



NICK - our front cover cat this year

Nick has been chosen to illustrate how well an FIV cat can do despite a very bad start in life. We believe, based on the experience of many FIV cats down the years, that those cats who have a bad start in life do not do as well as those who are properly fed and cared for in those vital early years; FIV is just one extra factor.

We rescued Nick at a young age from a Blue Cross centre in Devon, where he'd been taken as a stray and was destined to be put down because of his FIV status. He was, quite literally, rescued in the "nick" of time.

When he arrived, in 2004, he was a scruffy, terrified little cat; but, with TLC, good food and veterinary care, he blossomed into a beautiful cat with the sweetest of natures.

(How can anyone doubt that a soul lies behind wonderful amber eyes like his?)

Nick, after a few years, developed kidney problems – again, we believe, due to his bad start, but he did so well on his medication and frequent vet checks, that he was able to have a much needed dental in 2009.

We are so pleased that we have been able to give such a sweet cat a life here at Catwork, even if it is to be a shorter one than we would wish for him.



THE CATWORK YEAR

2009



Nick, on arrival in 2004...



...and in 2007



The Catwork Year 2009

2009 was, for us, filled with much sadness as we found ourselves having to say goodbye to many of our elderly cats, both in the rescue and personal pets.

The “festive period” was anything but, as we lost four cats, three of whom were elderly, in a short space of time. We did reach quite a low ebb, but the sitting room, hung with so many Christmas cards from well-wishers across the country, helped a lot. Our vet reminded us that, while losing an animal is always sad, the ones at Catwork had had a life, many of them a long one, which they might not have had if they hadn’t found their way to the sanctuary. In supporting Catwork you have enabled us to give these dear souls a life which others would have denied them.

Once again, throughout the year, we had lots of visitors, much to the delight of the cats who enjoy the treats and attention they usually receive.

Our supporters have been so very generous yet again. As well as many gifts of money, we have been given food, bedding, toys, even paving slabs for the FIV garden – all this on top of the support of our sponsors who give on a regular basis.

In 2009, friend Lisa organised, once again, several successful fundraising efforts, which included a tombola and coffee morning at her home, helped by daughter Amelia.

Lisa’s sister, Heather, and husband Sean, organised a sponsored walk, raising over £300 – a great effort.

Our sponsor Stuart Strong once again donated the proceeds of furniture he’d made and sold: with the money we opted to get more paving slabs to finish areas in the Fivory when it was extended a while ago.

Through Big Boy (see New Arrivals), we have formed a connection with a lovely rescue in Berkshire, known as CLAWS (Cat Lovers Animal Welfare Society). They seem to take on many of the “difficult cases” which larger organisations often seem to try and avoid. CLAWS has been extremely generous to us, donating many packs of Whiskas cat food and an incredible amount of new ‘end of line’ gift shop items to sell, as well as generously sponsoring Big Boy and BT (also from Berkshire). A big thank you to them and for featuring Big Boy on the front cover of their first ever calendar.

The Dennis sisters, again in Berkshire, who raise money and send goods to small rescues, have also been extremely generous to Catwork and we have received several cheques and goodie boxes for the cats – all very much appreciated.

Animal Affairs, also supporting small local rescues through their charity shop in Bristol, have continued to send regular cheques, which they have been doing for many years. It was lovely to take a trip up to Bristol and see the shop for the first time – like an Aladdin’s Cave; we were very impressed.



Carol & Dave's winter visit



Lisa's car boot sale



Heather & Sean bring treats

Thank you again to Bristol and District Cat Club and West of England/South Wales Clubs for money from their “charity fund”.

We were touched to receive a cheque from Cats Protection Forest of Dean, who kept a box going in their shop for “Tutts and friends”, even though we lost dear old Tutts early in 2009. Thank you for your generous gesture.

Again cheques have come from Albert Street Vet Clinic in Saltash, where vet Rob set up a collection box for Thomas who originated from there. Thomas also still gets a Christmas box from his rescuer who took him to Albert Street as a stray. Thomas does well for the FIV cause, spreading the word that it's not what it's made out to be; because of him we have even gained a sponsor in Australia who used to be a client at the Clinic. Thanks to Rob for all his efforts.

We are also supported annually by Portishead Spiritualist Church thanks to Margaret, whose mother's cat, Lucky, came to Catwork as a special needs cat, elderly and timid, when Margaret's mother went into a home.

In the summer, old friends and supporters Maureen and Ray, came to Somerset for a couple of days. It was good to spend time with them



John Wright with favourite, Cecil ...not forgetting the others, of course



Madge and Ann bring treats again



The 'team' at Animal Affairs: Barry, Angela and Mel



Heather & Sean's sponsored walkers



Margaret with Lucky



Mr & Mrs Ducker with Jasper ...and again - we think he's smitten!



again and have lots of “cat chat”. They decided they would like to give us some new vet bed, and a large roll arrived just before Christmas – we will be able to smarten up the chalets in the spring when we have a spring clean. Thanks for that gesture!

We must thank Moira in Leicester for fostering a young FIV cat, Oscar, for Catwork (see New Arrivals). We felt we were unable to take on such a young cat due to our own increasing age.



Sue keeping the rain off Thomas!



Pete visits his Sammy



Margaret, Maurice, Wendy & Olivia, long-standing supporters



Judy, friend from before we ever started, with Percy



Maureen and Ray, from Sussex

Thanks also to Sue in Minehead, who cares for Brandy for us after finding him after his owner died. Brandy, now an old cat, goes back to the early days of Catwork when we were doing a bit of rehoming.

Our old friend, Bob Viller, has continued to keep us supplied with woodchip for the garden litter trays, which he collects from the sawmills near his home. He has been bringing it over to us on a regular basis for many years, and it is much appreciated.

Lastly, a really big thank you to everyone at the Quantock Veterinary Hospital, where the cats receive excellent care and we receive a great deal of support, which really helps us in the work we do.

On the cat front, 2009 saw us, once again, extending the work beyond the Catwork garden and getting involved with people’s FIV concerns via emails and phone chats.

Barbara was able to help in a more hands-on way early in the year when she met a lady on a poetry study day with a “cat problem”: Deanne had been feeding “Matey” since he was a skinny youngster. She couldn’t take him on because of her existing cat, but was concerned about him.

Friend Lisa lives near Deanne, and so Matey’s neutering was organised, with him spending the night before and after the op at Lisa’s house.



Matey helped by a good bit of teamwork - of which Lisa played an important part

He had to be returned to the area he knew, sadly, but Deanne, who had always fed him, continued to do so and later found him a good home with her neighbour. All in all, a good team effort!

