

## Tails to Tell



**It's lovely to bring a heart-warming tale to our readers at Christmas...**

Back in early June this Branch was contacted by a local RSPCA Collection Officer asking for our help. A local resident in Farnborough had found a stray black cat that was very thin and poorly-looking with a nasty wound on his head. He was taken straight to a local vets where, after blood tests, he had an operation on an abscess and a repair to a hernia. He was also neutered and microchipped and as soon as he was well enough, he was moved to our cattery where the staff named him "Ritchie".

He took several weeks to recuperate from living rough, with lots of feeding and TLC needed, but after the first couple of days he was a happy, friendly chap, always gentle and affectionate. Once he was fully recovered (and looking handsome again!) we advertised him for rehoming on our website. Prospective adopters visited the cattery and in August someone chose Ritchie as their new pet, so following the usual adoption process, he was able to go off happily to a new home.

Within a week, poor Ritchie was back. His disappointed new owner had found he was allergic to him! Ritchie being such an affectionate boy had taken to frequently licking

his new companion who then unexpectedly developed a serious rash! Although somewhat bemused by his recent moves, Ritchie settled straight back into the cattery and we wasted no time in returning his details and a new video to our Branch website and that of the National Society.

...Meanwhile, during the preceding six months a family in Dagenham in Kent had lost their pet – a black cat called "B". One day back in March he'd just disappeared and they were coming to terms with the fact that, after being missing for so long, their pet was gone for good. For the first few weeks "B" was missing they did everything possible to find him, including searching on appropriate websites but all to no avail. In these circumstances everyone eventually gives up looking and faces the fact that their pet probably isn't coming home. However, one day a friend happened to mention a relative had found her missing cat on one of the 'lost & found' pet websites. The thought of this spurred the owner, Carmel, to have another look on the internet, although she told herself it was only going to rekindle all the sad feelings for her lost pussy-cat and it was probably best if she didn't.

Part of the search included trawling through the RSPCA National Society's website of pets looking for new homes and, as incredible as this is, she was rewarded by our Branch post and video of the 'only-just-readvertised-Ritchie'. The moment she saw the photo of this particular black cat – to everyone else just a regular-looking black moggy – she was convinced it was their cat "B"!

Frantic at what she'd found she got in touch immediately with our Rehoming Manager, and after several phone calls and questions related to identifying him, it did seem there was a good chance it was their boy! The very next day his owners were at the cattery having travelled from Dagenham to Farnham to see if

this was their cat. On seeing him and picking him up, they were sure this was their "B"! So, by a "million-to-one" chance, Ritchie (or should we say B) went off on his way home to Dagenham with them there and then; leaving us all stunned at this turn of events but naturally really happy that his family had found him!

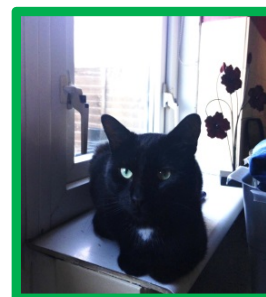
We will never know how he came to get from Dagenham to Farnborough – a staggering 70+ miles! All we can assume is he got into a vehicle travelling this way; first stop Farnborough! Imagine how terrified he must have felt when he found himself in a strange place with no idea how to get home?

We are just very grateful that a kind person reported him to us; that the gentleman who tried to adopt him had to return him, otherwise he would not have been back on our website; and grateful also for the perseverance of an owner not to give up hope of finding him.

In concluding this remarkable tale, we were naturally eager to follow up on B's return home and being reunited with familiar surroundings and family and this is Carmel's reply.

*"B has settled back in fine, almost instantly. On the first night he slept in the same spot on my bed as he used to and he recognised the dogs right away. He doesn't appear to have changed at all, all of his quirky little habits (following people to the bathroom, drinking from the sink, sitting on the side of the tub when we're taking a bath, etc.) are all still present.*

*When he saw his daddy again he was all over him and has gone back to following him around the house (he's always been a daddy's boy!)"*



# Older Cat Adoptions

**AND HOW WE HELP.....** As with most rescue Centres and RSPCA Branches we take in our fair share of older cats. Often these cats, in their middle or twilight years, come to us because an owner has passed away or needs to move into care and it is a sad situation for all. Occasionally a cat will be out on the street in a distressed and vulnerable condition. We always do our best to place the often disorientated and stressed cat into foster care, rather than our cattery pens in order to replicate the cosy warmth and companionship of the home they may have been used to.



