

FOR PETS

The magazine for Blue Cross supporters

Spring 2023

Healed and
happy

Pickle is safe now



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Behaviour and Training Service

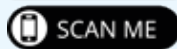
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COVER STORY

08 Brave kitten

Pickle overcomes terrible injuries to find happiness

THE TEAM

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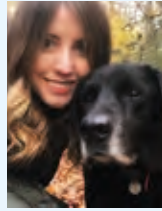
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WELCOME

Our late Queen’s enduring love of animals, and her support for Blue Cross, will never be forgotten. The late monarch, who we pay tribute to in this edition, knew the profound impact that pets have on people’s lives. It’s this spirit that is – and always has been – the very embodiment of our work. And it’s celebrated in this issue with some wonderful stories about the special bonds pets share with those who love them, such as dog Sheba and her family. Happy endings like this are why we work tirelessly to give pets in need a second chance. Pets like our brave cover star, Pickle, and those caught up in the devastating conflict in Ukraine. This is all made possible thanks to our kind supporters.

Aimee Brannen, Editor

 /thebluecrossUK  @The_Blue_Cross

FEATURES

04 Sheba’s story

Abandoned dog couldn’t be more loved

10 Our Queen

Remembering our late monarch’s love of pets

12 Sweet reunion

Pony friends back together

16 Small survivor

Tiny mouse never gave up

18 Ukraine pets special

How Blue Cross has been helping the pets of war

26 Against all odds

Sick stray mum and unborn puppies’ miraculous survival

REGULARS

17 Take me home

These Blue Cross pets need a loving family

25 Pet postbag

Your letters

30 News

The latest Blue Cross news

34 Competition

Win a £2,000 sofa!

35 Contact us

Get in touch or come and visit



04



12



18



26

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Young at HEART

Sheba is being showered with love after being left all alone in a vet hospital waiting room...

Sitting pride of place in the living room is a giant dog bed, and lying on it, proudly, is Sheba.

"I made her that bed," says Carole Jagger, who along with her husband Richard, adopted Sheba from Blue Cross 18 months ago.

"She likes to be comfy and I couldn't find one big enough. It's only some bits of foam with a cover."

Carole speaks modestly about her efforts to make Sheba feel at home, but those efforts are just one sign of everything the Jagers have done to make the German shepherd part of a loving family after her sad past.

Sheba was abandoned in the waiting room of our Victoria animal hospital in London in June 2021. Details about her past are sketchy, but we believe that before she found peace with Carole and Richard, she had likely been used for breeding, suffered a life-threatening womb infection, and had surgery for cancer.







Despite multiple attempts to contact her owner, we received no response, and so transferred Sheba from our animal hospital into the care of our Southampton rehoming centre in Hampshire to begin her search for a new home.

Amanda Rumball, London Welfare Officer, who looked after Sheba during her early days in Blue Cross care, says: "Sheba was the sweetest dog while she was with us at the hospital, and loved her toys!

DISTRESSED

"Initially she was overwhelmed and distressed as she didn't know what was happening to her, but she loved having a comfy bed and a snooze.

"I remember how much she loved to play and she soaked up all the TLC and attention from the team."

Our rehoming centres have warm, spacious kennels where we care for dogs with no place else to go.

But this environment doesn't suit every pet, and some can become very upset by the experience. Poor Sheba was one of them.

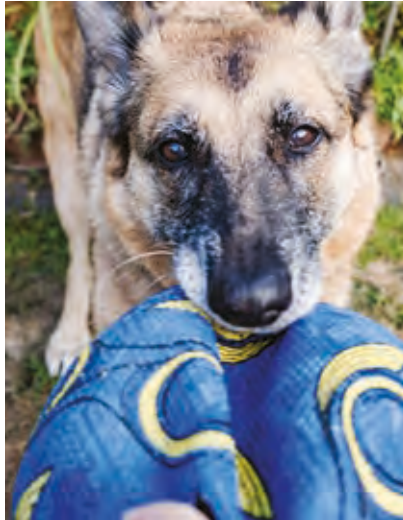
Kirsty Smith, Rehoming Supervisor at Blue Cross Southampton, says: "Sheba was friendly with us but extremely kennel-stressed, so we tried to have her out in a room with us as much as possible, but she still found kennel life really tricky. After 15 days we placed her in foster care where she was instantly much calmer and enjoyed the home comforts."

STABILITY

It's perhaps unsurprising that the older lady relaxed once she was placed in a quiet foster home with



We love her dearly. We've never had children so both of us have always preferred animals, and sometimes rate them higher than some humans to be fair. She means the world. We adore her. Just adore her.





stability and one-to-one attention, allowing her to begin to rebuild her life.

Sheba had arrived in our care severely underweight and suffering from tummy problems.

But thanks to care from those who understood her needs, and who made sure she got the veterinary attention she needed, Sheba began gaining weight and her stress levels fell.

Our vet checks revealed a couple of lumps that needed surgery to remove, and our Behaviour Team helped her to become more comfortable around other dogs and enjoy her walks.

Once she was ready, we started looking for loving new owners to give Sheba the home she deserved.

BIRTHDAY PARTY

On the day we catch up with Sheba, she is celebrating her 12th birthday.

That sensitive stomach means a birthday cake is off the cards, but Carole has wrapped up her favourite treats for her to open. This is a dog who has fallen on her paws.

Still fearful of other dogs, Carole and Richard often take her to an enclosed outdoor dog exercise space where she is free to potter about off-lead without the distractions of other pets, and spend some quality time with her devoted owners.