Back in the garden, although the numbers decreased, with many of our elderly cats coming to the end of their lives, the work with some of the others became more intensive. Many of our FIV cats who came to us as youngsters, are now in their teens and, just like people, exhibit all



Bev and Mum, when they brought Big Boy to us from Berkshire



John Cowen visits from Edinburgh



Mary and colleagues from Wales

sorts of geriatric conditions. Old age problems include kidney deterioration, mouth problems, digestive disorders, hyperthyroidism, incontinence, even dementia. Some cats need special diets, others at times need food to be liquidised, and we supplement conventional medicine with tried and tested herbal/homoeopathic remedies. We have found Crataegus to be a wonderful herbal remedy for the heart, eel serum (homoeopathic) for kidneys and milk thistle (herbal) for liver function.

Bach flower remedies, which work on the emotions, are also used from time to time. Most people have heard of 'rescue remedy', but all sorts of emotional problems can be helped by mixing appropriate flower essences; the great thing is that they are not harmful in any way but do seem to work and should be in every rescuer's 'toolbox'.

When the end comes, we always try to be with the cat if it needs to be put to sleep to stop it suffering. This isn't always possible as, occasionally, something untreatable, like a tumour, is found during an operation, in which case there is no point in bringing the animal round.

Sometimes an old cat will die in its bed over night, having had supper as normal. Although a shock for us, that has to be the best way to go, with no heart-wrenching decisions to be made.



Adrienne and her husband with Joseph, Bruce and Thomas



Lorna dishing out treats again



Jennifer and Martin stroke Sandy for the first time



Sara with some of her favourites



Lorna & Lyn find time to sit down at last



Jackie & Pete visit on a sunny autumn day



Jackie gets a kiss from Sammy



Jay and Nosh experience the Fivery for the first time



Vet Dominic attends to feral May in Bob's gloved grasp



Bob dares to sit down and gets some attention



Dawn, Megan and Rebecca, visit "granddad with the cats"

At the time of writing, cats in the sanctuary, funded by our supporters, number 28: 20 are FIV+; 2 FeLV and 6 special needs; we also have 2 foster cats, making a total of 30. Our personal pets number 6, plus a temporary lodger, not forgetting the rabbit.



No visitors today, so Joseph, Donny, Fluff and Thomas get to use the seat on their own



But in winter they huddle together in the big basket under the heater!

NEW ARRIVALS IN 2009

Thomas and Ralph arrived as a pair when their owner could no longer look after them. His sister, a vet nurse, had taken them back to the hospital in Cornwall where she worked, and their future looked bleak until Leanne met the trainee nurse from Ginger Thomas' Saltash practice and heard about Catwork.

Although we were trying not to take on any more young FIVs, we could not allow them to be put to sleep and, anyway, they weren't that young!

Leanne duly brought the pair up from Redruth back in the spring with all their belongings. Having been indoor only cats for some time, they seemed very excited when they sniffed fresh air as we got them settled into their chalet. Ralph at first seemed to act like Thomas' 'minder', but they now mix in with everybody else, although still share the same chalet at night.



THOMAS (FIV)

Although having been a pet and, presumably, well fed, Thomas, a handsome dark tabby, could eat for England (and France as well!) He really is one of the greediest and noisiest cats we've known. He has become very confident and mixes in well with the rest of the gang, no longer dependent on Ralph.

RALPH (FIV)

Not the most handsome of cats, with his cross-eye and bent ear, but a nice friendly character. Although he shares a chalet with old companion Thomas, he 'does his own thing' all day long, tending to be more solitary than Thomas.

Both cats, after a long period of being confined to an indoor home, really seem to like having the choice to be outside.



OSCAR (FIV)

We were approached by a vet nurse in Dorset who knew of our sanctuary, about a young cat brought to their hospital by a member of the public who had found him on a verge, soaking wet, by the roadside. Upon examination, "Wellie" as he was called (due to his rescuer having to don Wellington boots in order



to get to him), was found to have no physical injuries; he was, however, FIV positive. The hospital's policy is to put down FIVs, so Wellie, having survived his accident, was now in a precarious situation unless nurse Tracey could find somewhere for him to go.

We had, in view of our own age, decided not to take on any more young FIV cats, and Wellie was very young; but obviously we wanted to help. A posting on the CatChat website forum led us to Moira up in Leicester who had several FIV cats and agreed to foster him for Catwork.

Tracey and Moira met half way with a very frightened cat. Moira thought she had a cat proof garden, but this was about to be proved wrong by our young Dorset cat. On the first night in his new home he disappeared under a loose floorboard and then he escaped outside

where, although no other cat had found a way out, he did!

Frantic emails were sent and posters put around to try and locate the cat. Fortunately, Wellie loves his food, so sometimes two dishes a night were disappearing from the utility room linking to the outside. It had to be him! Moira's son set up a video camera and was able to film the cat coming in, looking warily around, eating the food and going back out again. It took a while, but Moira was finally able to gain the cat's confidence and he joined 'the gang'. In view of his starring performance in the videos, we decided to call him Oscar. We hear he is now doing well, thanks to Moira – another cat saved, and our first fostered FIV.



BIG BOY (FIV)

Big Boy came to us really by default, as a great friend of ours, who adopted FIV Roger from us in 2008, found herself at the last minute unable to take him on due to personal circumstances.

Feeling sorry for Big Boy, as he'd been so long at the rescue, and his home offer falling through, we said we'd take him at Catwork. Through him we have forged a close contact with CLAWS (Cat Lovers Animal Welfare Society) in Berkshire.

CLAWS, although a small group, does great work, often with special needs cats, and they have been extremely generous to us!

For the first time, this year CLAWS produced a calendar and decided to put Big Boy on the front cover – what an honour! He is a super cat, with a big friendly nature to match his size.

Big Boy had been living in somebody's garden and being fed for some time, so life in the garden is second nature to him, except he now has full use of heated chalets, beds and all creature comforts. He is now well and truly one of the gang.

MAX

Max came to join our house gang, temporarily, back in the summer when Barbara's daughter went off to study for a year. She had taken him on as a rescue youngster found wandering, and never claimed, in last year's snows in Bristol.



As a youngster of a few months, he looked like any normal kitten of that age, but grew into a really big lad. When we picked him up we'd been to see "Julius Caesar", so we looked for a Roman name and called him Maximus. – a good choice, it would seem.

As he grew we could see that Max was no ordinary kitten. He bears every resemblance to a Maine Coon with a most enormous tail; in fact he's more like a puppy in size and nature. It has been quite tricky integrating him into the household as he's very boisterous. Max, in keeping with his size, also has a big appetite (don't worry, no Catwork money gets spent on him!)

Max will be with us a bit longer before resuming his life as a "one and only" again; he's certainly a very unusual cat. We haven't had one like him before!



BUTTON

In November we rescued a dear little rabbit from a large rescue near Exeter. There were around 30 bunnies all needing homes. How to choose? Simple – the little frightened one in the farthest, darkest corner of the rescue on the bottom row (the cages were stacked 3 high).

