

# FOR PETS

The magazine for Blue Cross supporters

Spring 2022

## The future is Yoda

Brave kitten survives against all odds



Pets change lives  
We change theirs

# Struggling to cope with the loss of your pet?

Our Pet Bereavement Support  
Service is here to help



Pets change lives  
We change theirs

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**COVER STORY**

**10 Brave Yoda survived against all odds**  
And stole our hearts

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**WELCOME**

We're so proud of our rich history here at Blue Cross and this year we're celebrating an incredible 125 years of work. We've helped more than five million pets and 20 million people since our humble beginnings treating injured horses on the streets of London in 1897. And, in this special issue, we look back at the many different ways we've done this. Today, we continue to grow and adapt so that we can help millions more with your support in the years to come. We do this not only because pets need us, but we also need them. Animals like horse Micky and greyhound Bleu, who you'll soon read about, are shining examples of the astonishing ways that animals change lives and the reason we exist.

**Aimee Brannen, Editor**

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# OUR HISTORY

**T**his year marks our 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of helping animals. Blue Cross was born on the streets of London in 1897, and we've helped nearly five million pets and more than 20 million people since then.

Our four animal hospitals continue to offer vital vet care and our rehoming teams are there for homeless pets, while our behavioural support and pet food banks help to keep four-legged friends and their families together. We're also there for owners experiencing the pain of losing a pet and we educate future generations on caring for animals responsibly. With your support, we'll never stop being there.

Here's a look back at our rich history of helping pets and people...

A group of animal lovers founded Our Dumb Friends League – the original name for Blue Cross – to care for working horses on the streets of London. Many horses were hurt in road accidents, while others were poorly fed due to poverty and would work long hours in all kinds of weather. We stepped in to care for them.

## 1897



"OUR DUMB FRIENDS' LEAGUE" TRACE HORSE AT WIMBLEDON.  
Trace Horses at work at Archway Hill, Highbury, Wimbledon Hill, Notting Hill, and Grosvenor Place.



## 1901

We bought the first horse ambulance to be used on London's streets for £100, transporting injured animals to hospital. Before this point, injured horses were lying in the street for up to several hours awaiting help. In the same year, we also distributed horse sun hats due to the increasing numbers needing help for heat exhaustion. By 1913, 17 horse ambulances were travelling across the city to deliver life-saving care.



We opened our first animal hospital in Victoria, London (pictured above and below), thought to be the first of its kind in the world. It has since been rebuilt but never once closed its doors to pets in need.

## 1906





## 1912

We launched the Blue Cross Fund to help animals during the Balkan War. A flag bearing a blue cross on a white background on the battlefields became a beacon of hope for injured animals, like the Red Cross was for soldiers. We later changed our name to Blue Cross.



## 1914

We were there again for the animals on the frontline during the First World War. It's estimated that the British Army used 1.2 million horses and mules in the conflict and nearly 500,000 of those sadly died in battle. We helped as many as we could and, by the end of the war, we had treated over 50,000 sick and injured horses at dedicated Blue Cross hospitals on the continent. We also sent vet supplies to more than 3,500 units of the British and allied armies all over the world to treat animals. Above is an early fundraising poster along with a photo of a horse being treated in Serqueux, France.

This watercolour painting (below), Goodbye Old Man by Italian artist Fortunino Matania, was commissioned by the Blue Cross Fund to raise money to relieve the suffering of warhorses in Europe. It shows a heartbreaking scene of a British soldier saying farewell to his dying horse on the battlefield.

## 1916





## 1917

We became sole veterinary carers of the First World War's dogs, which were used extensively by the French Army as sentinels, patrols, watchdogs and messengers – these numbered 18,000. Pictured above is an ambulance collecting dogs in France. Meanwhile, back home, our Blackheath kennels cared for dogs who had become faithful friends to soldiers on the battlefields and were brought back to the UK as pets, until their new owners could collect them.



The first motorised Blue Cross animal ambulance, like this one above, navigated London's streets to transport and treat animals.

## 1923

We set up the War Horse Fund after discovering that 200 ex-British warhorses were being kept in "indescribable" conditions in Europe. It enabled us to rescue and bring back – where possible – any of these heroic four-legged veterans, like the ones pictured below.



## 1940

During the Blitz of the Second World War, our Victoria animal hospital operated on pets by candlelight (above) to save their lives due to injury or illness. And, each night, we opened our doors to pets as their owners headed to air raid shelters. Sadly, we cared for many animals whose owners were killed in the atrocities. Blue Cross heroes also risked their lives to dig injured pets out of the rubble (pictured below).

Many people also had to abandon their homes because of the bombings, and a network of volunteers stepped in to care for these homeless animals. To this day we rely on animal lovers to volunteer and foster pets before they find new homes.



Once again, our Blackheath kennels stepped in to help soldiers and European refugees bring dogs into the country from overseas, caring for them during their mandatory quarantine. During the Second World War, the kennels also cared for the animals of servicemen and women who needed a place to leave their pets during active service. This was despite one particularly powerful blast which tore down the walls and fences of our kennel block, with staff risking their lives against the backdrop of falling bombs and defensive gunfire to round up the terrified animals.

1945



1948

We launched national children's dog shows to encourage young people to care for their pets. Our Education Team continues to go into schools to teach future generations about responsible pet ownership (pictured above).



1959

We opened our new animal hospital in Grimsby, Lincolnshire. We later opened two further hospitals in Merton and Hammersmith, London.



1964

After 13 years of campaigning, we persuaded the Irish government to ban horse exports. Our rich history of political lobbying continues, including recent work calling for an end to breed specific legislation (BSL), which condemns some dogs to death based on a set of outdated measurements. We delivered a petition with 80,000 signatures to 10 Downing Street (shown above).



We opened our rehoming centre in Felixstowe, Suffolk (above). In 2016 we replaced this site with a new, state-of-the-art centre in nearby Ipswich. Our very first rehoming facility is thought to have opened in 1905 in Fulham, London. Today, we have seven rehoming centres with facilities for pets to live on site.