Carole continues: "She absolutely loves going out in the car. Especially when we pull up outside the Paw

Paddock; she seems to know that's her time. There are no dogs there. She's got no fear; she can't get out of the car quick enough. She's looking at you as if to say 'where's the ball then?' because we throw the ball."

And back at home, Sheba is the queen of the Jagers' hearts. She has her favourite spot in the garden, toys galore to cuddle up with, and devoted attention from her owners.

Carole adds: "We love her dearly. We've never had children so both of us have always preferred animals, and sometimes rate them higher than some humans to be fair.

"She means the world. We adore her. Just adore her."



Healed and **HAPPY**

Brave kitten overcomes painful injuries to find a happy home...

At just a few months old, Pickle was homeless and in need of emergency care.

Kitten playtime had turned to horror when her head was accidentally shut in a heavy door, leaving her with a fractured skull and jaw.

And with her family unable to

afford vet treatment or provide the right environment for the lengthy rehabilitation ahead, injured Pickle found herself in Blue Cross care.

Sadly, she is one of a mounting number of pets given up or abandoned as owners struggle to pay for food and vet care.

But Pickle was in the right place. Despite being in lots of pain with her jaw, the brave kitten stunned our team when she started eating.

And so, as she was so young and still growing, vets decided that the best way to heal her broken bones was rest, pain relief and plenty of TLC.



BEFORE



“

When we first got her, she didn't know when to stop playing – we had to teach her ways to slow down and stop. She's much calmer now, but still loves to play.

”

Once well enough, the kitten went to our Burford rehoming centre in Oxfordshire to continue her recovery.

She needed medication throughout the night to keep her comfortable, so Elisha Webber, Animal Welfare Assistant, took her into foster care.

WHIRLWIND

“She was a bit of a whirlwind,” says Elisha. “She's two extremes – very loving and affectionate but also extremely playful. We could easily see how she was injured.”

After 52 days in our care, Pickle found a home where she could put her painful past behind her.

A tiny, barely noticeable deformity in her jaw is the only indicator of her sad start to life.

She now lives with Laura Booth and Scott Nicol in London and couldn't be more loved or happier.

Her favourite game is being chased, and when she's keen to play, she'll often fetch her feather toy and drop it at her owners' feet.

Laura says: “When we first got her, she didn't know when to stop playing – we had to teach her ways to slow down and stop. She's much calmer now, but still loves to play.”

Seeing Pickle develop and grow in confidence has been rewarding.

“She's a lot more confident in herself now,” explains Laura.

“She wasn't happy being left alone and would follow us all over.

“Now she's confident and happy staying put. Noises outside used to make her skittish too, but she doesn't bat an eyelid now.”

But Pickle remains a cuddly, affectionate soul, which makes her even more special to her owners.

Laura adds: “She prefers to be with someone constantly. She likes four to five proper cuddles a day including a long cuddle in bed in the morning to start the day. She's brought a lot of love into our lives.”



Queen Elizabeth II
officially unveiled our
refurbished Victoria
animal hospital in 2001

Remembering our LATE QUEEN

Blue Cross joined the nation in paying tribute to Her Majesty's remarkable reign following her death in September last year...

No pet lover could have failed to be moved by the sight of Queen Elizabeth II's two corgis and beloved pony watching her funeral cortège approach Windsor Castle.

It was a poignant nod on an emotional day to Her Majesty's love of animals, which endured throughout her reign as the longest-serving monarch of Britain and the Commonwealth.

And our charity was honoured and thrilled that in 1997 – the year of our centenary – Queen Elizabeth II graciously agreed to be our charity's patron until 2000.

In 2001, we also welcomed her to officially open our refurbished Victoria animal hospital, which continues to treat thousands of pets needing urgent help every year.

The hospital in central London, thought to be the first of its kind in the world, first opened in 1906.

It hasn't closed its doors since, remaining open through periods including the Blitz, when injured pets plucked from bombed-out buildings were treated and operated on by candlelight during blackouts.



© Lichfield/Lichfield Archive Via Getty Images

“

Her love of pets will never be forgotten and will continue through generations of the Royal Family to come.

”



© Glyn Kirk/AFP Via Getty Images

The hospital, which now helps around 2,000 pets a month, is three storeys high with a large waiting area, operation theatres, dispensary, kennels, and six consultation clinics.

During her visit, Her Majesty was given a behind-the-scenes tour and Alison Thomas, Head of Veterinary Services at Blue Cross, was lucky enough to meet her.

She remembers: "I was in the prep room where we prepare pets for surgery. I explained to The Queen how pets are anaesthetised before their operation.

"I remember her listening very closely before asking: 'And how do you wake them up?' I thought this was a very intelligent question."

We are so very grateful for Her Majesty's remarkable service and devotion to animals.

Chris Burghes, Chief Executive of Blue Cross, adds: "My deepest condolences go out to her family as well as the many people affected by her loss. She will be very sadly missed, but her love for her pets will never be forgotten and will continue through generations of the Royal Family to come."





Best friends REUNITED

Rescue pony pals are 'living their best life' now they're back together again...

Despite spending five years apart, Treacle and Candy's bond is stronger than ever.

And seeing the Shetlands happily reunited and enjoying life together alongside her other Blue Cross rescue pony, Bubbles, brings their owner Joanna Robins daily joy.

Bookend bay mares Treacle and Candy, both 15, first arrived at our Burford horse unit in 2011 as part of a large welfare case in bad condition.

Initially adopted together, they found themselves back at Blue Cross five years later due to a change in their then-owner's circumstances.

Joanna, from Oxfordshire, then rehomed Candy in 2016 as a companion for Blue Cross rescue skewbald Shetland Bubbles, who

is now 12, but Treacle had already found another home.

