

FOR PETS

The magazine for Blue Cross supporters

ISSUE 15

Rescue pony

Overcomes trauma to help youngsters in need



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We change theirs

Here to take your hand when they let go



Pets change lives
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04

COVER STORY

04 **Inspirational Bandit**

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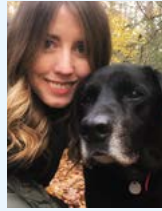
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WELCOME

Here at Blue Cross, we know every single pet is special. It's the very reason we exist. But, sometimes, an animal comes along that amazes us in new and astonishing ways – such as our cover star, Bandit. This remarkable pony, having gone through unimaginable trauma and pain himself, is now having a life-changing impact on youngsters overcoming their own difficulties. A pet's intuition, and the comfort they bring, is evident in many other stories in this issue. From cat Inari, who brought her owner back from the brink of mental health struggles, to dog Fidget – the star of our new TV advert – who mended his family's broken hearts, I hope you enjoy reading about each and every one.

Aimee Brannen, Editor

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ONE-EYED PONY OVERCOMES TRAUMA

Bandit's traumatic journey has inspired youngsters in need...

"Bandit makes me feel really calm. If I feel sad, then I can go to him," says 16-year-old Ashlee.

"He makes me very happy and if I'm anxious I know I can go and give Bandit a cuddle and he'll calm me down."

The teenager has spent the past few months connecting with Blue Cross pony Bandit, along with other youngsters in need of support.

The gentle native pony has overcome his own challenges to bring a sense of peace to those around him.



At just six months old, Bandit had a life-changing injury to his eye.

The little piebald foal had lacerated his cornea and was facing an uncertain future.

But thanks to the work of Blue Cross and other charities, Bandit is now helping give therapy to children who've also faced struggles.

For Ashlee, the support that Bandit gives on a daily basis is life-changing.

"If I've had a bad day, I'll go and give Bandit some treats and he'll stand there, kissing me and cuddling me," she reveals. "He just makes my bad day feel better."

Spending almost six months in

Blue Cross care, Bandit needed plenty of love and attention from the horse welfare team at our Rolleston site to help him regain his confidence.

TRAUMA

The black and white pony was just a foal when he came to us last year, but he'd already been through so much trauma and pain.

Bandit was taken in by local charity, The Next Chapter Rescue and Rehoming, following his injury.

A crowdfunding campaign raised enough cash for vet treatment to remove his eye, but Bandit faced more than just physical recovery.

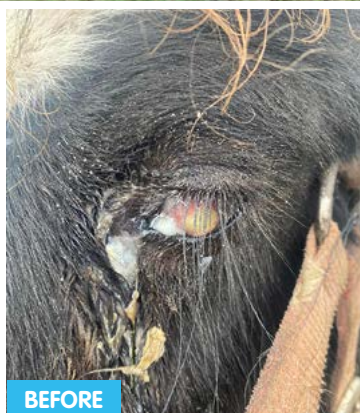
He needed more time to adjust because of having to cope with the eye injury, having it treated and getting used to his new vision, explains Alison Bennetts-Brown, Horse Welfare Assistant at Blue Cross Rolleston in Staffordshire.

Our team took in Bandit to "give him the time, care and training that he would need after the initial setback with the eye", she adds.

The coming months meant slow and careful training to get Bandit used to wearing a headcollar, having his legs and feet handled, and familiarising him with unusual surfaces and new places, all to



“
If I'm anxious
I know I can
go and give
Bandit a cuddle
and he'll calm
me down.
”



prepare him for his eventual life in a new and happy home.

Alison says that all the care helped his confidence grow so he became “affectionate and not at all the shy nervous little boy who turned up”.

She adds: “Bandit doesn't let anything hold him back in life.”

It wasn't long before Bandit's new-found mojo bagged him new admirers, who were searching for a pony to give much-needed therapy to children and young people needing their own boost in confidence.

After 173 days with Blue Cross, Bandit found his forever home, alongside fellow rescue pony Sunny.

Bandit has settled into life at his new home in Staffordshire, where he provides non-ridden equine assisted therapy to those aged six to 17 years.

EMPATHY

Developing a strong bond with the ponies has fostered a true sense of “empathy” among the children, says Louise Fresson, who cares for Bandit in his home alongside fellow horse lover and equine assisted learning practitioner Sandra Oulsnam.

“We know the benefits equine [therapy] has on anyone's mental health,” Louise explains.

“It was a brilliant choice rescuing

the ponies from Blue Cross because the young people can relate to the trauma they've had.”

The progress made by both Bandit and the young people he supports has been enormous.

“Bandit never wanted people on his blind side before but now he'll have people on either side. He has made huge progress,” adds Sandra.

“Bandit will play a big part in young people's lives as the therapy is all about learning and connecting their behaviours and emotions.

“Bandit's story shows we can be different and face challenges but still adapt and have a good life.”



'A PERFECT MATCH'

Homeless cat Bella found the warm home and affection she craved, while giving her new owner much-needed companionship...

H

aving a cat makes a house a home for Tony Isaacs, like it always has done.

Ever since he was born, the 93-year-old has been used to feline company – including his Blue Cross rescue cat Tilly, who was at his side for more than 17 years before passing away suddenly just before Christmas last year.

Feeling lost and lonely without his beloved cat to greet him each morning, Tony once again contacted our Hertfordshire rehoming centre in the hope of welcoming another pet into his life.