1971



We opened our Burford head office and centre, caring for small animals, dogs, cats and horses.

1991



1992

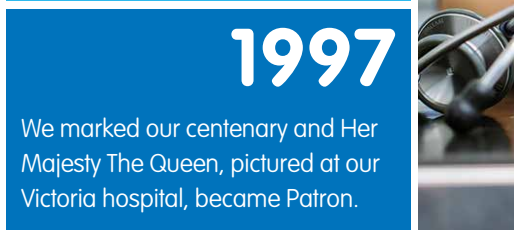
We became the first animal welfare charity to employ an animal behaviourist to help pets with a wide range of difficulties and fears.

Our behaviourists continue to work with the pets in our care and provide ongoing support to owners who have rehomed a Blue Cross animal. Pictured above is our Head of Behaviour Services, Ryan Neile.



We launched our Pet Bereavement Support Service (PBSS), to support those coming to terms with the loss of a pet, whether through death or separation. Since then, we have helped thousands of pet owners of all ages and from all walks of life.

1994



1997

We marked our centenary and Her Majesty The Queen, pictured at our Victoria hospital, became Patron.







## 2014

We opened our first pet care clinic in partnership with a local vet surgery in Derby, to reach more people who cannot afford private vet fees for their pets. We now have four more of these clinics in Luton, Torbay, Kent and York.



## 2016

Our Newport rehoming and advice unit opened, where our team offer support and advice to pet owners as well as helping homeless pets. Rather than pets staying on-site, they remain in their existing home or are placed in foster care while we find them new families. We now have three other similar facilities in Devon, Sheffield and Manchester.



The coronavirus pandemic has meant that we have needed to further embrace digital ways of helping pets and raising money for our charity's work. Our hospitals and rehoming centres continued to work throughout lockdowns to help pets most in need. Urgent prescriptions were even delivered on bike by our dedicated veterinary teams.

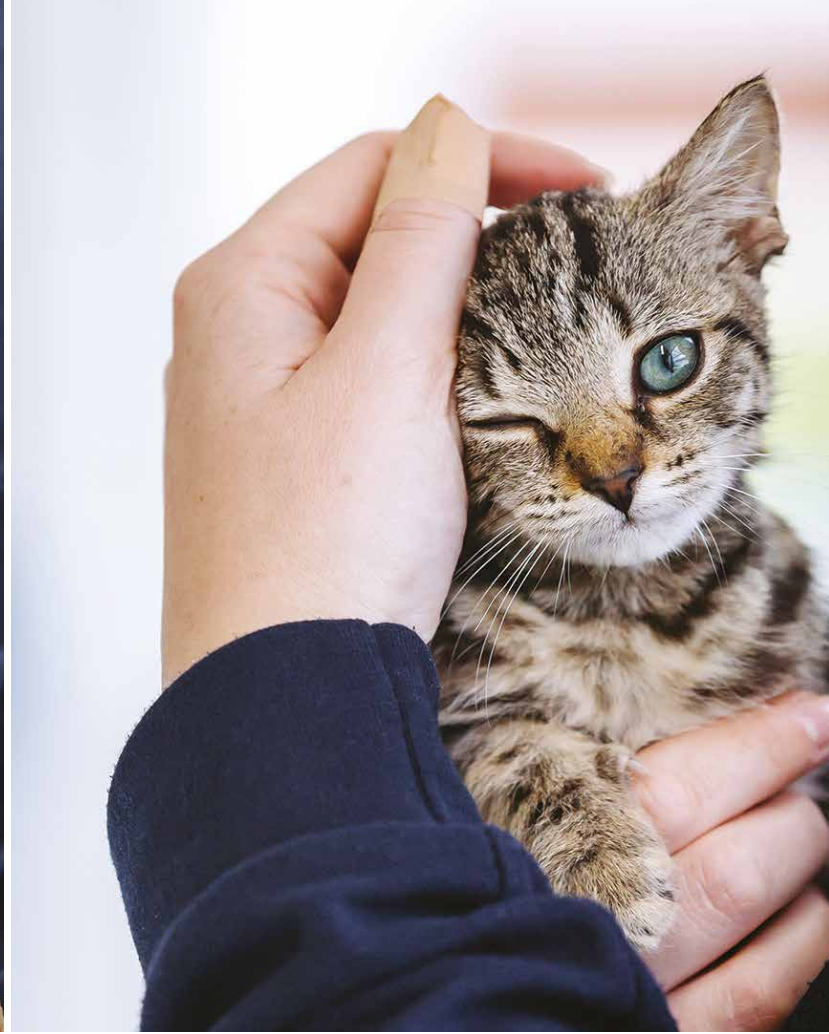
## 2020

## 2021

We launched pet food banks at our rehoming, behaviour and advice units in Sheffield and Manchester, to ensure people struggling to feed their four-legged friends have help. You can read more about this on pages 18 and 19.

Our rebuilt Hertfordshire rehoming centre also opened, becoming our newest site.





# BRAVE KITTEN SURVIVES against all odds

He was at death's door, but that didn't stop sweet Yoda from warming the hearts of everyone he met...

**L**ittle Yoda had collapsed by the time he arrived with us and was unresponsive.

It was clear to the team at our Victoria animal hospital in central London that the tiny weeks' old kitten was in grave danger – all because he was taken away from his mum far too young.

He had been sold online a week earlier as six to nine weeks old, when he was only five and unweaned.

Blue Cross has long campaigned for better regulation of online pet sales, as we continue to pick up the pieces of the irresponsible and often cruel breeding practices involved.

Not only was Yoda terribly sick, but



“

We joked that he may have been a parrot in a previous life, as he also loved nothing more than sitting on our shoulders and watching the world go by

”



BEFORE

he also had an open sore on his back from a suspected burn.

We weren't sure if he would pull through, as Amanda Rumball, London Welfare Officer, explains: "Poor Yoda hadn't been weaned and couldn't eat on his own, just taken away from his mum long before he could fend for himself.

"He had awful diarrhoea, an ear infection in both ears, was dehydrated, had a low temperature and low blood sugar levels."