"Fast forward another five years and Treacle was once again returned to Blue Cross," explains Lauren Bush, Horse Rehoming Coordinator.

Joanna, who quickly spotted Treacle on our website, says: "It didn't take long to decide that she had to come and live with us – she and Candy had lived together as a pair for five years and had always been in the same herd, so I was sure it was the right thing to do!"

INSTANT

Nervous that the two ponies may not remember that they were old friends, Joanna introduced them over a fence – but the pair instantly recognised



BEFORE



each other in what turned out to be an emotional and heartwarming reunion in October 2021.

Joanna says: "I was a little bit concerned about them because they hadn't seen each other for such a long time.

"But really and truly, they were absolutely fine. Candy was so excited. She did miss most of the moment because she was running around the field with excitement. So, when we finally got her to calm down, we put them in together.

"They were very, very pleased to see each other – just thrilled to be back together. The pair of them are very sweet."

“

They were very, very pleased to see each other – just thrilled to be back together. The pair of them are very sweet... Candy actually takes a lot of confidence from her.

”

With Bubbles in the mix, it took the trio a short time to find their hooves, but were soon living in harmony, with confident Treacle the natural leader.

"Candy isn't naturally a lead pony," explains Joanna. "But because Bubbles has always been bottom of the pecking order, she took the place of a lead pony.

"Treacle has come in and is definitely a lead mare. But she has the confidence to take that role without having to assert it too much. And Candy is much happier for being in that position."

Candy has also grown more confident since having her old friend back by her side.

"Candy could be quite highly strung and a little bit nervous and anxious," continues Joanna.

"But Treacle is the opposite of that,



Joanna (left) and friend Jenny with Treacle and Candy



she's very confident and you can do most things with her. It's almost like she's been there and done it all.

"So, Candy actually takes a lot of confidence from her and has definitely benefited from having her around. She's much more chilled about everything."

SPECIAL BOND

Joanna, who also has two ridden ponies and a pair of rescue alpacas, says: "Treacle and Candy are living their best life, totally joined at the hip and sharing their hay, like they've never been apart."

And seeing this special bond deepen has brought huge rewards

to Joanna and her friend, Jenny, who helps to care for them.

Joanna continues: "It's so lovely to see ponies bonding in the way they have bonded.

"It's lovely to have horses around full-stop, but I think what's been particularly nice for me has been the times that I've been able to relax and spend time with them.

"All three of them are very sweet-natured and they'll come and spend time with you. They'll nuzzle me and look for snacks."

AGILITY

Joanna enjoys competing in Shetland agility contests with the trio, as well as

practising lunging and driving.

And each year, on Boxing Day, Joanna takes Treacle and Candy down to her local village in what has become an annual highlight for the children there and raises vital funds for Blue Cross.

She adds: "If you get ponies and you're not riding them, they can still bring so much pleasure.

"Just spending time with them is a lovely thing to do. Like having any pet and working with them and teaching them; it's rewarding in itself."

Lauren adds: "We were thrilled to reunite this pair, and seeing that they very much remembered each other made it even more special."



A miniature **MIRACLE**

Poorly mouse Mini Mike was a third of the size of his brothers...

No bigger than a little finger, Mini Mike was tiny when he needed lifesaving care.

While his siblings grew and thrived, the minuscule mouse wasn't developing as he should have been.

Katie Stiles, who was helping to care for Mini Mike at our Burford rehoming centre in Oxfordshire, says: "Mini Mike was born on-site as part of an unexpected and big litter, shortly after we took in their mum.

"Once the litter was taken away from mum, we noticed that Mini Mike was looking very small, although he was eating.

"He was so tiny that he was about the size of a 'pinky' while his brothers were two to three times bigger.

"They initially seemed to be looking after him, but then sadly seemed to start picking on him."

STRENGTH

The team separated Mini Mike from his siblings to provide one-to-one care which included syringe feeding to help build his strength.

But he quickly took a further turn for the worse and, two days before Christmas last year, ended up in intensive care at the vets'.

Katie continues: "He became very weak, and his breathing deteriorated, so he was taken to the vet where he was given intensive care, including pain relief and antibiotics for a suspected chest infection. He was helped with his breathing as well."

Mini Mike responded well to treatment and, in the new year, returned to our Burford centre to continue his recovery.

Once neutered, he found a loving home alongside some female friends – as mice are social creatures that need the company of their own kind to be happy.

Adoption

Could you take me home?



These wonderful pets are in search of a second chance

Bobby and Shadow

Hey there, I'm Bobby. I was so lonely until Shadow hopped into my life and we want nothing more than to continue our love story in a happy home. It must be time soon, I've been waiting for more than a year!

Hertfordshire, 0300 777 1844



Max Verstappen

Howdy! I'm here (left) with my eight brothers, and we're all named after racing car drivers as we're sooooo lightning quick. We've now been neutered and are looking for homes in groups or with some lady friends.

Burford, 0300 777 1849



Ella

I wonder what a real home feels like! I'm told it's not my fault, but I've spent all my life in kennels. I've heard about these squidgy things called sofas, which I'd love to try! Have you a space on yours for me?

Southampton, 0300 777 1847



Mitzie

I'm a beautiful lady, don't you think? Aged 11, I find myself all alone after my owner died. I've got boundless love to give but a health condition is putting new people off, even though it can be managed with medication.

Bromsgrove, 0300 777 1842



Poppet and Bentley

We're like chalk and cheese, but that's why we make such a good match. All we need now is a home to call our own, but we've been waiting for a while. Could you find a space in your heart for two rabbits like us?