We took little Button, as we called him, back to Somerset and placed him in a brand new hutch where, over the next few days we attempted to win his confidence. We had him checked out by our vet and got him onto

a good vet recommended diet, as well as hay and veg which he took to with great relish.

When we let him out into the run he never wanted to go back in, and would give us the run-around trying to catch him – it took two of us to catch him and put him in the hutch for the night.

Button didn't seem to mind the snow either, seeming to enjoy his newfound freedom.



THOSE WHO LEFT US IN 2009

MOLLY PASCOE (FIV)

Dear Molly Pascoe was the first old lady to leave us in 2009, and she really was a dear – full of character and with wobbly legs.

She came to us when her owners went to Greece to live and do work with the Greek cats.



Molly, being FIV, was not able to go with her two elderly companions (clearly the elderly cat rescue thought Molly was a big threat – as if!) so, in one fell swoop Molly lost her family, home and companion cats and ended up at Catwork. We weren't really geared up for elderly cats back in 2003, but we created a geriatric area, full of modifications because of Molly's malformed legs. As Molly was quite soon followed by Florence and Jemima, saved from 'death' row, we had a nice little "old girls" area.

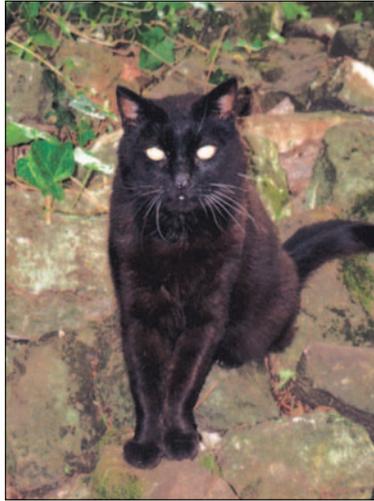
Six years after arriving here, Molly went into kidney failure in early 2009, and, with great sadness, we had to have her put to sleep.

TUTTS (FIV)

The cat we took on in 2004 from Forest of Dean Cats Protection was a lovely old gentleman. He loved his food, was good with the other cats and 'easy to run'. He enjoyed good health until age problems caught up with him at the end of a long life.

Tutts was extremely well supported by Forest of Dean CP group, and we also received cheques from "Tutts and friends" box on the counter of the group's charity shop.





BADGER (FIV)

Badger was another old gent, but, unlike Tutts, he liked to keep himself to himself and didn't enjoy the company of others; fortunately, the Fivery allowed him to remain private.

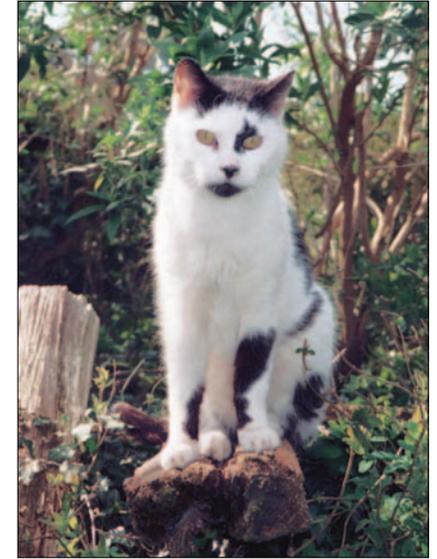
Badger came from a vets in Gloucester where nurse Laura worked. She asked if we could take him, but at the time we had no space, and our Gloucester friends, the Chapmans, boarded Badger for a few weeks to get him off death row. We went to collect him in

June 2008 and spent a lovely day seeing all the pedigree rescues our friends had saved.

Sadly, Badger wasn't with us long, although he seemed to enjoy the time he did have. He began to not eat (unlike him) and lose weight, and a much needed dental was done. However, it would seem as if his weight loss was due to something more sinister and, although he appeared alright in the hospital before being discharged, he rapidly went downhill and, sadly, died.

JOSEPH

Joseph, another old cat, came from the same vet practice in Gloucester as Badger. He arrived near Christmas 2007 (hence his name), skinny, snuffly and hyperthyroid. Despite his age and poor condition he did extremely well here. We used to 'steam' him from time to time by sitting him in a basket with a steaming mug of hot water infused with Olbas oil just outside the basket. The basket is covered with a towel to retain the fumes, which the cat breathes for ten minutes or so – wonderful treatment for snuffly cats.



Joseph used to love jumping into a cat basket (very unusual); he would frequently jump into a basket opened up ready to take a more reluctant cat to the vet. Joseph absolutely loved the attention he got at the vets, and at the hospital when he had his thyroid removed. He was a real character.

Barbara found him dead one morning in his bed, having eaten supper as normal the night before. Hyperthyroid cats, it seems, sometimes die quite suddenly from heart attack. Lovely to have given an old boy a new lease of life, thanks to vet nurse Laura pointing him in our direction.



MARY

The chubby little cat we took in from a Taunton vet at Christmas 2007 (hence her name), did very well indeed throughout the whole of 2008, and she joined the other FIV ladies in the geriatric area.

Early in 2009 we noticed a strangeness in her behaviour, which then led to full scale multiple fitting.

Barbara had a very scary drive to the hospital with Mary in a basket, hoping she wouldn't have a fit en route. In fact they made it to the hospital door before the next fit started; she was quickly whisked to the intensive area for treatment. The vet stabilised her and she remained hospitalised for a few days. She was able to return to us, much to everyone's surprise, and she did very well for some months on her medication for the condition. We did have to move her to an area on her own as, when she was near to fitting, she was unpredictable.

Mary seemed to be doing very well on the medication and the fitting did not return. Then one day she seemed very lethargic and off colour. The on-duty vet did not like the look of her as her gums were very pale, and took Mary back to the hospital for tests. We were shocked to hear later that morning that Mary's blood test showed she had hardly any red blood cell count and was suffering from pernicious anaemia, which must have been coming on over a long period. Perhaps this is the reason Mary had never been very active, she probably had little energy. The condition had progressed so far that nothing could be done, and Barbara drove into the hospital to say goodbye and be with her as she had to be put to sleep. What a blow! we always thought the fits were the problem, not something insidious and hidden like this. Poor Mary was a sweet, gentle cat, and we had hoped, on her medication, she would go on much longer.

GILES

We unexpectedly lost our lovely Giles, last year's front cover cat, to kidney failure in the autumn of 2009.

We had him for many years (since 2002 when he was approx 2 yrs), and Giles had no health problems in all that time, which is remarkable considering he was both FIV and FeLV positive.



Once kidney problems had been diagnosed Giles rapidly deteriorated, despite all the usual medication and treatment given to cats with that condition, and we lost him.

Giles was a nervous little sweetheart who was never any bother and he enjoyed the company of the other FeLV cats. We and they miss him a lot.