She continues: "He went straight into intensive care and started to improve a little each day, but his prognosis remained very guarded for a while, as he was so poorly."

Thankfully, Yoda surprised everyone with his zest for life and determination to live, gradually gaining strength.

And, after a fortnight of hospital care, he was ready to head to the new kitten facilities at our recently rebuilt Hertfordshire rehoming centre to continue his recovery.

### RECOVERY

Sarah Miller, Animal Welfare Assistant at the centre, says: "When Yoda arrived with us, he was really friendly and lovely from the outset.

"He would always want to come up to you and play, despite having to wear the cone all the time because of the awful wound on his back.

"The team took it in turns to foster him so that he got plenty of time in a home environment and when he was at the centre, you'd always find one of us stopping by for 10 minutes with him – there's nothing better for lifting spirits than a bit of kitten play.

"We joked that he may have been a parrot in a previous life, as he also loved nothing more than sitting on our shoulders and watching the world go by."

After a further six weeks of recuperation, Yoda was finally ready to start the next chapter of his life and found a wonderful home where he's now known as Otis and is showered with all the love he deserves.



# Neigh-bourhood STAR

Horse delivers for villagers after lockdown halts book club meetings...

**A** once-shy rescue horse now trots around his village enjoying local celebrity status, after stepping in to keep isolated pensioners reading during the pandemic.

Micky, five, saved the day for the community book club in Hullavington, Wiltshire, when lockdown meant collections and meetings couldn't happen at the village hall.

The piebald cob now laps up his new-found fame on rides about the neighbourhood, but he wasn't always so happy and confident.

He was found abandoned on a farm in 2019 and brought to Blue Cross in Burford, Oxfordshire, in a poor way, needing vet treatment and training to build up his trust around humans and handling.

Owner Abi Elliott-Williams at the door of her parents' house with Micky

Micky (centre) in the field with his pals Bronte and goat Eric



Book club member, Mike, receiving a delivery from Micky

“

There was a knock at the door one day, and there was Micky travelling with saddlebags, and that is what happened in the book we had read. Everybody was looking for good news, everything was gloomy, and everybody loves animals. He's so good.

”



## REHABILITATION

Following a year of rehabilitation at our Burford rehoming centre, Abi Elliott-Williams offered him a wonderful fresh start.

The usually timid cob took a shine to her husband James when the couple went to meet another horse, who didn't turn out to be quite the right match.

Soon after, Micky joined Abi's other pony Bronte and rescue goat Eric in their paddock.

At first, he was still worried by many things, especially farrier visits, and would often hide his face in the back corner of his stable when he encountered anything new.

Abi says: "He was young enough to have learnt better ways but old enough to remember what trauma had happened to him in the past."

But with Abi's care and the courage

he got from having Bronte by his side, Micky started to come out of his shell.

And, at the height of the pandemic, he was spreading joy to his local community in an important new role.

## REAL-LIFE STORY

In February 2021, the local book club was reading a novel by bestselling author Jojo Moyes, called *The Giver of Stars* based on a real-life story of women known as the Packhorse Librarians of Kentucky, who delivered books on horseback in the 1930s to rural communities in America.

With lockdown stopping further books from being collected, Abi's mum, Elizabeth Parry-Williams hatched the idea of recruiting Micky as their very own packhorse librarian to lift waning spirits.

"It cheered them up," says Abi. "It was one of the things that people

really looked forward to. It was something to make them smile."

Abi and her friend made special saddlebags for Micky's deliveries, and his heroics catapulted him into the media spotlight.

One of the grateful recipients, Mike, says: "It was amazing that the delivery and the whole thing could carry on.

"There was a knock at the door one day, and there was Micky travelling with saddlebags, and that is what happened in the book we had read.

"Everybody was looking for good news, everything was gloomy, and everybody loves animals.

"He's so good."

While the village hopes that Micky's librarian services won't ever be needed again, the smiles he brought to everyone around him at such a difficult time will never be forgotten.



# MICE BROTHERS

## found abandoned

**A** six-strong mice brother family abandoned at only a few hours old are still searching for a home six months on.

Hugo, Liam, Teddy, Dan, David and Toby were thankfully found by a member of the public in Devon and later brought to our Hertfordshire rehoming centre in August last year.

Sarah Miller, Animal Welfare Assistant, says: "In the wild, a group of male mice like this would be very unusual. But since they were raised together and are siblings, they are very bonded."

Sarah continues: "Most evenings

they fall asleep together in their nest and, when awake, they love nothing more than climbing up and down the branches in their playpen or cage."

Sadly, the brothers have had little interest from potential new owners.

We hope to rehome three of the brothers as a group and, once neutered, find the others separate homes with females for company.

"We know they would make wonderful pets for the right families," adds Sarah.

Blue Cross has seen a surge in the number of small pets in need of our help over the past two years, due to

them being bought in lockdown and given up when people are no longer able to care for them.

### WELFARE STANDARDS

Accommodation sold by pet shops often falls below welfare standards, with a minimum size cage requirement for Hugo and his brothers being 80 x 50 x 50cm. This can result in stressed and unhappy pets who, in extreme cases, will overgroom or bite themselves.

It is also very hard to sex pets like mice and, as a result, accidental litters are common.

Find out more about caring for mice at [bluecross.org.uk/pet-advice/pet-mice-care](https://bluecross.org.uk/pet-advice/pet-mice-care)



# Rehoming

## Could you take me home?



These wonderful pets are in search of a second chance

### PATRICIA

Are you looking for a project? Well, if so, I'm definitely your girl! I'm five and ready to start learning to be a child's riding pony. I'll need an experienced home with access to a shelter or stable. I'm a joy to catch and groom.

**Rolleston, 0300 777 1520**



### EGGNOG

Howdy! I may be a tiny chap but I'm in need of a spacious abode, where I can scurry about to my heart's content and enjoy plenty of sand baths and exploring. I'm a little shy so will need a bit of time getting to know you.

**Manchester, 0300 777 1592**



### BILLY

I've been here for nearly a whole year now and I'm starting to wonder why. I'll need a little time and space to find my paws but, once I'm settled, there'll be cuddles and purrs aplenty. Please take a chance on me?

