went back to the house, my husband dreading telling me Ikon was missing on our nightly call. Back at the house, they called his name again and my son heard a faint meow from upstairs. It seems Ikon had pulled back the duvet, buried himself between the pillows and presumably gone into a deep sleep. Whenever he goes 'missing' it's the first place we look and he is invariably there with a smile on his face!

He is the quirkiest Rex we have ever had the pleasure of owning. He is a love biter, a grumbler and so very humorous. He makes our lives whole with his happiness.



Makes choosing products for you

by Nicola & Roy Lovell

CRYSTAL CLEAR

Crystal Clear Pet Products

Find them at cat shows or online

OUR CAT TESTERS: We have a family of LaPerms (type of Rex cat), a Birman and an Oriental. Certainly all with different tastes and they are very lucky little souls. We refer to them as 'THE TEAM'.

WHAT DO THEY TEST?: Some companies we deal with let us have toys, food, treats and the odd box of litter to trial. The team love them,

hate or just tolerate them. One set of catnip treats were truly despised by all young and old. They just threw the treats around then left them. We had the unenviable task of telling the company which wasn't much fun! We have never known all The Team to do that with a new product before. Oopsy!

THINGS WE BUY TO TEST: We buy from other companies too and have lots of photos and videos of The Team playing and using various scratchers on our FB page. The good Catit cardboard scratchers no longer exist so searching for good quality ones is always a nightmare at they are our top sellers. We still have some 'Animal' and 'Play' types in stock. The main scratch posts The Team trial for our customers are the Catit Vesper High Bases which they find very safe, secure and last well whilst looking stylish and modern.

FOOD TESTING: The Teams' Favourite treats are Thrive Chicken, Tuna and White Fish. The best game is knocking the lids off so they can have midnight feasts! One full tub turns into half or even third of a tub in seconds. They tried the new Catit Nibbly Jerky treats and they had a great time playing with them and did eat them all so that was a great hit; they are made up of long strips of chicken or fish. They love the new Catit food too which is great for us as it's a product the entire Team likes. We have extensively trialled Thrive, Almo Nature and Josera. We can happily sell this to our customers knowing it's been thoroughly tested by us.

TOY TESTING: Toys are another matter. occasionally they will go mad and other in different ways. Most just run around with play fetch - at 3am that isn't much fun! springs and anything else she can find hours of course. Crissi loves crinkly stick a ladybird silvervine toy. The BAM catnip Team - soggy, yukky and usually found in their best" they meow. The Team was very lucky to be able to test the



We have Ferplast, Catit, Jackson Galaxy toys and times just ignore them? They all love springs them but Cindy and Annie, our La Perms, Annie plays fetch with squeaky toys, all in the early toys and tries to kill them; her favourite is toys have gone down a storm with The water dishes. "They are just the very best" they meow. The Team was very lucky to be able to test the prototypes. WOWEE what fun that was!

MAE'S TOP TOY CHOICE



CATIT PLAY

Mae just loves to scratch and play all day and often steals the ball!



BAM FISH

Try and take it from her...Dare you!!! You are likely to lose your fingers. Hours of stinky fun.



FUN CUBES & TUNNELS

Crystal Clear have their own range which are great in kitten packs. There is hours of fun to be had and Mae just loves a cube!



POOP BOOP DE POOP!

Natasha Guerassimova

BSc Biomedical Scientist

Miamur Devon Rex

I remember waking up one morning and not being able to move, and I had 2 litter boxes to clean for 3 cats. My back was gone to the point that I couldn't get out of bed. By now, I had been with the NHS for 4 months, doing 13 hour shifts of close patient contact. Until that morning, I never thought I would be THAT person to spend hundreds of pounds on an automatic pooper scooper.

Why spend so much on something that's so quick and easy to do yourself?

Whilst I was at university, doing my biomedical science degree, I was able to scoop their boxes and prevent them stepping into their poop. No smell in the home, all clean and tidy. Fast forward a few months and I was coming home to a mess. I can't live like that and neither could my cats or my back.