Southampton, 0300 777 1847



Johnny Rebel

At the ripe old age of 28 (though I don't look a day over 20, you know!) I'm in search of a quiet, non-ridden home. My dream yard would offer me some gentle love and friendly horsey company.

Rolleston, 0300 777 1846



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

HELPING THE PETS OF WAR

Blue Cross has partnered with four charities caring for animals affected by the war in Ukraine, while our Rehoming Team helped to settle refugee pets arriving in the UK...

A year on from Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine, Blue Cross continues to support the innocent pets and their people caught up in the devastation.

Our Ukraine Pet Welfare Fund has supported four partners: Save the Dogs and TAC.social in Romania, TOZ in Poland and the Ukraine Equestrian Federation. In this six-page special, we bring you news from the frontline.

Rem is one of 30 dogs displaced by a Russian attack on a pet shelter in Odessa, Ukraine



A SECOND CHANCE for bombed shelter dogs

The shelter he called home was bombed and he then endured a torturous 15-hour journey to safety.

But still, Rem arrived at Save the Dogs in Cernavoda, Romania, with a wagging tail and plenty of hope.

Such was his sunny disposition, that it soon inspired the team to name the young dog after the band R.E.M. as its iconic hit *Shiny, Happy People* epitomised his sweet soul.

Roberta Mantoni, one of Rem's main carers, says: "He's a very peaceful, calm and relaxed dog. Since day one, he was very sociable. He really loves cuddles.

"It's really lovely to be around him, because he's always happy, always trying to brighten your day."

Even when a positive heartworm result meant that Rem faced isolation despite him loving the company of other dogs, he remained upbeat.

Roberta continues: "He was allowed short walks and that was really a fun part of the day for him. It was still the highlight to meet people."

Rem tested negative for heartworm after six months of treatment and was paired with another dog while he waited to find a new home.

With support from our Ukraine Pet Welfare Fund, Rem was one of 30 dogs rescued by Save the Dogs from a shelter in Odessa, Ukraine, that had already taken in many pets of war when it was shelled by the Russians.

Unlike Rem, most of the dogs were left withdrawn and traumatised.

Like Tymon, who spent a month

curled up in a ball of fear – too afraid to walk. For weeks, he had to be physically carried to the centre's garden before realising he was safe.

Adriana Susma, who was working at the Romanian border with Ukraine to support refugees and their pets at the time of Rem and Tymon's rescue in March last year, saw the dogs part-way through their journey to safety.

She says: "The feeling I received when I saw them in that van was heartbreaking. They were not in a bad position physically, but they were definitely traumatised. I'm grateful they came here [to Save the Dogs]."

Sadly, these dogs are the lucky few. Tens of thousands of cats and dogs remain on Ukraine's war-torn streets, as shelters there hit breaking point.

Funded by Blue Cross, brave Save the Dogs volunteers continued to distribute vital food and lifesaving shelters to street animals throughout the freezing winter, which many without help couldn't survive.

And, with support from UK animal lovers, we hope to continue funding this critical work for the many more difficult months to come.



Poor Tymon, pictured with Roberta, arrived at Save the Dogs traumatised



VET CARE FOR REFUGEE PETS is a lifeline

On 21 February last year, Evgenia woke to the sound of bombs exploding beside her home in Kyiv.

She hurried her two children, mother, and pets to a nearby bomb shelter as the Russian shells rained down on the Ukrainian capital at the outbreak of Putin's illegal war.

"We were scared because they bombed very hard in Kyiv," says Evgenia. "We were in the bomb shelter for around one week. Then after this week our friends from Romania called and said: 'We can help'. So, we're here."

To protect their already traumatised family, Evgenia had no other choice but to leave behind her husband – who had been conscripted into the Ukrainian army – and head over the country's border to safety.

They are now safe in the Romanian city of Cluj-Napoca, and their dog Nika and cat Chupa are among those being supported by the not-for-profit vet clinic TAC.social, thanks to Blue Cross's Ukraine Pet Welfare Fund.

Some 60 pets, some of whom faced journeys of more than 40 hours to safety, have been helped by the TAC.social team, with Blue Cross support, since March 2022.

For people like Evgenia, the care given to her beloved pets – who she describes as her 'youngest children' – has been a lifeline.



She says: "They are members of my family, like children. We love them."

Both pets have been given vital routine treatment, while Chupa has also been spayed to protect her from future health problems and any unplanned pregnancies.

The trauma of hearing Russian bombs fall around her, and the overcrowded train journey to safety, has taken its toll on poor Nika, who is now particularly sensitive to loud noises and more nervous.

But she finds comfort in Chupa and her family, while both pets have helped Evgenia and her children settle into their new, unexpected life.

Such is the level of gratitude the family has for TAC.social, that Evgenia's 13-year-old son Arkadiy, who developed a deep interest in animal care, volunteers at the clinic.

Soon, Evgenia hopes it will be safe for her family and pets to return to Ukraine and reunite with her husband, who she speaks to daily.

Until then, TAC.social and Blue Cross will be there for them.

VOLUNTEER RISKS LIFE FOR PETS OF WAR

A heroic volunteer has been risking her life to rescue cats and dogs left behind on the streets of Ukraine.

Supported by the Blue Cross Ukraine Pet Welfare Fund and TOZ (The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) in Poland, Karina has driven for up to four days at a time in perilous conditions to save pets.

One of her rescue missions recently involved bringing 52 terrified cats left to roam the battle-strewn streets to safety.

Another trip saw her save six dogs from the brutality of war.

They included Hope, a dog left with a broken spine and unable to walk after Russian soldiers savagely kicked and pelted her with stones.

Blue Cross funded Hope's rescue alongside the five other dogs, as well as the vet treatment each needed to

make a recovery from their unimaginable ordeals.