"I couldn't remember a time that I haven't had a cat," Tony, of Hitchin, Hertfordshire, says.

As a child from an animal-loving

family, he and his late sister Betty were always surrounded by cats and even rabbits.

Throughout their lives, the siblings continued to keep pets and together adopted Tilly, then aged two, in 2006.

So, saying goodbye to the black and white 19-year-old cat last year, around 10 years after losing Betty, was a "horrid" time for Tony.



And, for two months, he struggled to adjust to life without a cat.

Meanwhile, 11-year-old Bella had arrived at Blue Cross.

Although well-loved and cared for, a change in circumstances meant that her previous owner had to make the difficult decision to give her up.

Billie Craig, Assistant Manager at our Hertfordshire centre in Kimpton, says: "Tony got in touch with us after losing his cat to find out if he could adopt another one, as he was very lonely. He was looking for an affectionate cat who wouldn't roam too far."

There were no suitable cats at the centre, but Billie contacted other Blue Cross sites. Our Suffolk team then suggested Bella, who loved human company and had never strayed out of her garden, as the "perfect match".

Tony was "over the moon" to hear

the news, and Bella was soon on her way home with him.

LIFE-CHANGING

Billie continues: "They haven't looked back since, and Bella has really changed Tony's life."

Tony says that Bella settled into his home straight away and was by his side asking for a fuss from day one – even trying to sneak into his bed for a cuddle on her first morning.

"She just fell into place – it's quite extraordinary," Tony, whose career was spent in engineering, says.

"I like the companionship she brings. She's terrifically companionable when I'm alone."

Billie adds: "We're so pleased we were able to bring Tony and Bella together. They share such a wonderful bond and have brought each other happiness."



She just fell into place – it's quite extraordinary. I like the companionship she brings.







From homeless puppy to TV STAR

Fidget's mum arrived at Blue Cross heavily pregnant, with nowhere left to turn...

His face has lit up TV screens up and down the country in a new advert celebrating our work.

And Fidget's story is a shining example of why, here at Blue Cross, we do all we can for pets in need – and the people who love them.

The jack russell cross, now one, was born at our Burford rehoming centre in Oxfordshire last year – to mum Chai, whose family could sadly no longer keep her.

Along with his four siblings, he thrived in our dedicated puppy facilities under the care of our expert team, which developed a careful socialisation plan to ensure the litter grew into confident and happy dogs who could live life to the full.

Fidget soon proved himself to be the boldest of the pups, quickly finding his voice and always keen to make himself seen and heard.

And so, it's no surprise that it was Fidget who bounded out first when Jenny Baxter and her family, who had been grieving following the sudden death of their border terrier and Blue Cross rescue, Aggie, visited.

Jenny says that losing the beloved 10-year-old pet had been particularly tough for her daughter Tilly, 11, as the pair had "grown up together".

But welcoming Fidget home in July last year returned "joy" to the family, also comprising Jenny's husband Tony and his 18-year-old son, George, as well as yellow labrador retriever rescue, Luna, six.

"He's really mended our broken hearts," says Jenny.

Fidget's story is one of many parallels with the role that he took on in the Blue Cross ad campaign, which celebrates the love stories of pets and their people over our charity's 127 years.

TRUE STORY

Playing Alfie in the advert, talented Fidget depicted the tale – based on a true story – of a dog called Alfie with nowhere left to turn before finding himself at Blue Cross.

Soon, he transforms the life of his new owner, Alice, who was lonely following the death of her husband.

“I was so proud of him,” says Jenny, of Fidget’s time in front of the camera.

“He adjusted so well and it enabled him to do a great job. He really enjoyed it.”

During filming, Fidget always had his own dressing room – a quiet space that was his to relax in between his short stints on set, which were carefully managed by our Behaviour Team.

OBLIVIOUS

But while the young dog might be a TV star now, he remains oblivious to his fame and is happiest by his family’s side, making them smile each day.

Jenny says: “He’s just a super cool and funny little dog. He’s really confident and makes us laugh every day. We love him so much and he’s just what we needed. We have been so lucky.”

She adds: “It has been a privilege to have him from a puppy as a rescue dog. And he really is evidence of how special rescue dogs are.”

Look out for our advert on your TV screen again this September and join the conversation online with the hashtag **#OurPetStories**.

And with your support, whatever the story, Blue Cross can continue to be there for the many pets and people who rely on us.



Fidget on set with 'owner', Alice, and the Blue Cross team



Fidget in his garden with friend, Luna

“
We just love him so much and he’s just what we needed. We have been so lucky.
”





FRIENDSHIP HEALS LOSS

Bereaved guinea pig Margo found joy in new best friend Paloma...

Hearing their excited chatter, it's clear Margo and Paloma are best buddies.

The duo have formed a beautiful bond after Paloma stepped in to befriend bereaved Margo during their time at Blue Cross.

Confident Paloma helped Margo come out of her shell after the little black and orange guinea pig lost her bestie Maggie to illness.

Now happily in a new home together, the pair are "a great couple of characters who make me smile every day", says adopter Nikki Pallett.

"They have settled in well and seem really happy," adds Nikki, whose specially adapted shed provides

all the space, security and shelter the friends need – plus plenty of enrichment to keep them entertained.

The three guinea pigs originally came to Blue Cross Burford after their owner's ill health meant she could no longer care for them.