**Southampton, 0300 777 1530**



### PONGO

Hiya! I'm told I'm a big and bouncy boy so I'll need an active and experienced home where I'll get plenty of walks. You'll need patience and time to train me, but I promise there'll be lots of fun along the way.

**Burford, 0300 777 1570**



### BEE

Bee is for Beautiful in my case, wouldn't you agree? But I don't let that go to my head. I'm a sweet, well-mannered and affectionate girl in search of a loving home as a non-ridden companion horse.

**Rolleston, 0300 777 1520**



### SONNY

They say our love won't pay the rent, but that's not true – my sister Cher and I will make you smile every day. We'll just need a little support to build up our confidence and help with our rockstar hairdos in return.

**Manchester, 0300 777 1592**



Find your new best friend at [bluecross.org.uk/rehome](https://bluecross.org.uk/rehome)



# NO PET SHOULD GO HUNGRY

## Food banks launched

Blue Cross now collects and donates pet food to owners struggling to afford to feed their four-legged friends as the cost of living soars...

**"M**ore and more people were asking to rehome pets through fear of not being able to provide for them," says John Cahill, Manager of the Blue Cross Sheffield rehoming, behaviour and advice unit (RABU).

Calls peaked as the pandemic took its cruel toll on purse strings in 2020 and John and his team were determined to find a way of giving these loving owners, who had simply fallen on hard times, the chance to stay with their beloved pets.

John stepped the idea of a pet food bank, open to kind donations from the local public, pet shops and vet surgeries to feed the animals in the area who are most in need.

Officially opened in June last year following a pilot, the scheme based at our Sheffield unit and now extended to our Manchester RABU supports a



“  
Some people are being forced to use food banks to put meals on the table for their families, and us to feed their pets  
”

core part of Blue Cross's mission, to keep pets and people together.

We work with partnership charities and organisations to get the food into the right hands, with a focus on helping those on low incomes, out of work or with mental health difficulties.

"Some people are being forced to use food banks to put meals on the table for their families, and us to feed their pets," John continues.

"These are wonderful owners who otherwise give their pets perfect homes and lives but have suddenly found themselves crippled financially, through no fault of their own. It could happen to any of us."

John adds: "One person has told us that he wouldn't be here if it weren't for us helping him to keep his pet. That really hit home to us what a lifeline this is to people. I'm so glad we can be there for them in this way."

Find more on our pet food banks at [bluecross.org.uk/petfoodbanks](https://bluecross.org.uk/petfoodbanks)

# From rescued racer to **MIRACLE PET**

When a young woman living with multiple sclerosis (MS) was told a dog could improve her mental health, she never imagined how much it would change her life...

**"S**he has given me a reason to smile every day, a reason to get up and leave my four walls. She just gets me," says Amy Johnson, of her beloved rescue dog Bleu.

The inseparable pair found each other after Amy's therapist suggested that a dog may help her to overcome depression. And Bleu has done this, along with so much more.

As well as transforming Amy's mental health, the ex-racer has miraculously learnt to detect when her owner is on the cusp of an MS attack – before she knows it herself.

This intuition is even more remarkable given that, for the first five years of her life, Bleu wasn't a pet, but a racer living in kennels, with limited human affection.

## REMARKABLE

Bleu arrived at our rehoming centre in Thirsk, North Yorkshire, in 2019 just as Amy began her search for a dog.

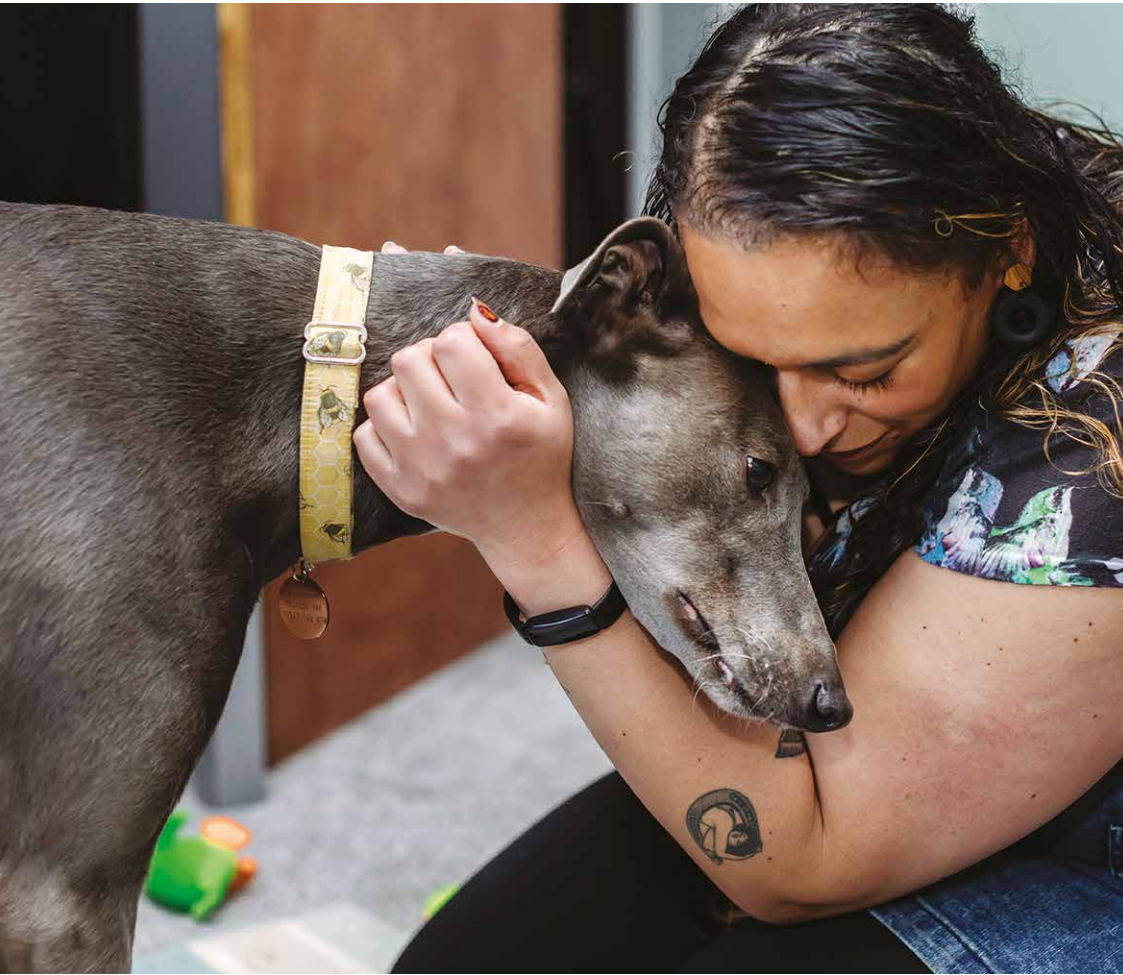
Amy recalls: "I suffered really badly with my mental health and it got to the point that I was like: 'I can't do this anymore'. I just needed something to keep me getting up each day.