FLORENCE

Florence came to us as an old cat with companion Jemima. They had escaped being put to sleep (they were both FIV), when their foster carer became too ill to look after them any longer.



The "oldies" all lived in one area of the garden near the house, and after Jemima died of kidney failure in 2008, Florence and Molly became good friends. Strangely, after Molly died, also of kidney failure, the two remaining oldies, Lucky and Florence, didn't strike up a friendship until very near the end of Florence's life when Lucky seemed to sense she was in trouble and would go into her bed and sleep with her.

Poor Florence seemed to be going mental and became very confused, and it wasn't long before she just "drifted away". She had been booked in for an examination the day we knew she was dying, so her end was hastened to spare her any suffering. At least she lived her allotted span without having a premature death because she was FIV.

PERCY

Sweet little Percy had been with us many years (arrived Dec 2001). He was never any trouble, loved his food and enjoyed excellent health until very near the end, which was very sudden and dramatic.

Percy had had a dental towards the end of 2008, which went well and, for a while, he seemed like his old self. Then Percy appeared to be having problems eating again. This was investigated and pain relief given, but the problem seemed to get worse.

Between Christmas and the New Year Percy had a really good attempt to eat everything we tried him with, but was taking longer and longer to finish his food, so clearly something that couldn't be seen was going on.

Barbara took him back once again to the vet on New Year's Eve to try and get him 'sorted' before the next holiday. Percy was anaesthetised so the vet could have a proper look at what was happening in the mouth, and, to her amazement, found she was unable to open his mouth, even under deep anaesthetic. The poor cat's jaw had fused! This is apparently extremely rare – usually caused by an accident and only rarely, as in this case, due to an infection in the jaw, which caused it to grow wrongly. Our vet said we had been extremely unlucky to have such a case and we would never see it again.

Poor Percy must have been so confused, not to mention hungry, the last couple of days of his life when he found himself physically unable to eat. He was allowed to pass away while still under the anaesthetic, so we couldn't be with him; he, however, knew nothing of that.

Having been with us since 2001 and not that young when he arrived, he must have been a good age, so he did well. We took him from our own vet hospital as a timid stray with FIV who seemed really happy here in the sanctuary.

His sad and unexpected death on New Years Eve seemed a fitting end to a year in which so many elderly friends came to the end and moved on to Rainbow Bridge.



As well as losing several of the “oldies” in the sanctuary, we also lost three of our elderly house pets.

GINGER THOMAS

We had Ginger Tom since Catwork's very early days when we did a bit of rehoming. We had a call from a Taunton vet to say they had taken in a stray, but no one claimed him, and all the shelters were full (no change there, then). We went to get him and he was in a bit of a state – scruffy, bad ears, bad eyes, but obviously a cat of character. Each time a possible home came up we found a reason for it not to be right as we had fallen for this unusual long-haired ginger/white guy who was, by now, looking good. Of course we kept Ginger Thomas and he remained a character all his life – all the other cats would defer to him and Billy who was closest to him used to get his ears bitten, but he didn't seem to mind!



At the start of 2008 tests were done as Tom was drinking and eating a lot, and diabetes was diagnosed – what a learning curve that was. Because Tom was such a bad patient (he put a vet in A&E once when he had to be hospitalised after becoming hypoglycaemic and we nearly lost him – Tom, not the vet), we decided to invest in all the kit and do our own insulin testing. This involved getting a small blood drop from the ear and measuring the sugar levels with a special meter.

Tom was a strange one; while he allowed us to get regular blood samples, he would not allow us to groom him lower than his head without a great deal of swipes and fuss!

Tom did okay for some months with his two doses of insulin a day and special diet, but in the spring of 2009 he was obviously deteriorating. In his youth, we used to say he looked like “a ship in full sail” with his plume of a tail held high as he rushed down the garden towards us. At the end he looked like a wizened old man, but the character was still there. We had to call the vet out at the May Bank Holiday to put him to sleep as he had lapsed into coma. We estimate Tom to have been 14-15 years old when we lost him. He left a very big Tom sized gap in the household.

BEN

We lost Ben, our Burmese, soon after his 19th birthday.

He was another great character who would never take “no” for an answer – he had a party trick of jumping from the floor up into our arms. He loved cake and always seemed to know when there was any on the go!



Ben had much treatment in the last months of his life to try and deal with a lump on the side of his face, which responded at first, but then got worse, and spread. Like Tom, Ben didn't want to give up and, while he was eating and still doing “Ben things”, we carried on with all the treatment. The last days of his life coincided with a beautiful autumn spell of sunshine, so he was able to be out in the fresh air on the seat he loved.

Ben was quietly put to sleep at the vets across the road from our house – it was a tearful family affair. Like his brother William, we had Ben privately cremated. We had the Burmese brothers before we moved home to Nether Stowey and when Catwork could never have even been imagined. Both boys were so different and such interesting characters who gave us 17 and 19 years of fun and friendship.

BARBABY

Barnaby had come from a rabbit rescue where he'd waited two years for a home. He had a lovely character and loved to come running over for a tickle and liked playing with Billy the cat.



During 2009 he developed kidney problems and began to lose weight.

Despite the hutch being cleaned out every day we lost him to fly strike in the unusually warm and humid weather of the autumn. The old and sick are sitting targets, and it only takes one fly to lay its eggs which, when hatched, create unbelievable damage, and this can happen overnight!

The rabbit was rushed to the hospital when we saw the problem but he was too old and suffering kidney damage to be able to be helped. What a shock when he seemed to be coping so well with his old age problems. Barnaby was about eight years old, which we are told is a good innings for a rabbit. He was a delightful creature – another hole in our lives. We lost both the rabbit and Ben in the same week.

Other cats with whom we have been involved

PIP

Pip belonged to Barbara's daughter, and he gets a mention here because he came to stay with us on a few occasions when Dora was away, and also because his death led to the rescue of Max (see New Arrivals), who is also having to stay with us temporarily.



Pip was rescued as a kitten from a pet shop in Taunton where he was in a tiny cage. Pip took a fatal blow to the head as he was returning home, right outside his own door in early January 2009. We were all very sad as he was only five years old. From a precarious start in life he had grown into a lovely cat and was much loved, even by the neighbours it seems, whom he would visit on a daily basis; one lady said how much she'd miss their little chats over the garden fence!

SADIE

Sadie came to Catwork as a supposed FeLV; her second (essential) test showed she wasn't – cats exposed to the leukaemia virus are often able to “deal with it” and not become permanently infected. Sadie was able to be homed and spent many happy years with our friend Claire at the the Catwork outpost.



CHARLIE BROWN

Our good friend Marilyn took Charlie Brown from the RSPCA in Coventry. We had been contacted about him when they found out he was FIV+. Charlie had been somebody's pet and was at the centre for rehoming because the owner had died. He was a really big healthy cat and, when a local vet needed blood for a transfusion for another cat, Charlie was chosen to give it – this is when his FIV status became known, but that put him on ‘death row’!