But sadly, little Maggie had an underlying health condition and she passed away, leaving now four-year-old Margo alone.

While Paloma had come into Blue Cross separate from the bonded pair, our team hoped the five-year-old could be a tonic for Margo.

"Paloma brought out the best in Margo and having each other's company has made them both

happier and more confident," explains Stacey Leigh, Pet Welfare Assistant at Blue Cross Burford.

After 21 days in our care, the sweet duo were adopted by office manager Nikki, joining her at home in Wiltshire alongside 11-year-old cocker spaniel Yogi.

Having spent the past six years caring for a group of guinea pigs, including a rescue called Fred, Nikki had been missing their energy and character after all four sadly passed away throughout 2023.

"Having Margo and Paloma has made a sad time a bit better though, as they are such little characters," adds Nikki.



Injured cat WALKS AGAIN

Harley is back on her feet after surgery to heal severe traffic injuries...

Left unable to walk after a road traffic collision, Harley was in agonising pain.

The pet cat was severely hurt – the trauma had caused injuries to her spine and pelvis and a dislocated hip.

“I did think the worst when I saw Harley,” says her owner Geraldine Cotton, 67, who has enjoyed life with Harley since she was a kitten.

“I bent down to pick Harley up and her back end was completely floppy. Her eyes were like saucers and she



“Unfortunately we see these types of injuries quite commonly in cats following road traffic accidents, due to high velocity trauma to the back end of the cat.”

Once Harley had been given pain relief and X-rays, she went into the hospital's major operating theatre for her first surgery.

Harley is among thousands of pets who receive low cost vet care at Blue Cross Victoria each year – the hospital has never closed its doors since opening in 1906.

“The two-hour op involved tricky surgery as our surgeons were working in an area with lots of important vessels and nerves that they had to be careful not to damage,” explains Jack.

He adds: “The screw placement has to be done very precisely or else you could end up hitting the spinal cord, causing paralysis, so the vets take careful measurements to aid surgical planning.”

was stone cold, I really thought they would have to put her to sleep.”

DEVASTATING

Harley's family brought her straight to Blue Cross after the devastating accident in London.

And after receiving intensive vet care from the team at our Victoria animal hospital, five-year-old Harley is now back on her feet.

“We hoped for the best and put our trust in Blue Cross,” explains

grandmother-of-three Geraldine, who adds that Harley is “like a child” for her and 67-year-old husband Ian.

Harley had two major operations during her time as an inpatient at our central London animal hospital.

Thankfully, the much-loved pet had escaped damage to her internal organs in the incident.

ROAD ACCIDENT

Jack Meier, Blue Cross Head Veterinary Surgeon at Victoria, says:

“

I bent down to pick Harley up and her back end was completely floppy. Her eyes were like saucers and she was stone cold.

”

After giving Harley time to stabilise and feel comfortable following her first operation, our vets planned a second surgery to help fix the injured cat's dislocated hip.

The one-hour surgery involved removing the top of Harley's thigh bone, to allow scar tissue to form in its place to make a "pseudo joint", continues Jack.

SUPPORT

During the next seven weeks, Harley's family were given support from our team to make sure their pet had all the follow-up appointments, X-rays and physiotherapy she needed.

"I really thought we were facing the worst news after Harley's accident," says Geraldine, whose family, friends and neighbours helped with donations towards the complex surgery.

"So, to hear that Blue Cross could do the operations, I was really pleased. Harley's been walking and is pretty much back to normal. She's just gorgeous."

Although Harley has a slight limp in her back left leg, she will gradually get back to full speed with physiotherapy and exercise, to build up the strength of the muscles around her hip and pelvis.

Playing with her toys, racing through her tunnel and exploring the garden at home, Harley is clearly able to enjoy being back with her family after the traumatic accident which left her in so much pain.



Rehoming

Could you take me home?



These wonderful pets are in search of a second chance

RUMBA

I've spent all my life in kennels, forced to run around a track as fast as I can. That's behind me now and, while I still don't know what a real home feels like, I sure do love not having to race. Walks and sniffing are my favourite.

Burford, 0300 777 1849



MIA

I've had a life filled with love, but found myself here two years ago – in search of a fresh start and a new best friend. As a non-ridden pony, I'm looking for a quiet, patient home with the company of my own kind.

Rolleston, 0300 777 1846



LORD FREDS

I'm an independent boy who knows exactly what he likes – and that's plenty of treats, fuss and sunshine. Give me those things, and lots of patience, and you'll soon have my heart – can I have yours, too?

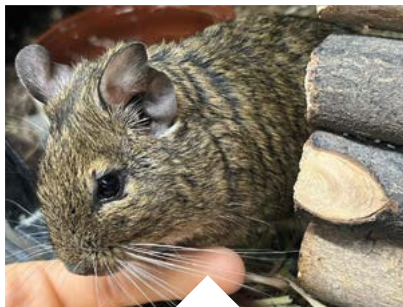
Hertfordshire, 0300 777 1844



THOMAS

I've been here for more than 150 days, waiting for that second chance. I'm a happy, chatty, quirky and playful boy. But I can get overwhelmed sometimes, so need a home with people who make me feel safe.