"I had pet rats, and they were my everything. They sort of kept me going, but they didn't get me out of the house.

"So, my therapist suggested getting a dog. But then, because I've got MS, I needed a dog that would, when I'm on my bad days, be OK with just a short walk."

Amy, who was diagnosed with the autoimmune condition in 2016, started looking into which dog breeds





would be a good match, and her sister suggested a greyhound.

She says: "Even though people think they need loads of exercise, they can sleep up to 18 hours a day. So, they're happy with two 20-minute walks a day."

Soon enough, Amy had found Bleu on the Blue Cross website and the pair struck up an immediate connection when they met.

Days later, Amy welcomed her new companion home in Leeds, with her mum donating the adoption fee, knowing how much having Bleu would mean to her beloved daughter.

Despite never living in a home

environment, Bleu settled in well and slowly started to come out of her shell, getting used to novel things like the television and washing machine.

“  
That first day I took her  
onto the beach, and her  
feet hit that sand – the  
joy on her face was just  
amazing. And her smile...  
it literally brought tears  
to my eyes

"She quickly became the queen of the house," Amy laughs.

### HAPPINESS

Bleu had found a happiness she had never known before, just as the sweet greyhound had changed her new owner's life beyond recognition – with friends, family and even her doctors amazed at the transformation.

Amy says: "On days when I'm really struggling with my MS, which means you're struggling mentally, Bleu's the reason I get up. And sometimes it's scary to say that, but she is.

"She makes me smile and people say: 'Amy, you seem so happy, and



As Bleu was trained to chase, Amy ensures she wears a muzzle when out on busy walks



we can tell it's because of Bleu’.”

Most remarkably, heroic Bleu has learnt to support Amy with her health condition in ways nobody imagined.

Amy says: “When my MS is really playing up, when my muscles are failing me. And even when I don’t know what’s going to happen, if we’re out on a walk, it’s like she can sense it and she’ll start to pull us home.

“When we get home that’s when my muscles collapse. And she’s guided me sometimes if my eyes are playing up with my optic neuritis, she’ll be there.”

The pair take it easy on walks when Amy’s MS is holding her back but will

also venture out for long walks when they can. They recently tackled a five-mile walk to celebrate Bleu’s second ‘Gotcha Day’.

“I’m in pain all the time, it’s not stopping,” Amy continues. “But I’ve never been fitter. We’re getting out walking every day. And that’s the thing, greyhounds can have a short walk, or they can have big walks, it’s just the building up to it.”

And Amy finds giving Bleu back the love and support her pet has given her hugely rewarding, especially given what the greyhound went through in her previous life.

Recalling her first trip with Bleu to

the beach, she says: “That first day I took her onto the beach, and her feet hit that sand – the joy on her face was just amazing. And her smile... it literally brought tears to my eyes.”

Amy and Bleu have an unbreakable bond and are living proof of the incredible transformative power of having pets, for both animal and owner.

Amy adds: “She has become so much more to me than I had ever expected. I didn’t think I could love an animal as much as I do Bleu. I say to her: ‘I will always be here supporting you like you’re supporting me’.

“She is my world, 100 per cent.”

# Fundraise for Blue Cross this year

Request our fundraising  
pack for ideas on how you  
can help pets in need?



Our pack includes tips and advice on planning  
your activity and making the most of the fun.

From dog  
walks...



... to gaming  
and streaming



... to cake sales...



Pets change lives  
We change theirs

There is something to suit everyone –  
with lots of virtual activities too.

Simply fill in the coupon at the back of the  
magazine or visit [bluecross.org.uk/fundraising](http://bluecross.org.uk/fundraising)

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





Letters

# We love to hear from you

Please send us your news and pictures of your pets!



## BEAUTIFUL GUENEVER

Four years ago, we went to Blue Cross, Thirsk, and rehomed a beautiful lurcher whom we named Guenever. We believe she had been used in illegal hunting and there were a few issues to resolve, but she soon proved to be a really wonderful, gentle dog.

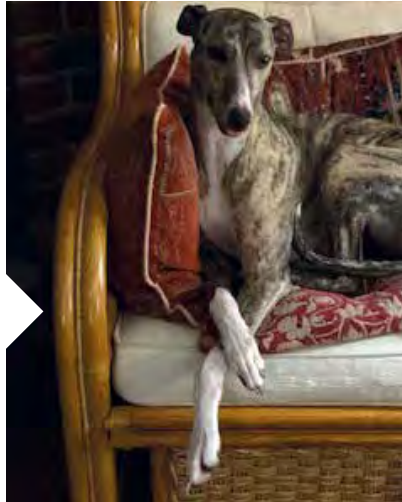
At Christmas, we have often offered hospitality to foreign university students studying in the UK, and in 2018, Milagros from Peru, studying at Dundee, and Jaeun from South Korea, studying at York, came to stay with us for four days. Jaeun was nervous of "big dogs", but Guenever soon made friends with her. This is what Jaeun wrote to us after her visit:

"When I visited your home, I was profoundly impressed by the comfort Guenever gave to me. She helped me to open my heart which was exhausted by homesickness and the agony of losing my mother (she had died seven months before I came to study at York). It was a very extraordinary experience, and mystical that my fatigue and sorrow were quite melted away by her".