Having been asked for help by one of the staff, we asked Marilyn if she would go and pick him up for us. Marilyn fell for Charlie and he stayed in Oxford where he was spoilt rotten and lived for the rest of his life.

UPDATE ON OTHER CATWORK CATS

THE FIVs



CAPTAIN

Captain is one of our “founder FIVs” and must now be the oldest. He has been getting round the fivery on three legs since 1997, coming to us in those early days from our own vets. He has always enjoyed good health, has a good appetite still and doesn’t seem to age like most cats do - a quite remarkable and much respected character.



GUY

Guy, the loner, enjoyed good health throughout 2009. He likes to keep himself to himself and is very little trouble. What he does not like, however, is being groomed. It took two of us to tackle him when his fur started to get matted, and let out screams of anguish while we were sorting him out. We were all pleased when the job was finished!



BLACKIE

Blackie, our stray from Weston, had a chequered year. First he needed a dental, followed not long after by eye problems. We went through many tubes of ointment and, each time one was finished, the condition just flared up again. In the end we realised the eye was not going to improve and, as he could see little with it, we opted to have it removed. Blackie copes very well as a one-eyed cat; it was the best solution as the eye was of no use to him being permanently infected.



JIM

Jim’s mouth issues refused to go away no matter what we did. He had much difficulty eating and often didn’t want to. In the end we opted to try treatment we’ve not used before at Catwork, - the injection of interferon, which is expensive and not always guaranteed to work.

Interferon is a natural protein that helps the body’s general immune system when it seems not to be working effectively.

The procedure required Jim to be anaesthetised and the interferon was injected directly into the affected area of the mouth. This had to be done three times at fortnightly intervals. After that, interferon is given orally daily at home. This has been an interesting experience and we are delighted with the results. All the drooling has stopped, Jim is able to eat properly again, and is much more his old self.



THOMAS CORNWALL

Thomas, from a vet clinic in Cornwall, is now a well established member of the Fivery. He enjoyed very good health in 2009, is very confident and loves the visitors.

Thomas’ box on the counter at Albert Street clinic brings in much appreciated donations and he is used to spread the word about FIV.



BERTIE

Bertie, found literally next door to us one dreadful autumn night, was never claimed and, being FIV+, he remained with us.

He has the sweetest nature and just wants to be loved. Bertie has fitted in well, enjoys good health and is now one of the gang.



FLUFF

Fluff has been with us since 2001, coming to us as a youngster when old friends Margaret and Maurice asked if we could take him as the vet had threatened him with death because of FIV! (Wish these vets would move on from the dark ages!)

Fluff's rescuers paid us a visit in 2009 and we reminisced how their generous donation, when we took him in, enabled us to buy more accommodation and thus save more FIV cats like Fluff from being put down.

Fluff had a good year health-wise, but remains his fussy self where food is concerned.



CECIL

The quiet, good-looking Cecil did well throughout 2009. He's never any trouble and a very pleasant cat who really loves it when visitors come. Cecil, originating from Bristol, has been with us since January 2002.



DONNY

Despite the terrible ordeal Donny suffered as a young cat from being shut in a room and starved, he is still with us and, during 2009, had no health problems. We have had Donny now for 7 years. He enjoys his food (he certainly gets plenty to eat here) and is a quiet, gentle character.



BOOTSY

Bootsy has been with us 7 years now. In the early days he used to suffer from urinary tract problems and also eye problems, but during 2009 he enjoyed extremely good health, even though he must be getting on in years.

We called him Bootsy as he used to be a right little "bossy boots", but seems to have mellowed in later years.



BRUCE

Another old timer, coming to us in 2003, who also had a good year. Like many of the cats, Bruce is very much "up front" when the visitors come and he enjoys a bit of fuss.



BATMAN

“Batty”, as we call our rescue from Battersea, did well in 2009. He’s a wiry little cat and an obvious city “toughie”, but he has his affectionate moments. He particularly likes to follow Bob around the Fivery when he’s doing the chores. Batty seems to hang out with Nick and they both go headfirst into the carrying box with the food in to see what’s on the menu.



NICK

Our front cover cat who came to us as a youngster, was diagnosed with kidney problems in 2008. We managed to keep on top of the problem with frequent tests and medication, then in December 2009 he went into ‘crisis’ and tests revealed a liver problem as well. Poor little chap was hospitalised and, when stabilised, came home on a regime of many tablets, to be given at various intervals throughout the day.

Nick came through the crisis and did well, but the cards are now stacked heavily against him, with the poor function of both kidneys and liver, two major organs.

We spend a lot of time with Nick trying to persuade him to eat – sometimes he does well, sometimes not. Barbara has tried every sort of cat food as Nick always did like something different frequently. He gets indulged as we know he’s on borrowed time and has done so well to make it this far.



JASPER

Jasper was diagnosed with urinary problems in 2009, which means he has to be on a special diet to try and stop crystals forming. It’s rather a shame as he’s very fond of eating, having come from one of those multicat households where he probably never got enough to eat. Ironically, Jasper has grown quite fat, even though on a special diet. He still makes up to the visitors when they come and enjoys the attention he usually gets.



BT

Saved by the bell, literally, when about to be put down by a vet in Berkshire three years ago. BT has not needed to see a vet since, and doesn’t want to! He is looking fit and well.



WOODY

A big cat now, who really enjoys his food, as do most strays actually. He comes into his own occasionally and shows an affectionate side, which is easy to miss in the panic to get to the food bowl. Again, a good year healthwise.



SAMMY

Sammy is our very elderly little gent who came to us when his owner went into a home. Friend Pete looked after him for some time until we offered to have him here. Sammy has thrived and really seems to like it around the other cats, though he's not averse to swiping if they get in the way.

Having always been fed a very strange diet by his owner (scrambled eggs and corn flakes!) Sammy really loves all that is on offer at Catwork. All the tests were done when he seemed to be eating excessively, but he wasn't hyperthyroid and the major organs were functioning all right. We have been treating him for digestive disorders in the hope that the medication will enable the body to utilise the food better.

Despite everything, Sammy is a proper little character.



ROGER

The characterful cat who escaped death by a whisker when the vet nurse intervened to save him, was taken on by our good friend Marilyn in Oxford. He is now called Timmy and is much enjoying a life he was nearly deprived of.