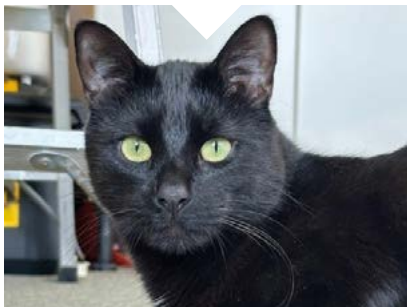
Suffolk, 0300 777 1843



LUCKY

Despite my name I feel anything but lucky right now. I've a heart as big as my smile and a spirit so vibrant for my 11 years. But I'm still here, dreaming of finding someone to give all of my love to. Could you be my whole world?

Sheffield, 0300 777 1851



DIEGO

Hi there! My name is Diego and I'm looking for a spacious new pad with my brothers Dougie and Danny. We're lads with bundles of energy but love to relax by snuggling together, as well as a bit of human fuss.

Hertfordshire, 0300 777 1844



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



From kennelled racer to a **LIFE OF LUXURY**

Woody is a shining example of why greyhounds belong on the sofa rather than the racetrack...



Chilled out Woody's favourite pastime is watching the world go by from his squishy window-side bed.

Life as a much-loved pet is a far cry from the existence the greyhound was once used to – one which left him homeless, with a serious and painful injury.

The brindle greyhound couldn't walk when he arrived at Blue Cross Southampton in 2019, having been saved by another charity after dislocating a joint in his front left leg on the racetrack.

His injury was one of 22,000 recorded on British licensed greyhound racing tracks between 2018 and 2022. Sadly, more than 2,000 dogs died.

These shocking statistics are why Blue Cross is campaigning for this cruel practice to end in all four nations of the UK.

Thankfully, Woody's leg could be fixed, though the road to recovery was a long one.

Tasha Cole, Rehabilitation Trainer and Behaviour Advisor, explains: "For the first three months, Woody had to be bandaged with splints and was on strict rest.

"It was a stressful time for him, which involved multiple vet visits, drugs and treatment. But he found joy in spending time behind reception with the team."

Woody was placed in foster care as soon as possible to continue his recovery. Once he was ready, gentle walks helped him rebuild muscle – and he thrived in a loving, nurturing home environment.

“

All greyhounds deserve the chance to be a much-loved pet, sprawled out on the sofa, where they belong.

”





Zondy with Woody

AFFECTIONATE

"Woody was very interactive, bright and fun in foster care," says Tasha. "He was also really affectionate."

For a dog who loves human company and his home comforts so much, it's heartbreaking that Woody's first two years of life were spent in kennels, existing as a commodity rather than a pet.

But, now eight years old, he has more than made up for lost time since going to live with the Webbers.

Zondy and Marjory, along with daughter Christina, adopted Woody in 2020, 21 years after losing their last dog in their native South Africa.

He had already spent 200 days recuperating in Blue Cross care.

And the laid-back boy didn't waste any time settling in and stretching out his long legs on the sofa.

"He moves around the room

depending on where the sunlight is hitting," laughs Christina.

Between sunbathing, snoozes, fuss and bird watching in the garden, Woody loves his walks and meeting new people when out and about.

COMPANY

Once only comfortable in the company of other greyhounds, he has also learned to develop friendships with other breeds since going to a dog walker twice a week.

The occasional limp after a longer walk is the only hint of his sad past, but anti-inflammatories keep this under control.

Meanwhile, having Woody has got his family out in the great outdoors more than ever. His first trip to the beach was a particular highlight.

Zondy says: "He was running around and then the one time he

stopped, he started digging a hole. Even he seemed shocked that he was doing that and where this instinct came from."

His presence in the home has also brought plenty of joy to his family.

"He's definitely the centre of attention," adds Marjory.

Becky Thwaites, Head of Public Affairs at Blue Cross, says: "The pain Woody went through as a racer proves why this cruel industry needs to be banned.

"And the joy he has experienced since demonstrates why all greyhounds deserve the chance to be a much-loved pet – sprawled out on a sofa, where they belong."

More than 100,000 people have signed our petition to end greyhound racing. Add your name to our Cut the Chase campaign at bluecross.org.uk/endgreyhoundracing

How to ENJOY WINTER WITH YOUR PETS

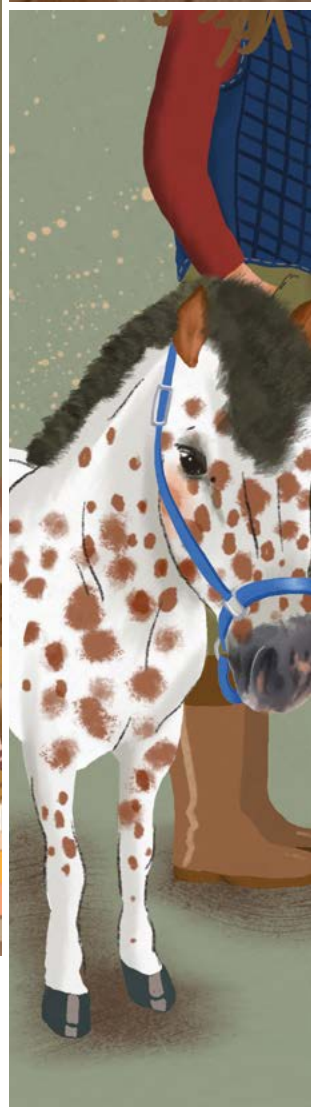
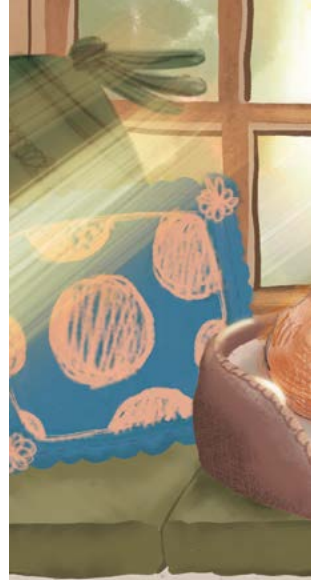
The winter months may be chilly, but there's lots you can do to keep your pet happy