Hope now lives happily in the countryside with friend Beza, another Ukraine war dog.

Seeing the pets being showered with the love and care they deserve, is what makes it all worthwhile for Karina, who has seen unimaginable horrors of animal suffering during her rescue missions in Ukraine.

She says: "It gives me a lot of strength to see them undergo a huge metamorphosis.

"It's not only thanks to me, but above all thanks to you [Blue Cross]. Because without your help I would not be able to do anything."

The money donated so far by kind supporters in the UK has also gone towards the care of 29 dogs at one of TOZ's partner shelters in Rivne, Ukraine.





HELPING REFUGEE PETS coming to the UK

For the first month of the war in Ukraine, Betty brought some rare joy to the terrified children at the school where her owner worked in Kyiv.

Most of the pupils had waved goodbye to fathers conscripted to the army, watched Russian shells destroy

their beautiful city and witnessed their mothers struggling to cope with the shock of the invasion.

But the golden Labrador puppy, who was rescued at just two months old after being left behind by a family fleeing a heavily bombed area, was a ray of sunshine amid the darkness.

Owner Viktoriia says: "She helped me to make the children happier, more smiley.

"They forgot about everything. They forgot they were scared.

"They just ran all the time, smiling and giggling and playing with lovely Betty. She was really very helpful."

Betty was also a huge comfort to Viktoriia, who was alone due to her husband being in the military and their two children – Elizabeth, eight, and Bohdan, 10 – staying with their grandparents in a safer area.

Soon, it became too dangerous for Viktoriia to stay, too.

And so a kind sponsor family offered her, Betty and the children a home in England.

But, due to strict quarantine rules in the UK to protect from zoonotic diseases like rabies, Viktoriia feared that she would not be able to bring her beloved pet.

That was until Blue Cross stepped in to provide a safe and loving place for Betty to spend her four-month isolation period.

Without it, her journey to the UK may not have been possible.

JOURNEY

Our Hertfordshire centre cared for a total of 13 pets belonging to Ukrainian refugees arriving in the UK.

And for young Betty, who was just a few months old on her arrival, this care also meant lots of training work and enrichment to keep her puppy brain busy and active.

Viktoriia couldn't be more grateful to the team, who provided regular updates, photos and videos.

She adds: "In the video she was happy, jumping and playing. I don't feel sad that my dog was here.

"They didn't just walk her. They spent a lot of time with my dog and gave a lot of love. I am really very happy to have an organisation like this who can take care of pets, the most important things in the world."



TOGETHER AGAIN AS LIFE IS REBUILT

"Elya is a part of me, I go anywhere with her," says Lisa about her beloved cat, Elya.

Alongside her mother and grandmother Natalia, she is one of the thousands of people to have fled the war in Ukraine for the UK.

And, thanks to Blue Cross, Lisa was able to bring Elya, while Natalia could bring her beloved Pekinese dog, Bonya. Both were cared for by our Hertfordshire rehoming centre during their quarantine period.

Lisa says: "The Blue Cross really helped me and thank you very much for that. I am very glad that they were with you and you took care of them, sent me photos and I was convinced that they were doing well. I can see from them that they are safe."

We're delighted that Lisa and her family are safely reunited with their beloved Bonya and Elya, and that despite all they've been through over the past year, they can now enjoy a little piece of home together.



Take steps to change the lives of pets and their people

Clock up 300,000 sponsored steps this May, and you can make a real difference to some of the UK's most vulnerable pets – and people too – right when they need it most.

And with a Steps for Pets dog tag, your dog can look their best whenever they tag along!

First steps

To find out more visit bluecross.org.uk/steps-for-pets

The £12.50 entry fee acts as your first donation – in return you'll get an exclusive Steps for Pets drawstring backpack.



The Blue Cross Heart



Blue Cross provides lifelong support for pets and people, from their first moments together, to their final goodbyes... and beyond.

The Blue Cross Heart badge is made from seed paper. Using a pin, you can attach it to clothes or a bag and wear it. Once you decide to remove your badge, you can then plant it and watch the flowers grow as a poignant way of celebrating pets' lives.

To purchase the Blue Cross Heart, visit our Blue Cross eBay shop at: ebay.co.uk/str/bluecrossforpets



Never Forgotten. Always in my Heart.

Letters

We love to hear from you

Please send us your news and pictures of your pets!



'HE'S BROUGHT US SO MUCH JOY'

I wanted to share with you a photo of Oscar. We got him from a cattery in Andover in 2021 which had offered their facilities to Blue Cross during lockdown. He was a stray and Blue Cross had given him the name of Mildrew. And even though he looked grumpy in his picture on your website, he was anything but. He head-butted us in greeting when we went to visit him, and we knew we didn't need to look at any more cats.

Here he is helping me with my studies. He is an independent indoor/outdoor cat who insists on playtime most evenings with throw the mouse or chase the string. He has brought much joy into our lives and takes up a full third of the bed at night.

Thank you for connecting us to him.

Catherine Anderson



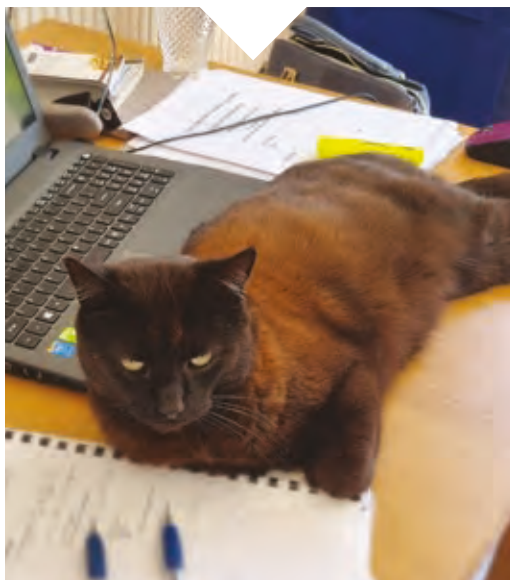
THANK YOU, BLUE CROSS!