My husband and I had no idea what was going on, but we are so proud that Guenever had the sensitivity to minister to our visitor. Jaeun is back in South Korea now, but she loves to receive news and pictures of Guenever.

We are very grateful for the care that Blue Cross put into preparing Guenever for rehoming. We love her.

**Susan Thorne**



## JON BUN-JOVI IN HIS NEW HOME

We rehomed Jon-bun Jovi from your Burford branch in March last year after he had failed to bond with a female rabbit already.

We have two females and one male and knew we could give him an exciting new life with us.

We have taken the bonding very slowly due to the previous one failing and he is now friends with our other three. He can still be very nervous around them, but we hope his confidence will continue to grow!

**Amy Green**

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

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

Find us on Facebook & Twitter

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Amazing Delilah nursing her biological kitten, Ian



## All good things come in **THREES**

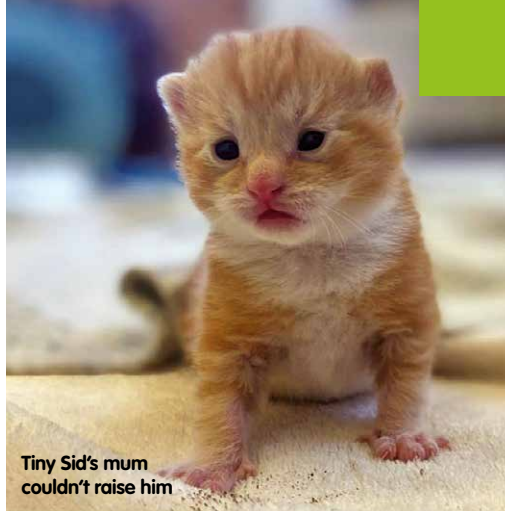
It's a miracle in itself that Delilah and Ian survived, let alone find the strength to put their healing paws around another...

**A**t just three days old, tiny Sid was frail and starving. His mum, only a kitten herself, was struggling to care for her litter and unable to produce any milk.

It was touch and go – until an incredible surrogate mum, who had

earlier been found clinging to life on the streets, stepped in to help.

One-year-old Delilah and her unborn kitten, who had become stuck during labour, were hours away from death when they were picked up near a sports centre.



Tiny Sid's mum  
couldn't raise him



Sweet Ian took Sid  
under his wing

Delilah needed an emergency caesarean to save both her life and that of her kitten Ian.

The pair recovered well at another charity before arriving at our Bromsgrove rehoming centre near Birmingham to find a home, on the same day that poor Sid and his siblings arrived.

Sid's mum, Dizzy, wasn't producing any milk to feed her young – so we stepped in to hand-rear them.

But, to give Sid a fighting chance, our team introduced him to Delilah and Ian, who quickly took the tiny chap under their wings.

Caroline Oram, Animal Welfare Assistant, said: "Dizzy was underweight and far too young to

have had kittens. She was just a scared little girl hiding in her pen and had been through so much.

"Meanwhile, Delilah was recovering well, and Ian was getting milk. So, we put Sid in with him and Delilah to see if she would take on another kitten and feed him.

### **GRADUALLY**

"We did it gradually, putting Sid on her and letting her sniff him, always supervised. She almost immediately started to wash his bottom and toilet him. It was lovely to see.

"We would bottle feed him whilst lying on Delilah. After two days he found the teat and began suckling away! Both Ian and Sid would

snuggle close to mum. There was one week between them."

Delilah didn't have quite enough milk to feed both kittens, so Bromsgrove Rehoming Supervisor, Laura Coveney, and the team sometimes hand-fed the adoptive brothers to give her a break.

Meanwhile, Sid's siblings, Sandra and Dave, were hand-reared in foster care with the team.

Caroline continues: "It was another great effort with sleepless nights for team Bromsgrove, but they took it all in their stride. It was so heart-warming to see and to be a part of."

All four kittens, along with Delilah and Dizzy, have since found wonderful, loving homes.

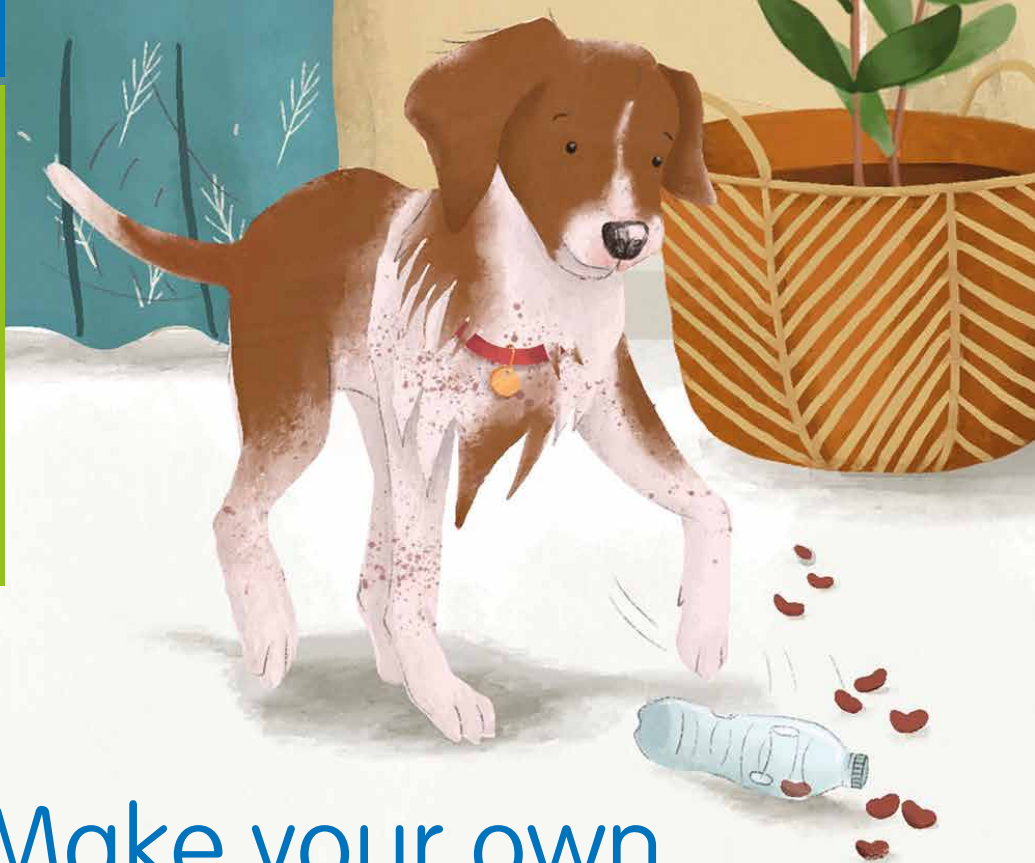
**Treat Bottles**  
**DOGS****What you need:**