THE FeLVs



JORDAN

Apart from the odd bout of mouth problems, Jordan has always enjoyed good health. He was brought to us from East Anglia in 2004 and was a fully mature cat then. A trip to the vets to treat what we thought was his usual mouth issue turned out to be something much more serious. An X-ray was done on Christmas Eve, and poor Jordan was diagnosed with cancer – a tumour in the jaw. All we can give is palliative care and trust that we will know when “the time” comes. Slow growing cancers are really hard to deal with, as one knows there is no cure. Of course Jordan has been receiving extra cuddles, which he absolutely loves, and we are able to control the pain with injections. He is still eating and getting out into the Felvery garden when weather permits. Extra blankets are in his chalet and the heat permanently on. Jordan is such a beautiful cat and such a nice character.



BILLY

Billy from Middlesex is a fun-loving cat and, since losing Giles, and now Jordan terminally ill, he is a bit lost, poor thing. Billy had a good year in 2009, seeing the vet only once when he appeared to have hurt his paw; he really played the “poor me” card, holding it up for sympathy. Billy, like Jordan is a nice, affectionate big cat.

SPECIAL NEEDS



SPIDER

Spider is a really old cat; in fact he was the second cat we ever rescued, back in 1995 in our brief rehoming phase. Spider was taken on by an elderly lady in the village, where he provided excellent companionship until she went into a home, and

later died. We took Spider back into care; he was now having health problems and not really rehomeable. Spider is hyperthyroid and also suffers from a digestive disorder, which means, although on medication, he is permanently hungry. Although extremely ancient (we estimate him to be 17-18) he can still stand up for himself and asserts his authority by swiping the younger ones if they get in his way.

Spider is aptly named as he lurks and leaps out at passing cats. He's a real character and quite a looker in his day with long black fur and emerald eyes.



MAY

We have had this pretty little feral since 2006 and, sadly she has always remained terrified of people. May needed to go to the hospital in 2009 to have her claws sorted out.

Because we never see her properly, we hadn't realised there was a problem until she was holding one foot up – one of her claws had curled right under and was obviously painful. While under anaesthetic, May was given a makeover. We finally got her to accept a proper cat bed and she has a heater in her little house, so that's really all we can do.



SANDY

Sandy is a very pretty cat whom we took on after her rescuer, one of our sponsors, died. She was absolutely terrified at first, then, in time, she decided to trust us, but still she remains frightened of strangers. These days, however, Sandy is so much more confident; she has her own little chalet, the gate of which is always open, so she is free to come and go as she pleases. She especially likes to be on the seat outside the house. Healthwise she has had no problems.



LUCKY

Lucky had a good year in 2009 despite her heart problem, She is given a wonderful herbal remedy each day, crataegus, a well known herbal heart tonic, which is mixed with eel serum for kidneys.

Lucky has always kept herself to herself, but towards the end of Florence's life (by now they were the only two left in the geriatric area), Lucky would go in and cuddle up next to her. It seemed very desolate when Lucky was the last old lady left. At the end of the year, when the weather turned very cold, we set up a pen for her in the house.

Lucky's owner's daughter came to visit during the year, and was amazed that she was actually able to pick her up and give her a cuddle! Lucky has grown in confidence here and stopped being frightened of people as she once was. Such a pretty little cat who has done well to make it to a grand old age.

THE HOUSE CATS



TEDDY

Teddy, our deaf/blind cat, lives in the house, mostly upstairs on the landing leading to Bob's office. He can be very demanding when he wants food or cuddles, and has to have his "fix" of a spell on Bob's lap every morning before he settles down to sleep. At night he is put into a pen in the living room to keep him from being bothered by the others.

Teddy has worked out a way of dealing with his restricted life and has done well here.



BRANDY

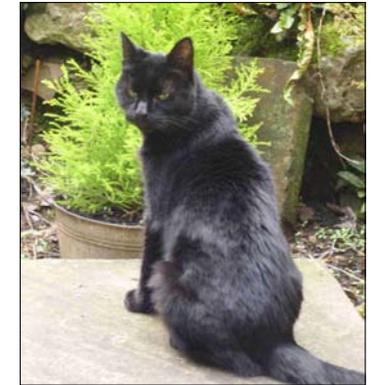
Homed by us in the very early days of Catwork, Brandy went missing after his owner died in 2008. Some months later he was found by Sue in Minehead, who said she would like to keep him. It suited us well as Brandy is an old cat now and much better off back in a home.

Barbara visited him in 2009, and he looked remarkably like he did when we first had dealings with him, yet he must now be in his late teens. He gets spoiled rotten by Sue, as do all her own pets, and we are very grateful to her for looking after him.

MILLIE

Milly, though tiny and now well into her teens, is still very active; in fact she's probably the most active of all the housecats, and still loves to play with a ball round the kitchen most days. Millie can be a bit bossy with the others, but still remains very much in tune with Barbara's moods. She had a lot of consoling to do in 2009 helping Barbara cope with our many losses.

Millie has been with us since 1995, right at the start of Catwork, becoming the inspiration for the Catwork logo.



BILLY

Billy, also a teenager now and permanently snuffly, underwent a personality change in 2009 and became a proper housecat, even wanting to sit on our lap! Until last year, Billy has always spent most of his time outdoors, always near the house, but it was sometimes a job to get him in for the night. Nowadays he hardly ever goes out! We would never have believed he would stretch out on Barbara's lap of an evening and see off anybody else who wants to join in!

Billy had a good year healthwise (his snuffles are something we can't do much about, he's always been that way).

He remains his affectionate self with us and the other cats and has even grown less scared of visitors.



MARMADUKE

Marmie is a really handsome, affectionate, but extremely fussy little cat whom we have had from a small kitten when abandoned on the village bypass, unable to walk due to a broken leg. The leg was saved and he certainly makes good use of it, being the most lively of all the housecats.



Marmie is a very sociable cat and, in the evenings, tries to get a turn on Barbara's lap before Billy comes and turns him off. Altogether a smart little cat is Marmaduke.

He still likes watching wildlife programmes on TV, but last year he had some real wildlife to watch – one of the baby hedgehogs born in an old shed near the house.



JACK

Jack, although younger, is much bigger than Marmie. He enjoys his food a bit too much, and has grown rather fat and not very active!

We've had Jack from a small kitten also; he was found in the village and never claimed, so stayed with us. At a young age Jack contracted pneumonia and we nearly lost him, but a late night trip to the vet, where they pulled out all the stops, saved his life. Difficult to remember how small and fragile he was after this episode, as he's a big lad now, a real home-loving cat.



POLLY

Polly is our five-toed cat who mostly lives upstairs and looks after young Oliver. This year she has been somewhat put out by the arrival of Max, with us temporarily, who is very big and boisterous, though still just very young.

In the evenings Polly settles on the ledge back of the settee on a cushion, which Barbara dares not move as Polly has got it just as she likes it.



OLIVER

Oliver, found by the postman in a country lane at Christmas two years ago, is a dear little chap who's scared of people, noises and smells! The odd thing is that Ollie is not afraid of Max like everyone else is! He puts up with the rough and tumble from Max and, up against him, he looks like a midget as he's never grown much. Barbara says that little Oliver was the best Christmas present ever.