After reading your magazine I thought you may like a picture of Sammy and Smokey. They have just had their first birthdays and we collected them from Bromsgrove when they were about 10 weeks old back in October 2021.

They both have the kindest natures and are a very special part of our family, enjoying lots of strokes and cuddles and now enjoying the garden.

We love them very much. My only regret is that we didn't have their two brothers as well! Thank you.

Julia Waddington



We love to hear how Blue Cross pets are changing lives...

Please email your letters and photos to editor@bluecross.org.uk or write to For Pets Editor, Blue Cross, Shilton Road, Burford, Oxon OX18 4PF

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MIRACLE PUPPIES

survive against all odds

A litter of eight golden retrievers born in an emergency C-section to a sick stray mum have been saved and rehomed by Blue Cross...

It was touch and go. And, had it not been for a team of 30 people working round-the-clock to deliver lifesaving care, they wouldn't have made it.

Golden retrievers Theodore, Cider, Dougal, Kasper, Winnie, Holly, Sasha and Bailey were born by caesarean at a vet practice close to Blue Cross Burford in Oxfordshire last year.

Their stray mum, Amber, arrived at the rehoming centre days earlier, starving and heavily pregnant.

In grave danger, we placed her under close monitoring and rushed to the vets when the stressed mother-to-be took a further turn for the worse.

With her unborn litter's heart rates dipping, it was now a race against the clock to deliver them safely.

Thankfully, all eight puppies arrived and drew their first breaths. But they weren't out of the woods yet.

The first two weeks were crucial for both mum and pups, especially Holly, who was half the size of her littermates and born with a hernia which required an operation to repair.

Burford Centre Manager, Hannah Wiltshire, says: "We were seriously



concerned about all of them – there was a serious risk that all nine of them wouldn't make it."

WEAK AND STRESSED

As mum was so poorly, weak and stressed, the team had to give the puppies supplementary hand-feeds every three hours from the outset.

This required volunteers from all over Blue Cross working shift patterns, day and night, and sleeping at the centre on makeshift beds.

"Myself, along with one colleague, stayed with them for that first night," says Hannah.

"Puppies have to eat, and when you hand-rear, you can't make them eat. So, it is them deciding to do it. But if they didn't eat, they wouldn't survive. It was really touch and go."

She continues: "It was a massive team effort. My team only has 12 people in it, and so there were people from the horse unit and head office, which we share the site with, also volunteering to help. It was intense."

But, thanks to the extraordinary efforts of all involved, they all made it.



Diary of HANNAH WILTSHIRE

Burford Blue Cross Centre Manager

Hannah has worked at Blue Cross for 15 years. Over that time she's seen some appalling cases of neglect, but none as horrific as that of Amber and her unborn puppies.

Weeks one and two

There's little sleep to be had at the moment. The puppies need feeding every three hours and we're always on hand to support Amber, who's very stressed and sick.

Both mum and puppies remain in a critical condition, but we're doing all we can.

Week three

We can now breathe a cautious sigh of relief. The puppies are past the crucial two-week mark, and Amber is sleeping deeply for the first time. They're all fighters, but there's plenty more to do.

Weeks four to five

Amber is so much more relaxed and happy. And the puppies' personalities are shining through. They took their first trip outside in their stride.

Weeks six to seven

In group sessions with the puppies' new owners, we've taught them how to continue their socialisation and training at home.

Week eight

It's bittersweet to say goodbye to these puppies, but we're so happy to see them go to loving homes. Now for some well-earned rest...





SOCIALISATION

Once the risky first few weeks were behind them, the focus shifted to the puppies' socialisation process.

Hannah explains: "In a home environment, they would just be exposed to things organically, like different flooring and different sounds. So, all the things we don't

even register, like doorbells, phones, ovens and kettles, or kids playing and different voices, that's all stuff they're not going to be exposed to unless we make it happen."

Our team developed a special weekly plan for the litter, to ensure they experienced the things they needed to at the right times.

This included the puppies being played CDs introducing them to new sounds gradually, like fireworks.

And the windows and doors of the puppy unit were left open as much as possible, so they could hear the birds, wind and planes.

Hannah says: "There was an extra level of effort that our team put in to ensure they were getting exposure to the different sounds, shapes and touches at the right ages.

"The plan was put into action from day one and continued right up until they went to their homes and continues with their new families with our support."

By the time they were four weeks old, the puppies oozed confidence and were eager to explore anything in their surroundings, as well as run around playing with each other.



MUM AMBER THRIVES WITH NEW FAMILY

After her puppies were all adopted, it was Amber's time to secure the happy future she so very deserved.

She had been through so much – abandoned while heavily pregnant in a field and with a terrible case of mange, a painful skin condition which left her covered in agonising sores.

Terrified, she spent days running away from concerned dog walkers until she had no energy left in her to flee, and was brought to Blue Cross.

When Amber arrived in our care, she was starving and her bones were protruding. It was a heartbreaking case of neglect that shocked our team to the core.

But, despite all she had been through, she was a brilliant mum – and hadn't lost her ability to love.

And now, she's an adored family pet alongside fellow Blue Cross rescue dog, Crumble.