INDOOR GAMES FOR DOGS

Too wet to play outside? There's lots of ways you can keep your pooch's brain busy indoors. If your dog is food motivated, challenge their sense of smell with scent work. While your dog is out of the room, place their favourite treats in hidden spots. Then let them back in and watch them sniff around!



Illustrations by Perched Bird





MAKING A COSY CORNER FOR YOUR CAT

Your cat may be sleepier in winter to help them preserve energy for staying warm. To keep them comfortable, place lots of soft beds around the house – many cats like to sleep somewhere up high.

During the chilly season your cat may avoid going outside. You can help them enjoy the sun (when possible!) by keeping your curtains open when you can. You can also place beds near windows to help your cat catch the rays.

PONY PLAY DATES

Socialising with field mates is one of the most important parts of your horse's daily routine. But when the fields are flooded or frozen, there may be times there is less turnout. To keep them moving and socialised, try turning them out in the school or in-hand walking with their companions. And make sure they have plenty of enrichment activities when stabled.



CARING FOR OUTDOOR RABBITS

As long as they have a large, dry and warm shelter and a good winter coat, healthy rabbits can still thrive in colder temperatures. Make sure your rabbits' housing is kept dry and warm during the cold and wet weather. You can create a cosy bed with insulating straw, and bury a pet-safe heating pad for an extra boost of warmth. Don't forget to give them plenty of hay to eat too.



LIFESAVING impact

Once shy rescue cat, Inari, brings her owner back from the brink during mental and physical health struggles...

I wouldn't be here without her," says Lee McKenzie of the beloved rescue cat who saved his life.

Inari arrived in Blue Cross care in 2015 just as cat lover Lee started his search for a pet, on the advice of his psychologist after years of recurring mental illness.

In the seven years leading up to that point, Lee experienced more grief and health issues than most people shoulder in a lifetime – with more still on the horizon.

In December 2008, six months after he survived meningitis, three of Lee's closest uncles died of cancer.

A month later, his missing best friend was also found dead.

This devastating sequence of events understandably sent Lee, who up until then had never missed a day's work, into a downward spiral of depression and anxiety, with numerous suicide attempts.

"I didn't want to be alive anymore – I wanted to take my own life," he says.

PURPOSE

Lee, whose happiest times were when he had a cat as a child, was advised by his therapist to get a pet to give him "a purpose".

And adopting Inari did just that



““

Looking after her and seeing her come out of her shell made me never want to end my life again.

””

and so much more. Her listening ear, quiet reassurance and soothing company proved to be a monumental turning point for Lee.

His devoted partner of 13 years, Rachel, says: “He was in despair... And when Inari came along, he had an interest again.

“When Inari did go up to him, his face just lit up. You could see this love between them.

“It’s almost like she understood that Lee had his own struggles.”

Inari’s arrival also led Lee to

accept more help from medical professionals which put him on a “life-changing” path to recovery.

In return, Lee and Rachel gave Inari the stable and loving home she needed and deserved.

In her senior years and struggling to form bonds with people, the shy tabby had repeatedly been overlooked by potential adopters.

But when Lee first met her, their connection was instant.

Inari, an indoor cat, soon became Lee and Rachel’s “world” and even joined them on holiday home getaways around the UK.

Lee continues: “Looking after her and seeing her come out of her shell made me never want to end my life again, as she was now depending on us to keep our promise of a loving, warm and safe home.”

Inari has helped Lee and Rachel through many tough times since. A rare autoimmune condition called

pyoderma left Lee in hospital for three months in 2022, facing the prospect of losing both legs and battling kidney failure caused by the medication.

Rachel’s visits and, with them, photo and video updates of Inari, kept Lee’s spirits up.

Thankfully, treatment started to work, but Lee was left bedbound and is gradually learning how to walk again. Seeing Inari each day helps him with every step.

INSPIRATION

And she was the inspiration for Lee taking on the Blue Cross 1897 Challenge last year, a virtual event in which he raised more than £450 for pets in need by gaming or streaming tasks such as Lego building for 1,897 minutes in one month.

Meanwhile, Rachel – a previously self-professed dog person who credits Inari with making her “fall in love with cats” – has completed a charity run in aid of Blue Cross.

Inari has given Lee and Rachel their future together back. And Lee’s goal is to once again enjoy holidays with both Inari and Rachel by his side.



Letters

We love to hear from you

Please send us your news and pictures of your pets!



HEARTWARMING

This is Arthur, rescued from Blue Cross Manchester in March [2023], he's currently 18-months-old.

He has helped me by being there through my chronic health conditions, providing cuddles and enriching myself by designing and upgrading his enclosure.

My brother who is on the spectrum has also greatly benefited from him as he will stroke and hold him, whereas he is averse to any other animal, it was a heartwarming moment for the whole family to find this out.