CAT RESCUE - The Big Picture

Circumstance

During our work with cats we get to hear a lot of what happens in the animal world outside of the sanctuary, and sometimes it is difficult not to feel overwhelmed by the need out there. This is especially true at the moment because of the general financial situation. 2009 was a bad year for many people, and pets often became the innocent victims of what happened to their owners. Many people lost their jobs, or had reduced hours and could no longer afford to keep their pet; some owners lost their homes and had to give up their pets. The rescues have been full to bursting, even worse than normal, and all have a never-ending list of animals needing help.

Cruelty

We also heard of some shocking cases of cruelty from rescues we know.

Two kittens, just a few weeks old, were rescued from a skip seconds before being crushed at a recycling centre. One little mite had crawled out of the box into which they had been put and was spotted. The machinery was switched off and a search revealed a second tiny kitten. "Bill and Ben" were taken to our friend's rescue in Wiltshire where they were lovingly reared and looked after and later homed.

Our friends in Berkshire took in a little cat that had been stuffed down a public toilet! Incredibly, although injured and having inhaled chemicals, the cat survived, thanks to the loving care it received. The cat recovered, and was finally homed.

Many of the small groups we are in touch with do brilliant work, often taking in the 'difficult' cases which larger, well-funded organisations put their way.

The lottery of life is a sad fact for both people and animals, and when we, as we sometimes do, feel sad for our sanctuary gang because they aren't in 'proper' homes, we have to remind ourselves that they are safe, warm, fed and cared for, so maybe that's not so bad after all, especially as many of them were in danger of having no life at all.

Hypocrisy

We have always known that some "rescues" put down FIV cats and almost all put down FeLVs. What is not so well known is that animals are sometimes put down for other reasons as well, such as old age, and even thyroid problems. When Barbara's daughter went to the local RSPCA shelter last year looking for a cat to rescue, she saw a "yours desperately" cat she recognised from their website. Upon enquiring about this cat, she was told that it was "being assessed for euthanasia". The reason was, apparently, that she was possibly hyperthyroid. This is a perfectly treatable condition which many cats get, but the cat was probably going to be put to sleep. Do we put down people because they require regular medication? I think not!

Some of the big organisations offer 'bereavement counselling' which we find totally hypocritical when the organisations themselves seem okay about killing so many animals that come their way.

Our own little Nick, when just a petrified youngster, was going to be put down when he tested positive for FIV. We got him in the 'nick' of time because a worker at the Devon branch of the Blue Cross heard a talk Barbara gave, and asked the manager to contact us and see if we would take him, which we did.

It would seem that Blue Cross head office policy is not to put down FIVs, but they leave it up to individual managers to decide. Being as they, seemingly, have 'targets' for homing, FIVs who may take longer to home, are going to be first to be put down.

How can organisations do bereavement counselling with any sincerity while they themselves feel able to kill, sometimes, animals that are not even ill, just inconvenient?

Ignorance

While the perception of individuals about FIVs does appear to be changing, thank goodness, many vets and some rescues are still in the dark ages about the virus and continue to advocate killing them.

We have recently been in touch with a vet nurse who wrote in with an update on the FIV problem she presented us with back in 2008. (She was kind enough to say that the two cats, Trevor and Prince, were saved thanks to the website). However, what she told us about



Trevor & Prince

the training still current fills us with sadness and dismay. She has given us permission to quote:

“I think that, unfortunately, the vets and nurses in training are given such a blinkered view. One of our newly qualified nurses said they were asked: ‘What should

you do with a cat with a FIV or FeLV virus?’ – The so-called ‘correct’ answer (according to the training) was euthanasia”.

This particular vet nurse knows the truth about FIV from her own personal experience, and Trevor and Prince owe her their lives.

People are, increasingly, these days taking the trouble to find things out for themselves and not relying on the so-called experts.

This last point was well made when a lady contacted us about her lovely 12 year old cat who was still unable to eat, despite having had a dental (it turned out to be no more than a scale and polish!) The owner took the cat back again saying it still couldn’t eat, and was told that he’d have to be put to sleep. Boysie’s ‘mum’ thought this could not be right as the cat was



Boysie tucks into a chicken!

otherwise fit and healthy. She found our website and asked for advice, even though Boysie wasn’t FIV+. Barbara advised she change her vet and recommended our own practice, where the cat was duly taken, and had some much needed extractions – all that was needed to sort out the problem. We received a lovely thank you letter at Christmas with a photo of Boysie tucking into half a chicken!

As with all professions, there are good and bad practitioners; vets are no exception. Don’t always believe what the vet tells you if your instinct tells you otherwise – you know your own cat best!

Little Figaro ended up in a trap set to catch ferals in order to get them neutered. He, however, was clearly not feral, but a domestic trying to survive amongst them. The vet his rescuer took him to for neutering

was not “FIV-friendly”, but his rescuer was not going to let him be put to sleep.

Susan, his new mum, did much research on FIV, which ended up in a long phone chat with Barbara, which seemed to reassure her about keeping Figaro, and the implications of having an FIV cat.



Figaro in his favourite bed!

Figaro, lucky boy, is now a much loved addition to Susan’s household in Newcastle.

We have, sadly, over the years become very cynical and find ourselves wondering at times what difference all the hard work with the cats makes? Obviously it makes all the difference in the world to the individuals, since every life is precious and quite unique, but, through the contacts made via the website, we know that many more FIV cats have been helped, and even saved, as a result of what we have learnt from ours.

To end on a lighter note – we do feel that the climate, generally, is beginning to change for FIVs, as people are starting to realise that FIV is not the terrible killer it has been made out to be.

We no longer feel that we are isolated in trying to help FIVs as we once did when the sanctuary began. Barbara used to feel responsible for every cat at the back of a vet’s going to be put down because rescues wouldn’t take him.

More rescues do take them now, and websites like Cat Chat have sprung up exchanging information and giving help to all sorts of needy cats, FIVs included. Many FIVs are getting homes now as a result of such websites.

We found a home for Oscar (see New Arrivals) as a result of a posting on Cat Chat.

Prospects for the FIV cats are finally changing; during the 15 years we have been working with cats we hope we have made a difference – it’s certainly been a privilege to have been part of the FIV story.

We feel we can now start to move into phase three of Catwork – phase one was the initial rescue rehome phase; then came the sanctuary, concentrating on FIVs and FeLVs; the next phase will be a mixture of continuing with the information part of FIV and FeLV, and helping where we can with other special needs cats.