That morning, I started looking. Not willing (and not being in a financial position) to pay £900 for a litter robot, I wanted to seek other alternatives. As a pet owner first, I wanted something that would still check their weight, then I wanted something that was lower (I didn't need a tower they would look down from) and then I wanted something safe for kittens to use - A flap style waste compartment, rather than a slider or a flipper.

And that is how I found MeoWant. Admittedly, this is not a comparison to a Robot Litter story as I only have MeoWant. But I do understand that no auto pooper scooper is without its faults. The first issue I encountered was connection, their customer service was amazing and within 36 hours I was logged on successfully. From there it was a breeze.

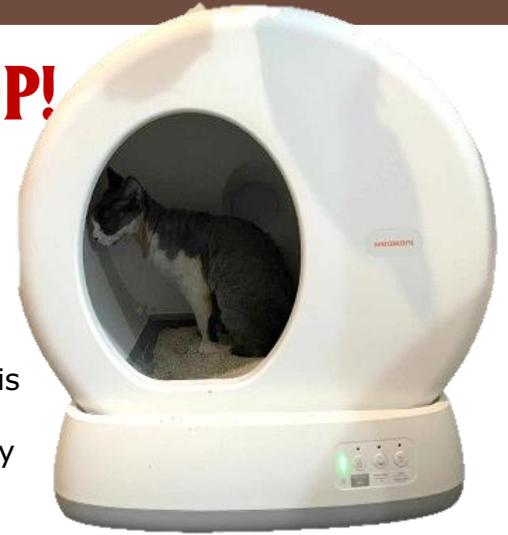
Myshka, my Devon Rex, was the first to use it successfully but her nakid friend Flora, took some time. It took a week for me (wipe daily, change bag every few days, and full wash once per week) to realise the issues. A normal cat goes in, turns around and faces outside through the hole. Flora would just stick her butt towards the opening and pee, rising up as she did so. That's how leaks happened!

With the help of the internet and 3D printing, I created a flap on the inside. I then took to training her - she went in and I applied light pressure to her backside to keep it down. Few weeks using it and Flora's habit was sorted.

Next issue, maybe not for all, was that finer litter got stuck in crevices. This drove me insane with the first wash. I took a toothbrush to it and added clear silicone to all crevices, and it's sorted (if you aim to do this, use a bathroom clear silicone as it's waterproof and you may need to redo it, as it comes off).

As for the smell, with the right litter and food, your smell should be a minimal smell. But another trick was to use wet cleaning cloth, and soaking it in urine destroyer. This then goes into the waste compartment. Ours is bubblegum (QBC40) and every time I empty the bag, there is no smell at all.

After 4 months of owning my MeoWant, I have no complaints, so if you are looking for a auto pooper scooper that won't cost your wage, this is one of the great options you could try.



Maystar HQ invested in a broken second hand Litter Robot 3 and did all the repairs to get it up and running. A couple of our friends have a number of them and rated them highly. I have to admit, like Natasha, when my back was being horrid, it was a piece of wonderment that I miss fondly. However, for us there were a few issues more to do with personal taste than anything wrong with the LR3. Viktori was suffering from urinary issues at the time and I missed it. The smell, for us, was unbearable as the only place it would fit was beside a sunny window or a hot radiator...gag. TBH, our home is just too small and I do miss it for the times we are not home and overnight cleaning. It was easy to use, easy to clean and very safe. Every cat in the house, 8 in total, gave it a good trial with no complaints. If you work long hours, it works!





That's Odd

By Anya Mikulski

We all love when our purry friends act their usual selves: hide our socks, loudly play at night, constantly ask for favourite food and pretending they are starving, do their bird watching and, our favourite – act as alarm clocks, waking us up at 5.00am by stepping on our heads and purring.

Therefore, my heart skipped a beat, when I was cleaning Felix's litter tray and saw blood in his smelly poo. Traces of blood are always alarming if found where they should not be present. So, I immediately called our mobile vet, highly recommended by everyone in the town. He came, gave him his annual vaccination and without much interest advised that Felix should go on 24 hours starvation to reset his digestive system. He mentioned that fresh blood is less worrying and it suggests that it comes from the bottom end of a digestive system, which is less likely to be related to anything serious. It was a bit of a relief for me, but I was not happy with lack of a considerate forward plan and quite a cruel action to starve him. It just felt wrong.