Ellie Taylor



THANK YOU

We adopted Mildred from Burford in May 2023 as a fearful, neglected, underweight, unsocialised jack russell in need of so much care, love and patience.

Mildred has made a full recovery, gained weight, loves walks and is keen to meet other dogs which means she can now let her personality shine through.

Such a beautiful addition to the family. With all the hurdles overcome, she is definitely worth it.

So pleased we adopted her.

Alison Leigh

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

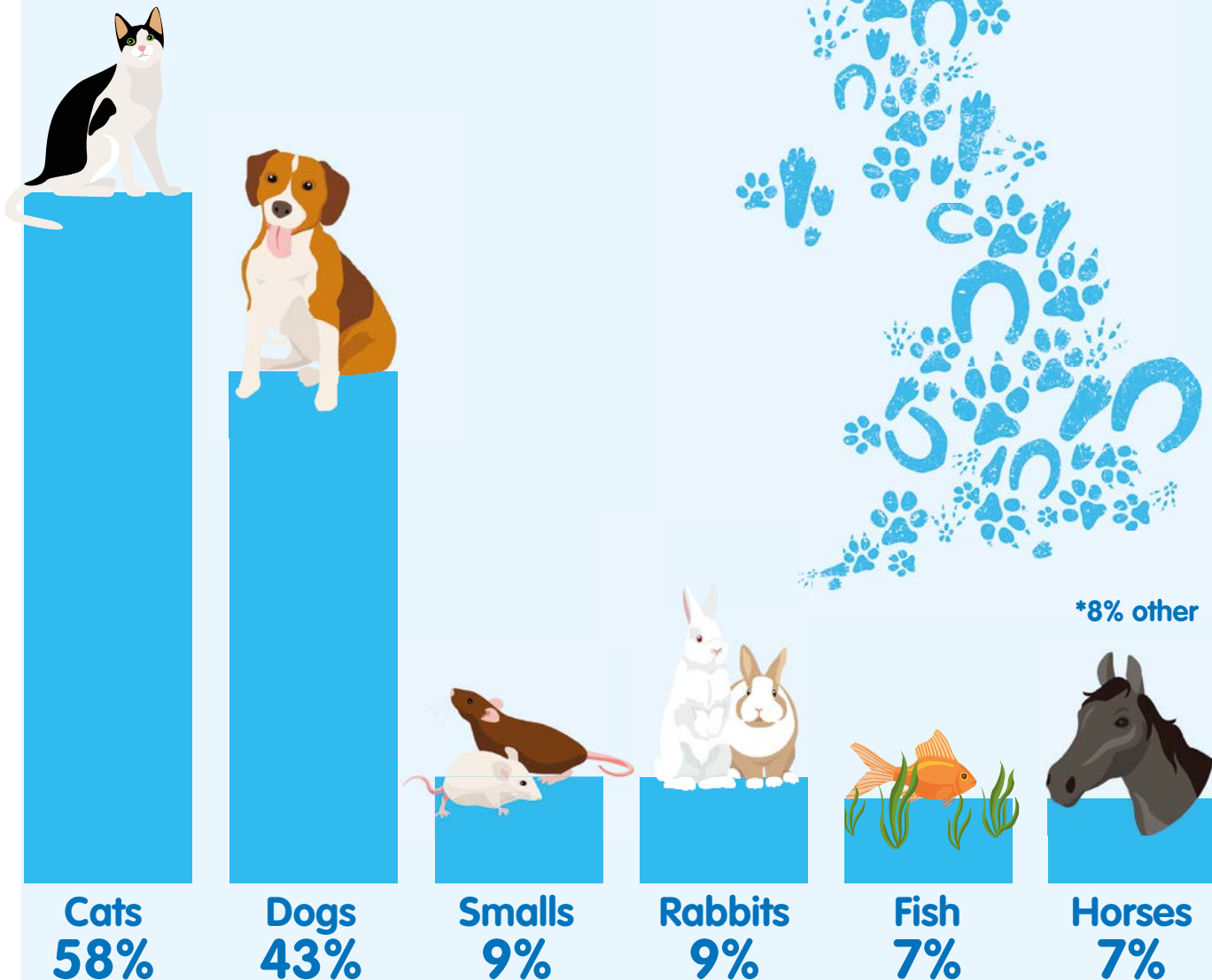
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BIG PET CENSUS 2024

Two years ago, we heard from pet lovers all over the UK in our first Big Pet Census, and now we're thrilled to see how our lives with pets have changed. Your input helps us improve our care for the pets we all cherish. Thank you for sharing your stories with us. 🐾

The pets people are living with





27%

of people said veterinary costs are the biggest challenge they face as a pet owner, followed by 'My pet getting older' at 18%, which is the second biggest challenge facing UK pet owners

87%

of people now celebrate their pet's birthday, which is 7% more than in our 2022 Pet Census



92%

said they see their pet as part of the family

In the 2024 Pet Census, **91%** of people got their pet from a UK charity/rescue



'Beautiful'

is one of the most common words people use to describe their horse or pony

89%

said their pet comes to them for affection



What pet welfare issue concerns you most?

The issues that matter most to you are:

Poor/unregulated breeding of pets	41%
Theft of pets and horses	12%
Ensuring pets have adequate housing	8%
Supporting low income pet owners	7%
Breed specific legislation such as XL bullies	7%

That's why we're campaigning to improve education around animal welfare and ensuring there are laws in place to protect our pets.