- Used plastic bottle
- Scissors
- Treats

**Step one:** Get a used plastic bottle and wash it out thoroughly. Remove the label but keep the lid.

**Step two:** Cut two holes on different sides of the bottle. The holes need to be only slightly bigger than the treats you're planning on using.

**Step three:** Pop your dog's treats into the bottle through the open top and then replace the lid tightly.



# Make your own **PET TOYS**

Why spend a small fortune on a toy when you could make it yourself? Here are some super simple ways to make your pet their very own toy using items you'd find lying around the house.

Go get creative – your pet will thank you!

## Tunnel SMALL PETS

### What you need:

- One toilet roll inner tube
- Scissors
- Digestible hay
- Treats (optional)

**Step one:** Get a toilet roll inner tube and cut notches of varying thickness horizontally on each end, about 2cm long. Bend the flaps outwards.

**Step two:** Make one incision down the entire length of the tube to avoid your pet getting stuck.

**Step three:** Fill the tube with hay – you can even add a few treats.



## Vending machine CATS

### What you need:

- Shoebox
- Non-toxic glue
- 10+ toilet roll inner tubes
- Treats/toys

**Step one:** Glue 30 toilet roll inner tubes into the box with lid removed.

**Step two:** Glue the long edge of shoebox into the middle of the lid to give the toy a sturdy base.

**Step three:** Wait an hour for the glue to fully dry, then pop a treat into each inner tube. Give this to your cat to fish out with their paw!

Find more DIY toy ideas at [bluecross.org.uk/diypettoys](https://bluecross.org.uk/diypettoys)

# News

## Bitesize Stories

All the latest news from Blue Cross



### WE NEED YOU

Get closer to our cause by joining the Blue Cross Supporter Panel. Your honest opinions, good or bad, will help influence our campaigns, initiatives and how we communicate with supporters like you. Your feedback from surveys sent during the year will enable us to better support pets like Suzie (below). Want to get involved? Email [SupporterPanel@bluecross.org.uk](mailto:SupporterPanel@bluecross.org.uk) for more information on joining.

## Karma's fortunes

**A** pregnant dog who was hours away from giving birth without a roof over her head found herself in Blue Cross care in the nick of time.

Karma's devastated owner, who had suddenly found herself unable to keep her, was in a race against the clock to find her much-loved pet a safe place to have her puppies.

The 18-month-old Staffordshire bull terrier arrived at our Victoria animal hospital for the urgent vet care she needed and gave birth to a healthy litter of eight within five hours.

Wanting the very best for her beloved dog, Karma's owner asked us to care for the mum and puppies and find them all loving homes once they were ready.

We soon transferred the family to our Bromsgrove rehoming centre near Birmingham, where Animal Welfare Assistant, Caroline Oram, stepped in as foster carer to provide a crucial home environment.

### LEARNING TO TRUST

The puppies – Spirit, Buddha, Asher, Kaleb, Joy, Lotus, Faith and Serenity – went from strength to strength, and Karma took well to motherhood.

Caroline says: "Karma really trusted me with her babies. We became a real team together, it was lovely."

Once the puppies were eight weeks old, they went to wonderful new homes. And after some TLC from Caroline in the month that followed, Karma too found herself a fresh start.





## End the trend

Blue Cross has been calling on brands to phase out flat-faced pets in advertisements to help tackle the related animal welfare crisis.

Flat-faced (or brachycephalic) pets – such as pugs, French bulldogs, Boston terriers, Persian cats, and lionhead rabbits – have soared in popularity in recent years and appear nationwide in brand campaigns.

Flat-faced breeds accounted for one-fifth of the nation's dogs in 2021.

But sadly, the nation's obsession with these pets has created an animal welfare crisis and Blue Cross often finds itself picking up the pieces.

We've treated more than 5,000 flat-faced pets for a catalogue of veterinary issues and have cared for many at our rehoming centres due to impulse buying or callous breeding.

Our campaign, #EndTheTrend, calls on leading brands across the UK to pledge against using brachycephalic pets in future campaign materials.

Caroline Reay, Blue Cross Vet, says: "These animals have become the poster pets for advertising but behind those cute faces can lie horrifying health problems. It needs to stop."

Support our campaign at [bluecross.org.uk/endthetrend](https://bluecross.org.uk/endthetrend)

## DOUGHNUT UNDERESTIMATE THIS BRAVE HORSE

A one-eyed pony who survived cancer has found a new home.

Doughnut, 21, came to our Rolleston centre in Burton-on-Trent early last year and was quickly diagnosed with cancerous cells in his right eye, which meant it needed to be removed.

The native grey pony adapted well and was soon ready to find a new home. But as he also suffers from Cushing's disease (a common hormonal condition in older horses) as well as laminitis (inflammation in the foot), Doughnut needed quite a specific home and had a long wait.

Verity Anderton-Johnson, Rehoming Coordinator, says:

"Doughnut is a lovely pony who loves company. He deserves a home where he is loved and can meet some new friends."