I decided not to follow it and I de-wormed him instead. When it wasn't better after the wormer, I decided to bother our "cat guru" – Felix's breeder – Nicole. She agreed that starving him would not work, but only unnecessarily make him upset, instead feed frequent small meals and provide a probiotic in the form of Forteflora. Nicole asked lots of questions and recommended taking Felix to a vet who has a silver or

bronze accreditation for treating cats.

I found a clinic nearby and indeed, there was huge difference in approach and treatment. Felix did not think so and my poor boy was terrified having only ever having his vaccines at home. He pretended to be an ostrich burying his head under his blanket, hoping the nightmare around him would disappear. We were trying to comfort him. The vet lady was extremely kind and she could not stop saying complements about Felix's markings and rippled coat. She was talking to him and was making huge effort to make this a pleasant visit for Felix.

She believed that his problem related to his diet and possibly stress related to the arrival of his new sister, Inky. She recommended changing his food to *Digestive Support by Specific*. Nicole also recommended changing his usual food to a gastrointestinal food. After just a few days things started to improve and within 10days he was back to normal. He is feeling himself now and is as mischievous as usual. As I am writing he is getting crazy with his Minoan Sister, Inky.



by Mrs Anya B The meet of unexpected cats



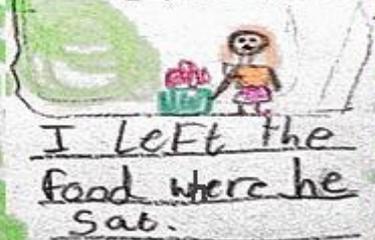
In the mornings us all I rest and the cats rest.



They were staring at each other. I took a bowl and put food in it. Sadly the cat ran away into the hedges.



But then out of nowhere came a greyish blue cat we didn't realise it at first



I left the food where he sat.

Will he ever come back?



When I went to stroke Felix I saw the grey cat.



I waited for him to come back but he did not.

Playing with the boys

By Amanda Donovan

Southsea Pet Sitting

Dobby is a determined escape artist. As a kitten, he learnt to tailgate the microchip cat flap, so I had two catios built and I harness walked him in the garden. I have chickens at the end of the garden, so I let him inside their aviary and there he caught his first mouse. After that, his daily mission was to see the chickens! Once, he escaped the chicken coop and my neighbour rang me. I had to drive home from a clients', all within the speed limit of course, whilst my neighbour held onto him the whole time.

I couldn't do anything except follow them around the garden and pop Ziggy back in the catio as he is fast. I would watch Dobby until he eyed up a fence and then grab him and put him back inside. I did this for a few summers. Once, I looked round and Dobby had a neighbourhood cat called Felix cornered and was quietly hitting him.

Along came my handsome Maystar boys, Wiggy and Ziggy, with more harness walks during lockdown, followed by a big catio extension, but that wasn't enough as Dobby, and now partner in crime Ziggy, wanted to go out at every opportunity.

They ran to the catio gate as soon as they heard the chicken feed bag rustle, squealed with delight as they squeezed through and escaped. Wiggy was a good boy and ran into the catio instead, but would then meow constantly for some grass! There were times when I needed to be quick and would have to wait until they were not looking (rare) before I could feed the chickens or go to the shed. The yelling from the catio if I went without them was horrendous.

We all needed a bit of freedom so I got quotes for enclosing the garden with angled brackets and cat proof fencing. I chose professional installation with Sanctuary SOS in August 2023. It only took a day to install and was worth every penny. The cats all climbed, tested it and couldn't escape.



I recently bought an outdoor cat house from Cat Tree King. Whenever I check the garden camera there is Ziggy on mouse watch! He was really pleased to catch one a few weeks ago and bring it all the way into the house and drop it for everyone to play with. He'd sit there all night if I let him, so I call him in by 9pm and he runs in happily. He's also growing a plush winter coat now.