Find out more about our campaigns and how to support them
bluecross.org.uk/our-campaigns

News

Bitesize Stories



All the latest news from Blue Cross



Worried dog's fresh start

Striking German short-haired pointer cross Wesley spent almost five years at his previous home.

The much-loved pet had been an active and adventurous part of the family since he was a puppy.

But sadly, Wesley's family were forced to bring him to Blue Cross because of his worry around children.

With a toddler in the family and a new baby on the way, energetic Wesley was in need of a new home that could help him live life to the full.

Coming to Blue Cross, Wesley immediately won over the team at our Suffolk rehoming centre with his good looks and friendly nature.

Loving walks and off-lead time, our team knew Wesley needed to be

matched with a home that could fill his days with fun and activity.

Like many pets in our care, Wesley struggled in a kennel environment so we quickly found him a foster home, where he thrived.

After 17 days with Blue Cross – during which Wesley received routine vet care including flea and worming treatments – he headed off to his new home nearby for a fresh start.

New owner Joyce Dunachie explains: "He's such a lovely dog – a gentle, soft, fun giant. He's settling in really well, enjoying his walks and playing in the garden and house.

"He has a lovely bed in the kitchen but we needn't have bothered as he much prefers the doormat inside the back door. Funny boy!"

NEW ARRIVAL

A foal has been born after an abandoned pregnant mare was rescued by Blue Cross.

Little Babybel's mum, Brie, had to be saved from a flooded field and arrived in the care of our Rolleston centre in need of urgent vet and farrier care.

After getting the treatment she needed, the eight-year-old could relax in safe hands as she prepared to give birth, and piebald foal Babybel arrived 100 days later.

Caitlin Lowe, Rolleston Horse Welfare Supervisor, says: "Brie has been a brilliant mum, so thankfully we haven't had to intervene much."





Bullied rat finds new friends

Rats need the company of their own kind but, sadly, Eclipse was bullied out of his group.

When one of his friends died, it disrupted the harmony of the previously happy gang and resulted in six-month-old Eclipse being picked on and injured.

His owner had no other choice but to bring him to Blue Cross to ensure his safety and happiness.

The black and white rat had wounds on his tail and a swelling on his back paw but was soon on the mend, thanks to our Hertfordshire rehoming centre.

Lonely Eclipse then started his search for a new home where he could be bonded with another group of rodent friends.

As single rats can quickly become depressed, every day spent alone impacted him.

Billie Craig, Hertfordshire Assistant Manager, says: "He was shy at first but is such a sweet and friendly little guy who loves an arm to climb up."

And, after 26 days in our care, he found a perfect home where he could make new friends.

ABANDONED KITTENS ARE SAFE NOW

Crammed into a tiny carrier and a sealed cardboard box, nine petrified kittens were abandoned in the dead of night.

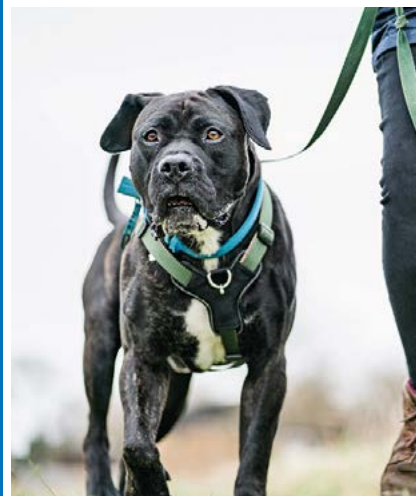
A heartbreaking note left with the abandoned pets begged for Blue Cross to "please help" as the owner could no longer afford to feed them.

Mum Dahlia and her five six-week-old kittens were squeezed into one carrier, where they had spent the night outside our Thirsk rehoming centre in North Yorkshire before being found.

A cardboard box sealed with a plastic supermarket bag and gaffer tape held another four kittens, also aged around six weeks.

Their mum, Molly, had escaped and was found days later in someone's garden.

Dahlia and Molly, along with their kittens Gimli, Pippin, Peregrin, Frodo, Marie, Layla, Lottie, Lulu and Lilibet – received all the help they needed before being placed in foster care ahead of finding new homes.



BAKERY-RAIDING DOGS ADOPTED

Two starving dogs looted the bakery they were abandoned outside before arriving in Blue Cross care.

Cane corso Rupert and German shepherd cross Pretzel were spotted being abandoned by a van driver at a row of shops in Hertfordshire in December.

After spending seven days in stray kennels, Rupert, five, and Pretzel, three, were brought to our rehoming centre in Kimpton, Hertfordshire.

Both needed vet care, a diet to gain weight and help to rebuild confidence before starting their search for new homes. Both dogs now have families to love them.



Whatever happened to?

PEGGY AND KITTENS

Happy and healthy kittens are a joy – but life could have turned out very differently for this gorgeous foursome.

Born on Mother's Day in Blue Cross care, Pedro, Pascal, Penelope and Percy were rescued from having a cold and lonely start to life.

Mum Peggy was a stray with no place to call home. And with a litter of kittens on the way, she was thankfully brought to Blue Cross Southampton at the end of February.

Riddled with fleas, dirty and 'tiny', Peggy needed care and attention before she could begin her new life as a mum. She gave birth two weeks later.