New owner Elly says: "She's unbelievably stoic with how she's coped with everything. She's brought us happiness. It's lovely, she's the perfect family pet."

Hannah says: "Their development just skyrocketed. They were so confident in everything we gave them to do. They picked up independent feeding straight away and went outside for the first time without hesitation. They were just superstars.

"It was adorable when they started playing with each other and would let out these tiny puppy barks out of nowhere, which were so cute. They all had such strong little characters that we knew which one was which.

"The boys would just eat and sleep, but the girls were more active and loved playing.

"When we'd go in to see them in the mornings and they started rushing towards us with tails wagging, you got that lovely fuzzy feeling which made all the sleepless nights and worry worth it."

CHERISHED PETS

Blue Cross found loving homes for all eight puppies midway through their time with us, so that our team could bring in the new owners for group training sessions to ensure they had the very best start to their life as cherished pets.

And, at eight weeks old, they all flew the nest, leaving behind an exhausted but happy team.

Hannah adds: "It was hard to let them go, as we'd invested two months of our lives into them. It was not a normal litter of puppies or hand-rears, it was extremes of both.

"But we had spent lots of time with the new owners so know they will be happy, and hopefully we'll get updates and see them grow up."



“

Their development just skyrocketed. They were so confident in everything we gave them to do... They were just superstars.

”



News

Bitesize stories



All the latest news from Blue Cross



MEDAL WINNER

A heroic hound, who counts chasing away burglars among his incredible efforts to keep his owners safe, won the 2022 Blue Cross Medal.

Alaskan malamute Storm stopped thieves getting upstairs to his sleeping owner Karen Crosby and scared them into dropping their stash.

Other heroics include saving cats from a housefire and helping Karen and husband Phil with their health issues.

Karen says: "Storm is a hero to me for everything he has done and continues to do."

Storm won the historic medal in 2022, our charity's 125th year.

Feeding more pets in need

Blue Cross has rapidly expanded its network of pet food banks up and down the country in response to the deepening cost of living crisis.

Our scheme to feed hungry pets launched in June 2021 in Sheffield and has now been rolled out to sites nationwide while also supporting 90 food banks for people.

It comes in the face of unprecedented demand from struggling owners who, without the scheme, could potentially face the unimaginable decision to give up their much-loved pet.

We strive to keep pets and the people that love them together wherever possible, and support from our pet food banks is just one of the

many ways we continue to do this.

There are currently 13 Blue Cross hospitals, rehoming centres and shops operating their own pet food banks, both collecting and distributing vital supplies to those in need.

Meanwhile, many of our other sites – as well as more than 100 Pets at Home stores up and down the country – have food donation points that supply existing schemes supporting people.

Louise Newman, Hospital Lead at our Victoria animal hospital, which has teamed up with a human food bank at Westminster Chapel, said: "No pet should have to go hungry, and no one should have to choose between feeding themselves or feeding their pets."



Find out more at bluecross.org.uk/GivePetFood



ONE-EYED DOG ON THE MEND

A stray long-haired Chihuahua injured in a suspected car accident has made a full recovery and found a loving home.

Missy, six, arrived at our Grimsby animal hospital with painful injuries to her eye, lacerations to her ears, a fractured rib, matted fur and overgrown claws. Sadly, her left eye could not be saved.

But she soon made a full recovery and was placed in foster care with Jenny Day, Blue Cross Volunteer Co-ordinator and Animal Welfare Assistant, for some extra TLC.

Jenny says: "It was a pleasure to have Missy in my care while we searched for the perfect new home after her ordeal.

"She enjoyed having the company of my two dogs and her foster kitten playmate. We are delighted that she is in safe hands now in a loving home of her own."

Warehouse cat's transformation

A straggly stray cat, who spent months living in a warehouse, has been given a makeover and a new lease of life by Blue Cross.

Dirty and dishevelled Dave arrived at our Victoria animal hospital in central London after the warehouse workers, who were increasingly concerned for his welfare, bought a safe trap to catch him with.

MATTED

He needed a full shave to remove his matted fur, a dental which included three teeth being removed, and a tasty prescription diet to treat early-stage kidney disease.

Amanda Rumball, London Welfare Officer, says: "Dave was the sweetest gent. Slowly, we started to get his face back to the white it once was!

"He is one of those cats who is just beyond amazing. He has had a hard life being a stray but is so lovely that he has obviously been owned at some point in his past."

Dave, who we think is about five years old, lapped up some love in foster care before being adopted.



WORRYING HAIRLESS PETS TREND

Furless rats Bert and Ernie are among a spike in bald pets in need of Blue Cross help.

We're concerned about a growing trend for hairless pets and the lack of awareness among potential owners about their special needs.

Health issues can include respiratory problems, reduced tolerance to the cold, skin injuries and conditions, kidney and liver failure and a shortened lifespan.

Becky Thwaites, Head of Public Affairs at Blue Cross, says: "Sadly many owners buy these pets on impulse without realising how much special care they need.

"They have complex needs and we'd urge anyone looking to take on any hairless animal to really consider this."





Whatever happened to?

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

ALBERT

Albert was a shell of a dog after being abandoned in a field in agony, with devastating injuries.

The terrier had suffered horrendous facial wounds consistent with the cruel illegal practice of badger baiting.

With several cuts to his face, and

an enormous, deep cut on his chin, he recoiled in pain when examined by the vets at our Victoria animal hospital in central London.

But his tail never stopped wagging. And after a long road to recovery, he found happiness with one of the vets who helped to bring him back from the brink.

Johannah Maxwell, who rehomed Albert after fostering him, says: "His case was the worst [I've seen] because he was such a baby. Despite what had happened, he was still such a nice dog, and that was what was really sad about it.