Ironically, my outdoor sofa is in the catio so it seems I am still trapped inside whilst they have their freedom! I'm looking forward to spending long summer evenings there, reading books and sipping G&Ts whilst Wiggy, Ziggy and Dobby run around in the garden. It's so nice not to worry about them escaping anymore.



Everyone has had a fun summer and autumn outside watching squirrels and birds from the safety of a new catio we built ourselves here at Maystar HQ. It runs across the entire back of the house measuring 6m x 3.6m. It has a sliding door into the garden and joins our stud quarters together too. A third of it has twinwall roofing and comes complete with its own parkour cat wall and wheel. It is a real sun trap now allowing us to use it more as an outside room. It's amazing and really changed the way in which we use it.

A PURELY PRECIOUS POPPET

GLORIA BRYNES

Bountiful Devon Rex

Even after over forty plus years of breeding. Every litter of kittens

is just like your first one; you hope and pray all will be well. So when our Devon Rex, Dive, started in labour with her first litter, I was there by her side to help if she needed me. Bless her she managed so well even though all three kittens came backwards in breach position. One black male, one lilac female, plus one wee little soul, no coat and so tiny and very quiet. My heart sank as I know all too well how this may end!

I always name babies who may become angels, so she was blessed with the name 'Precious Poppet'. We soon realised that she had no suckling reflex yet and looked very premature. I am not one to be beaten and set about the task of hand feeding every two hours to give her a fighting chance. This little girl was definitely a fighter! I took her to work with me for four days a week so that Poppet could feed on time. Watching and hoping that she was going to make another day. Once I was home she was placed back in with Mum and siblings for evening and night cuddles in between my two hourly feeds. By two weeks old her eyes were open and I had my sights set on the next hurdle, to get her to four weeks so that she could start mix feeding onto solids. It's important not to over feed them so we began on just two meals a day and milk feeds as usual to get her tiny system working efficiently.

There were days when she was not so good with taking her milk and plenty of tears were shed during this time.

You are constantly worrying if you are being fair? Just because I could do all this graft to save them, does not

always mean you should! It is a very fine line that you try never to cross. Then, like a miracle, we were at four weeks and mix feeding was a dream. Poppet was straight on to a dish, supping and slurping the Purrform kitten mix. The change in her was so amazing that she could be with mum and siblings all the time. She was still so tiny, around 400g to her siblings 800g, but WOW... She was a force to be reckoned with. She was soon at the vets for vaccinations.

I promised Poppet, that because she was so pretty, I would enter her into a show if she grew big enough. I felt so blessed that we were even at this exciting stage in her life. She was so strong and full of beans. Helping me pick her

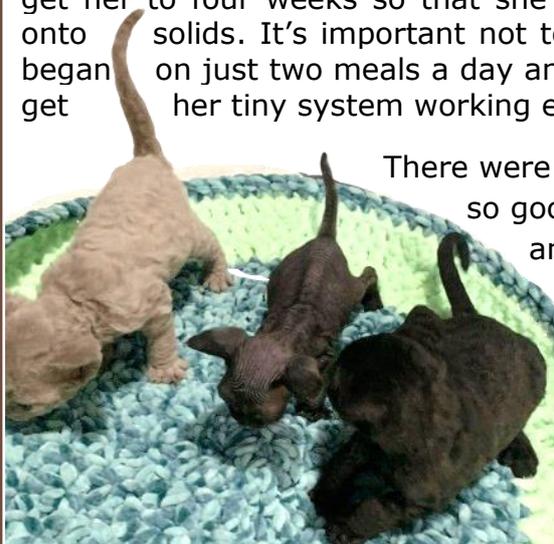
classes out, we filled in the entry form for the Scottish Cat Club and the West of Scotland Cat Club and before we knew it, it was show day.