The vulnerable new family got all the care they needed from our team in the early days, with three-year-old Peggy getting plenty of support when she needed it most.

The family then went into foster care before being found loving new homes where they're now thriving.



STRAY RABBITS SAVED FROM DARK ROAD

When heavily pregnant rabbit Shrimp was rescued from a dark country road, it was a lifeline for the adorable pet and her unborn kits.

Spotted "frozen in the headlights" of a car, the golden brown rabbit was taken to safety by Blue Cross Suffolk's Centre Manager Charles White.

Along with a male rabbit named Ned, the pair were rescued from the road where they had been abandoned on the cold January night.

Charles soon discovered that Shrimp – who is around six months old – was pregnant.

A week later, she gave birth to four kits – Oyster, Prawn, Clam and Squid.

With the help of Blue Cross, this little rabbit family soon found new homes where they will be safe, protected and loved.





VITAL SURGERY keeps dog healthy

W

hen a lump appeared on Yogi's neck, her owner was deeply worried.

The laid-back bull mastiff had previously been diagnosed with a malignant tumour on her leg, so the new lump was cause for concern.

Bringing 10-year-old Yogi into the Blue Cross animal hospital in Victoria, owner Charles Larcher could get answers to his fears.

"When the new lump came up under her chin, I don't think she noticed she had it, but dogs can mask pain really well," said Charles,

29, who adopted Yogi as a rescue when she was six years old.

He continues: "I was worried as she'd had a lump removed from her leg around three months before that turned out to be malignant."

Charles had noticed a raised mass around a centimetre across appearing under Yogi's chin, and was concerned at the speed it had grown.

A tissue sample tested in a lab showed inflammation and unusual cells. Because of the potential for the cells to be cancerous, Blue Cross removed the lump, alongside another

small lump that was starting to develop on her back.

Yogi joined the 24,940 pets helped by veterinary services at our hospitals and clinics up and down the country each year – with low-cost care for those who need Blue Cross help.

The operation on the 45kg dog under general anaesthetic was a success, and Yogi recovered in our dedicated day kennels with plenty of attention from Blue Cross nurses and animal care assistants.

Charles adds: "It's good to have Yogi back and not have to worry anymore."



le boat
Who's on board?

WIN! Dog-friendly boating holiday

In partnership with our friends at Le Boat we are giving you another chance to win a seven night boating holiday for up to four people and your dog*.

Le Boat is the number one provider of boating holidays on the beautiful inland waterways of the UK, Europe and Canada. They boast the world's largest fleet of self-drive boats to hire and the widest choice of destinations.

Not many of their customers know how to drive a boat, but they soon realise they don't need to. The team at Le Boat show you how easy it is, giving you the confidence to navigate the waterways so you can relax and enjoy your time together.

And the best thing... your four-legged friends can come along too. We all know they're part of the family!

Find out more at leboat.co.uk

HOW TO ENTER

To be in with a chance of winning, answer the question below:

On pages 10 to 13, we brought you the story Fidget, the star of our TV advert. What was his name in the commercial?

- Albert
- Archie
- Alfie

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:

.....

.....

.....

.....

Postcode:

Telephone:

Email:

Closing date Thursday, 31 October 2024

*Strictly one entry per household.

The winner of the Le Boat holiday in our spring edition is **Margaret Engel**.
Congratulations!

*The prize is one Le Boat boating holiday of seven nights for up to four people and one dog in any of Le Boat's destinations (excluding Italy and Canada). The prize may be taken on any budget or comfort boat in the Le Boat fleet sleeping up to four, subject to availability. The prize must be booked at least eight weeks before departure and taken by 31 October 2025 (excluding 6 March – 5 April, 27 April – 10 May, 31 May – 7 June, 8 July – 31 Aug). Includes boat hire only. Once booking is confirmed, no amendments can be made. 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 58 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 Devon
- 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 Loss 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: plsmail@bluecross.org.uk

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



Pets change lives
We change theirs



Leave a gift in your Will and you could change pets' lives long into the future.



Pets change lives
We change theirs

Please send me a Gifts in Wills information pack

Title: B224

First name:

Surname:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone:

Email:

I've already included a gift to Blue Cross in my Will

*Please tick if you are happy for us to send future communications to you by: Telephone Email

If you DO NOT wish to hear from us by post please tick this box:



By leaving a gift in your Will, you can ensure your love for pets lives on.

Long after you're gone, you can still be there. There for a sick pet in the operating theatre. There when a homeless pet finds a loving family. Including Blue Cross in your Will is a powerful way to protect sick, injured and homeless pets for years to come.

A gift of any size will have a huge impact for the dogs, cats, small pets and horses that need us, and it will be so gratefully received.

Request our free Gifts in Wills information pack today for guidance on making or amending your Will and leaving a gift to Blue Cross.

Making a Will needn't feel daunting, thanks to our trusted partners Bequeathed and the National Free Wills Network, who can help you write one for free. You can find out more in the pack.

To receive your Gifts in Wills information pack, visit bluecross.org.uk/gift-your-will or complete the coupon and return to freepost: **BLUE CROSS FOR PETS.**

*From time to time we may wish to communicate with you 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 opposite.

We hope you enjoy the communications we send you. If you ever want to change how you hear from us, please contact our customer care team on **0300 790 9903** or by emailing preferences@bluecross.org.uk

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



Alternatively, call 0300 777 1945 or email legacy@bluecross.org.uk and quote B224