After nearly 250 days, he found just that as a companion horse.



## TINY TURBO BUILDS UP HIS CONFIDENCE

One-year-old roborovski hamster Turbo was a nervous little chap when he arrived in our care.

Due to a lack of advice given at pet shops, he had been living in a cage far too small and without vital enrichment.

It's sadly a common problem that we're seeing more and more of here at Blue Cross.

His owner wanted more for Turbo and our Hertfordshire rehoming centre stepped in to find him a new home with all the space, obstacles and tunnels he needed to explore and be happy.

Find more on hamster needs at [bluecross.org.uk/advice/hamster](https://bluecross.org.uk/advice/hamster)



## 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...



### PICKLE

Born unable to hear a sound, Pickle must have been so overwhelmed and confused by the world.

By the time the puppy was just three months old, he found himself in Blue Cross care, having already known two other homes.

His foster carer taught him sign language, so that he could understand life. And soon, he'd found a wonderful new home to continue his training in with Cathie and Graham Dyne in rural Devon.

Cathie says: "I've just started having him completely off-lead on our local walk and he's been so good, constantly checking in with me when called [waved at], or of his own accord.

"People say we've done brilliantly, but to be honest, much of it is due to Blue Cross."

## SEX MIX-UP LEAVES BABY GUINEA PIGS HOMELESS

Five baby guinea pigs have been among a recent surge of small pets needing our help.

Muffin, Marmaduke, Mo, Minty and Mable's owner bought their mum with another guinea pig who had been wrongly sexed as male.

The pair mated and the owners were unable to care for their young.

Louise Thompson, Animal Welfare Assistant in Devon, says: "We've noticed the trend across the board. There is a large increase in the number of accidental pregnancies in small pets."

"It's very easy to mis-sex small pets like guinea pigs and we're happy the owner came to us for help as, like many pets, guinea pigs breed so quickly that owners can fast find themselves with a large group of animals to care for," adds Louise.







## REJECTED KITTENS showered with love

**F**our kittens rejected by their mum have been hand-reared at Blue Cross and found loving homes.

Widget, Gidget, Tiddles and Wiggles were born in the care of our Bromsgrove rehoming centre near Birmingham in September after their mum Gracie arrived as a stray.

Only a young cat herself, Gracie then began to reject the kittens – leaving our team to provide all the care needed to keep them alive.

Amy Neale, Animal Welfare Assistant, says: “Gracie initially took

well to the kittens but after a week and a half, she became less attentive.

“She was always more interested in us when we went in and didn’t always acknowledge their cries for her and, sadly, she did reject them.

“So, the team stepped in to give them the best fighting chance.”

### FOSTER CARE

They were fostered in pairs and Amy helped out with Widget and Gidget to give their main carer a break.

“It’s very tiring hand-rearing kittens – but very rewarding,” she says.

“After weeks of round-the-clock TLC, bottle feeding, toileting and weaning onto solids with help from all the team, the kittens were thriving and were soon reserved to new homes!”

The siblings were very close, so the team were keen to find them homes where they could stay in pairs – and they have found just that.



# WIN! Burgess goodies worth £100



**O**ur friends at Burgess, one of the UK's leading animal food manufacturers, are giving away £100's worth of pet essentials for three lucky pets. For many years, Burgess has kindly donated food, treats and bedding to Blue Cross to enable us to care for all small pets, from mice to rabbits, at our rehoming centres across the UK. Like Blue Cross, Burgess also works hard to improve the health and welfare of pets through research, education and initiatives like Rabbit Awareness Week. Find out more at [burgesspetcare.com](http://burgesspetcare.com).

**Burgess™ Excel™**  
SINCE 1790

**Mr Follett is the winner of our pet portrait by Stephen Yorke competition, For Pets Autumn 2021. Congratulations!**

## HOW TO ENTER

To be in with a chance of winning a bundle of Burgess food and goodies for your pet, answer the following question:

As you read on pages four to nine, Blue Cross is celebrating a milestone anniversary in 2022 – but in what year was the charity formed?

- 1987
- 1897
- 1797

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

**Freepost BLUE CROSS FOR PETS**

Or, enter online at [bluecross.org.uk/forpets](http://bluecross.org.uk/forpets)

Name: .....

Address: .....

Postcode: .....

Telephone: .....

Email: .....

Closing date Friday, 29 April 2022  
\*Strictly one entry per household.

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](http://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](mailto:info@bluecross.org.uk)

# FIND US

Discover your local Blue Cross

We have 56 shops and  
11 rehoming college  
partnership locations

## Our animal hospitals

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

## Our pet care clinics

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

## Our rehoming units and centres

- 10 Bromsgrove
- 11 Burford
- 12 Cambridge (coming soon)
- 13 Exeter
- 14 Hertfordshire (Kimpton)
- 15 Manchester
- 16 Newport
- 17 Rolleston
- 18 Sheffield
- 19 Southampton
- 20 Suffolk (Ipswich)
- 21 Thirsk



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

**Call:** 0300 790 9903 **Email:** [info@bluecross.org.uk](mailto:info@bluecross.org.uk) **Visit:** [bluecross.org.uk](http://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](http://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](mailto:pbssmail@bluecross.org.uk)



Pets change lives  
**We change theirs**

# Loving care for her. Peace of mind for you.



Pets change lives  
We change theirs



## Please send me a Blue Cross:

- Pet Peace of Mind information pack
- Gifts in Will information pack

Title: B122

First name:

Surname:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone:

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



Our **Pet Peace of Mind service**  
means your pet will be loved and  
cared for after you've gone.

We understand how much your pets mean  
to you and how important it is that they are  
well looked after, no matter what happens.  
There is no cost to register your pets onto  
the service, but many people choose to  
remember Blue Cross with a gift in their Will.

To request an information pack please call  
**0300 777 1910** or fill in the coupon and send  
to **Freepost Blue Cross for Pets**.

**Thank you for your  
continued support.**

[bluecross.org.uk/pet-peace-of-mind](http://bluecross.org.uk/pet-peace-of-mind)

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

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