Christmas at Catwork - in close-up

Sad to say, the “festive season” was anything but here at Catwork, and, while Somerset, like the rest of the country, ground to a frozen halt, the care of the cats here intensified. We found ourselves suffering some unexpected losses and looking after two particularly sick cats, We reached quite a low ebb at this period, as so much happened in a relatively short time, leaving us emotionally drained. Here follows a close-up of our Christmas; it is Barbara’s attempt to “deal with it”, as the phrase is, by writing it down and sharing it with you.

Christmas Eve –

Jordan, our lovely big black cat is x-rayed today and the oral tumour, long suspected, now confirmed. He’s still eating and so bright and affectionate, that I can’t believe he won’t be with us much longer.

Colin says we can give him painkilling injections twice a day for a while and we will know when the time has come.

Christmas progresses, with family coming at different times to visit.

We remain home and garden bound, looking after everyone as usual, but especially Jordan, and also Nicky who is on much medication several times a day, after recently being diagnosed with liver problems on top of his already existing kidney issues. The other cats washing him and keeping him warm in a big cat huddle under the heater raises a smile.

Tues 29th -

Stowey surgery open again across the road. I take Tabby Percy, who had a dental in November, but still appears to be having problems eating. Colin gives him antibiotic and painkiller.

Wed 30th –

Captain’s sponsors, Bernie and Steve, come to see him (and us) and take us out to lunch! Captain never seems to age yet he must be about 15 having come here in ’97 as a young adult cat.

Percy still having problems eating and, despite yesterday’s treatment, he can’t seem to get the food up off the dish and is getting quite frantic about it; will have to take him back again in the morning for more investigation before the New year closure.

Thurs 31st –

Percy is taken back to the hospital for his mouth to be examined under anaesthetic; we expect to fetch him home late afternoon, but, instead, I have a phone call with very bad news – the vet tells me she has been unable to open the poor cat’s mouth even under anaesthetic, because the jaw has fused! He won’t be able to eat, poor little soul, so we have to let him go and not bring him round. I am in total shock, as I listen to the vet telling me how extremely rare this is, usually only happening to victims of accident, but occasionally, as in this case, as a result of diseased bone. I can’t believe we won’t see Percy again and have not been able to say “goodbye”. The last couple of days must have been so psychologically traumatic, as he always loved his food. I comfort myself with thinking of his long stay with us with no ill health until the problem that was to finish him.

Colin later tells us he has only seen this condition about five times in his long career and we will certainly never see it again.

New Year’s Day –

What a way to start the year! Bob fetches Percy back from the hospital and we later bury him outside his chalet, which he had occupied for nine years. A sweet soul, never any trouble.

Tuesday 5th –

The big snowfall hits Somerset overnight. We wake to a scene of great beauty, but bitterly cold.

Wednesday 6th -

Colin opens up the surgery opposite and builds animals with the snow which he clears from the door – there are no clients this morning, not even us!

Bob clears snow from the sanctuary roofs – they weren't built to withstand weight like this. The cats huddle together in their chalets under the heaters, which are destined to be on continuously for days.

I notice at lunchtime that old Sammy seems to have injured his front paw and ring the hospital to make sure someone will be at Stowey in the morning, as he's probably going to need an x-ray. We put him in the hospital bay where he can be confined and safe. He eats his supper but, for the first time ever, doesn't finish.



Colin builds 'snow patients'...



...who are then kept waiting out in the cold!

Thursday 7th –

We go up the garden early to get Sammy to be examined as soon as the vets open. I find dear little Sammy dead in his bed.

Bob tells Colin there won't be a cat needing to go back to the hospital. Colin says the paw was almost certainly nerve damage prior to a stroke. I comfort myself with the knowledge that Sammy seemed to really enjoy his time here, coming to us after his owner went into care. He was in fact a very old cat.

The big freeze continues; we can't bury Sammy, so he lies wrapped up in a mini chalet at the top of the garden.

The intensive care of Jordan and Nicky continues as well as routine care of everyone else.

We have set up a pen indoors for Lucky, the last of the geriatric

females. The front room resembles a hospital with blind Teddy's overnight pen and now one for Lucky.

We move into the New Year; it's so cold here in Somerset, and we dress up like Eskimos just to go outside the door. I can't imagine how rescue friends further north are coping. I worry about the birds finding food but don't want to encourage them into the garden because of the danger from the house cats. I wonder if any of the hedgehogs, born near the house last spring, have found the straw-filled shelters we placed around the garden - such a privilege to have had a hedgehog family born here.

I give poor dear Jordan lots of extra cuddles as we're going to have to let him go soon, before he really suffers; the cancer is spreading down his face.

I can't believe how hard caring can sometimes be, but perhaps caring is what Christmas is really about.



View from our front window, showing the snowy scene, and just how far we have to go to the vet surgery

Looking to the future

At long last more FIV cats are being given the chance of life, and the virus is not as feared as it was when we began our work with them thirteen years ago. We know from the feedback we get from the website that many people now agree with us that FIV is no big deal, and cats with the virus can live long and healthy lives.

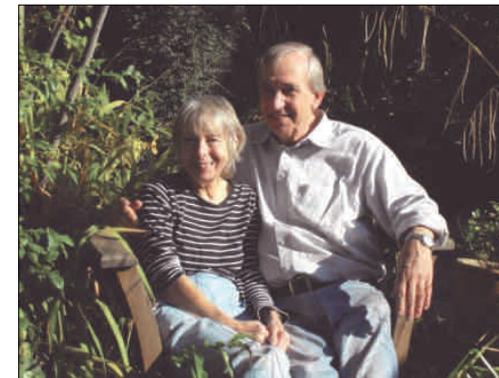
As FIV cats are often young, and we are getting ever older and less fit, we are needing to change our focus. The FIV cats in the sanctuary will, of course, stay here, but we are starting to feel that FIV cats shouldn't need to be in a sanctuary and are trying not to take on any more young ones. However, there are many elderly cats out there and ones with health issues, which makes them extremely difficult to rehome once they get into rescue, and we feel that this is where we should now be focussing. We have always had a small number of what we call 'special needs' cats along with the FIVs and FeLVs – at the moment we have feral May, very nervous Sandy, blind/deaf Teddyy, elderly Sammy and Lucky and extremely ancient, hyperthyroid, Spider. All these are typical of the sort of cases not likely to find a home, yet they deserve to be loved and looked after.

To this end we have been thinking of creating an area right by the house, in fact an extension of it, which could provide a comfortable home in the sunniest part of the garden for some elderly / special needs cats. This is still a long way off, and in the mean time you will see from this yearbook that there are still plenty of residents in the Fivery to keep us busy.

Hopefully, before too much longer, FIVs will not need to be in a sanctuary, but there are always going to be the old, difficult and unwanted cats, and we feel such cats should be our focus in the future.



Our current "special needs" cats:
Sammy, Spider, Sandy,
Teddy, May and Lucky...
could they be the shape of things to come?



Finally found a seat without a cat on it ... just about
room for the two of us... to ponder the future!