I don't think she was too impressed with her early morning bath, she looked very miffed, but soon was dry and happy again. She travelled better than I did in the car, I was very nervous about the vetting in that they might reject her for being too small? I needn't have worried; the vet cuddled her and thought she was a real 'Poppet'. Everything has to be pure white in the show pen for GCCF and she settled in there like a little poser in her fluffy bed, jet black against all that white. We have to leave the show hall whilst they are judged and I was still worrying if the judges might find her too small or just over look that for her exquisite and perfect looks?



Returning to her pen and I could not of been prouder of her winning a FIRST place in both shows and Best of Breed. This then placed her with a chance to go up for Best of Variety. Which, I must add, is a huge section and very hard to get placed. The waiting is always anxious; did the judges choose my 'Precious Poppet' for Overall BOV Kitten Section 4? YES THEY DID - I was over joyed.

Poppet had stolen so many hearts that day and seeing people's faces light up when they saw, touched and held her, made all the weeks of worry, stress, fear and sleep deprivation fade away.





URINE FOR A TREAT

By Lizzie Quinlan

"My name is Ezra and I am eleven. I am a Red Tabby Devon Rex and live with my two tabby Wyrewood brothers, three Maystar Rex nutters, one cute Minoan Rex, two jet black rescue farm cats and three lunatic Yorkshire Terriers. When I was small I was very poorly and my mum is going to tell you all about it."

I came home from work one evening just before the boys second birthday and Ezra was acting very oddly. He was doing things like trying to pee in the toy box, on rugs etc. This was so out of character for him but in every other respect he was fine and eating and drinking normally.

The following morning I got up for work at 04.00hrs and Ezra was not well at all, it was as if he had lost the use of his back legs.

Fast forward a couple of hours after an urgent call to my vet he was admitted and taken straight to surgery with an obstructed urethra from Struvite crystals.

He was extremely ill and ended up being at the surgery for nearly two weeks. It took nine hours for him to come around after his second anaesthetic and they basically prepared me for the worst. He rallied, thankfully, and came home on an ST/OX diet, Cystophan and Metacam.

Over time he gained weight and settled but there was always a sense of dread that it would happen again. Ezra was a frail kitten, not as robust as his two litter mate brothers, he'd had some loose tummy issues before he ever came home from the breeder but other than this there nothing else physical that we could identify.

He is certainly sensitive, especially to noise but is not shy and retiring, if one of the other cats gets a bit overzealous, he will defend himself. He is without doubt a mama's boy and is the most affectionate and playful with me.

Diet wise he was on Royal Canin wet and dry SO for about seven years but after issues with the RC, I moved him on to Hills cd and he has a little Trovet ASD dry mixed in. He continues with the meds too as it was too risky to stop them.

Though he continues to have 'episodes' where he won't eat and withdraws, they are thankfully minor. Early on I would get anxious about these but over time I have learned how to manage the episodes and pinpoint stress triggers and avoid them. I feel so blessed that he is eleven and going strong.

NOT JUST SKIN DEEP

Two years ago we finally got a diagnosis for Maystar's Viktori and her skin troubles, she has Urticaria Pigmentosa, where too many immune mast cells in the skin, that help fight infection, release histamine which causes surrounding tissues to become inflamed.

I feel these cells affect her bladder too when she eats an allergen as it seems to be an instant response to her getting cystitis. Viktori has severe allergies to every grain and protein which displays in terrifying anaphylactic reactions. She only has a small reaction to rabbit and parsnips. So this has become her diet in wet form only and is combined with evening primrose and wheatgerm oils for added Omega 3&6 and a multivitamin especially mixed for her without any additives or proteins just the stuff she needs.

Her U-P is controlled by 5mg of antihistamine, Cystophan and a very strict diet. Anything else that enters her mouth is stolen and results in scratching around her throat and small urine output. Without understanding vets to prescribe Meloxicam urgently on occasion, we would be in a mess. I do have a secret weapon though; it's called Urinary Care Paste with L-Methionine which helps dissolve bladder sludge.

VEE'S FIRST AID KIT



Cystophan or Cystease **£8.00**
both are very good.



Allacac Citerizine tiny tablets **£2.00**



Urinary Care Paste. Doesn't taste the best but does the job! **£8.99**