"Now he's perfect," she says. "He's all healed up and he's very well."

As a much-loved pet, Albert has put his sad beginning behind him.

Now, his is a life full of cuddling up on the sofa after countryside walks; and what more could a dog ask for?



FOUND IN A BOX

Abandoned in the early hours of the morning in a shopping centre car park with part of her right ear missing, Florence's past was a mystery.

But she's safe now. The young rabbit thankfully found herself at our Victoria animal hospital in central London, which has seen a worrying spike in bunny abandonments over the past year.

Once she'd had a thorough health check, she travelled to Southampton Blue Cross to find a home.

Florence must have been so confused and scared by her ordeal, but she didn't let the horrid experience hold her back and was soon zooming around her spacious pen.

Rabbits need to live with their own kind to be happy. And, after a short wait, Florence found a neutered male companion to live with in a happy new home.





KITTEN overcomes sad loss

A tiny kitten who survived against all odds is thriving in a new home.

Ziggy arrived in our care with his siblings and brave mum Emma, who was struggling to care for her seven kittens in someone's back garden. They were all in a terrible way.

"We thought they were going to die," says Caroline Oram, Animal Welfare Assistant at our Bromsgrove rehoming centre in Worcestershire.

Two-year-old Emma was so terrified that she had toileted over her litter and – perhaps due to the trauma she had endured – wasn't producing enough milk to feed her young.

But the team stepped in to provide supplement feeds round-the-clock and soon, mum and kittens were on the mend.

BROTHERLY LOVE

Little Ziggy was particularly close to his brother Martin, who developed a terminal neurological condition.

After all the other kittens fled the nest, Ziggy remained in foster care with Martin while he underwent tests and treatment as the pair brought such deep comfort to one another.

Devastatingly, Martin didn't make it and Ziggy found himself all alone.

Caroline, who fostered the pair,

says: "It was heartbreaking to see. Martin was wobbling and unable to walk properly but he found such reassurance when with Ziggy.

"The brothers would always be cuddled up together, they loved each other so much. We were all so sad for Ziggy when we lost Martin."

But, after lots of TLC from Caroline, Ziggy found a new home where he continues to be showered with love.



BEFORE



WIN! A sofa worth £2,000*

Sofology wants everyone to feel at home on a sofa they love – and that includes our four-legged friends, who are very much part of the family.

That's why it's offering one lucky For Pets reader the chance to win a sofa up to the value of £2,000 in a pet-friendly fabric. The velvet-like fabric is more resistant to pet claws and is smooth to the surface, meaning that pet hairs can be wiped away with ease. What's more, most household stains can be easily cleaned from this fabric with only water, making it easier to get rid of pet odours.

Kelly Jupp is the winner of the Pan Pacific London pet-friendly hotel stay in our autumn 2022 issue of For Pets. Congratulations!

HOW TO ENTER

Answer the following question to be in with a chance of winning:

On pages 12 to 15, we brought you the story of a pair of rescue ponies, Treacle and Candy. What is the name of the other Shetland they live with?

- Bourbon
- Betty
- Bubbles

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

Freepost BLUE CROSS FOR PETS

Or, enter online at

bluecross.org.uk/forpets

Name:

Address:

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Postcode:

Telephone:

Email:

Closing date Friday, 28 April, 2023
*Strictly one entry per household.

*Terms and conditions apply to this competition. The prize is a voucher that can be redeemed (in-store only) in any seating combination of the pet-friendly fabric up to the value of £2,000. Voucher valid until 31 December 2023. No other prizes or cash alternatives. Cannot be used to pay off existing sofa balances or finance. For full terms and conditions, visit bluecross.org.uk/forpets. Blue Cross respects your privacy and will keep your information safe and secure and will only use it in accordance with our Privacy Policy. We will not sell, rent or share your personal data with other organisations for their marketing purposes. We may use your data for profiling purposes to make future communications more relevant to you. To see more about how we will use your information visit bluecross.org.uk/privacy. You can change your preferences at any time by contacting our Supporter Care Team on 0300 790 9903 or email info@bluecross.org.uk

FIND US

Discover your local Blue Cross

We also have 53 shops, and a rapidly growing number of pet food banks and donation points

Our animal hospitals

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

Our pet care clinics

- 5 Derby
- 6 York

Our rehoming units and centres

- 7 Bromsgrove
- 8 Burford
- 9 Exeter
- 10 Hertfordshire (Kimpton)
- 11 Manchester
- 12 Newport
- 13 Rolleston
- 14 Sheffield
- 15 Southampton
- 16 Suffolk (Ipswich)
- 17 Thirsk



Say hello, find your nearest Blue Cross or make a donation

Call: 0300 790 9903 **Email:** info@bluecross.org.uk **Visit:** bluecross.org.uk

Write to us: Freepost BLUE CROSS FOR PETS

Book a free education talk

Animal welfare and responsible pet ownership workshops for children and young people in schools.

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

Pet Bereavement Support Service

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

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

Email: pbssmail@bluecross.org.uk

For the full map of all Blue Cross locations visit bluecross.org.uk/findus



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We change theirs

Remember me in your Will



Pets change lives
We change theirs



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

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

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Alternatively, call or email and quote: B123

Telephone: **0300 790 9903**

Email: legacy@bluecross.org.uk

Thank you for your continued support.

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B123

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- If you are happy for us to contact you by phone, please tick*



*From time to time we may wish to communicate with you by phone with news about the pets you are helping and ways you can help in the future. If you are happy for us to do this, please fill in your details on the form and tick the box.

Blue Cross is a charity registered in England and Wales (224392) and in Scotland (SC040154).