**11 yr old Boots recently very happily rehomed following the death of his owner.**

Just because the pet is old, we do not treat them any differently but invest as much time in the recuperation and rehoming of these animals as any other that crosses our path needing help. We will always consult the expertise of a vet in any cases where the cat's quality of life is in question and ensure that we do all that we can to alleviate any 'aches and pains' or ailments they may have.

Whilst in foster care they will be brought up to date with any vet treatment they may need which could include checking bloods for thyroid or diabetes problems and often dental treatment too. Once we know what we are dealing with we are able to advertise the cat for rehoming. Adopting an older pet can be a rewarding and happy experience as they can offer much in terms of easy and mature companionship and a generally more serene approach to life.

However, this Branch recognises that some adopters may be concerned about potential veterinary costs that ownership of a mature pet could involve, especially if these costs are on-going. In order to assist owners with these older companions we are pleased to offer our **Senior Years Vet Support Scheme**. This scheme (given at our discretion) allows an owner to claim certain veterinary treatments for age related illness which the rehomed cat might be suffering from or may develop in future years.



**Milly was found wandering alone, thin and very frail. For the past 2 ½ years she has been living happily with a lady in Yateley, receiving love and comfort from her owner and regular medication and tests with our support.**

We hope that our financial support will offer the peace of mind to anyone who might consider giving an older cat the home they deserve during their twilight years. If your home is suitable for an elderly cat and you have the time and experience to adopt or long-term foster an elderly or needy cat, we are always glad to hear from you.

**Contact our Rehoming Manager, Geraldine on 07880 547502 or visit [www.rspca-hantsandsurrey.org.uk](http://www.rspca-hantsandsurrey.org.uk)**

## 'Rescued & Rehomed' Cats 2014 Desk Calendars



Every year this Branch rescues and rehomes around 200 cats and kittens. During the time each cat is with us photos are taken of them either in our cattery or their foster home and some turn out to be really great photos.

Last year we produced desk calendars from some of the wonderful photos entered into our 2012 "Catwalk Your Cat" photo competition, so this year we thought our supporters might enjoy a calendar featuring some of the lovely felines we've been responsible for rescuing; all of which have gone on to find loving homes. The calendar is unique - you can't buy anything like it anywhere else and for any cat lover or RSPCA supporter, this will make an ideal Christmas gift for friends and family, as well as for personal use at work or home.

This year's calendars have been on sale since early November and supplies are now running low so if you

want to grab a bargain, please hurry. Price is now just £2.95 each, plus P&P (was £3.50). They can be bought on-line from our website or direct from our three charity shops in North Camp, Ash Vale and Farnham.

Remember, every calendar sold is contributing to future RSPCA rescued cats whose lives will be made that much better, thanks to all our efforts!

## Review of our recent BVG Fundraisers

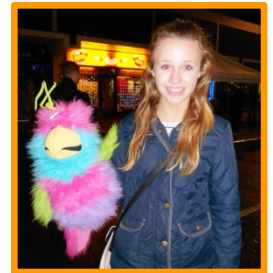
Six months in to our newly formed Branch Volunteer Group (BVG), we have already had some notable successes....

Our latest three events have been our own



**BRANCH MUTT STRUTT** in October when we invited RSPCA Millbrook Animal Centre to join us to raise funds for both our animal welfare aims. The proceeds amounted to just over £1,000 – a great result. Above photo shows two of the four Millbrook rescue dogs that took part.

We also raised another £600+ in total attending the **FLEET FESTIVAL** on 20<sup>th</sup> November, followed three days later at the **FARNHAM CHARITIES MARKET**. At the former fundraiser we included a Cuddly Toy Tombola and Kiddies Lucky Dips, both of which went down a storm and the smiles on



the children's faces was a delight to see! For the latter we were lucky enough to be invited to run a Cake Stall alongside our merchandise stall, and our team of volunteers did us proud by baking lots of different cakes



and biscuits – the sale of these alone raised nearly £200.

Thanks go to all the volunteers who contributed by helping in advance and on the days – we simply can't run these events without you!

**Keep an eye out on our website for more fundraising events in 2014**